

Faculty of Sports Sciences Students' Opinions on the Community Service Practice Course

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Abstract: *Educational institutions play a major role in meeting social needs and expectations. Particularly, the Community Service Practices (CSP) course within universities offers students the opportunity to engage in social activities with the community, to gain awareness of social responsibility, and to get to know the community from different perspectives. For this reason, this research was carried out to determine the opinions of the Faculty of Sport Sciences students who took the 'Community Service Practices' course before taking it and their gains after the course. A total of 53 students who were studying at Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University Faculty of Sports Sciences and taking Community Service Practices course participated in the research. The research was applied in two parts as before and after the application. Before the application, the students were asked about their expectations about the CPS course in the form of open-ended questions and their answers were requested in writing. At the end of the application process, 14 people were determined to participate in the interview voluntarily, and focus group interviews were held with semi-structured questions. The questions directed to the students were recorded using the note-taking technique. The data obtained from the students' opinions were coded independently by two researchers by making descriptive and content analysis. As a result of the research, it is observed that the students show positive progress in terms of social awareness, social responsibility, communication, professional experience and cooperation with the CPS course in the university programs.*

Keywords: *Community service practices course, opinion, education.*

How to cite: Bulut, D. & Çelen, A. (2023). Faculty of Sports Sciences Students' Opinions on the Community Service Practice Course. *Revista Românească pentru Educație Multidimensională*, 15(3), 312-330. <https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/15.3/768>

1. Introduction

Man is an entity that has to adapt to the society he lives in and carries the necessary responsibilities. The ability of people with a sense of responsibility to act together, to be sensitive towards society and to adopt the problems of the society are the basic elements that ensure the continuity of societies. Societies expect individuals not only to produce goods or services, but also to contribute to their social, cultural, educational, political and sportive development to deal with problems and to come up with solutions (Yılmaz, 2011). For this reason, the associations, websites, non-governmental organizations and service-producing institutions' interest on social responsibility is increasing day by day.

Schools and universities, which are of great importance among service-producing institutions, play an effective role in meeting social needs and expectations (Tülüce, 2014). Educational institutions in primary and secondary education are to regulate the procedures and principles of social activities to be held in public, private, formal and lifelong learning institutions of all types and levels within the framework of the "Ministry of National Education Educational Institutions Social Activities Regulation" published by the Ministry of National Education in 2009. Socially responsible universities rely on the development and effective capacities of young people (Bringle & Steinberg, 2010) and undertake the responsibility of integrating their teachers with the society. For this reason, YÖK decided to introduce a new course called "Community Service Practices (CSP)" within the framework of "Learning by Serving" within the scope of renewing the curriculum in 2006 (Kocadere & Serafoğlu, 2013).

CSP, which is defined as a teaching method that combines the needs of society with curriculum-based education and is linked to academic content and standards (Uğurlu & Kırıl, 2011). It offers pre-service teachers the opportunity to gain experience in the society in line with their education, and to apply the theoretical knowledge, observation, skills and service teaching they receive in the classroom. (Toledano & Lapinid, 2010). In addition, while it provides the student with the opportunity to test their knowledge in a real-life environment (Kesten, 2012), it also offers the opportunity to practice it by leaving the traditional classroom atmosphere (George et al., 2017).

Studies conducted in line with the scope of CSP indicate that this course, which is included in the university curriculum, has many benefits. With the university students taking the CSP, following benefits were observed:

To have the opportunity to get to know the society in various aspects when they graduate, to be able to solve the problems caused by social characteristics more easily in the institution that it will serve (Özdemir, 2015), to provide the opportunity to combine classroom learning with real life (Toledano & Lapinid, 2010), academic learning, individual skill acquisition, the opportunity to apply the awareness of taking responsibility in the society (Bassı, 2011), conceptual development, promoting academic achievement, recognizing post-education employment opportunities, opportunity to have social awareness, social responsibility, positive development, skills, behavior, values, self-esteem, self-awareness and self-respect (Shek & Chan, 2013), being predictive to students in their career planning (Watson et al., 2002).

