SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER CANDIDATES' PERCEPTION OF URBAN ENVIRONMENT: THE EXAMPLE OF AFYONKARAHISAR, TURKEY

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Abstract:

This research was conducted to determine social studies teacher candidates' perceptions of the urban environment of Afyonkarahisar. The study group of the research, which was designed according to the basic qualitative research approach, was 100 teacher candidates generated from a purposeful sampling strategy among the 1st and 4th grade teacher candidates studying at the Department of Social Studies Education at a state university at the beginning of the spring semester of the 2019-2020 academic year. Four questions were employed in the questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions such as *"What features do you look for in the city you want to live in?", "How would you describe Afyonkarahisar?", "What are the first 5 words that come to your mind when you say Afyonkarahisar?"* and *"What are the positive and negative aspects of Afyonkarahisar?".* In the last chapter, the teacher candidates were asked to draw a mental image they visualized when Afyonkarahisar was mentioned. The obtained data were analyzed using the content analysis method, presented in the form of content tables, expressed in frequencies, and supported with direct quotations from the teacher candidates' opinions. According to the findings obtained from the research result; the prominent concepts in the minds and drawings of the teacher candidates have been urban, historical, and gastronomic factors. In Afyonkarahisar descriptions of the teacher candidates, there were negative qualifications such as underdeveloped, small, dirty, and boring and positive qualifications such as quiet/calm, livable, at an important junction point in terms of transportation to other cities, affordable and ideal for students.

Keywords: behavioral geography, environmental perception, urban environment, Afyonkarahisar, the teacher candidate

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1. Introduction

The geographical environment is a whole in which fundamentally consists of two parts, natural and human, and these parts are constantly in interaction with each other. Geography has multiple perspectives from the past to the present in evaluating the relations between person and space. Environmental perception and behavioral geography are some of these perspectives as well (Karadağ & Turut, 2013). Behavioral geography, one of the sub-branches of geography, examines how people perceive the environment they live in distinctively based on the differences in their interests, socio-cultural background, education, level of awareness and interests, and what are the effective factors on these different perception processes (Aliağaoğlu, 2007). A behavioral geography is an approach that deals with how people discern peripherals with different characteristics, with which symbols they describe them, in what ways they express these definitions, and their reactions to these environments (Özgüç & Tümertekin, 2000). The environmental perception approach comes to the fore in behavioral geography studies. Environmental perception is identified as the phenomenon of obtaining information about the world by taking stimulants from the environment through people's feelings (Tümertekin & Özgüç, 1998).

As stated by Güleç Solak (2017), in studies related to the city and architecture, the concept of perception mostly appears as environmental perception, space perception, or spatial perception. The fact that a structured physical environment evokes different perceptions in different people has inspired many researchers who study urban textures (Ülkeryıldız, Durmuş Arsan & Akış, 2009). The effect of urban appearance on people, due to their perceptions, has led to the emergence of the concept of urban environment perception. This concept, which can be defined as the general impression of a city with its physical facilities, is a substantial process in the formation of the city's identity and social memory (Topçu, 2011). Lynch's (1960) study on the perception of the urban environment is among the primary ones in this field, accentuating that all components of cities and the environment they inhabit are effective in shaping people's environmental insights. In the study, Lynch focused on how people living in Boston, Jersey City, and Los Angeles conceive visual information in the environment and concluded that the perception of urban texture is shaped utilizing the images that the image of the city constitutes in the human mind (Lynch, 1960). According to Lynch (1960), the image of a city or picture are the traces left by urban life on people through feelings and thoughts, and these traces are the most significant step in the recognition of urban identity. thanks to the images it creates in the human mind.

In the literature, there are studies carried out to assess the city/city image and city/city perceptions of students and distinctive groups regarding various cities. Dülger Türkoğlu (2002) examined the urban environment perceptions of the people towards Istanbul, and Aliağaoğlu (2007) identified the city image of Balıkesir in the minds of university students via the draft map method. Özdemir and Karaca (2009) found out that the city's closest products to become a brand are cream, soujouk, candy, the thermal and

historical castle on the grounds of their research with people who are not Afyon residents and who do not live in the city to determine the image of Afyonkarahisar city. Karadağ & Turut (2013) worked on measuring students' perceptions of the urban environment towards Izmir and on the factors affecting these perceptions. Demirel (2014) in the study to measure the perceptions of Mehmet Akif Ersoy University students on the city image of Burdur, designated that the image perception of the students towards both the city of Burdur and its people is at a moderate level. Temuçin and Keçeli (2015) examined the urban space perception of foreign students studying in Isparta. In their research, Aliağaoğlu and Yılmaz Çildam (2017) evaluated the city images of the inhabitants of Balıkesir to identify urban problems. To improve the image of the city and create a positive city brand, Aliağaoğlu and Uzun (2017) delved into the city image perception of Balıkesir University students. Gündoğdu, Kuru, and Özkök (2016) conducted a study on the urban perception of Kırklareli, and it was determined how the image of the city affects students, the comparison of the city perceptions of students and residents and how they perceive the city. Türkan (2017) assessed the university students' perceptions of the urban environment towards the city of Çankırı. Henden Şolt (2018) carried out a study on Zonguldak Ereğli to find out how the city branding and its image are perceived. Hammaloğlu and Akten (2019) appointed the city of Antalya as a working area for environmental perception and urban aesthetics based on the hypothesis that cities that have gained aesthetic quality will create more peaceful, healthier urban living spaces where urban consciousness has developed. Alkan and Yılmaz Çildam (2019) evaluated the perceptions of students studying at Siirt University on the image of the city of Siirt and deduced that while climate and delicious food have a high image, green area, sportive, cultural, artistic events, and shopping opportunities has low image.

The main purpose of the Turkish education system is to raise individuals who have knowledge, skills, and behaviors integrated with our values and competencies. (MEB, 2018). This purpose is carried through various courses in education and training as specified in the National Education Fundamental Law No. 1739. One of these courses is social studies. Among the special purposes of the Social Studies Curriculum (2018) are "*to explain the interaction between humans and the environment by distinguishing the general geographical features of the environment and the world in which they live in, and to improve the skills of perceiving the space.*" The "*People, Places and Environments*" learning area, which aims to provide students with the spatial basic knowledge, skills, and values essential for human life, and the ability to perceive the space are among the skills that are aimed to be acquired at all grade levels where the social studies course is taught. It is planned that the students will be included in this field from the simple to the complex, from close to far and from where they are located to the environment and an increasingly complex approach. The concepts of "*places used in daily life, living place and environment*" are included in the acquisitions within the relevant learning area (MEB, 2018). In addition, one of the teachers conducting the "Our City…" course, which is taught in secondary schools as an elective, is social studies teachers. It is considered fundamental to refer to the opinions of social studies teacher candidates, who will educate the future citizens

about the perception of the urban environment. The purpose of this study is to examine social studies teacher candidates' (SSTC) perceptions of the urban environment towards the city of Afyonkarahisar.

