

Analysis of candidate teachers' opinions of history course books printed after 2009

Ali Efdal Ozkul¹ · Huseyin Tufan² · Mete Ozsezer²

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Abstract The purpose of the study is to reveal the opinions of candidate history teachers studying at a private university on the course books on the History of Cyprus and to develop new recommendations. In the study, document analysis was conducted and a scanning model based on the qualitative research technique was used. The study group of the study consisted of 18 senior candidate history teachers in the 2016–2017 academic year. The data collection tool of the study was the report files of the candidate history teachers, which included the teaching on the course book, measuring-evaluation, language-narration, preparation works, visual and physical design. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the History of Cyprus course books suffer from significant deficiencies in terms of teaching, measuring and evaluation, language and narration, and visual and physical structure. Based on the recommendations of the candidate teachers, it was concluded that the history course books should be improved based on the opinions of academicians who specialise in the field of history as well as history teachers in order to ensure success in history teaching and to transfer knowledge to future generations.

Keywords Quality in education · Course books · Higher education

✉ Ali Efdal Ozkul
aliefdal.ozkul@neu.edu.tr

Huseyin Tufan
huseyin.tufan@neu.edu.tr

Mete Ozsezer
mete.ozsezer@neu.edu.tr

¹ Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Science, Near East University, North Cyprus, Mersin 10, Turkey

² History Education, Ataturk Faculty of Education, Near East University, North Cyprus, Mersin 10, Turkey

1 Introduction

The concept of education has a critical place in the development of societies and the ability to follow innovations required by the changing times. Education is a process which prepares individuals for cultural and social life and aims to equip them with knowledge which is focused on a certain period of time and with which the individual will be able adapt to the spirit of that time (Celep 2007). According to Çetinkaya, education is a science that gives students direction and enables them to improve (Çelikkaya 2006). According to Ozkul et al. (2017), education is firstly concerned with sustaining of the task and functions of human life; then, it becomes the transfer of knowledge to the next generations (Ozkul et al. 2017). The most important part and complementary element of education and teaching at educational institutions is, without doubt, books. Therefore, course books have assumed important roles from several perspectives. Course books usually consist of texts that directly include or affect teachers and students with the intention of being used for supporting a course topic or a curriculum in general, which are written by teachers for the students (Ozbaran 2005). The target group for course books is students; therefore, it is important that they are suitable for the age level of the student and can meet their pedagogical expectations (Kabapinar 2005). In other words, course books have a complementary function, ensuring that the teacher can deliver lessons effectively (Kiliç 2005). Preparing course books with accurate knowledge and enriching them with several activities is also essential so that students are actively integrated into the class (Ozkul and Ulvay 2017).

History course books are different from other course books in terms of social engineering. After nation states were founded in the 19th century, countries began to regularly use their history course books in their own curricula. The most important reason for this attitude was the general function of history in the classroom. After the nation states were founded around the world, the concept of history began to be perceived as a course through which national pride and values could be imposed on students (Safran 2009). As the information in history course books used in schools can easily be accepted into the long-term memory, governments usually try to teach their own version of the truth to new generations and thus aim to preventing any questioning of their legitimacy. This means that history course books are both a political memory element and a memory bank as they reflect the political preferences and values of the society (Demircioglu 2013). According to Kabapinar (1992a), history tells not one thing, but many. He stated that the truth of history is discussed until a new truth is reached. In this process, the information in history course books is accepted as the absolute truth (Kabapinar 1992a). Kabapinar states that this situation prevents individuals from thinking and history course books present their knowledge as dogmas, which have no alternatives. Resultantly, critical thinking skills are not taught in schools, where rote learning is applied in a patronizing manner and the aim is to make an absolute truth seem acceptable (Kabapinar 1992b). In this manner, governments follow education policies which aim to produce one type of citizen. When political power changes, the thinking systems and emotions of such education policies also change (Kabapinar 1992c). Additionally, political governments in the country believe that the selection of topics in history course books is a natural reflection of their value judgments (Ozbaran 2005).