CSP course, which is emphasized in every unit of universities, is applied with the same meticulousness in Physical Education and Sports Schools (PESS) and Sports Sciences Faculties. The aim of the CSP course, which has been included in PESS education programs since the 2006-2007 academic year, is to enable university students to develop awareness of social problems and to produce solutions to these problems with the projects of their own fields, as in other faculties (Şentürk et al., 2014). In fact, the existence of continuous projects in every environment where sports take place, the fact that sports activities bring together many different cultures and people across the world and the country, recreational activities and sports are intertwined, and the organization of sports competitions can be given as examples of social events.

Sport is an important tool that brings societies together, even in all kinds of adverse conditions. Although there have been wars, negative political approaches and social problems between countries from the past to the present, these countries have managed to come together in sportive events and have ignored these negativities throughout the sporting organizations. For this reason, it is an undeniable fact that sports, which has a very important role in the world, has a positive contribution to social problems. Generally, students studying in PESS and Sports Sciences Faculties fulfill their social responsibilities by taking part in such activities. They develop their communication skills in their environment by establishing good relationships (Goslin et al., 2016) and contribute to both their own development and the development of the people they communicate with by shaping their social lives.

When the projects that are generally applied within the scope of this course in Physical Education Sports Colleges and Sports Sciences Faculties are examined, it can be seen that the following projects are conducted:

Providing the missing sports equipment in schools in order to contribute to the physical education lessons of the schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in the provinces where they are located, again, in cooperation with the physical education teachers in these schools, to organize various sports organizations in the classes. making field drawings for sports branches in the gardens of schools, introducing various sports branches to village schools and providing the opportunity to practice these branches and Engaging in social activities with other stakeholders in the city (BAIBU Faculty of Sports Sciences CSP course project examples). Although students are aware of their social responsibility before taking this course, they realize what this course has brought to them only after they have the opportunity to apply it in real terms. For this reason, this research was conducted to determine the opinions of the students who took the 'Community Service Practices' course about this course before taking the course and the gains from their experiences after the course.

2. Method

This research is a qualitative study conducted to determine the pre-and post-course views of the students about the Community Service Course given at universities.

2.1. Research Model

The research is a descriptive study. In the research, the case study design (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006, p.77), which focuses on how students affect the related situation and how they are affected by the related situation, was used. The students who participated in the research were coded with the letter "K".

2.2. Study Group

A total of 53 students from Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University, 4th grade students of the Department of Physical Education and Sports Management (DPET 37 students, DSM 16 students) who took the Community Service practices course in the spring term of 2016-2017 academic year, participated in the research. The students participating in the research were divided into groups of 5-8 people at the beginning of the semester by an instructor responsible for all groups. Different instructors were assigned to each group as advisors. The students, with their advisors, determined the projects that they thought could be beneficial to the society on the subjects they preferred, obtained the necessary legal permissions for

their application areas and implemented their activities that would last for 13 weeks. They have prepared a 13-week implementation plan for the activities.

2.3. Data collection tool

Before the implementation phase of the research started, interview forms were prepared as a data collection tool, and the expectations of the students about the CSP course were asked in written form by asking open-ended questions. At the end of the implementation process of the research, a focus group interview was conducted with a total of 14 volunteered students, who participated in the research among the project groups, accompanied by semi-structured questions. The focus group interview was held in the first week following the end of the 13th week. The questions directed to the students were recorded using the note-taking technique.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the students' opinions were coded independently by two researchers by making descriptive and content analysis. Sub-themes and themes were created in line with the statements. The reliability of the study was calculated using the formula “Reliability = Consensus / (Agreement + Disagreement) x 100” (Miles & Huberman, 1994). 47 out of 51 codes created by the researchers through content analysis were accepted by the researchers and the agreement among the researchers was found to be 92.2%. Reliability calculations over 70% are considered reliable for the research (Büyüköztürk et.al., 2008, Miles & Huberman, 1994). This shows that the coding is reliable, as the similarity between the researchers is high.

3. Results

The research data were obtained with semi-structured questions in the first stage and with the focus group technique in the second stage. The findings were expressed in the form of tables and figures in line with the themes.