2. Method

2.1. Research Pattern

In this study, a 'basic qualitative research model' was used. Basic qualitative research, which is frequently preferred in applied fields such as educational sciences, is research that deals with the perspectives of the participants on a subject. Researchers conducting basic qualitative research are concerned with how people interpret their lives, how they structure the world they live in, and what meaning they add to their experiences (Merriam, 2018). The basic qualitative research approach was chosen as this study focused on the perceptions of the teacher candidates in the urban environment towards the city of Afyonkarahisar.

2.2 Study Group

The study group consists of 100 teacher candidates generated from a purposeful sampling strategy among the 1st and 4th-grade class teachers studying at the Department of Social Studies Education at a state university at the beginning of the spring semester of the 2019-2020 academic year. This sampling is performed to reach richer data than the situations determined by random sampling and to increase the credibility of the research (Flick, 2014). The reason for choosing the 1st and 4th grades in the study is to examine the perceptions of the teacher candidates about the urban environment of Afyonkarahisar that they acquired while starting and finishing university. Information about the working group is included in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of information about the study group

		f	%
Gender	Female	60	60
	Male	40	40
Class	1st Grade	50	50
	4th Grade	50	50
Place of Birth	City	74	74
	District	26	26
Place of Residence	Home	22	22
	Dormitory-Pension-Apart	68	68
	With Family or Relatives	10	10
Total		100	100

2.3 Data Collection Tools

A questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions and the teacher candidates' drawings were used as data collection tools. Open-ended questions were utilized to reveal different dimensions of the study group's perception of Afyonkarahisar. It is

unlikely to measure a person's opinions on a certain subject with a single question. A successful result can be obtained if the research subject is measured in different and supporting aspects (Baş & Akturan, 2008). To Yıldırım and Şimşek (2018), analysis of written documents and documents is a data collection method used in qualitative research to support data obtained either by itself or through interviews and observations. A pilot study was conducted on ten teacher candidates in order to measure the operability of open-ended questions in the questionnaire. In order to find out the clarity and comprehensibility of the questions and whether the answers given reflect the answers to the questions asked, a field expert together with the researcher also examined the pilot application results. At the end of this study, the internal validity of the question items was designated, and the questions were put into final form.

In the questionnaires consisting of open-ended questions, regarding the demographic data of prospective teachers, their gender, place of birth, and residence were asked. Four questions were asked in the second part of the questionnaires such as *"What features do you look for in the city you want to live in?"*, *"How would you describe Afyonkarahisar?"*, *"What are the first 5 words that come to your mind when Afyonkarahisar is mentioned?"* and *"What are the positive and negative aspects of Afyonkarahisar?"*. In the last chapter, the teacher candidates were asked to draw a mental image they visualized in their minds when Afyonkarahisar was mentioned. No intervention has been made on the shape of the drawings, the drawing area, and the drawing elements.

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The research data were collected from 100 teacher candidates who voluntarily participated in the study at the beginning of the spring semester of the 2019-2020 academic year. The obtained data were analyzed through the content analysis method. To Yıldırım and Şimşek (2018), content analysis requires an in-depth analysis of the collected data and allows to reveal previously unclear themes and dimensions. The basic process in content analysis is to gather similar data within the framework of certain concepts and themes and to organize and interpret them in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Codes were generated from sentences or words written in the analysis of the data and these codes were grouped under the created themes and evaluated. Each element in drawings was accepted as a code, and these elements were grouped under certain themes. By determining the drawing frequencies of the elements, the effective factors in the prominent view of the city of Afyonkarahisar in the minds of the teacher candidates were evaluated. The generated themes and the codes were demonstrated in Tables and their frequencies were indicated, some sentences summarizing the participants' opinions were presented with direct quotations. For the selection of citations in the presentation of data, the criteria of intensity (different opinion), explanatory (suitability to the theme), diversity, and extreme examples were considered. In the presentation of the findings, the teacher candidates were named with the abbreviations as TC1, TC2... to protect participant confidentiality in accordance with ethical rules.

To ensure the validity of the research, the stages in the data collection and analysis process were explained in detail, and the direct quotations of the participants regarding the data collected under the generated themes in the study were given as an example. To ensure the reliability of the research, the data were coded by the researcher and a field expert, and the reliability calculation was made according to the reliability formula [Reliability = Consensus / Consensus + Disagreement) * 100] of Miles and Huberman (1994). Considering the calculation, the reliability of the research was calculated as [= (283 / 283 + 13) *100] %95. Reliability accounts for over 70% are considered reliable for research (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The result obtained from this study was regarded as reliable.

3. Findings

In this section, the data obtained from the opinions of teacher candidates participating in the study on the subject were interpreted in the form of themes, codes, and frequencies by tabulating, the opinions of teacher candidates were supported by direct quotations.

3.1. The Opinions of Social Studies Teacher Candidates About the Features They Want to Be in the City They Would Like to Live

The opinions of teacher candidates were analyzed regarding the question *"What features do you look for in the city you want to live in?"*; themes, conceptual coding under themes, and the frequency of use of coding are demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2: The features that the teacher candidates
want to be in the city they would like to live in

Themes	Coding	f
Town-Wide	There should be no transportation problem	25
	It must be a developed city	22
	It must be a quiet / calm city	18
	Life should be quality and cheap	9
	Everything should be easily accessible	9
	It should be a comfortable / organized city	4
	There should be no traffic problems	3
	There must be a sparkling nightlife	3
	It must be a small city	1
	There must be wide streets	1
	Food & drinks should be natural	1
	There should be no infrastructure problem	1
Urban Living Quarters	There must be a sea / beach	22
	There must be places to visit	14
	It must have a clean environment	12
	There must be recreational areas / parks / picnic areas	8
	They must be peaceful places	7
	There should be no urbanization problem / excessive urbanization	2
	There must be big shopping malls	2

	There should be places to walk	2
	City and nature life should be together	1
Socio-Cultural Life Factors	It must have socio-cultural activities	26
	It must be historically and culturally beautiful	5
	It must be a touristic place	4
	There should be libraries / research centers	4
	It must have an environment of free thought / understanding	3
	Standards of living should be high	1
Service Industry	It must be safe	5
	There should be more job opportunities	4
	There should be good health care service	3
	There should be good education opportunities	2
	The phone should get a signal there	1
	There should be good municipality services	1
	The water should be clean	1
	There must be a night meal service	1
Climate / Vegetation	Climate conditions should be mild	14
	There must be green areas	13
	Its air must be clean	7
	Its surroundings and nature must be beautiful	3
Personal Factors	People should be respectful / polite	12
	People must be tolerant	8
	People should be helpful	4
	People must be cultured	3
	People must be sensitive	3
	People should be friendly	3
	It must be student friendly	2
	The people I love should be in that city	1
	It should make me happy	1
	It must be close to my family	1
	People must be hospitable	1
	People must be animal lovers	1
	It is enough to be a homeland	1

As a result of the analysis of the teacher candidates' answers to the question *"What features do you look for in the city you want to live in?"*, the themes of town-wide, urban living quarters, socio-cultural living factors, service industry, climate/vegetation, and personal factors were generated.