This power of history course books is even more evident in island nations such as Cyprus where two communities co-exist. The value judgements and priorities of the two communities living on the island diverge in many respects. Thus, it is almost impossible to produce a history course books that covers both communities. Several problems and

conflicts have been experienced in Cyprus between 1950 and 1974, which were witnessed by the entire world. In the mentioned period, collective homicides, migrations, rapes, losses, unemployment, hunger and poverty were experienced at the highest level (Güneyli 2013; Charis et al. 2017). All these developments profoundly influenced the societies living on the island. The Turkish Cypriot community was considerably affected by these tragic problems. As a result of these developments, the Turkish Cypriots decided to use the power of course books in order to raise awareness within their community. Consequently, the Turkish Cypriot history course books began to be used at Turkish schools with the purpose of raising awareness in the society in 1971. The book was used subsequently used in the schools without making any changes to its format until 1995, during which time the book was used without interruption, with several additions. In 1995, alterations were made and a small scale simplification was implemented in terms of the language used in the History of Cyprus book (Ozsezer 2016).

However, after only 1 year, the newly prepared book was abandoned and in 1996 the format and content of the book from 1971 was reintroduced. The mentioned books were used without any change or interruption until 2004. Additionally, the relevant book was used in the 6th, 7th and 8th grades of the elementary schools. Thus, the book was used in the mentioned grades for 3 years. The book that was introduced into the system in 1995 for a short period also functioned with the same rationale. In 2004, another change was made to the books used in the schools under the Ministry of National Education. The books changed in 2004 had significant differences compared to the previous books. Unlike the previous books, a separate book was printed for every grade level and the content of the books was enriched with visual materials. Thus, a different book was printed for every grade at secondary and high school level, as a result of which, seven different History of Cyprus books were prepared. The 9th grade course book had the title Turkish Cypriot History. Additionally, the books printed in 2004 were published based on new pedagogical methods, which separated them from books printed in previous years in several aspects (Papadakis 2008). In 2009, another change was made to the Cypriot History books that had been published in 2004. Moreover, although the books printed in 2009 appeared to be a continuation of the books published in 2004 in terms of the format with their colourful content and visual materials, there are major differences in terms of the content and discourse (Ozsezer 2016). The History of Cyprus course books printed in 2009 were prepared as different books, as a continuation of each other, for secondary and high schools. In 2016, an initiative was launched to make changes in the course books used in Cyprus. In the context of this change, amendment of the History of Cyprus course books which were used in the 6th, 7th and 8th grades was envisaged. At the time of writing this paper, the project has not been completed; thus, these books have not been included in the analysis. Therefore, when the periods of change of the history course books at the schools under Ministry of National Education are examined, it is seen that their commonality is the governmental changes that were witnessed in the country.

2 Method

2.1 Research model

The study employs a document analysis, which is a qualitative research data collection method. Document analysis involves skimming, reading and interpretation. This iterative process combines elements of content analysis and thematic analysis (Glenn 2009).

2.2 Study group

The study group of the study consisted of 18 senior candidate teachers who were at fourth grade, studying in the 2016–2017 academic year at the history teaching department of a private university. The average age of these candidates is 20–25, 10 are males and 8 are females.

2.3 Data collection

Data collection tool of the study were the book review reports of the candidates of history teachers. The open-ended questions about the mentioned book were applied to the teachers. These reports reflect their subjective ideas and include measurement-evaluation, preparation studies, language-expression, visual and physical design. These reports were given to prospective teachers from the beginning till the end of the academic year of 2016–2017 and they were collected by the end of the semester.

2.4 Data analysis

Content analysis was used in order to obtain the data collected in the study. This type of analysis includes taking into consideration the working group and the data collection method of the study, bringing them together within certain concepts and themes which resemble each other, and organizing and interpreting them in a manner that the reader can understand (Yildirim and Simsek 2016).

3 Results

3.1 Lecturing in the History of Cyprus course books

Firstly, it is evident that 1 h of the History of Cyprus class at the secondary school level and 2 h a week of History of Cyprus classes in the 9th and 10th grades is not sufficient for the students on the island to learn about their past. Additionally, course books contain 100 pages on average and the books have an extremely detailed structure in terms of lecturing content; resultantly, transferring all the knowledge in the History of Cyprus course books into the allocated class hours during the academic year has proved to be a challenge.