Table 1: Findings related to independent variables

Section	DPET	DSM	Total
Number of students	37	16	53

Source: Author's own conception

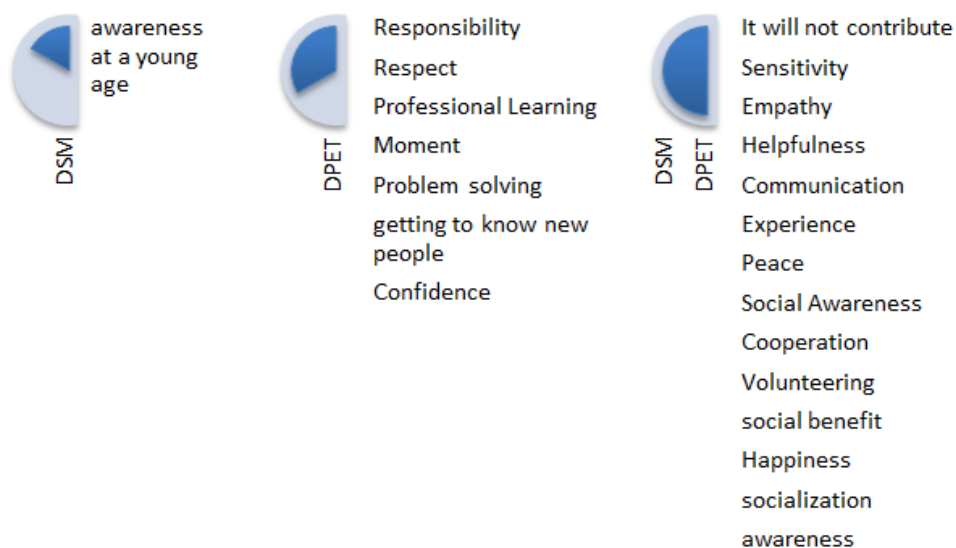
37 students from Bolu Abant Izzet Baysal University, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Department of Physical Education Teaching (DPET) and 16 students from the Department of Sports Management (DSM) participated in the research. A total of 14 students participated in the focus group interview conducted in the research, with two students from both departments participating voluntarily.

Phase I

Findings Obtained Before Taking CSP Course

Before taking the CSP course, open-ended questions were asked to the students and it was attempted to determine what kind of contributions the CSP course could provide to the students, and the resulting themes were presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Students' Opinions on the Benefits That the Course Can Provide Before Taking the CSP Course



Source: Author's own conception

Figure 1 expresses the themes obtained from the opinions of the students participating in the research about the contributions that this course will provide to them before taking the CSP course. The students stated that the CSP course could contribute to them the most in subjects such as "empathy (N:13)", "sensitivity (N:12)" and "collaboration (N:12)". In addition, some of the statements that support the views of the students about the contributions that the THU course can provide are as follows:

"It can contribute to our awareness about the society (P11, P30, P37), it creates social awareness, Social Awareness according to (K3, K10, K14, K24) ", It allows me to see my shortcomings, helps us develop necessary thinking and research skills (P21), we can gain experience (P27, P28, P29), helps us gain experience, "Experience" according to (P40), "I think it will give us a sense of benevolence. (K39)", "I think it can help us raise awareness in terms of benevolence", "Benevolence" According to (K1, K17, K30, K31, K36)": "I think it will help us gain communication skills. It will enable you to improve in communication and strengthen mutual understanding (K40, P42, K45, K46, K49)", "I think it can be effective in our communication and contribute to people's understanding of each other. "communication" according to (K25, K27, K33, K35).

"I think it will help us to gain the ability to reflect (P39)", "will contribute to the development of our understanding of empathy, (P42, P46)", "I think it will enable us to empathize, I think it will improve our ability to think like others, it can enable us to establish an empathic understanding, "Empathy" according to (P1, P6, P11, P23, K25, K26, K29, K33, K34, K35)". They contributed to the formation of the "will not contribute" theme of the CSP course by expressing negative opinions with the statements "I do not think it will make any contribution (P38, P50, P52)", "I do not think it will create any awareness (P13)".

