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## Challenges in the Process of Training Citizen Educators: A Case Study\*

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### Abstract

Undergraduate education endeavors to impart fundamental proficiencies; nevertheless, it falls short of adequately fulfilling the requisites for adept personnel. Conversely, graduate education strives to cultivate the aptitude for generating scholarly knowledge and executing research. The governmental authorities aspire to escalate the enrollment of educators pursuing advanced degrees and deploy varied incentives. Nevertheless, numerous obstacles manifest in the course of advanced education. Given the pivotal role of graduate education in augmenting teacher competencies and potentially influencing the overall educational caliber, it is imperative to recognize and redress these challenges. This research aims to scrutinize the predicaments and origins encountered within graduate education comprehensively. Accordingly, the research employs a case study design, a qualitative research methodology. A cohort of twelve educators engaged in advanced studies within the social studies domain partook in the study. Data were gathered via semi-structured interviews and subjected to content analysis. As a result of the data analysis, five main themes emerged, including factors influencing success, sources of problems, problems, suggestions, and purposes of pursuing graduate education. It was revealed that participants engaged in graduate education primarily to pursue an academic career and personal development, and their success throughout the process was primarily influenced by supervisors, faculty members, and financial and personal challenges. The problems faced by participants mainly originated from the curriculum, supervisors, and faculty members. The suggested remedies forwarded by the participants constituted a distinct theme.

**Keywords:** Citizenship education, graduate education, social studies

### 1. Introduction

All governing ideological frameworks seek to mold citizens according to their desired direction, necessitating a deliberate process of citizen education. This process, known as citizenship education, is employed by states to furnish their populace with diverse attributes, thereby fostering societal progress. In democratic societies, citizenship education aims to cultivate proficient individuals who embody the requisites of democracy. These individuals are expected to actively engage in problem-solving within their communities, contributing to societal advancement.

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Modern educational institutions, particularly schools, must administer citizenship education as part of their curriculum (Geboers, Geijsel, Admiraal & Ten Dam, 2013). Citizenship education in schools aims to equip students with knowledge, skills, and values that they can apply in their personal lives, enabling them to address emerging challenges effectively. In today's intricate world, individuals require a range of competencies to tackle multifaceted issues, necessitating an emphasis on knowledge dissemination, skill acquisition, and value inculcation to propel societal progress. Citizenship education empowers students to play an active role in society, engaging in matters of societal import, participating in decision-making processes, and influencing the trajectory of society.

Given its interdisciplinary nature, the field of education draws upon various disciplines, notably psychology, to inform its practices. This underscores the ongoing need for professionals in education, especially teachers, to continually update their knowledge. Teachers are mainly tasked with adapting their instructional strategies to meet contemporary demands. Başer, Narlı, and Günhan (2005) posit that teaching entails a broad spectrum of responsibilities, likely expanding with societal shifts. Consequently, teachers must adeptly adapt to evolving roles and tasks.

The middle school social studies curriculum is the central locus for nurturing citizens in Turkey. A close examination of the specific objectives within the Social Studies Curriculum reveals the pivotal role that social studies teachers play in fostering responsible citizens (MEB, 2018b). Citizenship education predominantly falls under the purview of social studies educators. The Social Studies Curriculum emphasizes skills such as digital literacy and innovative thinking, underscoring the significance of ongoing professional development for teachers. Enhancing social studies teachers' expertise is crucial for imparting the qualifications demanded by the modern era, enabling them to guide students in becoming proficient citizens who meet contemporary standards.

The current undergraduate education landscape is insufficient in producing adept human resources that align with governmental and labor market demands for requisite skills in the modern era. Additionally, the proliferation of qualified individuals within society necessitates a recalibration of admission and promotion criteria, with postgraduate education emerging as a crucial determinant. Postgraduate education aims to cultivate individuals capable of contributing to scholarly knowledge, inculcating values, and honing skills. In today's context, postgraduate education serves as a gateway to achieving the status of a scholar, transcending the role of merely advanced education. Postgraduate education equips teachers with tools to navigate changes, enhancing teaching quality and facilitating professional development. This process, known as professional development or learning, holds significant promise within education (Wells, 2014).

The Republic of Turkey demonstrates cognizance of these imperatives by implementing measures that bolster postgraduate education. For instance, one of the objectives outlined in the Ministry of National Education's (MEB) 2019-2023 Strategic Plan Document (Goal 2.2) seeks to establish an innovative professional development model to nurture teachers and school administrators. The aim is to augment the number of teachers pursuing postgraduate education substantially. Another goal (Goal 6.4) aims to double the count of scholarship recipients for postgraduate studies under the Graduate Education Support Program (YLSY) by the plan's conclusion (MEB, 2019). The 2023 Education Vision Document, published by the MEB, similarly underscores support for postgraduate education (MEB, 2018a). The ultimate objective is to produce specialized teachers capable of generating solutions informed by educational sciences, thereby maximizing students' potential. As governmental support for postgraduate education gains traction, teachers' interest in such pursuits concurrently intensifies. Furthermore,

the burgeoning number of universities and postgraduate programs in Turkey, accompanied by an expanding array of options, serves as an additional impetus for individuals to undertake postgraduate studies.

