
How Well are Japanese Secondary Social Studies Student Teachers Prepared to Teach Global Issues?: Student Teacher's Perceptions about International Education

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1. Introduction

Promotion of global/ international understanding has been historically regarded as an important concept for society, especially in recent years, but there has been an increasing concern for developing global citizenship with the progress of globalisation. Also in Japan, international education has been focused on and an increasing number of related studies have been published. Especially, Social Studies has also been a subject which is directly involved with developing citizenship compared to other school subjects and thus Social Studies researchers paid attention to international education.

Our study explores Japanese student teachers' perceptions about international education in the context of Social Studies after a semester of a civics methods course. It is widely known among education researchers that 'Teacher expertise—what teachers know and can do—affects all the core tasks of teaching' (Darling-Hammond and Deborah Loewenberg, 1997, p.1). Yoneda, Okazaki and Takao (2006) found a number of obstacles when sampled school teachers implement international education. The sampled teachers showed confusion about the concept of 'global education/ international education' or 'international understanding' even though the samples were selected from the teachers who had special interest in international education. The result of Yoneda's study could indicate the importance of teacher training program which deal with teaching global issues and international understanding. Our study would have potential to provide useful data in order to improve Social Studies teacher training course in terms of promoting international education. In this study, we use 'global education' to mean the same as 'international education'.

Our first paper on our study (Hashizaki and Kawaguchi, 2012) indicated

student teachers' perceptions about their knowledge, skills, and attitude toward teaching global issues, and possible teaching strategies that they would take in the future. This paper gives attention to how well student teachers are prepared to teach global issues. We especially focused on students' perceptions about the amount of the content knowledge of international education, as well as their interest in teaching them.

This paper consists of four main parts. In the first part, the previous studies looking at global education in the context of Social Studies are reviewed. Secondly, we introduce the overall research strategy of our study, including research questions and method. Thirdly, we present the findings from our study, particularly general characteristics in relation to global education from our questionnaire data. In the fourth part, we provide the conclusion and suggestions for future research.

2. Literature review: relationship between international education and Social Studies in Japan

Since Social Studies was established in 1947 in Japan, there have been a number of arguments about the importance of developing an international perspective in Social Studies (Ido, 1955; Nagai, 1957; Utsumi, 1960). Ido (1955) pointed out the similarities of purpose between Social Studies and global education, stating 'What is the relationship between Social Studies and global education? The purpose of Social Studies is to reform the contemporary society through developing democratic citizenship.(...) If current Social Studies lessons are examined and promoted further, it can contribute to global education. Understanding of basic human rights could remove the bias and stereotypes of certain races and ethnics groups that people have. Studying about other countries could contribute to respect and symphonize the people from other nations and ethnic groups.(p.97)' Morita (2012) and Kiritani (2012) argued that Social Studies could be a main vehicle for international education, because there are a number of overlaps in terms of educational purposes. Matsui (2004) reviewed previous studies of international education in relation to Social Studies written in Japanese during 1978 and 2003. Morimo and Nayayama (2011) also introduced 26 representative literatures written in Japanese which deal with Social Studies and multi-cultural education.

On the assumption that there are close relationships between Social Studies and international education, various studies which try to integrate international education into Social Studies were conducted. As a leading researcher, Fujiwara (1997; 2000a; 2000b; 2002) proposed a variety of lesson plans of international education in Social Studies. For example, Fujiwara (1997) developed global

educational material called 'Hyotan Island Problems' which aims to expand the students' perspective of multicultural society through role-play. Similarly, Otsu (1987; 1995) and Tabuchi (1981) proposed a number of lessons plans and resources which aims to develop the international perspective of students in the area of Social Studies. Kobayashi and Yoneda (1995) selected a number of well-planned lessons of international education in Social Studies. Referring to the four approaches to multicultural education (Banks, 2006), the previous studies seem to be based on the idea of 'the additive approach' these previous studies seemed to be based on the idea of 'the additive approach' which is strongly bound by the national curriculum. The approach which means that content, concepts, themes, and perspective of diverse culture are added to the current curriculum without changing its structure. Although these proposed plans have significantly contributed to promote and develop international understandings in Social Studies in Japan, this approach also shares several shortcomings. The biggest disadvantage is the lack of critical perspectives toward mainstream-centric and nation-centric viewpoints, because this approach means that ethnic and international contents are only a small part of the mainstream-centric curriculum (Banks, 2006).