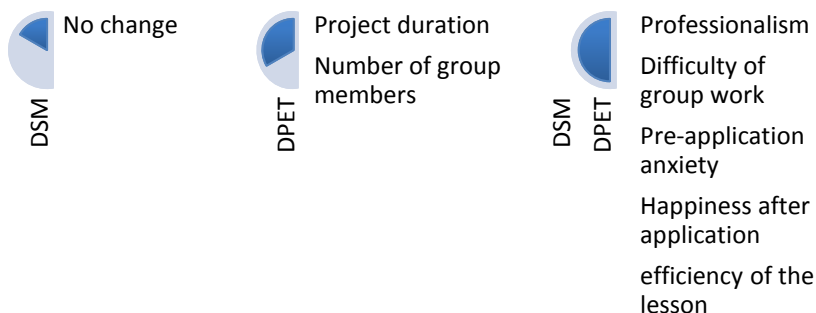
It can be said that the students participating in the research contributed to the formation of the themes in Figure 1, considering that they have social awareness before taking the CSP course; providing social benefit in any subject could be positive for them and that the education they received at their school could also contribute to them.

Phase 2

Findings Obtained After Taking the CSP Course

Faculty of Sport Sciences DPET and DSM students applied the CSP course with various projects for a period of 13 weeks. At the end of the term, a focus group meeting was held with the students who took part in CSP course projects voluntarily. During the interview, the students were asked, "Is there a difference between your thoughts about the course before after taking the course? If so, can you explain?" By asking the question, the themes in figure 2 were obtained from the student expressions.

Figure 2: Students' Opinions Before and After Taking CSP Course



Source: Author's own conception

Figure 2 shows the themes obtained from the opinions of the students before and after taking the CSP course. The expressions that contribute to the formation of these themes are as follows;

With the statements "group work is important (P13)", "group work is not an easy task (P1, P2, K3, P4)", "group work is a demanding situation and the responsibility of the project is on a single person (P2)". They contributed to the formation of the theme "The difficulty of group work".

It is seen that the expressions listed were effective in the formation of the theme of "productivity of the CSP course"; "I didn't think it would be a useful lesson (P10, P11)", "everyone should take this course (K10)", "I realized how useful it was after the practice (K11)", "I thought it was easy before the lesson (P2)", "I was not aware of anything before the application and I understood after the project (K5, P6, P8)".

The students said, "We were worried before the project. I thought it was difficult to reach the children. Then, we learned to communicate with the children (P9)" and "I was worried before the course application (P7, P8)". However, after the course application, they expressed the theme of "Happiness" with the views "I realized how important it is to see that they are happy when I help someone (P10)" and "I realized how much happiness such activities bring (P7, P8)".

The DPET students, who were not aware of their concerns about the duration of the project and the number of group members before the application, said, "I thought this project would be finished in 2-3 weeks before the lesson, it was a very long and arduous process (P3, P4)"; They drew attention to the theme of "project duration". "Previously, I thought that the number of group members was low (7 people), but in practice, even 5 people were too many, and 2-3 people could be better organized. We had difficulties even when setting the meeting time (P3)". They drew attention to the theme of "group members".

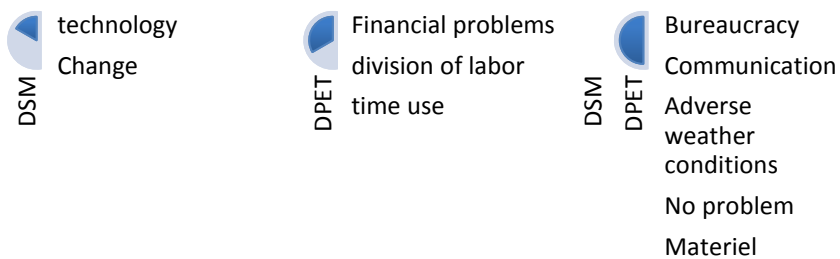
Some students stated that "*there was no change in their opinion (P12)*" about the course before and after the CSP course.