The teacher candidates underlined that there should be no transportation problem, it must be a developed, a quiet/calm city, life should be quality and cheap, easy access to everything and not being crowded in the town-wide theme of the city they want to live in. It is observed in the expressions of TC2 and TC99 *"It must be a developed city. I should be able to find everything I am looking for in the city easily"* that the teacher candidates associate a developed city with easy access to what they are looking for. The teacher candidates ventilated their opinions about a quiet/calm city and the quality and cheapness of life as the features of the city they want to live in by saying: TC5 *"… There should be no traffic problems. It shouldn't be too crowded."*, TC26 *"I shouldn't experience*

financial difficulty.", TC47 *"It must be a calm city, that transportation services are developed, and that it is an economically livable city."*

The teacher candidates think that there should be urban living quarters in the city they live in; They stated that it is important to have a sea/coast, places to visit, a clean environment, peaceful places, green areas, parks, and historical and cultural beauties. The teacher candidates' views on this issue are as follows: TC53 *"… There should be green areas where people can rest quietly...",* TC91 *"Peaceful environment, abundant green spaces, woodlands ...",* TC92 *"There should be parks where I can relax and have fun in a green and spacious environment with my family at the end of the busy work pace.",* TC76 *"… There should be lots of places to visit and see".*

The opinions of teacher candidates who illustrate the cities they want to live in with history and nature are as follows: TC42 *"…Although it is well developed, there should not be too much urbanization. It should also include natural areas.",* TC73 *"I would like to live in a city where city and nature life is one and where there are simple settlements rather than tall buildings.",* TC96. *"…I want its natural beauty to be preserved.".*

In addition, the teacher candidates underscored the importance of socio-cultural activities, security, mild climate, clean air, and having tolerant/polite/respectful/helpful people like the characteristics of the cities they want to live in by saying that: TC32 *"I want it to be a place where social activities are copious and where I can spend quality time.",* TC29 *"What I look for is understanding people and the activities in the city.",* TC85 *"A society where people are respectful and that helps animals, salutary events and sea.",* TC89 *"The features I look for in a city are having a warm, friendly, cultured society with booksellers and coffee shops in narrow streets, and a fine weather".*

3.3 The Definitions of Afyonkarahisar City by Social Studies Teacher Candidates

The opinions of teacher candidates were analyzed regarding the question *"How would you define Afyonkarahisar?"*; themes, conceptual coding under themes, and the frequency of use of coding are demonstrated in Table 3.

Table 3: The definitions of Afyonkarahisar city by social studies teacher candidates

Themes	Coding	f
Town-Wide	An undeveloped city	22
	A small city	17
	A quiet/calm city	14
	A liveable city	11
	A nice city	11
	A city with polluted air	10
	Close to other cities / at the junction point	10
	An inexpensive city	9
	A dull city	9
	A developing city	6
	Ideal city for a student	4
	A busy/noisy city	3
	A city with a lot of environmental pollution	5

	Famous for its marble	3
	The city with constantly attacking dogs	2
	A city that provides a livelihood with agriculture and animal husbandry	1
	A city with a clean air	1
	One of the cities to stop by	1
Climate / Vegetation	Cold city with harsh climate	15
	A city with a rural and barren land	3
	A city that looks like a flat plain	1
	A beautiful city when it snows in winter	1
Personal Factors	A city with rude people	11
	My favorite city	9
	A city with friendly/intimate/amiable/funny people	5
	The city of the bigot	4
	A city with cold people	2
	My biggest regret in my life	1
Socio-Cultural Life Factors	A historical city	16
	A city with limited social activities	14
	The city with not much place to visit	8
	A city with Akarçay River	1
	A city with lots of mosques	1
	Famous for its castle	1
Gastronomic Flavors	A city with delicious food	6
	Famous for Turkish delight	4
	Famous for cream	4
	Famous for soujouk	4
	Famous for poppy	1
Service Industry	A city with good / famous thermal	7
	A city with traffic problems	5
	A city with infrastructure problems	3
	A city with bad urban planning	3
	An adequate city in terms of health and service	1
	A city with a mediocre municipality	1

As a result of the analysis of the teacher candidates' answers to the question *"How would you define Afyonkarahisar?"*, the themes of town-wide, climate/vegetation, personal factors, socio-cultural living factors, gastronomic flavors, and service industry were generated. In Afyonkarahisar's descriptions of the teacher candidates in the town-wide theme, there were negative qualifications such as undeveloped, small, dirty, and boring and positive qualifications such as quiet/calm, livable, at a junction point in terms of transportation to other cities, inexpensive and ideal for students.

The negative statements in the opinions of teacher candidates about the city, in general, are as follows: TC88 *"A small and undeveloped place in the Aegean."*, TC7 *"It's a simple and ordinary city."*, TC10 *"It's a boring, gloomy city."*, TC90. *"Its air is polluted, it is a crowded, cold and not a safe city."*.

The positive statements in the opinions of teacher candidates about the city, in general, are as follows: TC17 *"There are some problems in Afyon, but it is not a bad place to*

live. I think it's a small and safe city.", TC35 *"It is at the junction point, a place where transportation can be easily provided to most cities.",* TC39. *"A livable city with clean air and easy transportation.",* TC96 *"Afyonkarahisar is a beautiful city. It is an economically suitable place and a city where everyone can be happy.".*

The teacher candidates who describe Afyonkarahisar as a city with a harsh climate, rough people, and limited social activities pointed out that the city has got historical value, gastronomic flavors such as Turkish delight, soujouk, cream, and thermal tourism facilities. It has been observed that some of the teacher candidates portray Afyonkarahisar with both positive and negative features. The teacher candidates' opinions are as follows: TC3 *"It is a city famous for its historical beauties and cream and soujouk. On the other hand, it is a place with air pollution.",* TC52. *"Its people are far behind about education, yet it is a historical place, and its food is luscious. ",* TC53. *"It is cold and dry, a city with bad smell and bad urban planning, however, it is a central place full of mosques and zestful food like Bükme (pastry burrito filled with lentil or potato)."*

3.4 The Words that Come to Mind of Social Studies Teacher Candidates When Afyonkarahisar is Mentioned

The opinions of teacher candidates were analyzed regarding the question *"What are the first 5 words that come to your mind when you say Afyonkarahisar?"*; themes, conceptual coding under themes, and the frequency of use of coding are demonstrated in Table 4.