The caliber of postgraduate education in social studies significantly influences the quality of future educators and, by extension, the quality of citizenship education. Hence, postgraduate education in social studies directly affects citizenship education quality. However, postgraduate education faces challenges and complexities stemming from diverse factors. The resolution of these challenges directly affects the efficacy of Turkey's citizen cultivation policy. Identifying these issues can engender awareness among academia and universities, fostering avenues for effective solutions. Various studies have sought to analyze these challenges. The results of these studies indicate that students face problems such as obtaining permission from their workplaces to attend classes (Aktan, 2020; Başer et al., 2005; Yetkiner & İnce, 2016), weak and problematic communication with supervisors (Aktan, 2020; Başer et al., 2005; Çoruk, Çağatay & Öztürk, 2016; Yetkiner & İnce, 2016), lack of appropriate individuals to consult (Aktan, 2020), burnout in classes (Aktan, 2020), difficulty in attending classes from outside the city (Aktan, 2020; Özmen & Güç Aydın, 2013), issues with scientific preparation (Yetkiner & İnce, 2016), lack of fair evaluation throughout the process (Yetkiner & İnce, 2016), restriction on selecting desired courses (Özmen & Güç Aydın, 2013; Yetkiner & İnce, 2016), inadequacy of courses related to scientific methodology (Yetkiner & İnce, 2016), class schedules spread across different days (Aktan, 2020), bias or prejudice of faculty members (Başer et al., 2005), delays and problems in thesis writing due to the personal problems of faculty members (Yetkiner & İnce, 2016), excessive workload at workplaces (Aktan, 2020; Özmen & Güç Aydın, 2013; Yetkiner & İnce, 2016), and the lack of standards among universities (Yetkiner & İnce, 2016).

Postgraduate students in the field of education encounter similar hurdles. According to Başer et al. (2005), these challenges are bifurcated into those originating from the university and those from the Ministry of Education. Ministry-based issues include program conflicts, lack of administrative support, time constraints, and limited collaboration between the Ministry of Education and universities. University-based problems encompass faculty attitudes, communication gaps, and inadequate research opportunities. The authors also highlight that school administrators do not adequately facilitate postgraduate education for teachers. Consequently, these problems beset individuals pursuing postgraduate education in education.

Social studies is inherently interdisciplinary, encompassing a range of social sciences and disciplines. Consequently, the challenges encountered within social studies postgraduate education may diverge from those prevalent in other fields. Remarkably, a dearth of literature directly addresses postgraduate education in social studies, which constitutes a gap in the scholarly discourse. This void is attributed to the unique interdisciplinary nature of social studies, suggesting that the challenges confronted within this domain differ from those in other disciplines. Therefore, this study seeks to discern and address the specific challenges faced by individuals pursuing postgraduate education in social studies education, aiming to propose viable solutions.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research Model

The investigation adhered to the case study design, a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research encompasses a methodology wherein data collection employs techniques like observation, interviews, and document analysis, portraying perceptions and occurrences comprehensively and realistically (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). The case study design was

adopted for this inquiry to identify challenges faced by students during their postgraduate endeavors.

Case study research involves the scrutiny of an actual instance within an established context (Yin, 2009). In this methodology, the researcher elucidates the particulars of a case by leveraging resources like observation, interviews, and documents. The researcher may scrutinize multiple cases or focus exclusively on a singular one (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009). This study identified the "issues in postgraduate education" as the designated case, aiming to uncover the factors influencing this case. Thus, the case study design was selected for this investigation, to ascertain the predicaments and their origins encountered in postgraduate education processes within social studies.

## 2.2. Study Group

In the research endeavor, individuals under investigation were explicitly drawn from a cohort of educators actively pursuing advanced studies within social studies education, encompassing the domain of state-affiliated tertiary institutions. The roster of individuals comprising the research participants is comprehensively presented in the Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Participants*

Code Name	Gender	Postgraduate Level	Age
K1	M	Doctorate	36
K2	F	Master	25
K3	F	Doctorate	33
K4	M	Doctorate	35
K5	M	Doctorate	32
K6	F	Master	36
K7	M	Master	27
K8	M	Doctorate	39
K9	F	Scientific Preparation	27
K10	M	Scientific Preparation	31
K11	M	Master	28
K12	M	Doctorate	38

Two participants are in the scientific preparation stage, four are in the master's program, and six are pursuing doctoral studies. The age of the study participants ranged from 25 to 39.