When the opinions of the students, who did the CSP course application projects, before after taking the course are compared,

It can be seen that they did not have awareness on many issues and they encountered some difficulties during implementation. It can be said that students had different views on especially group work, communication and use of time, before and after taking the course.

"Did you encounter any problems during the CSP course project applications? If you have, what are these problems?" In line with the statements of the students who were asked the question, the themes specified in Figure 3 were reached.

Figure 3: Problems Encountered by Students During Projects Implemented in the Scope of the Course



Source: Author's own conception

Examining the common statements of DPET and DSM students regarding the problems faced by the students during the project implementations selected within the scope of the course, the results are as follows;

"We had a problem with the school administration about getting permission (P10), "the permission process took longer, it took our time (P4)", which constitutes the theme of "Bureaucracy".

Statements that draw attention to the theme of "adverse weather conditions" are "adverse weather conditions caused us to have a hard time (P9)", "we had problems with weather conditions (P6, P8)".

The statements that make up the theme of "Material" are "Materials were missing during the project and this caused problems in our practices (P13)", "We had a problem in carrying sports materials to schools (P5)", "It was difficult to preserve the collected materials, we did not know where to store them (K1)".

"We did not have any problems with the people in charge or the application group while implementing our projects (P12)", "No problem (P7)", which constitutes the "No Problem" theme.

Both departments express the common problems they encountered during the application, with the expressions "I had problems due to the lack of communication in my own project group (P13)", "I had a communication problem with pre-school students (P5)", which constitute the "communication" theme.

Only for DPET students; "We could not use computers during the implementation of the project. Computers were running inefficiently. We couldn't meet our needs", "I encountered technological problems, the fact that the programs I used were not in the application environment made it a bit difficult for me. (P11)", the theme of "technology" emerged. The theme of "change" emerged as the problems encountered during the implementation, with the statement "While our full practices were continuing successfully, the instructor changed, the change of instructor caused serious problems (K11)".

DSM students; "We had financial problems. We had to spend our own money (P1, P3, P4)", They drew attention to the theme of "financial distress" with their expressions.

The theme of "division of labor" was expressed with the statements "certain people have done most of the work while some has not contributed at all" (P2, P4, P8).

They contributed to the formation of the "use of time" theme with the expressions "I made a sacrifice for the first time from the time I had to spare for myself (P6)", "The implementation of the project took a lot of time, we couldn't spare much time for our other lessons (P6).

The students expressed their distress that they could not find the same opportunities when they went to the project institutions because they could use all kinds of school opportunities within the scope of the education they received at their school. The fact that students encountered some problems during project implementations can actually appear as natural processes experienced in institutions. However, students may not realize such problems during their theoretical education. For this reason, it can be thought that the positive and negative situations faced by the students help them in terms of their future achievements, business life and social awareness.

Finally, after the projects implemented within the scope of the CSP Course, the students were asked, "Do you think the CSP course contributed to your professional knowledge and skills?" The students' views on the question contributed to the formation of the themes in figure 4.

Figure 4: Student Views on the Contribution of CSP Course to Professional Knowledge and Skills



Source: Author's own conception

In Figure 4; The students of both departments had a consensus on the themes of communication, experience and problem solving as the behaviors that CSP course can bring to students in terms of professional knowledge and skills. The students of DSM department only contributed to the formation of the control over the group, awareness and content knowledge themes, whereas the students of DPET department only contributed to the themes of empathy, responsibility, discipline and cooperation. The students of the DPET department also expressed the opinion that the projects implemented in the CSP course do not contribute in terms of professional knowledge and skills.

Some of the answers given by the students to the question in the formation of these themes are exemplified below.