Table 4: The words that come to mind of social studies
teacher candidates when Afyonkarahisar is mentioned

Themes	Coding	f
Gastronomic Flavours	Soujouk	59
	Turkish Delight	51
	Cream	43
	Poppy	19
	Potato	11
	Bükme	8
	Food	2
	Meat and Meat Products	1
	Patty	1
	Kashkek (a sort of ceremonial meat or chicken and wheat or barley stew found in Turkish cuisine)	1
Urban Symbols	Castle	69
	Marble	15
	The White Elephant	2
	Old Afyon houses/mansions	1
	Mineral water	1
Town-Wide	Gazlıgöl (A district in Afyon)	5
	Dogs	3
	Bad smell	3
	Undeveloped	3
	Roads without pavements	2

	Culture	1
	Natural Beauties	1
	Housefly	1
	Field	1
	Çavuşbaş (A laborer district in Afyon)	1
	Clean Environment	1
	Shepherds	1
	Green Way	1
	Şuhut (A main district in Afyon)	1
	Filthy	1
	Artless	1
	Small	1
	Mountains	1
Public	Rude People	7
	Traffic monstrosity/lawlessness	5
	Accent	3
	Bigot	2
	Aggressive People	1
	Different people	1
	To defy somebody	1
	Unsatisfactory effort	1
Religious Factors	Imaret Mosque	3
	Mawlawiyah	2
	Kocatepe Mosque	1
	Ulu Mosque (The Great Mosque)	1
University-related Factors	Erenler (A district in Afyon)	15
	Afyon Kocatepe University	12
	Faculty of Education	4
	Dormitory	2
	Academic Staff of Faculty of Education	1
	ANS (Ahmet Necdet Sezer) Campus	1
	Students	1
Climate / Vegetation	Cold	12
	Snow	3
Shopping Malls and Recreation Areas	Park Afyon	9
	Afium	2
	Akarçay River	2
	Anıtpark	2
	Emre Lake	1
	Hıdırlık	1
	Urban Forest	1
Historical and Touristic Factors	Thermal	29
	Frig Valley	8
	History	7
	Kocatepe	4
	Museum	3
	Turkish Bath	3
	Zafer Monument/Museum	2
	The lands where the Republic was founded	2

	Train Station	2
	National struggle	2
	Bedesten Bazaar (A covered Turkish bazaar)	1
	Martyrs	1
	Go sightseeing	1
Personal Factors	My friends / friendship	2
	Family / Home	2
	Freedom	1
	Homeland	1
	Paradise	1
	Difficulty	1
	Boredom	1
	Stress	1

As a result of the analysis of the teacher candidates' answers to the question *"What are the first 5 words that come to your mind when you say Afyonkarahisar?"*, the themes of gastronomic flavors, urban symbols, public, town-wide, religious factors, university-related factors, climate/vegetation, shopping malls and recreation areas, historical and touristic factors, and personal factors were generated.

The teacher candidates employed the words that evoke Afyonkarahisar in the gastronomic flavors such as soujouk-cream-Turkish delight, in the urban symbols like castle-marble, the concepts related to history and value of the city and the university. While some teacher candidates defined the city with the concepts of cold weather, rude people, traffic problems, pollution, difficulty, and stress, some of them portrayed the city with the concepts such as friendship, family, home, paradise, and homeland.

3.5 The Opinions of Social Studies Teacher Candidates About Positive and Negative Aspects of Afyonkarahisar

The opinions of teacher candidates were analyzed regarding the question *"What are the positive and negative aspects of Afyonkarahisar?"*; themes, conceptual coding under themes, and the frequency of use of coding are demonstrated in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: The positive aspects of Afyonkarahisar according to the teacher candidates

Themes		Coding	f
Positive Aspects	**Town-Wide**	At the junction point in terms of transportation	28
		It is a small city	17
		It is a calm/quiet city	16
		Its air is clean	2
		There is less traffic jam	2
		It is a conservative city	2
		It is a developing city	1
		It snows there	1
		There are no high-rise buildings	1
		It is a beautiful city	1
		It is a big city	1
		There are four seasons	1

	Socio-cultural Life Factors	It is historically beautiful	15
		It has a rich culture in food and beverage	5
		It is a city with culture	2
		The university education is high quality	2
		There are many cafes	1
	Economical Factors	Life is easy	12
		It is an affordable city	9
		It is a student city	7
		There are enough shopping facilities	2
	Service Industry	It is a thermal city	8
		It is a sufficient city in terms of hospitals	2
		It is a safe city	2
		It is a touristic city	1
	Personal Factors	People are nice/friendly/helpful	5
		My family is in here	1

As a result of the analysis of the teacher candidates' answers to the question *"What are the positive aspects of Afyonkarahisar?"*, the themes of town-wide, socio-cultural life factors, economic factors, service industry, and personal factors were created.

The teacher candidates underlined its positive aspects that it is comfortable in terms of transportation, being a small and quiet city, having historical value, delicious food, easy and affordable life, available thermal resources, and people with humanitarian characteristics. The opinions of teacher candidates are as follows: TC3 *"It is historically beautiful and offers different tastes in food."*, TC65 *"It is a city that tells people the sense of homeland and nation. It is a city with access to all over the country."*, TC28 *"It's small so you can go anywhere easily."*, TC27 *"The fact that life is cheap, and it is a suitable city to live in, it is better to live in here compared to big cities on minimum wage, it is close to everywhere."*

Table 6: The negative aspects of Afyonkarahisar according to the teacher candidates

Themes		Coding	f
Negative Aspects	Town-Wide	Its air is polluted	17
		It is undeveloped	17
		There are so many negative aspects	13
		There is traffic jam	9
		The city is/smells filthy	8
		It is a boring city	6
		There are aggressive dogs	4
		It is a small city	3
		There are narrow sidewalks/streets	3
		It is a city that could not become a city brand	2
		Not paying attention to stray animals	2
		There is earthquake risk	1
		It is a crowded city	1
		The university is far from the city center and hospitals	1
		It is lack of job opportunities	1
	Socio-Cultural Life Factors	There are few places to visit	14
		It is lack of social/cultural activity areas	12