Although the curriculum of the books follows a chronological order, after the 8th grade history course books, topics are repeated in the 9th and 10th grade history course books. The same information is given in the 6th, 7th and 8th grade books as well as the 9th and 10th grade books.

To be more precise, the number of pages in the 6th grade History of Cyprus course books is 74. An examination of chapters shows that the 1st chapter titled “The Names and General Geographical Features of the Island of Cyprus” has 10 pages, the 2nd chapter titled “The Island of Cyprus in Prehistoric Ages” has 14 pages, the 3rd chapter on “First Age in Cyprus” consists of 18 pages, and the 4th chapter titled “Cyprus in the Middle Ages” has 15 pages. The chapter with the least number of pages is the 1st chapter with the title “The Names and General Geographical Features of the Island of Cyprus” with only 10 pages, whereas the chapter with the most number of pages is the 3rd chapter with the title “First Age in Cyprus” with a total of 18 pages (C1, C2, C3).

The total number of pages in the 7th grade History of Cyprus course book is 83. An examination of the chapters shows that the 1st chapter "Conquest of Cyprus by Turks" consists of 19 pages, the 2nd chapter titled "Our Arrival in Cyprus" consists of 6 pages, the 3rd chapter titled "Administrative Structure in Cyprus in the Ottoman Era" consists of 8 pages, the 4th chapter titled "Social and Economic Life in Cyprus in the Ottoman Era" has 12 pages, and the 5th chapter titled "Our Artefacts in Cyprus" has 21 pages. The chapter with the least number of pages is the 2nd chapter with the title "Our Arrival in Cyprus" with 6 pages, whereas the chapter with the most number of pages is the 5th chapter with the title "Our Artefacts in Cyprus" with 21 pages (C4, C5, C6).

The total number of pages in the 8th grade History of Cyprus course books is 98. An examination of the chapters shows that the 1st chapter on the "British Era in Cyprus" has 9 pages, the 2nd chapter on the "First World War and Cyprus" has 13 pages, the 3rd chapter on "The Issue of Cyprus" has 13 pages, the 4th chapter on the "Republic of Cyprus" has 7 pages, the 5th chapter on "Developments from the Foundation of the Republic to 21 December 1961" has 7 pages, the 6th chapter titled "Developments from the Bloody Christmas on 21 December 1963 to the Peace Operation" has 23 pages, the 7th chapter on the "Coups against Makarios and Operation Happy Peace" has 9 pages, the 8th chapter on the "Political Situation of Turkish Cypriots after the Peace Operation" has 9 pages. The chapters with the least number of pages in the book are the 4th chapter on the "Republic of Cyprus" and the 5th chapter on the "Developments from the foundation of the Republic to 21 December 1961" with 7 pages, whereas the chapter with the least number of pages is the 6th chapter titled "Developments from the Bloody Christmas on 21 December 1963 to the Peace Operation", with a total of 23 pages (C7, C8, C9, C10).

The total number of pages in the 9th grade History of Cyprus course book is 115. An examination of the chapters shows that the 1st chapter titled "Cyprus in the First and Middle Ages" has 7 pages, the 2nd chapter on "Conquest of Cyprus by the Ottoman State" has 21 pages, the 3rd chapter on "Cyprus under Ottoman Administration" has 35 pages, the 4th chapter on the "British Colonial Era in Cyprus" has 35 pages, while the 5th chapter on "The Life of Dr. Fazıl Küçük and his Importance and Place in our National Struggle" has 7 pages. The chapter with the least number of pages in the book is the 5th chapter titled "The Life of Dr. Fazıl Küçük and his Importance and Place in our National Struggle" with 7 pages, whereas the chapters with the most number of pages are the 3rd chapter titled "Cyprus under Ottoman Administration" and the 4th chapter titled "British Colonial Era in Cyprus", which both have 35 pages (C11, C12, C13, C14).