(K10); *With the statement "I learned how to handle 30-35 people, so I think I can handle larger and smaller groups in the future"; "Control over the group,"*(K11) and (K12); *"I learned about the problems experienced by disabled people, I gained awareness about disabled athletes. If I have different groups in the future, at least I may not think about how I should approach."* in his words;(K11 and K12); *"Field knowledge" with the expression "I learned the Paralympic branches"*(K7); *"Helping" with the statements; "It was nice to cooperate with my group friends and the employees of the institution where the application project was made. They supported us in every way.*

(K2, K5); *"Discipline", with the statements; "Such projects can give us discipline and regular working habits in our professional life. In other words, we can say that it is a short field application" (K13); "I made a connection between theoretical knowledge and practice, I was able to reflect my learning at school into practice. Thus, I saw that I could use this knowledge in the future", (P12); "We learn to correct the things we misunderstood", (P4, P5, P6, P8); "It allowed me to gain experience, we can put our knowledge into practice when there are practical applications", (P6); "We learned how to*

write a permission petition”, (P5); “I gained research skills”. They contributed to the formation of the “Experience” theme with the expressions.

Our experiences in our daily and educational life have a guiding feature for our future achievements. It is seen that the education received by the students participating in the research and the experience they gained thanks to the projects they implemented within the scope of this course contributed significantly to their professional knowledge and skills.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Considering the research findings; At the beginning of the semester, the students who took the CSP course were asked how this course could contribute to them, and among the answers received from the students, "responsibility, respect, professional learning, memory, problem solving, getting to know new people, self-confidence, it will not contribute, sensitivity, empathy, helpfulness, communication. The themes of “experience, peace, social awareness, cooperation, volunteering, social benefit, happiness, socialization, awareness and informing at a young age” have been reached. In their research, Abrakwah, Mensah, and Teye (2010) determined the reasons for students' participation in social services as recognition, motivation and reward, sense of responsibility, supporting the formation of a better society and helping the community members in need. Ergül and Kurtulmuş (2014) examined the views of the instructors on the CSP course and stated that the qualities that students should have in the CSP course are "being useful individuals to the society, having a sense of social responsibility, being equipped with universal-local values, and having a mission-vision". In their research, Talas and Karataş (2012) claimed that they developed projects with the aim of improving the social responsibility awareness of primary school teacher candidates, dealing with the problems of the society before the service, seeking solutions to these problems and finding solutions to the identified problems. developing self-confidence and increasing their professional satisfaction, developing social sensitivity and awareness, supporting cooperation, solidarity, effective communication and self-evaluation skills. In the research conducted by Bellağ et al. (2015); the views on the aims of the course were examined and the views of the pre-service teachers; The themes of raising awareness about social problems, solving social problems, gaining experience in problem solving, gaining cooperation skills and socialization were documented. When the results of this study are compared with the other studies conducted; In particular, social awareness, sense of responsibility, benevolence and cooperation expressions seem to come to the fore as a common view. While the

understanding of social responsibility is expressed as providing social benefit and making a difference in the society (Saran et al., 2011), the repetition of student expectations regarding the CSP course, especially on the same statements, shows that the studies conducted support each other.

In this study, the students were asked whether there was any difference in their thoughts about the course before and after taking the CSP course, and in line with the statements from the students, "no change, duration of the project, number of group members, professionalism, difficulty of group work, anxiety before the practice, happiness after the practice, efficiency of the lesson" themes were reached. Uğurlu and Kral (2012) stated in their research findings that students have improved in their self-confidence, understanding of communication and teamwork thanks to the CSP course. In their study, Kocadere and Seferoğlu (2013) draw attention to the fact that there are teacher candidates who express their opinions especially in terms of gaining the awareness of serving the society and making the individual feel happy, peaceful and proud. In these studies, the students expressed their positive opinions by seeing how well the work they actually did during the application gave a good result. However, it should not be forgotten that project work is a team effort. In addition, it should be considered that the project plan, its duration and the number of people in the projects are important. In the findings of this research, it can be considered that the negative differences between students' opinions about before and after taking the course, expressed as "project duration, number of group members, difficulty of group work", stemmed from these reasons.

In this research, the students, whose opinions were taken about the problems they encountered during the course process, included statements about the formation of the themes of bureaucracy, communication, adverse weather conditions, materials, financial difficulties, division of labor, time use, technology and change. some students emphasized that they did not encounter any problems. When the studies on CSP course are examined, it is noteworthy that most of the researches are about the problems encountered in the application part of the course.