## 2.3. Instruments and Data Collection Process

Within the purview of this investigation, data were acquired employing a semi-structured interview protocol. The formulation of inquiries for inclusion in the interview protocol ensued from a comprehensive review of pertinent literature, wherein suitable questions germane to the research endeavor were ascertained and subsequently integrated into the protocol. The judiciousness of the interview protocol was validated through consultation with subject matter experts. The preliminary implementation of this protocol was administered to three non-participating students, with the alignment of the pilot study results to the research objectives determining the adoption of the structured interview protocol for the ensuing study.

Interview sessions were conducted through both face-to-face interactions and online platforms. For participants amenable to digital interactions, interviews were facilitated through instant

messaging applications, and when unfeasible, the interview protocol was disseminated via electronic mail, with responses duly collated and examined. Supplementary queries were administered to participants employing the same modality as deemed necessary.

The point of data saturation constituted the principal criterion for terminating the data collection phase. The phenomenon of encountering no novel responses, coupled with the emergence of congruent participant answers across diverse interview modalities, substantiated the attainment of data saturation. At this juncture, the data collection phase drew to a close.

#### **2.4. Data Analysis**

In this study, the method of content analysis, noted for its inductive orientation, was selected. The rationale for the adoption of content analysis resides in its objective to discern pertinent concepts and interrelationships within the data, thereby explicating the underlying phenomena (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). All interviews were transcribed verbatim, with participant validation sought for these transcripts. Systematic organization of the amassed data ensued, at which point the coding process was applied. Coding operations were predicated on textual substrates, encompassing a nomenclature of codes, denoted as K1, K2, correspondingly assigned to participants. The congruity between the coded constructs and the research objectives informed the coding process, which conformed to a reflexive approach, mandating a fundamental commitment to accountability.

During content analysis, codes emerged through unstructured coding techniques, coalescing under overarching rubrics to instantiate a coding framework. The encoding procedure adhered to an inductive tenet for qualitative inquiry, facilitating delineating affiliations between categories and codes whenever substantiated by a logical linkage. The resulting conceptual constructs were reinforced using direct participant quotations, culminating in the visual representation of the emergent categories.

#### **2.5. Validity and Reliability**

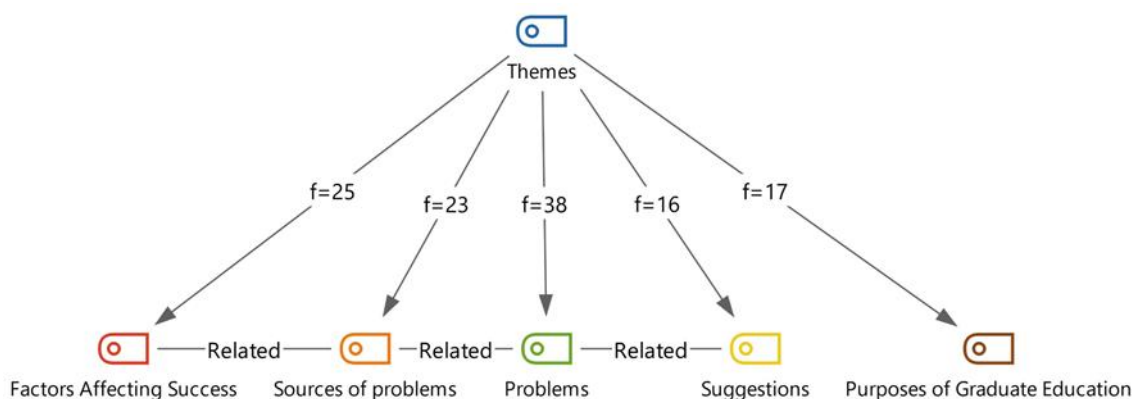
In qualitative methodology, theorists propose various strategies. In this study, in-depth data was collected, detailed descriptions were provided in the presentation of findings, expert opinion was sought in developing data collection tools and coding processes, consent was obtained from participants during the data collection process, and participants verified the accuracy of transcribed data. Thus, the aim was to ensure the credibility, confirmability, transferability, and consistency of the research.

#### **2.6. Ethics Committee Permission**

In this study all rules were followed as stated in the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics directive of Higher Education Institutions. Ethics committee permission of this study is taken with the decision of the Ethics Committee of Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University dated 30/05/2022 and numbered 2022.06.182.

### **3. Findings**

As a result of the data analysis, five themes emerged: factors influencing success, sources of problems, problems, suggestions, and purposes of graduate education. The visual representation of these themes is presented in Figure 1.