The number of pages in the 10th grade History of Cyprus course book is 104. An examination of the chapters shows that the 1st chapter on the "Foundation of the Republic of Cyprus" has 16 pages, the 2nd chapter on "The Process from the Foundation of Republic of Cyprus to December 1963" has 9 pages, which covers the activities of the Greeks with the purpose of subverting the Republic of Cyprus, the 3rd chapter on "The Resistance of Turkish Cypriots and Political Developments (1963–1967)" has 15 pages, the 4th chapter on the "Political Developments between 1963 and 1974 and the Social Life of Turkish Cypriots" has 11 pages, the 5th chapter titled "1974 Peace Operation, Causes and Effects" has 19 pages, the 6th chapter titled the "Political Situation of Turkish Cypriots after the peace operation" has 5 pages, the 7th chapter titled the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" has 9 pages, and the 8th chapter on "Political, Social and Economic Developments from 1983 until Today" has 12 pages. The chapter with the least number of pages in the book is the 6th chapter titled the "political situation of Turkish Cypriots after peace operation" with 5 pages, whereas the chapter with the most number of

pages is the 5th chapter titled “1974 Peace Operation, causes and effects”, with 19 pages (C15, C16, C17, C18).

A general evaluation shows that the largest number of pages is reserved for history topics in the History of Cyprus course books. The subjects of History of Cyprus course books which begin with the foundation of the island in 6th grade course books comes until today with 10th grade course books. However, only 90 pages of the History of Cyprus course books, which consist of approximately 500 pages in total, present subjects other than the History of Cyprus. All subjects in the remaining pages are related to the History of Cyprus, either directly or indirectly. Again, some 400 pages of the History of Cyprus course books are on political history subjects, whereas around 100 pages cover social, cultural and economic history subjects. Resultantly, it is observed that the majority of subjects in the History of Cyprus course books consist of history subjects. Approximately 120 pages of the 400 pages on political history subjects cover developments after 1960, whereas the remaining pages cover the period before 1960. Around 120 pages of the political history subjects on the History of Cyprus before 1960 are about Ottoman history subjects.

It is observed that the subjects of the History of Cyprus course books usually focus on the political History of Cyprus (C3, C9, C14). In this case, it means that the aim is to transfer knowledge on the political History of Cyprus to the next generations. However, this method is not suitable for the multi-community and multi-cultural past of the island, which covers thousands of years (C5, C7). Subjects with political content in the History of Cyprus course books have to be summarised and social subjects must be given more weight. While doing this, the multiculturalism of the island should not be forgotten, as it is essential that children make analogies with their past and the society in which they live as well as their environment in order that the many events that occurred in the past can be understood. The political concepts and events presented in the books are not suitable for the age level of the children. An excessive amount of unnecessary political events and dates are detailed in the books and the children are asked to perceive and remember them (C2, C10, C16). However, by doing this, it makes it impossible for the children to comprehend what they really should learn.

In terms of the presentation of the content of the History of Cyprus course books, the lecturing method is generally used (C9, C11). However, in this method, their content does not urge children to conduct further research and the information is given directly. Although there are some question boxes and vocabulary questions in some of the chapters, the answers to these questions cannot be found in the glossary section of the book (C13). The content of the books is usually not at a level which could give a questioning perspective to the student; furthermore, teaching techniques such as role playing, drama, brainstorming, and view development, which would ensure more effective participation of students in the class, are not included. Questions and topics that could prevent the children from having to memorize information and encourage them to conduct research are not given. Additionally, another deficiency is the lack of a student workbook.

The guidance function of the books is not at sufficient level. Although there are information boxes and detailed explanations in the books for students, their distinction in the main text is not clear, which leads to problems for students in terms of separating the main text and informing text (C1, C14). Additionally, the level and stage at which lecturing would be applied as well as the method and technique are not detailed, which is not only a problem for the students, but the teachers in particular (C18). Most importantly, the History of Cyprus course books do not have auxiliary teacher guide books which are problems in terms of efficient usage and transfer of content of books.