	Climate/ Vegetation	It is cold	20
		There is not sufficient foliage/tree/nature	4
		There are lots of swampy areas	1
	Service Industry	The municipal services are inadequate	6
		Poor city infrastructure	3
		The city transportation services are poor/expensive	3
		It fails to advertise tourism potential successfully	1
	Personal Factors	People are rude/senseless	14
		It is a city that needs to be developed in terms of humanity	10
		The public is cold/dislike the students.	3
		No negative aspect	2
		People are indifferent towards environment	1
		Bus rides	1

As a result of the analysis of the teacher candidates' answers to the question *"What are the negative aspects of Afyonkarahisar?"*, the themes of town-wide, socio-cultural life factors, climate/vegetation, service industry, and personal factors were generated.

The teacher candidates emphasized its negative aspects that its air is polluted, it is an undeveloped city, there is a traffic jam, it is filthy, there is nowhere to visit and insufficient socio-cultural activity areas, it is cold, the municipal services are inadequate, people are rude, and it is a place that needs to be improved concerning humanity. The opinions of teacher candidates are as follows: TC51 *"People who dislike students, people who drive carelessly, and not paying attention to animals."*, TC38 *"The drivers are bad, people are rude in general."*, TC9. *"It needs to be developed in terms of humanity and as a city structure."*, TC34 *"…not many places to visit."*, TC32 *"It is a city with few social opportunities"*, TC78 *"...dirty and cold air"*, TC4 *"…the dogs roaming the streets and attacking."*.

3.6 The Mental Images of Social Studies Teacher Candidates When Afyonkarahisar is Mentioned

The opinions of teacher candidates were analyzed regarding the question *"Can you draw the mental images when Afyonkarahisar is mentioned?"*; themes, conceptual coding under themes, and the frequency of use of coding are demonstrated in Table 7.

Table 7: According to the teacher candidates, the mental images
that come to their mind when Afyonkarahisar is mentioned

Themes	Coding	f
Historical Factors	Castle	64
	Houses near the castle/old Afyon houses	11
	Zafer monument	1
	Flag	1
Gastronomic Factors	Soujouk	20
	Poppy	16
	Turkish Delight	8
	Potato	3
	Bükme	2

University-related Factors	KYK (higher education credit and dormitories agency)-school road	3
	Dormitory	2
	Faculty of Education	2
	Erenler (A district in Afyon)	2
	ANS (Ahmet Necdet Sezer) Campus	1
	ANS Minibus	1
Urban Factors	Park Afyon Shopping Mall	5
	Akarçay River	3
	Mountain	3
	The Elephant	2
	Dogs	2
	Mosque	2
	Unhappy/sick street animals	2
	Social media account of Garahisarlıyın	1
	Roads without pavements	1
	Thermal Springs	1
Personal Factors	Friends	2
	4 years wasted	1

As a result of the analysis of the teacher candidates' drawings to the question *"Can you draw the mental images when Afyonkarahisar is mentioned?"*, the themes of historical, gastronomic, university-related, urban and personal factors were created. When Table 7 was examined, it was concluded that in the perception of the teacher candidates, the historical and gastronomic factors of Afyonkarahisar are predominantly formed in their minds. While the teacher candidates utilized the symbols related to Afyonkarahisar in their drawings, it was observed that they did not include sketch-style drawings. The factors that the teacher candidates employed most in their drawings were the castle, old Afyon houses, soujouk, poppy, Turkish delight, dormitory-school road, Park Afyon shopping mall, Akarçay River, mountains, the crossroad with the elephant, and the dogs and sick and careless street animals. The least included factor in the drawings was the personal ones.

Image 1 and 2: The examples of Afyon Castle
and old Afyon houses/mansions drawings
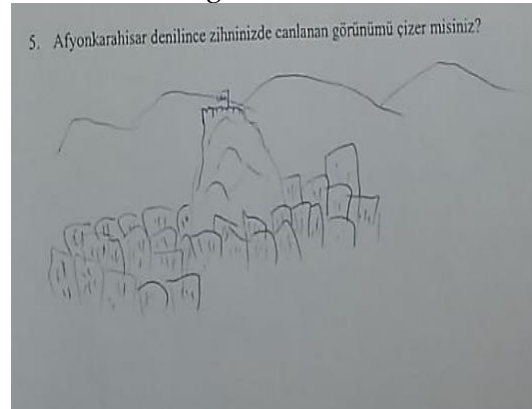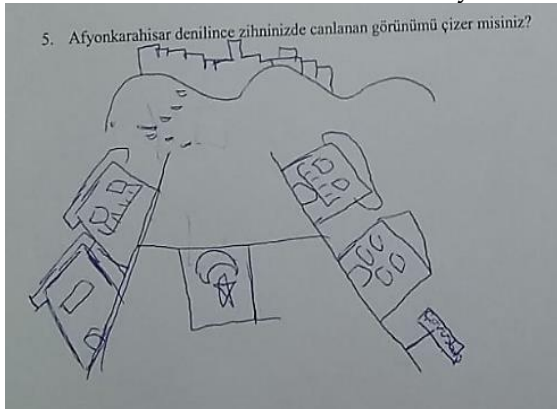
The most employed symbol in the drawings of the teacher candidates was the castle, and many teacher candidates drew the castle and the old Afyon houses/mansions around it. (Image 1 and 2)

One of the symbols applied frequently in the drawings of the teacher candidates was gastronomic factors, and they often made drawings of soujouk, poppy, and Turkish delight. (Image 3 and 4)