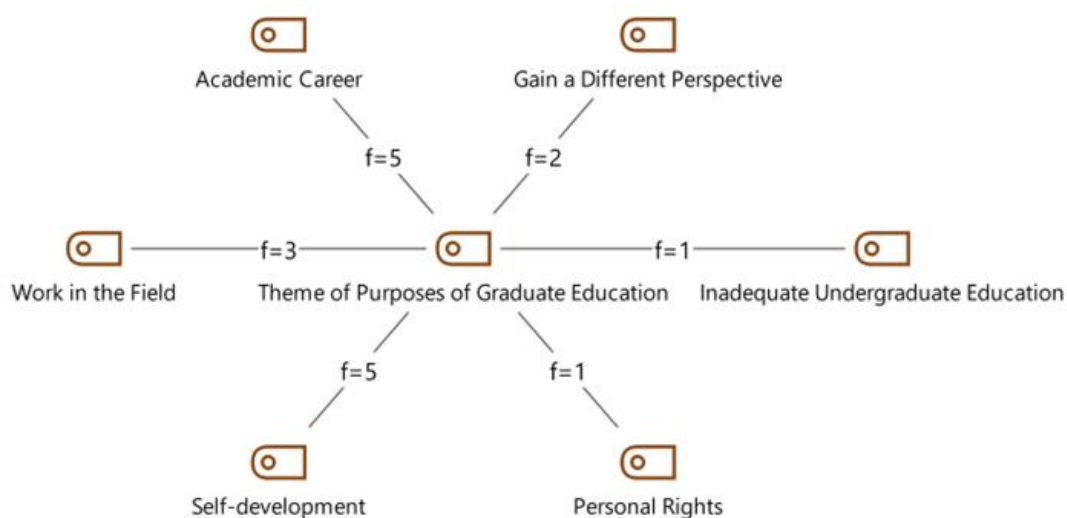


**Figure 1.** Themes

As a result of coding, it was revealed that the theme of factors influencing success was related to the theme of sources of problems, the theme of sources of problems was related to the theme of problems and the theme of problems was related to the theme of suggestions. The explanations and visuals regarding the themes that emerged from the data analysis are presented below in sequence.

### 3.1. Theme of Purposes of Graduate Education

The categories that emerged under the theme are visualized and presented in Figure 2.



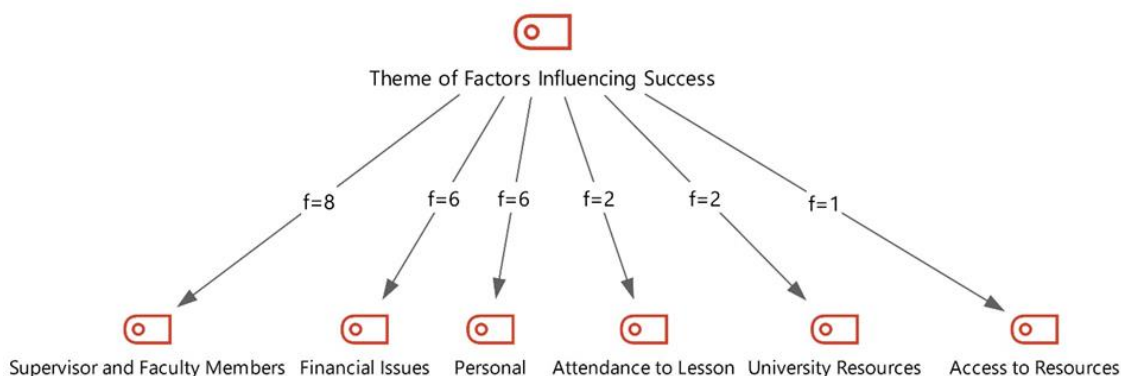
**Figure 2.** Theme of Purposes of Graduate Education

Most of the participants stated that they enrolled in postgraduate education to improve themselves and pursue an academic career. Participant K6 expressed their intention to engage in postgraduate education for self-improvement in the field of social sciences, stating, "My motivation for pursuing a master's degree is my interest in academic studies and my desire to develop myself in the field of social sciences." Participant K3 explained their preference for postgraduate education by saying, "Although it may not seem feasible under these conditions, I aim to become a good academician."

Additionally, participants mentioned various reasons which are coded in other categories, such as “self-development and personal rights” in the theme for choosing postgraduate education, such as the occasional requirement of postgraduate education by the Ministry of National Education for certain benefits and privileges, the interest in scientific research, and the belief that an undergraduate education alone is insufficient to become a competent teacher.

### 3.2. Theme of Factors Influencing Success

The visual representation of the theme is presented in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Theme of Factors Influencing Success

Participants have frequently associated the success of postgraduate education with the approaches of supervisors and faculty members, financial resources, and personal attitudes and behaviors. According to the participants, supervisors and faculty members are considered critical factors in the success of postgraduate education. Participant K5 expressed this by stating, "The interest and guidance of the supervisor contribute greatly to the student. Even in postgraduate studies, the student is still a student and values the words of their supervisor. If the supervisor can guide without breaking the student's spirit and affectionately, success will undoubtedly be inevitable." Participant K11 emphasized the impact of faculty members on success, stating, "The high level of communication skills of our department's professors greatly enhances motivation and academic achievement."