Alternatively, instead of 'the additive approach' mentioned above, Banks (2006) argued for 'the transformation approach' meaning the structure of the current curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural background. In addition, Pike and Selby (1988) suggested an interdisciplinary approach to promote holistic understanding of global issues of which the causes and effects influence each other at different geographical levels. Although there has been several works like Otsu (1990) and Nakayama (2007), this type of work seems to be limited. In this study, we argue that considering alternative approaches in the Social Studies curriculum is necessary in order to teach global issues effectively.

In addition, the Japanese Social Studies research tradition seems to be rooted in the introspective, compared with the research tradition of Western countries, like the United States (Ogawa and Kusahara, 2011). This means that there have been a limited number of empirical studies and more works were based on theoretical and dialectical approaches. In fact, a study which looked at Social Studies student teachers' perceptions about international education was only conducted by Parker et al. (1997). Although this is a large study comparing Japanese and American pre-service teachers, this study was completed more than fifteen years ago. Our study would provide an opportunity for the reformation of teacher education in Social Studies from the perspective

of international education.

3. Overall research strategy: Research questions, method and report focus

As described at the beginning of this paper, our study was divided into two parts. While the previous paper (Hashizaki and Kawaguchi, 2012) focused on the student teachers' perception about their knowledge, skills, and attitude toward teaching global issues, this paper gives attention to how student teachers would react to the current Social Studies framework, and how they are prepared for teaching global issues. This section explains the overall research strategy including previous studies and briefly indicates the focus of this report.

3.1. Research questions

The overarching aim of our study is to examine student teacher's perceptions about teaching global issues in Social Studies. In order to meet this research aim, the following four research questions were established:

- 1) How do student teachers evaluate their own current knowledge, skills, and attitude for teaching global issues?;
- 2) What kind of curriculum would student teachers develop when they become teachers in the future?;
- 3) How do student teachers evaluate their own current knowledge on and interest in teaching the disciplines of Social Studies?;
- 4) How do student teachers evaluate their current knowledge on and interest in teaching background of global issues?

This report focuses on the latter two questions. Although these two questions do not ask directly about student teachers' tendency on teaching global issues, they may clarify how student teachers would react to the current Social Studies framework and how they are prepared for teaching global issues.

3.2. Research method

The main study took place in January 2012, namely on the end of the semester. In this study, 173 students who were enrolled in secondary civics teaching methods classes at two private universities in Kyoto participated. The samples were not nationally representative and so findings should not be generalized beyond the sample. We selected participants who have varied backgrounds to obtain coherent information. In terms of year levels, 70 percent of the students were sophomores, 23 percent were juniors, and less than 2 percent were seniors. 95 percent of the students have not participated in the teaching internship which takes place in the 4th year. In addition, the specialities of student teachers were diverse, including education, history, and economics.

Based on the research questions, we established the questionnaire based on Kenreich (2011)'s previous work with his permission. All items used a Likert-style scale and consisted of main four parts. The former two parts were related to the former two research questions which were already reported in our previous paper (Hashizaki and Kawaguchi, 2012), and the latter two parts were established to answer the latter two research questions. In the latter part, there are four questions; To what extent do you evaluate your content knowledge related to the disciplines of Social Studies? (Q1); To what extent do you evaluate your interest related to the disciplines of Social Studies? (Q2); To what extent do you evaluate your content knowledge of the background of global issues? (Q3); To what extent do you evaluate your interest in the background of global issues? (Q4). The selected student teachers were asked to choose their response from four choices (Four choices are from 'A' to 'F'. 'A' means significantly high and 'F' means significantly low) . Before receiving the questionnaires, the sampled student teachers were explained the purpose of this study and received an instructions of answering the questionnaires.

4. Findings

This section shows how student teachers perceive their knowledge and interest in the existing disciplines and subjects of Social Studies, as well as information about globalization. The four main questions that we have asked can be divided into two sections, namely, (a) current knowledge on and interest in teaching disciplines of Social Studies (Q1 and 2) and (b) current knowledge on and interest in teaching the background of global issues (Q3 and 4). Content knowledge is the knowledge about the subject matter that is to be learned or taught.