Image 3 and 4: The examples of gastronomic drawings
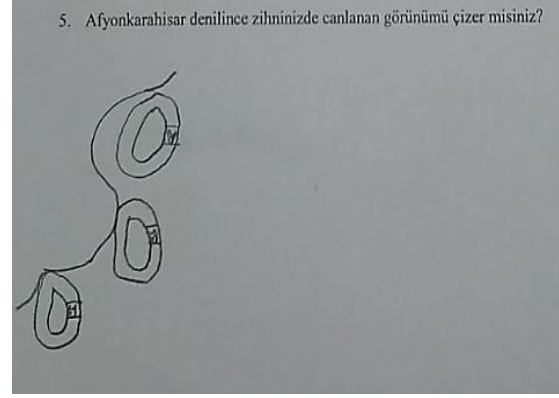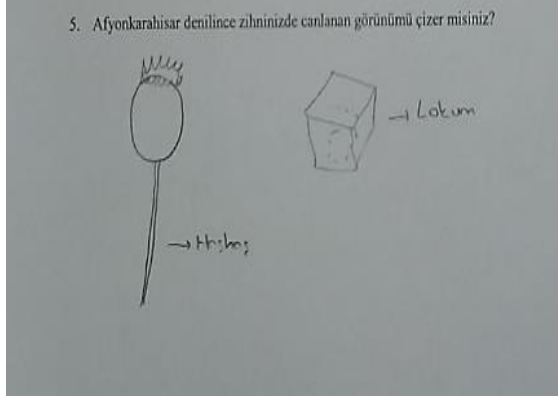
In the drawings of the teacher candidates, factors related to the university were included as a dormitory, school, dormitory-school road, and campus. (Image 5 and 6)

Image 5 and 6: The examples of university-related drawings
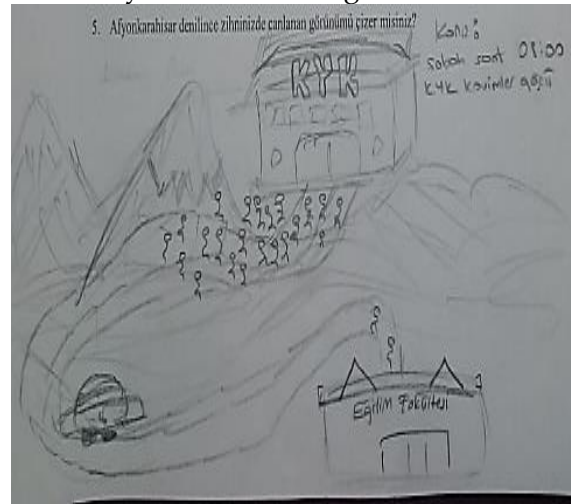
Some teacher candidates use many symbols of the city in their drawings together. This situation reveals the richness of the image that comes to mind when Afyonkarahisar is mentioned. In addition to the positive symbols of the city in their drawings, the teacher candidates also drew the situations they complained about. Traffic problems, minibusses, roads without pavements, dogs, and neglected street animals were reflected in the drawings as complaints. (Image 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11).

Image 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11: The examples of drawings that use many symbols together
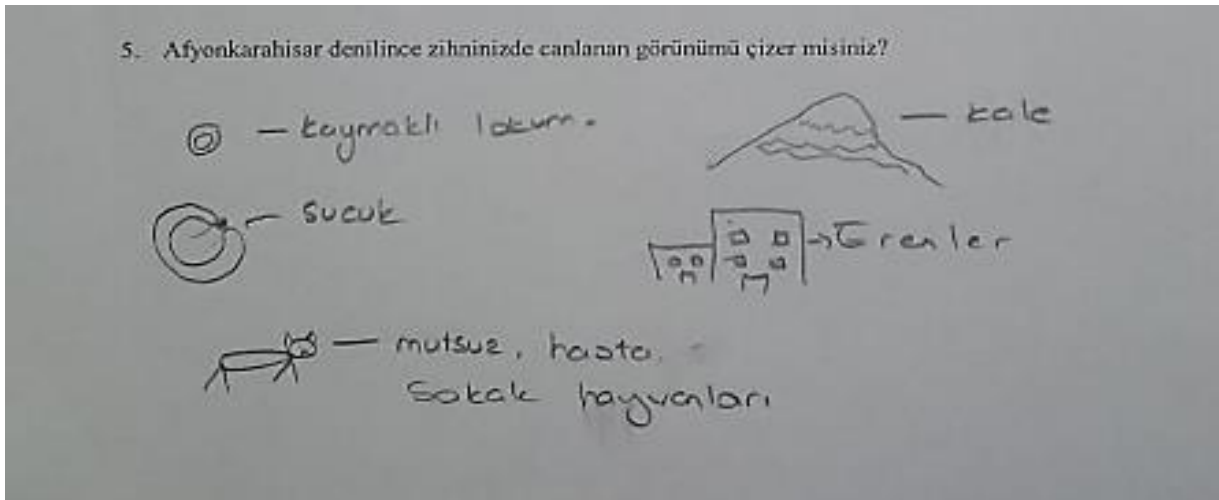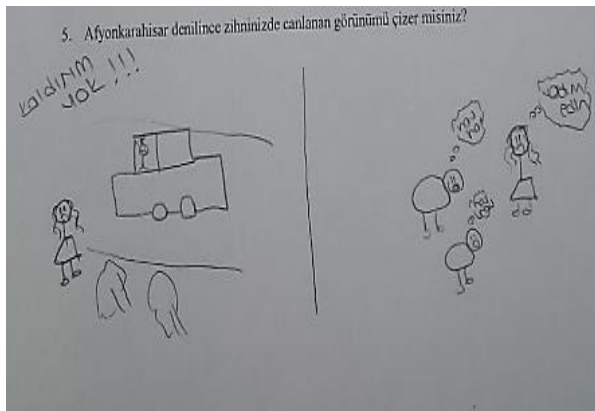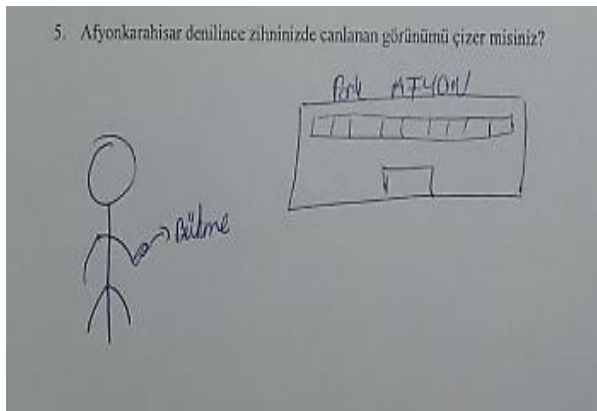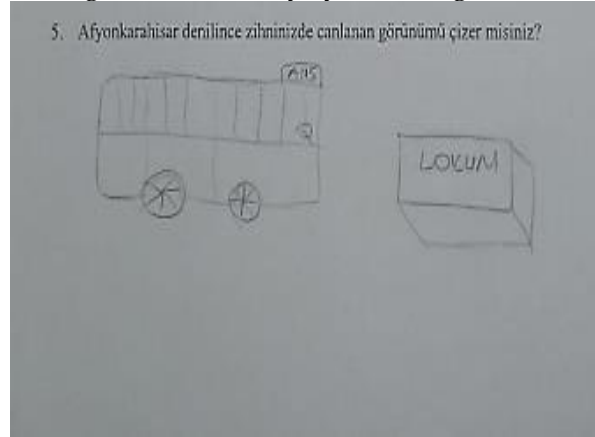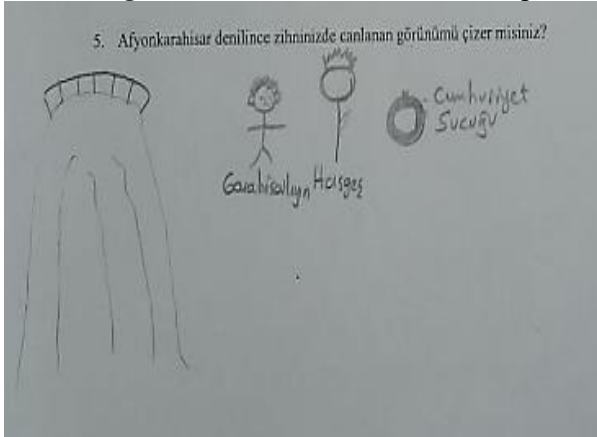
4. Conclusion, Discussion, and Suggestions