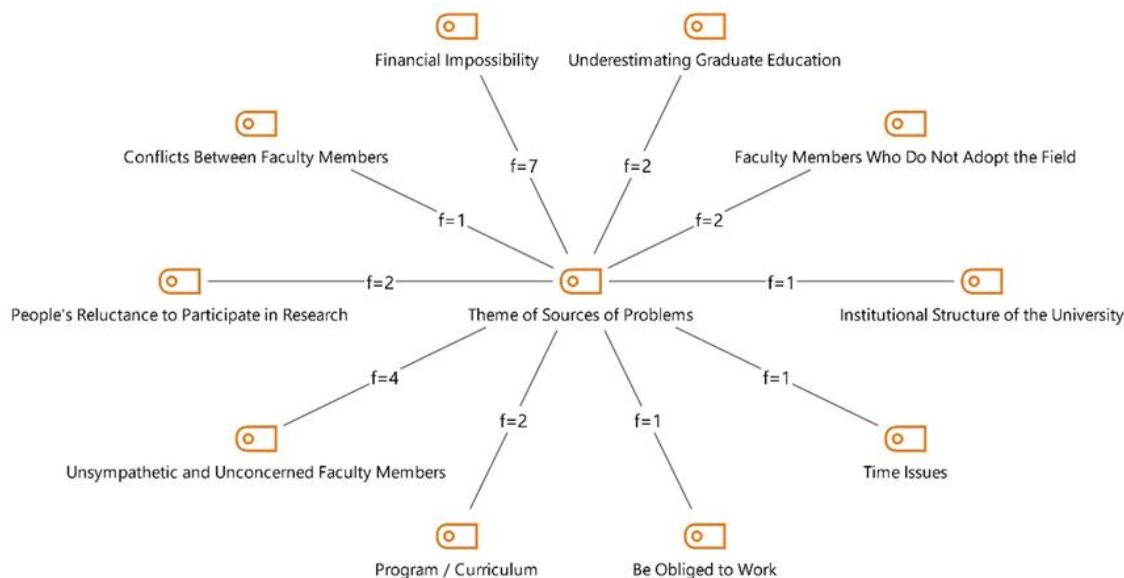
According to the participants, another critical factor in success, is financial resources. Participant K2 highlighted the importance of economic conditions, stating, "Another factor for me is financial matters. The extent to which I can reach the places I need to go for a book I want to buy or a topic I want to research directly affects my success." Participant K8 stated, "Financial situation is crucial. If you have money, you can do it. An unemployed person cannot, for example." The participants argued that financial circumstances affect postgraduate education success from transportation to accessing resources.

The participants also emphasized the importance of student motivation, interest, and skills in postgraduate success. Participant K9 stated, "I believe that two factors are very crucial. First is the student's motivation and willingness, and second is their economic situation." Participant K6 suggested the significance of research-oriented attitudes by stating, "Factors affecting success in postgraduate education include the student's research skills (...) and their curiosity for research."

Alongside these categories, the participants mentioned factors such as access to resources, attending classes, and opportunities provided by the university as determinants of success.

### 3.3. Theme of Problem of Resources

The visual representation of the theme is presented in Figure 4.



**Figure 4.** Theme of Problem of Resources

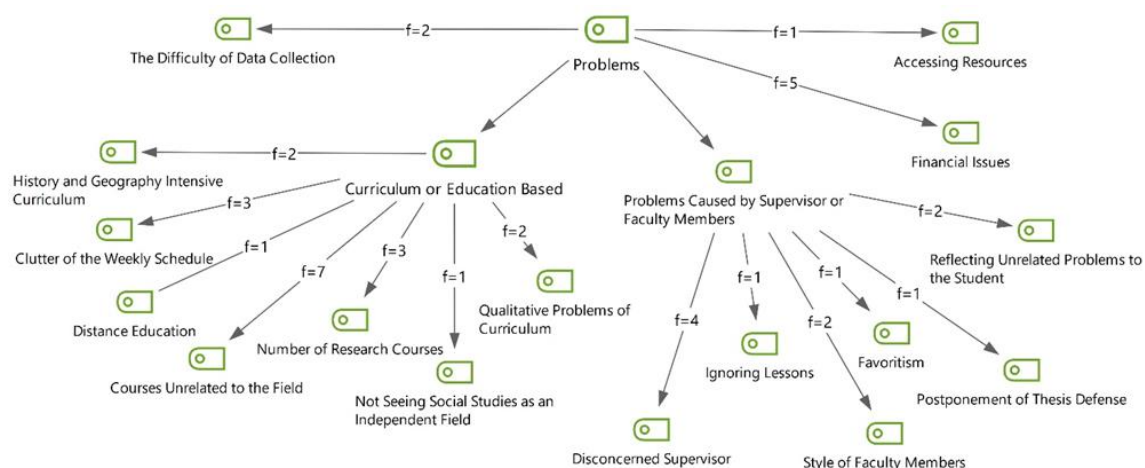
According to the participants, the problems encountered in graduate education stem from financial issues, faculty members, and programs or curriculum. It can be inferred from the visual evidence that most participants perceive their economic situation as the primary source of problems. Participant K10 said "*Financial problems are almost like the root cause of all problems.*" Similarly, participant K11 stated, "*The inadequacy of my economic conditions and the university's incomplete institutional structure is fundamentally responsible for the problems I experience,*" using similar expressions.