4.1. Student teachers' content knowledge and interest in teaching courses in Social Studies

4.1.1. Student teachers' content knowledge on disciplines of Social Studies

Table 1 shows student teachers' content knowledge in disciplines of the current Japanese high school Social Studies, curriculum, namely Japanese History, World history, Politics, Economics, Ethics, and Geography. As an overall tendency, their confidence in their content knowledge is relatively low in the most of the disciplines. About 40-50 percent of the students say they have low or lowest knowledge in the disciplines such as World history, Economics, Ethics and Geography. Economics is the discipline which students have least confidence in their knowledge. However, it is remarkable that student teachers believe they have relatively larger amount of knowledge in Japanese History

(43.4 percent of the students said they had the highest or high knowledge), compared with other disciplines.

Table1: Result of the Q1: Rate your relative content knowledge in the following fields/disciplines
(Highest knowledge to lowest knowledge)

	Highest or high		Middle		Low or lowest		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Japanese History	75	43.4	58	33.5	40	23.1	173
World History	42	24.3	51	29.5	80	46.2	173
Politics	40	23.4	66	38.6	65	38.0	171
Economics	29	16.7	42	24.3	102	59.0	173
Ethics	45	26.3	43	25.2	83	48.5	171
Geography	35	20.3	55	32.0	82	47.7	172

4.1.2. Student teachers' interest in teaching the courses of Social Studies

Table2 shows student teachers' interest in teaching the courses of Social Studies: Japanese History, World History, Geography, and Civics. Overall, students' interest in teaching these courses is high, especially for Japanese History and Civics, as more than 60 percent of the students say they have the highest or high interest in teaching. On the other, students' interest in teaching Geography is low, with only 33.6 percent of the students showing interest.

Table2: Result of the Q2: Rate your interest in teaching the following courses
(Highest interest to lowest interest)

	Highest or high		Middle		Low or lowest		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Japanese History	104	60.5	32	18.6	36	20.9	172
World History	86	50.0	29	16.9	57	33.1	172
Geography	58	33.6	61	35.3	54	31.2	173
Civics	104	60.1	44	25.4	25	14.5	173

By analyzing Table1 and Table2, it is clear that there is the gap between the amount of the content knowledge of disciplines and degree of interest in teaching the courses of Social Studies. Student teachers show higher scores

on their interest in teaching compared with their confidence in their content knowledge.

The relations between the two are different in three ways. Firstly, the findings may indicate that the more content knowledge student teachers have, the more interest they have in teaching the courses. The typical case is Japanese History. As Table1 shows, student teachers seem to have large amount of knowledge in Japanese History and they also have a high interest in teaching the course as Table2 shows. Secondly, student teachers show high interest in teaching some courses, in spite of their limited content knowledge about them. The typical example is Civics. Although almost half of the students have less confidence in their knowledge on Economics and Ethics, more than 60 percent the highest or high interest in teaching Civics. Thirdly, sampled student teachers show little interest in teaching Geography, although they have a certain amount of knowledge. Although students have more knowledge on Geography than Economics, students show less interest in teaching Geography than Civics.

4.2. Student teachers' perceptions about their knowledge on and importance of teaching background of global issues

4.2.1. Student teachers' perceptions about their knowledge on background of global issues

Q4 and Q5 asked about student teachers' knowledge of and interest in teaching background of globalization in nine areas. The areas are mainly consists of major concepts and systems of globalization such as diversity, human rights and social justice, and political, social and economic systems. The knowledge can provide student teachers with better understanding of global issues. Therefore, Q4 and Q5 were asked in order to examine how well student teachers are prepared to teach global issues.

Table3 shows student teachers' knowledge on background of global issues. As for the overall tendency, the percentage of the students who have confidence in their knowledge is relatively low. Precisely, only less than one third of the students answer that they have the highest or high amount of the knowledge in all areas. Among them, the following four items receive relatively high score: race and ethnicity (30.0 percent), global belief systems (30.6 percent), conflict and its control (28.9 percent) and planet management (28.9 percent). On the other, economic systems receives students' low score (only 19.1 percent say they have large amount of knowledge).