Furthermore, the biographies of people who made contributions to the social, cultural, political and scientific history of the island as well as their contributions to the people of the island in the past are not included in the content of the History of Cyprus course books. This omission prevents the children from understanding the important people who had an impact on the island in the past. This method, which is used in course books around the world, is not used in these text books and the children are prevented from finding pride in the values created in their society and perceiving them as examples from which they can learn.

3.2 Language and wording

Although there are some misspelling and typographical errors in the books, effort has been made to use pure Turkish in the language. However, although the general subject content of the books is intense, the language is generally difficult to understand (C2, C5, C7, C8, C11, C12, C17) and exceeds the preparedness level of the students. For example, in the 6th and 7th grade books, while emphasising the situation of the island, the words “geostrategic” and “geopolitical” are almost impossible to comprehend for students in the 11–12 age category. The concepts like “legislative”, “executive”, and “parliament” in the sentences in the 8th grade history books are above the political knowledge level of students in this age range and thus, it is believed that they will be difficult to comprehend (when choosing the content of lecturing, the preparedness level of students must be taken into consideration). Additionally, some of these words are not included in the glossary section at the end of the books.

Important words and sections in the books are emphasised in bold and “let us know these” or “let us research these” sections are included, and, in some sections, unknown words are explained (C6, C10, C18). Furthermore, the important points in the text are written in dark colours (C6). However, the use of such techniques is not implemented effectively and does not draw the attention of the students to the relevant subject matter.

3.3 Visual and physical structure

The History of Cyprus course books are coloured and printed on glossy paper. This aspect is attractive for the students in terms of the quality of the books. However, it is clear that the eye-straining effect of the colours used in the books is not taken into consideration. The cover designs of books are at an adequate level. Each book uses a different colour for its cover. In terms of the figures on the cover, the course books for the 6th, 7th and 8th grades have the same figures, whereas there are some changes in 9th and 10th grade course books. On the covers of the 6th, 7th and 8th grade course books, there is a portrait of Atatürk on the top right corner whose face is turned to the left, while in the left bottom, there is a picture of Selim II, the Ottoman Sultan who conquered the island in 1571. Immediately above this image, there is a sailing ship portrait and below that, there is a section of the Mediterranean map which includes the map of Turkey and Cyprus. In the Anatolian section of this map, there is a figure with an Ottoman Sultan riding a horse, while in the lower part of the island of Cyprus, there is another figure with ships whose owners cannot be identified (C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10). In the upper right section of the cover of the 9th grade course books, there is a portrait of Atatürk looking leftwards, while on the opposite side to the portrait there is a coat of arms of the Ottoman state, and below that, there is a picture of a mosque and a portrait of Selim II (C11, C12, C13, C14). On the cover of the 10th grade course books, there is an Atatürk portrait looking leftwards in upper right

section as well as a picture including images from the history of the Turkish Cypriot national struggle, images of 1974 operation and the TRNC flag drawn on the left edge of the Pentadaktylos Mountain (C15, C16, C17, C18). Although the cover pictures of the books are suitable for the subject contents, they have some deficiencies. Firstly, a drawing from the first ages, a historical artefact built in the middle ages or the Ottoman era, a picture from the British era or a picture from Cypriot social life could be located on the cover of the History of Cyprus course books. Nevertheless, cover structures that are related to the content of the books is essential in that they summarise the subjects that the children can find in the books before they actually open them.

Using pictures, figures, graphs and photographs in the books increases the permanence of learning (C13). However, some pictures, figures, graphs and photographs in the books are located at the end of pages, which reduces visual perception. Pictures, figures, graphs and photographs are not assigned numbers in the book, which is an insufficiency in terms of the ease of comprehension. Additionally, the fact that several visuals used do not portray the conditions of the era and that they are used merely to ensure there is visual material makes reaching the learning objectives more difficult.