The participants also consider the attitudes and behaviors of faculty members and supervisors a major source of problems. Participant K7 stated, "*My initial supervisor did not pay much attention to me and did not read what I had written. My work was stuck, and I was trying to seek help from other professors and research assistants.*" Participant K1 mentioned the attitudes of some faculty members towards social sciences, saying, "*I think the biggest problem with social sciences is that some professors do not embrace the field. They still see themselves as historians or geographers. They continue this tradition. The problem is not being a historian or a geographer but not being a social scientist. These professors consider social studies to be limited to history and geography.*" Participants also reported problems stemming from the programs, individuals' perspectives on graduate education, and time constraints.

### 3.4. Theme of Problems in Graduate Education

The visual representation of the theme is presented in Figure 5.





**Figure 5.** Theme of Problems

The data analysis revealed that the main problems encountered by students in their graduate education in social studies revolve around the implemented program and curriculum, supervisors or faculty members, and financial matters.

Participants heavily criticized the nature and content of the implemented programs or curriculum. Participant K8 criticized the subjects in the program by stating, "*The problem, in my opinion, is that the courses focus on history and geography. Always history, geography. There is no education course. Are we going to be teachers, historians, geographers? Someone who will become a middle school teacher can handle those subjects with just an hour of reading. However, how will you teach that subject? Will you be able to make the students gain something from it? That is the real issue. That is why this is the main problem.*" Participant K12 expressed a similar criticism by stating, "*There is an unnecessary course load. Courses that I think are non-academic and not related to the field. I do not think we needed a course on European history.*"

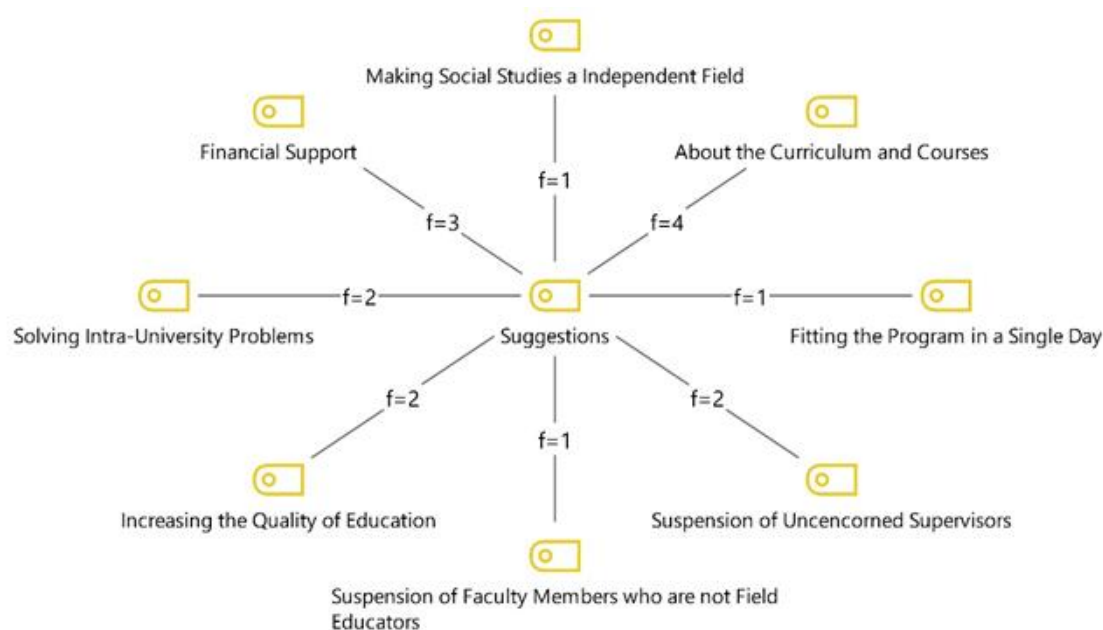
The participants' opinions mostly converged around the lack of relevance of the courses in the program to social studies education, scientific research, or education in general. They also expressed concerns about the weekly program being spread across multiple days, distance education, and social studies not being considered as an independent field.