Table3: The result of Q3 Rate your relative content knowledge in the following areas (Highest knowledge to Lowest knowledge)

	Highest or high		Middle		Low or lowest		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Conflict and Its Control: Violence/ Terrorism/War	50	28.9	79	45.7	44	25.4	173
Economic Systems: International Trade/ Aid/Investment	33	19.1	65	37.6	75	43.3	173
Global Belief Systems: Ideologies/ Religions/Philosophies	53	30.6	55	31.8	65	37.6	173
Human Rights and Social Justice/Human Needs and Quality of Life	37	21.4	72	41.6	64	37.0	173
Planet Management: Resources/Energy/ Environment	50	28.9	68	39.3	55	31.8	173
Political Systems: International Structures/Institutions/Actors/Procedures	48	27.9	63	36.6	61	35.5	172
Population: Demographic Growth/ Patterns/Movements/Trends	41	23.7	81	46.8	51	29.5	173
Race and Ethnicity: Human Commonality and Diversity	52	30.0	79	45.7	42	24.3	173
Sustainable Development: Political/ Economic/Social	39	22.7	64	37.2	69	40.1	172

4.2.2. Student teachers' perceptions on the importance of teaching background of global issues.

Table 4 shows student teachers' perceptions about the importance of teaching background of globalization. Student teachers understand the significance of teaching global issues in general. Precisely, more than half of the students admit the importance of teaching all background of globalization except population issues. The top three areas that students show the highest or high interest in are: conflict and its control (79.8 percent), planet management (74.0 percent), and race and ethnicity (72.3 percent). In addition, more than 60 percent of the students think it is important to teach sustainable development and economic systems. On the other hand, it is notable that population issues received the least student attention (only 38.2 percent admit its importance and 15.6 percent showed low interest in teaching). Regarding global belief systems and human rights and social justice, students' perceptions are complex. More than half of the students admit the importance of teaching these areas, but not an insignificant amount of them said they do not think it is important to teach (15.1 for global belief systems and 9.9 for human rights and social justice).

Table4: The result of Q4 Rate the relative importance of teaching about the following areas (Highest knowledge to lowest knowledge)

	Highest or high		Middle		Low or lowest		Total N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Conflict and Its Control: Violence/ Terrorism/War	138	79.8	31	17.9	4	2.3	173
Economic Systems: International Trade/ Aid/Investment	110	63.6	56	32.4	7	4.0	173
Global Belief Systems: Ideologies/ Religions/Philosophies	90	52.3	56	32.6	26	15.1	172
Human Rights and Social Justice/Human Needs and Quality of Life	100	58.5	54	31.6	17	9.9	171
Planet Management: Resources/Energy/ Environment	128	74.0	36	20.8	9	5.2	173
Political Systems: International Structures/Institutions/Actors/Procedures	114	65.9	49	28.3	10	5.8	173
Population: Demographic Growth/ Patterns/Movements/Trends	66	38.2	80	46.2	27	15.6	173
Race and Ethnicity: Human Commonality and Diversity	125	72.3	41	23.7	7	4.0	173
Sustainable Development: Political/ Economic/Social	118	68.2	43	24.9	12	6.9	173

Through the analysis of Tables3 and 4, it was found that there is a gap between student teachers' perceptions about the importance of teaching the background of global issues and the content knowledge they possessed on these issues. More than half of the students understand the significance of teaching the background of globalization; however, only 20-30 percent of them think they have content knowledge on these issues. The gap is significantly large especially on economic systems. This coincides with the findings from the analysis of Questions 1 and 2; while students have limited knowledge about economics, they are interested in teaching Civics.

There is a gap between students' amount of knowledge and their interest in teaching, but they are closely related. The more knowledge students possess on a certain issue, the more interest they tend to have in teaching the issue. For example, students have a high amount of knowledge and interest in teaching issues such as conflict and its control, planet management, and race and ethnicity. However, student teachers' perceptions about population issues are an exception. Their knowledge on this area is not very low compared with issues such as economic systems, but their interest in teaching population issues is remarkably low. It is true that population issues are taught in Geography in schools; therefore students might have shown low interest in teaching

Geography as described above despite the amount of knowledge they have.

The following three points can be stated regarding the relations between students' perceptions about the importance of each item of Q5. Firstly, although students have knowledge and show high interest in teaching about environment management and sustainable development, they have limited knowledge and interest in teaching about their solutions, such as economic systems. This may show that the link between issues is not understood appropriately, and that therefore the depth of the understanding about the issues may be a problem. Secondly, students have knowledge and show high interest in teaching about race and ethnicity; however, they have limited knowledge and interest in the root cause of the issue. For example, population, economic systems and global belief systems are the issues that may cause issues such as immigration, the gap between rich and poor, and conflicts over different religions. If students are to tackle race and ethnicity issues effectively, they should be aware of the link between the issue and the root causes.