The pictures, figures, graphs and photographs in the majority of the chapters of the books are accompanied with explanations which ensures that students establish a connection between the picture and the subject. However, some of the pictures, figures, graphs and photographs are added to the books without any explanation, which is a deficiency in terms of content integrity. However, it is observed that several visual materials used in the books have problems in visual terms, and that some pictures have low resolution (C3, C4, C6, C8, C10, C14, C18). As these pictures create problems with establish a connection with the basic subject that the chapter intends to teach, it is observed that pictures and photographs with high resolution should be used. Sections for taking notes are included at the end of chapters so that students can transfer their information, which is an important detail in terms of students recording their knowledge during class time or studying. Additionally, the upper left sections of the book pages are usually blank which demonstrates that the upper left corners, which can be effective in terms of perception, are not used effectively.

It is believed that the failure to provide additional teaching packages with the History of Cyprus course books such as CDs, which could make history teaching more effective and interactive, which is a deficiency in this context (C1, C4, C9, C11, C13, C14, C17, C18).

The History of Cyprus course books lack trip and observation activities, which can improve the learning levels of the students (C1, C3, C6, C7, C9, C12, C14, C17, C18). The island of Cyprus has been ruled by numerous civilisations, which means that it is rich in terms of history, particularly in the architectural sense. Trips and observation activities should be added to the History of Cyprus course books so that students can establish a connection with their past and can explore the richness of the environment.

3.4 Preparation works

In the introduction sections of the History of Cyprus course books, preparation questions are asked under the heading “preparation works”. These questions ensure that the teacher saves time and energy when introducing the subject (C1, C2, C3, C4, C6, C8, C9, C11, C13, C16, C18). Additionally, the “let us research” sections in the chapters of the History of Cyprus course books enable the students to prepare effectively for the subject content that is contained within the chapter. However, if the preparatory questions were designed in a more interrogative manner that is distinct from rote learning, this will reinforce the

process of learning. The usage of questions that urge students to research and think is essential in terms of learning objectives. Furthermore, the fact that preparatory questions asked at the beginning of the chapters are in the style of traditional questions is a deficiency in terms of question diversity (C17).

3.5 Measuring and evaluation

Although there are questions in the chapters of the History of Cyprus course books which measure knowledge, the basic measuring-evaluation questions are found at the end of chapters. The measuring-evaluation questions at the end of chapters are traditional, fill-in-the-blanks, matching and multiple choice questions in 6th, 7th and 8th grade course books (C3, C6, C7, C10), whereas they are usually in the form of traditional questions in the 9th and 10th grade course books (C11, C12, C14, C16, C17, C18). The fact that questions at the end of chapters are given in different types means that they will be more successful in terms of measuring the level of knowledge of the student; thus, the diversity applied at the secondary school level also has to be applied at the high school level. Additionally, it is observed that measuring-evaluation questions asked at the end of the History of Cyprus course books do not cover the entire chapter, but only certain parts of it. In order to perform a fair measuring-evaluation, the subject coverage of the unit should be diversified and questions should cover the entire chapter. However, it is also observed that the diversity of questions in the History of Cyprus course books is not sufficient to develop the students' researching abilities. Some of the questions asked urge people to conduct analysis and research, whereas the majority of questions do not encourage questioning. Even the answers to the traditional-style questions asked in the books are based on memorized information (C2, C4, C5, C8, C9, C13, C17). The purpose of the evaluation questions used in the books should be to direct the children to research and think in several areas when evaluating their learning from the chapter (C1, C13). If the evaluation section is not prepared carefully and consists of questions based on memorizing, the majority of information that the students learn will not be permanently stored in their memories. Furthermore, the questions asked in the books are not sufficient qualified to prepare the students for university or higher levels of education. If activity sections were added to these sections, it could be ensured that children are more engaged and interested in the subject to be learned.

4 Discussion and conclusion

Seeking the ideas and opinions of candidate teachers will have a positive impact on the course books that will be used in future years. When the interpretations, criticisms and suggestions in the reports of candidate teachers concerning the History of Cyprus course books are evaluated, in general, it can be seen that candidate teachers believe that the 1 h a week at secondary school level and 2 h a week in the 9th and 10th grades allocated to the History of Cyprus class during the academic year is not sufficient for students on the island to learn about their past. Additionally, taking into consideration that the books consist of 100 pages on average and they are extremely detailed in terms teaching, they believe that transferring all knowledge in the History of Cyprus course books in such a limited number class hours during the academic year is not possible.