Nas et al. (2015) stated the problems encountered during the implementation of the projects as following: transportation, providing financial support, obtaining the necessary permits, unsuitable weather conditions, task distribution with group friendships, difficulty in obtaining the necessary materials, and people's insensitivity.

Saran et al. (2011) expressed the general difficulties as following: bureaucratic problems, communication problems, budget and hardware problems, creativity, standardization, time problems related to the course

period. Aykırı (2017) expressed the following problems: insensitive and negative attitudes of the public, bureaucratic problems, negative attitudes of the officials of the institution, transportation, space, budget, personal problems, adverse weather conditions and intra-group conflict. Bellağ et al. (2015) expressed the following difficulties: disinterest towards projects, lack of coordination between stakeholder groups, lack of financial resources, inauthenticity of projects, time limitations, lack of project skills, incompatibility within the group, and problems with the consultant. Ekşi and Cinoğlu (2012) stated the problems as the following: lack of planning, lack of involvement and workload of the advisors towards the course, official processes and correspondence, negative attitudes of the authorities of the institution/organization, economic problems and supply of equipment. Şentürk et al. (2014) expressed the problems as follows: students' self-induced problems, limited opportunities, university-institutional coordination, problems arising from the institution visited, and people's lack of involvement. Problems experienced in transportation, budget, weather conditions, material supply, lack of planning, intra-group communication, official correspondence and project duration emerged from the research findings related to the implementation phase of the CSP course appear to be in line with the findings of this study.

Finally, the question was asked whether the projects implemented within the scope of course CSP contributed to the professional knowledge and skills of the students participating in the research. The themes of communication, experience, problem solving, empathy, responsibility, discipline, no professional contribution, cooperation, control over the group, awareness and content knowledge have been reached. When the researches on this subject are examined, it has been found out that there are many studies on whether the CSP course contributes to the professional knowledge and skills of the students. Nas et al. (2015) stated in their research that the CSP course brings to teacher candidates as follows: comprehending the importance of cooperation and solidarity, being sensitive to social problems, awareness of responsibility, self-confidence, group work skills, empathy, communication skills, planned-programmed working skills, problem solving and environmental awareness. In his research, Demir (2019) states that CSP practices are beneficial in terms of providing teacher candidates with experience, raising awareness on social issues related to society, and establishing links between society and universities. In his research findings, Çetinkaya (2018) concluded that CSP activities contributed positively to teacher candidates in terms of social skills and self-efficacy beliefs, but poorly planned CSP activities did not contribute to the

development of such skills. In their research, Boran and Karakuş (2017) included the findings that the applications made within the scope of CSP course contributed to the pre-service teachers' getting to know the society more closely, integrating with the society, recognizing and cooperating with different institutions/organizations, tasting the emotional dimension and spirituality of the teaching profession, developing self-confidence and socialization. Deck et al. (2017) stated in their research that Community Service Projects support students in social work and cooperation, and also provide students with experience. George et al. (2017) stated in their research that community-based projects can be beneficial to professional development, educational experiences and social commitment. As a result of their research, Kocadere and Seferoğlu (2013) found that pre-service teachers who participated in community service practices projects made students feel happy and peaceful after the projects; the projects were effective in gaining awareness of service to the community and such services could reduce social problems and contribute to environmental awareness. Kesten (2012), Bassı (2011), Brinle and Satinberg (2010) stated in their research results that social-based projects help students connecting with the society, contributing to human relations and personal development; the candidates develop themselves academically and socially, and they can improve themselves in their future professional life and social life. Simons and Clary (2010) stated that CSP projects contributed positively to the social and emotional development of students as well as their academic learning. When these research findings are compared with other research findings, we encounter the fact that the projects implemented within the scope of CSP course contribute to students' future lives, professional knowledge and skills emotionally, socially, personally and academically.

As a conclusion, these activities can contribute to students in terms of social awareness, social responsibility, communication, professional experience and cooperation with different institutions and organizations. Therefore, it is very important to include CSP course in university programs.

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