



## The Utilization of History within the Framework of Interdisciplinary Approach in Geography Courses\*

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
Received: 03.05.2025	In recent years, one of the prominently emphasized concepts in educational activities is interdisciplinarity. In this research, was to examine the extent to which geography teachers benefit from history within the framework of the interdisciplinary approach in geography lessons. The data in the research were collected with semi-structured interview forms. According to the findings obtained from the research a significant majority of the geography teachers showed a high interest in history, and all of them believed that history could contribute to geography lessons. It has been observed that geography teachers utilize history in various ways in their lessons including referring to historical processes of the topics, talking about first historical landmarks, and the impact of geography on historical events. It has been determined that geography teachers perceive the connection between the curriculum and textbooks with history as primarily inadequate; they think that there are issues that need to be improved.
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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The advancement of science and its ability to elevate societies to higher levels depend on the importance given to it by the society it seeks to grow within. When societies believe in the necessity of scientific advancement, they will provide the necessary environment for its development, and in parallel with this progress, they themselves will change and develop. However, the advancement of science is not achievable through breakthroughs in just one field. This is because disciplines are interconnected and support each other's development with the knowledge they gain. The statement from Gilbert (1909, as cited in Baerwald, 2010) emphasizes that progress occurs in science through the interactions among different disciplines, and unauthorized entry of scientific fields into each other's domains is one of the fruitful methods of interaction. This highlights that partial or limited incursions of disciplines into each other's areas are key to progress. Synthesizing knowledge from different disciplines and creating new interdisciplinary research areas are considered crucial for economic development and fostering innovations. Based on these topinions, it is evident that the disciplines that can be expressed as interdisciplinarity must support each other and collaboratively produce knowledge or products and thus it holds great importance and cannot be overlooked by policymakers (Rekers & Hansen, 2015). It is evident that if policy intervention encourages efficient interdisciplinary research, science will progress much faster.

Geography is one of the disciplines that require an interdisciplinary approach due to its diverse content. Geography can be divided into two main sub-branches: physical geography (including geomorphology, climatology, biogeography, etc.) and human geography or anthropogeography (including culture, population, politics, etc.). These sub-branches diversify within themselves and develop in cooperation with quite different disciplines in terms of content. The multidimensionality of geography offers numerous examples of its impact on national identity, migration, and the formation and development of human communities. (Bryce, 1886).

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Due to its interdisciplinary nature, geography should be built on spatial analysis and human-environment interaction to encourage communication and interaction with other disciplines (Baerwald, 2010). Harris (2012) views geography as a powerful field that will develop strong social and political awareness about critical issues facing humanity. Therefore, he states that geography serves as a tool for fostering values and commitment to social action. According to Sağdıç and Demirkaya (2014), geography has emerged as an interdisciplinary field that integrates intersecting technologies with art and science education, and they added that geography serves as a bridge between human and natural sciences in terms of the subjects it addresses. They highlighted that geography lessons can be considered the most suitable courses for interdisciplinary instruction.

Geography has two main effects on the development of interdisciplinary research (Baerwald, 2010). The first of these effects is contextually supportive factors such as strong research environments in different fields. The second effect is the strong and facilitating aspect of geographical proximity in creating social networks. Geography has diversified its research tradition by exploring the role of place and space in factors that influence human well-being, livelihood, and human-environment interactions, alongside the classical tradition of field research such as spatially-based regional analysis. Due to these features, geography increasingly is seen and valued as a “bridge discipline” according to Gober (2000). Geography as a discipline continues to maintain its status as a bridge discipline by connecting human and natural system studies and enabling intellectual synthesis. The bridge discipline feature of geography facilitates interactions between geographers and many other disciplines, creating opportunities for productive collaborations (Baerwald, 2010).

Due to its research area, geography has the most interaction with history and often becomes inseparable from it, making it difficult to distinguish their subjects from each other. Indeed, the close connection between geography and history has given rise to a specific field of study known as historical geography. According to Bryce (1886), the roots of history lie in geography because without a clear and vivid understanding of a country's physical structure, the events of life that people have experienced within it would have no significance or meaning. Darby (1953) presents the relationship between geography and history as a mutual necessity and quotes the expression from Heylyn's *Microcosmus*, “history without geography, like the dead, contains neither life nor motion.” However, by referring to the beginning of the quote, “Without history, geography has life and motion, but this motion is random and variable,” Darby emphasizes that without the support of history, geography lacks regular motion.

When considering that history as a discipline is concerned with human experiences within the context of human interactions, it becomes evident that there is a strong connection between history and geography because geography is the study of how humans uniquely interact with and adapt to their physical environment. This provides us with two closely related disciplines: one focuses on human interactions with each other, and the other centres on the relationship between humans and their environments. Both disciplines aim to focus on what humans do in diverse historical contexts, acknowledging humans as creative thinking beings. The attempt to establish a special relationship between geography and history is not about setting rigid boundaries. In fact, there is considerable overlap between these two disciplines and many others. However, it is inevitable for each of them to have a defined network of subjects (Guelke, 1997). According to Darby (1953), expanding the vision of history to encompass all aspects of human movement from social and economic perspectives made historical studies more realistic and directed them towards a more geographical approach. In this regard, Michelet, who believes that history is in a compulsory relationship with geography, expresses that without a geographical foundation, the creators of history, namely humans, would appear to be walking in the air. In other words, Michelet emphasizes that without geographical basis, historical knowledge cannot have a solid footing.