The participants frequently mentioned problems arising from supervisors and faculty members. Participant K10 highlighted the indifference of their supervisor by stating, "*I had a supervisor who did not care about me. No matter what I sent, he would not respond. Maybe they were busy, I do not know, but if they were busy, they should not have taken on students. They caused significant delays for me.*" Participant K7 pointed out internal issues within the university by stating, "*It is a big problem when professors reflect their conflicts onto students. They put the student in the middle. If my supervisor argued with someone, that person sees me as an enemy too.*" Participant K8 also expressed concerns about the faculty members' attitudes by saying, "*The attitudes of the professors are also a separate issue. Some treat us like people who do not know anything understand anything, or are useless. They scolded us and dismissed us from class. There should not be such an attitude in doctoral or master's programs. For example, I had to arrive a few minutes late to the next class because one professor extended their lecture. The professor did not allow it. However, he made us wait for half an hour the following week.*"

Participants also regarded financial constraints as a significant problem. Participant K5 described transportation, meals, and the lack of dedicated internet and computer access for graduate students at the university as significant issues. Participant K1 highlighted the problems caused by economic conditions by stating, "Not being able to obtain permission from our workplaces is also an important issue. Unfortunately, in Turkey, these efforts are seen as futile. They ask how many people will pursue higher education. However, improving oneself in the profession is possible through education. That is why obtaining permission becomes a problem. Considering the situation in the country, leaving the job is not an option." Furthermore, participants identified data collection and resource access as additional challenges.

### 3.5. Theme of Suggestions

The visual representation of the theme is presented in Figure 6.



**Figure 6.** Theme of Suggestions

Upon examining the codes generated under the theme, it is understood that a significant portion is directly related to the categories of problems related to the theme. The suggestions from the participants mainly focus on programs, financial issues, and supervisors and faculty members. Participant K1 stated that the intensity of history and geography courses in the program should be reduced: "I do not think it is right to give so much emphasis to history and occasionally geography courses in social studies doctoral and master's programs. Here, we should take education courses and research courses. We are expected to produce knowledge. The knowledge we need to produce should be related to education. Of course, through research." Participant K7 argued that increasing research courses would be essential, stating, "Updating the education programs and incorporating research courses would be a significant improvement."

The participants' suggestions regarding financial support are clustered around book support, transportation support, research incentives, and scholarships. Participant K2 stated, "There are support systems for social sciences, of course, but I see them as limited. If there is a desire to solve them one day, it would be great to increase financial support for students to conduct

*research, provide book support, research incentives, and facilitate certain aspects within this scope."*

Faculty members and supervisors are also essential topics in the participants' suggestions. Participant K7 used the expression, *"If supervisors who do not care about the students are replaced by professors who provide better guidance, a significant portion of these problems would be solved."* Participant K5 argued, *"For our department, non-educational professors should be removed from the department,"* suggesting that non-education faculty members should not be involved in graduate processes.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The principal rationale underscoring the necessity and significance of postgraduate education within the realm of education, akin to other domains, emanates from the rapid flux and evolving circumstances. The certainties and fallacies of education remain in a state of perpetual flux and diversification, demanding an array of competencies to remain abreast of these developments. Consequently, the conventional archetype of the educator falls short within the contemporary educational landscape. Postgraduate education empowers educators to assimilate the shifts within the education milieu. Alabaş, Kamer, and Polat (2012) posit those postgraduate educational pursuits function as a guide, fostering both professional and personal growth, thereby ameliorating classroom practices.

The principal motivational drivers prompting individuals to engage in postgraduate education chiefly encompass the aspiration to become an academician, participation in scholarly endeavors, and personal advancement. Pursuing an academic career is a vocational and personal aspiration. However, participants who avow postgraduate education to undertake scholarly pursuits and foster personal evolution seek to elevate their professional trajectory, seeking remedies for enhanced pedagogy. This stance augurs well for the caliber of pedagogy and educational practices. The vocation of academia may allure due to its prestige and prerogatives, elucidating the pursuit of postgraduate education.

Nonetheless, participants' emphasis on personal growth and scholarly exploration beyond this purview reflects a disposition toward holistic development. This observation is congruous with extant scholarship. Başer et al. (2005) ascertain that over 90% of educators undertake postgraduate studies with the intent of self-improvement, with a minority opting for an academic trajectory. Contemporary investigations likewise indicate that educators pursue postgraduate education predominantly for personal and vocational enhancement (Aktan, 2020; Baş, 2013; Kahraman & Tok, 2016; Kırıl & Altun, 2015; Koşar, Er & Kılınc, 2020). Despite the upswing in postgraduate education driven by academic ambitions, a substantial cohort of educators persists in pursuing advanced education to refine their competencies and pedagogical praxes. Expanding the participation of likeminded educators would constitute a robust stride in middle school social studies education, concomitantly augmenting civic education.

Er and Ünal (2017), in their investigation involving aspiring social studies educators, ascertain a correlation between postgraduate education and professional advancement. This finding is congruent with extant literature and aligns with the present study's findings. Aspiring social studies educators commonly prioritize their professional progression when contemplating or embarking on postgraduate education. Hence, rectifying postgraduate social studies education challenges, aside from student-originated concerns, could engender a milieu conducive to developmental pursuits.