The candidate teachers stated that although the History of Cyprus course books follow a chronological order, after the 8th grade, the course books for the 9th and 10th grades repeat themselves in terms of course content and the same information given in 6th, 7th and 8th grades is given in the 9th and 10th grades. Furthermore, they stated that the majority of pages in the History of Cyprus course books are reserved for Turkish history and only approximately 90 pages out of the total of 500 pages books are reserved for subjects other than Turkish history. All subjects in the remaining pages are directly or indirectly related to Cypriot Turkish history and, while 400 pages of the History of Cyprus course books cover political history topics, only 100 pages deal with social and economic history topics. The candidate teachers stated that out of the 400 pages on the political history subjects, some 120 pages cover the events after 1960, whereas the remaining pages cover the events before 1960 and 120 pages on the Turkish Cypriot history subjects before 1960 are reserved for Ottoman history subjects. Additionally, they also argued that the subjects of the History of Cyprus course books are usually related to the political-history of Turkish Cypriots and that the political content of History of Cyprus course books should be summarised and more weight should be given to social subjects, which will ensure that the multicultural characteristics of the island will not be forgotten. According to Latif (2017), Turkish history and Ottoman history constitute main areas of the Cyprus History lecture books printed in 2009.

The candidate teachers claimed that in terms of the presentation of the content of History of Cyprus course books in general, the content in the books does not fully encourage the students to conduct research and that information is given directly. In some chapter sections, there are question boxes or vocabulary questions inserted; however, the answers to these questions are generally not found in the glossary section. Furthermore, they emphasised that the content of books is not suitable for encouraging the students to have a questioning perspective and that teaching techniques such as role playing, drama, brainstorming, and viewpoint development, which would ensure increased participation of students in the classes, were not added.

The candidate teachers asserted that the guidance function of the books is not at a sufficient level and the lack of auxiliary teacher guide books for the History of Cyprus course books has led to a deficiency in the efficient usage and transfer of the books. In addition, they emphasised that, despite minor wording and typographical mistakes in terms of language and expression, effort has been made to old Turkish in words but as the general content of the books is relatively intense, the language of the books is usually hard to understand and above the preparedness level of the students.

The candidate teachers stated that the visual and physical structure of the History of Cyprus course books is high-quality and coloured, and that the effective use of pictures, figures, graphs and photographs increased the permanence of learning. At this point, it is necessary to enrich the book through adding more images. Similarly, Kasot and Ozsezer stated that it would be beneficial to add visual materials in Cyprus History course books printed in 2009 (Kasot and Ozsezer 2017). Ozkul and Ulvay also stressed on the inadequacy of images in these books (Ozkul and Ulvay 2017).

However, they complained that using some pictures, figures, graphs and photographs at the end of pages led to a decrease in visual perception and the failure to use a numbering system in the book for the pictures, figures, graphs and photographs resulted challenges in terms of ease of understanding. The candidate teachers stated that the failure to provide additional teaching packages such as CDs with the History of Cyprus course books, which could make history education more effective and interactive, created a deficiency in terms of teaching.

The candidate teachers also stated that trip and observation activities, which could increase the learning level of the students, were missing in the History of Cyprus course books and it is necessary to incorporate such activities so that students can establish a connection with their past and explore its richness.

The candidate teachers observed that the diversity of questions in the History of Cyprus course books did not have any developmental or research qualities. They emphasised that only a limited number of the questions asked were aimed to direct the students towards examination and research, while most of them did not encourage researching, and that even the answers to the traditional questions asked in the books were based on memorized knowledge; furthermore, the questions asked in the books were not able to prepare students for university or examinations in higher education institutions.

5 Recommendations

The candidate teachers concluded that the history course books should be improved based on the opinions of academician experts in the field of history, history teachers and students in order to ensure success and the transfer of historical knowledge to future generation and that these books should not be changed each time the political power changes hands. Otherwise, generations will be raised that are discouraged from learning about their history and the socio-cultural structure of their environment.

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