In this study, which aims to determine the social studies teacher candidates' perceptions of the urban environment towards Afyonkarahisar province, the concepts that became outstanding in the minds and drawings of the teacher candidates were urban, historical, and gastronomic factors. Providing positive value to cities where universities are located around the world and in Turkey brings out the importance of the students' thoughts and comments about the city as well as with the concepts of satisfaction and happiness of

university students from it (İri, 2020). City images are formed with university campuses established in cities that are recognized in different ways by the inhabitants and common settlements where people with different goals live together (Aliağaoğlu & Uzun, 2017). Most particularly, universities and university students are the drivers of growth in economic, social, and cultural fields for developing cities that do not have metropolitan status. Students are tourism ambassadors that they are proud of the city in which the universities they study are located, and that they will promote positively or negatively in different regions in the future. There are not many scientific studies in Turkey on the expectations of university students from cities alongside on how well the city can address students' expectations and satisfaction. These are no longer limited to education quality, campus area, academics, and university staff, but also including the city and region where universities are located, the residents, or service providers for students in the city. Thereby, those who live in the university city and region, service providers for students or those who do business should also attach importance to or concentrate on the students' happiness and satisfaction as much as the value and importance that universities place on them (İri, 2020).

The teacher candidates characterized the cities they want to live in with that there should be no transportation problem, it must be a developed, a quiet/calm city, life should be quality and affordable, easy access to everything, there should be places to visit and green areas, it should have historical and cultural beauties, a sea, a temperate climate, and tolerant/polite/respectful/helpful people. In the literature, some similar results with this research were acquired in studies in which urban environmental perceptions were determined regarding different cities. Ünal, İlter and Yılar (2013) deduced in their study on city perceptions of university students residing in rural areas that students aspire to study in a university city where human relations are warm, has a good climate, a variety of social activities, a developed transportation network and a seaside, in other words, natural possibilities. As demonstrated by Eygü and Karaman (2013), designing the city to meet the needs, wishes or demands of the students about environment, infrastructure and superstructure, security, transportation activities, the quality of life in the city, social, cultural, and sportive facilities and the individual characteristics of the student are among the multidimensional student happiness and satisfaction factors for the city.

In Afyonkarahisar definitions of the teacher candidates, while the concepts of undeveloped, small, filthy, and boring were included as negative attributes, the concepts of quiet/calm, livable, at the junction point in terms of transportation to other cities, not too expensive and ideal for students were included as positive ones. The fact that some teacher candidates illustrated Afyonkarahisar with positive and some with negative attributes coincides with the results of Hagerty (1999) which is livability depends on meeting people's expectations and the degree of their satisfaction with it. Cities that are an important part of the man-made geographical appearance are perceived differently by the people living in them. It would be imprecise to refer to a single city perception since cities are settlements where people with different purposes live together (Aliağaoğlu & Uzun, 2017). A parallel conclusion was demonstrated in the study

conducted by Köksal and Sarı (2014) aiming at measuring the city image of Burdur through local people and university students that while the city is perceived negatively by students, local people are more positive about it. In the research by Türkan (2017) on the factors of urban identity regarding the city of Çankırı in the minds of students, the statement of undeveloped has been one of the frequently used terms, as in this study. Aliağaoğlu ve Uzun (2017) designated in their study examining the city image of Balıkesir in the minds of graduate students that Balıkesir has a positive image regarding geographical location and intercity transportation. In this study, the location of Afyonkarahisar as being at the junction point in terms of transportation to other cities have been frequently repeated among the positive opinions of the teacher candidates as well. Sağdıç (2014) identified in his research on Istanbul images of university students that they perceive the most fundamental problems of Istanbul as traffic jams, crowded population, environmental pollution, and unplanned urbanization. On the other hand, problems related to big cities were not perceived through highlighting the characteristics of Afyonkarahisar such as quiet, calm, and livable.

The teacher candidates who define Afyonkarahisar as a city with a harsh climate, rude people and limited social activities stated that the city has historical value, gastronomic flavors such as Turkish delight-soujouk-cream and thermal tourism facilities. Some teacher candidates portrayed Afyonkarahisar with both positive and negative characteristics. Özdemir and Karaca (2009) also extrapolated a similar conclusion with the teacher candidates' definitions of Afyonkarahisar. In the study conducted with people who are not from Afyonkarahisar and do not live in Afyonkarahisar for the measurement of city brand and brand image, it has been conceded that Afyonkarahisar people are conservative, the city is clean, quiet, underdeveloped, and cheap; cream-soujouk-Turkish delight, thermal facilities, potatoes, castle, marble, and the products of the War of Independence are identified with the city's name. The images and identity perceptions that individuals have about the cities they live or want to live in constitute their acceptance of a livable city. Therefore, cities may have an advantage in the matter of being more livable places or for individuals living in them are happier ones (Aktan & Çakmak, 2020). As a result of current university students' level of satisfaction or happiness with the city; giving a positive or negative message to their close and distant circles about the city where the university is located help to improve the image of cities and marketing by word of mouth can be influential on the city preferences of new/other students (Erdoğan & Bulut, 2015). To Görkemli, Tekin and Baypınar (2013), people's own experiences about the city are more tangible and perdurable than the information obtained by any means. Moreover, people can influence other people as well through sharing these experiences (Demirel, 2014).