5. Summary and interpretation of the findings

To summarize our argument, we touch upon two points. Firstly, there is a gap between the amount of student teachers' content knowledge of the subjects in Social Studies and their interest in teaching these subjects. For some subjects, such as Japanese history, the amount of knowledge is in a correlation with interest in teaching. However, for others, such as Geography, student teachers are less interested in teaching, regardless of the amount of knowledge. The reason why Geography draws limited attention in teaching could be explored further in the future research.

Secondly, similarly to the first point, the gap between student teachers' possessed content knowledge and interest in teaching global issues were also found. The top three issues that student teachers have a relatively large amount of knowledge and interest in teaching are conflict and control, race and ethnicity, and planet management. Although students have knowledge about population issues and global belief systems, they only have limited interest in teaching them.

The interpretation of the above findings is that student teachers' understanding of the subjects as well as background of globalization seems to be fragmentary. In other words, the close relations between different global issues seem not to be clearly recognized by the student teachers. For example, student teachers said they were interested in teaching issues such as conflict and control and race and ethnicity; however, they were not very interested in teaching issues such as economic systems, population, and global belief

systems. This may show that student teachers agree with the normative idea of multicultural coexistence and the difficulty of its realization because conflict may arise when people with different races and ethnicities meet. In addition, this may show that student teachers do not examine deeply about the root cause of such conflict as: the economic gap between north and south, population issues (e.g. migrant workers), and different beliefs (e.g. religious beliefs). These issues are complicated and sensitive; therefore, student teachers may avoid facing them. In sum, student teachers are not prepared to explore global issues from an interdisciplinary approach.

The interdisciplinary approach is important in global education because the approach reflects the reality of the globalized world where different issues influence each other. If people do not understand the causes and effects of an issue by using an interdisciplinary approach, they may not be able to examine the issue critically and explore solutions. Using such an approach, student teachers would better be able to teach their students.

6.1. Limitations of the study

Here we identify two major limitations. First, there are good reasons to question the student teachers' understanding of scale's meaning. As the scale was translated into Japanese from English, there are phrases that were not common in Japanese. Moreover, most of the student teachers have not learned global education or an equivalent: thus it is uncertain that the intent of a question was correctly understood by the students. Second, the findings cannot be generalized, considering that the sample was small and not randomly selected.

6.2. Implications for Teacher Education and Further Research

This section offers two broad propositions. First, it appears that it may be helpful for student teachers to be given more opportunities to increase the amount of knowledge in the disciplines of social studies, along with background of global issues. The data shows that generally student teachers are less confident in their knowledge, regardless of their high levels of the interest in teaching the subject. The findings also indicate student teachers are not strong in certain areas, especially Economics and Geography. Thus, teacher education program can assist to develop a stronger knowledge base for teaching global issues.

However, only increasing the quantity of the student teachers' content knowledge is insufficient to help them be prepared to teach global issues. The quality of the knowledge is more important. Therefore, the second implication for teacher education is the need to deepen teachers' recognition of the interlinked nature of globalization/global issues. The findings indicate that

student teachers are interested in teaching issues such as conflict and control and race and ethnicity; however, they are not very interested in teaching economic systems, population issues, and global belief systems. This may show that student teachers agree with the normative idea of respecting diversity, but they do not consider deeply about the interlinked nature of global issues such as the relation between respecting diversity, economical gap, migrant workers, and different beliefs. These issues are complicated and sensitive; therefore, student teachers may avoid facing them.

The student teachers' perceptions described above may reflect the nature of the current Social Studies curriculum at the high school level, which adopts a discipline-centered approach based on solid academic frameworks. Moreover, matters regarding globalization or internationalization are added to the current curriculum without changing its structure. This 'additive approach' (Banks, 2006) brings a limitation on teaching and learning globalization/global issues, because they tend to be taught and learned independently. In order to overcome the limitation, teacher education program may be able to consider interdisciplinary approaches to help student teachers view concepts, issues, events, and systems of globalization critically and holistically. An example of the practice using the approach can be letting student teachers to do a research project on the root causes and effects of global issues, and by analyzing information critically based on various views, so that they can come to realize the interlinked and interdependent nature of the globalized world.

For further research, in-depth interviews are necessary to fully understand the possible reasons behind the trends that we have discussed. Thus, for example, the questions such as 'why student teachers are less interested in teaching Geography than other subjects' or 'why student teachers are less interested in teaching belief systems' can be explored. In addition, the researchers would like to conduct a comparative study of Japanese and American Social Studies student teachers' perceptions on teaching global issues in the future in order to explore the characteristic of Japanese student teachers' perceptions and issues of Japanese teacher education programs.

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