Participants proffer a comprehensive array of insights within this thematic ambit. The categories nested within this theme bear relevance to the genesis of issues and the remedies advanced by participants as potential resolutions. The participants evince coherence regarding the sources of predicaments and the proposals posited to address the raised concerns. Within the study's purview, participants predominantly opine that problems emanate from the programmatic and course-based frameworks, alongside challenges associated with mentors and academic staff. The viewpoints encapsulated in the "Program or Education-related Problems" categories mirror extant scholarship. Issues such as the lack of proficiency in research methodologies (Alabaş et al., 2012; Katılmış, Çelik & Kop, 2013), antiquated, incongruent, or subpar courses (Aktan, 2020; Bayar & Duran, 2019; Dilci, 2019; Gürkan Öztürk & Dinç, 2016; Teyfur & Çakır, 2017), program quality (Dilci, 2019; Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010), and suboptimal weekly schedules (Aktan, 2020; Bayar & Duran, 2019) resonate with the present inquiry's findings.

Participants contend that their social studies graduate education frequently features tangential courses, at the expense of courses germane to pedagogy, social studies education, and scholarly research. The concentration on history and geography courses within certain programs is deemed inadequate by participants, resulting in a perceived shortfall vis-à-vis their expectations. Concomitantly, social studies educators participating in graduate programs assert that the anticipated benefits from such pursuits remain unfulfilled. Central to advanced education processes is the cultivation of problem-solving proficiencies through scientific methodologies. Beyond disseminating domain knowledge, a salient aspiration of postgraduate programs is to equip educators with the acumen to access requisite scholarly knowledge and apply it efficaciously in instructional contexts. Inadequate curricula in this regard undermine these expectations. Consequently, the efficacious attainment of these objectives hinges on including pedagogical courses that explicitly address the tenets of social studies and its instructional methods, along with research-focused courses that elucidate problem identification and resolution through rigorous scientific means. Integrating these elements into social studies graduate education programs appears imperative to realize the programs' intended objectives.

Many participants attribute problems to mentors or academic staff, mirroring concordant findings in the literature. Instances of mentors displaying indifference, adopting negative attitudes, manifesting inappropriate behaviors, and adopting suboptimal approaches (Aktan, 2020; Alabaş et al., 2012; Bayar & Duran, 2019; Dilci, 2019; Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010; Teyfur & Çakır, 2017) are consistent with this study's outcomes. Participants expound that mentors who are unresponsive leave them unsupported, occasionally resort to harsh and inapposite language, and underscore the perceived neglect of courses. The efficacy of an educational or instructional regimen is intricately linked not solely to the educator's erudition and skill set, but also their demeanor towards students, the curriculum, and the courses. Within this framework, social studies graduate education's potency is inextricably tied to academic staff's qualifications, attitudes, comportment, and methodologies. While it is acknowledged that academic staff contend with formidable workloads and administrative obligations, graduate education's orientation often veers towards quantity over quality. Participants assert that eliminating mentors devoid of expertise in social studies education, coupled with the appointment of mentors demonstrating heightened student engagement, would ameliorate these predicaments. Nonetheless, institutes commonly mandate the incumbent mentor's approval or departmental sanction for mentorship alterations. Consequently, instituting alterations predicated on objective criteria, including student interaction frequency, and heeding student preferences, could serve as a mechanism to enhance quality.

The research underscores the pivotal role of financial resources in realizing postgraduate education's aspirations. Most participants argue that fiscal constraints pose formidable challenges to the process. Literature espousing this viewpoint is abundant (Aktan, 2020; Bayar

& Duran, 2019; Dilci, 2019; Gürkan Öztürk & Dinç, 2016; Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010; Katılmış et al., 2013; Koşar et al., 2020). Financial constraints persist as a substantial impediment for postgraduate students. Many students pursuing advanced education study in institutions distant from their residences. Contemporary academic obligations necessitate access to materials, software, and proficient computing resources. In addition to transportation, sustenance, and lodging expenses, the costs associated with books, stationery, and technological requisites render postgraduate education financially demanding. Thus, the participants' concerns regarding financial exigencies are underpinned by pragmatic considerations. However, students can avail themselves of various scholarships and credit facilities offered by governmental and private entities. It is infeasible for the government to furnish unconditional financial support to all postgraduate students. Scholarships aligned with diverse benchmarks of achievement and initiatives facilitating student employment could potentially ameliorate financial circumstances for accomplished students.

Redirecting postgraduate education toward the professional and personal development of educators, eradicating impediments that hinder this trajectory, and fostering a culture of postgraduate education resonate harmoniously with the education policy of the Republic of Turkey. The Ministry of National Education (2018a) affirms in the 2023 Education Vision Document its commitment to bolstering educators' professional development through postgraduate education. Addressing the issues unveiled in this research or mitigating their impact could engender an environment where accomplished social studies educators are more inclined to pursue postgraduate education.

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**Ethics Committee Permission:**

In this study all rules were followed stated in the directive of Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions. Ethics committee permission of this study is taken with the decision of the Ethics Committee of Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University dated 30/05/2022 and numbered 2022.06.182.