The teacher candidates utilized the words that evoke Afyonkarahisar in the gastronomic flavors such as soujouk-cream-Turkish delight, in the urban symbols like castle-marble, the concepts related to history and value of the city and the university. While some teacher candidates defined the city with the concepts of cold weather, rude people, traffic problems, pollution, difficulty, and stress, some of them portrayed the city

with the concepts such as friendship, family, home, paradise, and homeland. In the studies carried out on different cities, some similar results are found with the words that are associated with the city in the literature. In the research conducted by Bakan and Kaya (2010) for the purpose of evaluating the image of Konya province, Mowlana and his religion were identified as the first things that spring to mind when Konya is mentioned. As a result of the inquiry administered by Karadağ and Turut (2013) to assess the Izmir urban perceptions of the students studying at Ege University, İzmir was brought together with the concepts of sea, freedom, gevrek (Turkish bagel), Clock Tower, ferry and Kordon (a street in Izmir).

The teacher candidates asserted its positive aspects: it is comfortable in terms of transportation, being a small and quiet city, having historical value, delicious food, easy and affordable life, available thermal resources, and people with humanitarian characteristics. They principally accentuated the historical and cultural value of Afyonkarahisar, its rich food culture and gastronomic flavors. After Hatay and Gaziantep the provinces in Turkey, Afyonkarahisar was included in the UNESCO "Creative Cities Network Program" in 2019 from the gastronomy theme (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2019). The inclusion of a city in any theme in the program both provides the relevant city with credibility and global recognition and creates an important driving force in the branding of the city. (Taştan and Iflazoğlu, 2018). As the candidate teacher laid stress on it; Afyonkarahisar has a very rich structure on the subject of cultural values due to its location. The city has an important potential in respect of both tangible cultural heritage elements and intangible cultural heritage elements. Afyonkarahisar Castle, The Great Mosque, Mowlana (Tomb) Mosque, Gedik Ahmet Pasha Mosque and Complex, Bedesten (covered Turkish bazaar), historical Afyonkarahisar houses in the city can be evaluated relating to traditional crafts and cultural tourism together with traditional handicrafts such as felt-making, blacksmithing, copper smithing, hand-printed head scarf selling, harness and horse carriage (Koca, Yazıcı & Ekiz, 2018). In addition to the coastal tourism aimed in the Tourism Strategy of Turkey (2023), the tangible and intangible cultural heritage elements of the city of Afyonkarahisar, its inclusion in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the theme of gastronomy, and thermal tourism facilities can be shown as an example of the development of alternative tourism types and tourism diversification.

The teacher candidates made a point of its negative aspects that its air is polluted, it is an undeveloped city, there is traffic jam, it is filthy, there is nowhere to visit and insufficient socio-cultural activity areas, it is cold, the municipal services are inadequate, people are rude and it is a place that needs to be improved in terms of humanity. A parallel result was found in the study of Akdoğan and Akkuş Kargın (2010). In consequence of the study carried out by Akdoğan and Akkuş Kargın (2010) to identify the image of Sivas in the eyes of city dwellers; Sivas was characterised as not completing its industrial and commercial development, a city with low education level, inadequate accommodation, food and beverage, sports facilities, entertainment venues, and cultural-artistic activities. Karadağ and Yücel (2019), in their study named "Student Friendly

University Cities", it was remarked that Eskişehir, Antalya and Aydın are among the university student cities of Turkey; in only 27 provinces of Turkey, the students feel satisfied with the city where universities are located; the students of 36 cities revealed a feeling of dissatisfaction; in the 48 cities where the satisfaction level is low, it was stated that there was a very negative reaction from the students about having a sensitivity about student satisfaction. Accordingly, the most striking finding of the research is that there is a significant increase in the number of provinces that make students feel dissatisfied with the city compared to the previous year. (Karadağ & Yücel, 2019). As indicated in the study conducted in Ordu by Yeşil and Yüksel (2016), as the level of education decreases, the level of satisfaction with the city increases.

Considering the analysis of the teacher candidates' drawings to the question *"Can you draw the mental images when Afyonkarahisar is mentioned?"*, it was concluded that the historical and gastronomic factors of Afyonkarahisar were predominantly formed in the mind. The elements that the teacher candidates employed most in their drawings were castle, old Afyon houses, soujouk, poppy, Turkish delight, dormitory-school road, Park Afyon shopping mall, Akarçay River, mountains, the crossroad with the elephant, and the dogs and sick and careless street animals. The least included factor in the drawings was the personal ones. The teacher candidates also drew the situations they complained about as well as the positive symbols of the city. Traffic problems, minibuses, roads without pavements, dogs and neglected street animals were reflected in the drawings as complaints. In a study carried out by Gelibolu, Kanıbir, Saydan, Tutar and Yavuz (2014), the factors such as snow and white color, nature and green were underlined as the visual identity of Kars and as the historical factors, intangible cultural heritage items, red and martyrdom, animal husbandry and Kars's cheese were emphasized. In the research of Varnacı Uzun (2018), cultural factors such as Sheyh Hamid-i Vali (famously known as Somuncu Baba), Zinciriye Madrasa, and geographical factors such as Hasan Mountain and Ihlara Valley were applied in the perception of Aksaray drawing of the teacher candidates.

In accordance with the findings of the study, the following recommendations may be a guide for future research.

- Some courses such as Community Service Practices and Social Project Development can be taught to enable the teacher candidates to get to know the city and the culture of the city where they receive their university education.
- Participation in activities aimed at promoting intangible cultural heritage items alongside tangible cultural heritage items such as Afyonkarahisar Castle, historical Afyonkarahisar houses associated with Afyonkarahisar can be ensured.
- For university students to have more positive perceptions of the urban environment, various socio-cultural activities that will enable them to spend a longer and more positive time in the city can be designed.
- Considering the teacher candidates' emphasis on the rich food culture of Afyonkarahisar, gastronomic flavors of the city can be used in the promotion of

the city, moreover the food and beverage businesses can be encouraged to enrich their menus endemically.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interests.

About the Author

Ceren Utkugün was born in 1983 in Afyonkarahisar, Turkey. She completed her primary, secondary and high school education in Afyonkarahisar. She completed his undergraduate education in the Department of History of Afyon Kocatepe University, his master's degree in the Department of Turkish and Social Sciences Education at the Institute of Social Sciences of Afyon Kocatepe University, and his doctorate in the Department of Republic History at the Institute of Social Sciences of Afyon Kocatepe University. In 2004, she started to work as a research assistant in Afyon Kocatepe University Faculty of Education, Department of Turkish and Social Sciences Education, in 2019, she was appointed as a doctor lecturer and still continues to work. Her field of study is social studies teaching, history teaching, values education and teacher training.

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