The area that overlaps most between geographers and historians is the role of the past in the present. Bringing up questions about heritage and memory refers to the relationship between these two fields (Ogborn, 1999). In summary, as expressed by Hartshorne, parallel to Kant's views, “Explanation based on time is history, while explanation based on space is geography.” History differs from geography only in terms of time and space. The former is a report of successive and time-referencing phenomena. The latter is a report of phenomena that are side by side in space. That is, history is a narrative, while geography is a description. ... Geography and history fill our entire perceptual environment: geography provides the definition of space, while history enables the definition of time (Guelke, 1997).

The strong bond between geography and history necessitates benefiting from each other's knowledge when explaining them to individuals at various levels because presenting these two disciplines with their organic bond within themselves to individuals will enhance the understanding of both disciplines' content. The social life and societal structure in a country are largely shaped by various geographical factors prevailing in that country (Harichandan, et al. 2013). Various historical events have been greatly influenced by geographical factors, and even in some cases, geographical factors have played a significant role in shaping historical events. Effectively conveying this relationship to students at various educational levels is the most suitable way of presenting the nature of that discipline. Knowing the historical events that have occurred and influenced people, such as wars, migrations, natural disasters, pandemics, and such phenomena will enable a better understanding of the subjects addressed by both human and population geography today (İskender Kılıç, 2019). Indeed, the first cultural centres established by humans, their economic activities, and livelihood methods from the past to the present are among the topics that history contributes to geography (Doğan, 2014). Moreover, it can be argued that many primary sources that are of importance to the discipline and teaching of history will provide valuable information in the evaluation of socio-cultural, economic, and demographic subjects in the field of geography (İskender Kılıç, 2019).

Conveying information from different disciplines by establishing connections between them brings about an interdisciplinary curriculum approach. Designing an interdisciplinary curriculum requires familiarity with relevant literature. This literature encompasses theories, research processes, innovative pedagogies, assessment methods, institutional context, and faculty support strategies and it typically includes the fundamental design elements that characterize interdisciplinary curriculum. An interdisciplinary curriculum aims to solve complex problems that cannot be addressed by a single discipline, using perspectives developed by different disciplines (Repko, 2007). Kockelmans (1979, as cited in Soupepez, 2016) defined the interdisciplinary concept as “solving a set of problems that can only be achieved by integrating the parts of existing discipline.” The need for interdisciplinary curricula arises from the increasing complexity of problems to be solved, and modern challenges largely possess an interdisciplinary nature (Soupepez, 2016). According to DeZure (1999), “life is interdisciplinary.” Considering this perspective, the teaching of all sciences necessitates an interdisciplinary approach. Therefore, programming the education and teaching process with an interdisciplinary approach is considered important. In this case, the integration of in-depth knowledge put forth by individual disciplines is especially necessary for the effective sustainability of the education and teaching process (Sağdıç & Demirkaya, 2014).

According to Soupepez (2016), one of the main and often overlooked benefits of interdisciplinary education is that it allows students to think thoroughly about their areas of expertise and helps them understand what disciplines entail. Indeed, this view makes the interdisciplinary teaching of history and geography, which have a close relationship with each other, almost necessary because the education-teaching process fundamentally aims to familiarize students with the working areas of different disciplines and how these areas function. According to Nissani (1997), the benefits of interdisciplinary learning and teaching are expressed as follows: more meaningful learning experiences, new opportunities arising from the transitions between two disciplines, demonstrating real-life applications, gaining diverse perspectives, flexibility in problem-solving, academic freedom, social change, critical thinking, building shared knowledge, establishing trust, encouraging creativity, and developing transferable skills.

At the student level, the most common benefit of an interdisciplinary curriculum approach is that it encourages students to connect ideas and concepts from various disciplines, fostering a constructive paradigm that leads to a deeper understanding (Soupepez, 2016). Achieving these benefits for students during the learning process is among the goals of instructional programs. These benefits largely support the development of high-order thinking skills. When examining the instructional programs of the Ministry of National Education (MEB) in Turkey, the importance given to interdisciplinary approaches and the development of high-order thinking skills is conveyed through the following statements: “...*a comprehensive set of instructional programs has been developed, which directs the use of high-order cognitive skills, ensures meaningful and permanent learning, is well-grounded and associated with prior knowledge, and integrates with other disciplines and daily life in terms of values, skills, and competencies.*” (MEB, 2018). The statement is included in all instructional programs prepared by the Ministry of National Education.

### 1.1. Purpose of the Research and Statement of the Problem

Given the nature of their content, it is both easy and essential to establish connections between topics in geography and history curricula. Therefore, implementing an interdisciplinary curriculum approach in these subjects is highly important. Establishing connections between the two disciplines at the curriculum level is not sufficient on its own because it is crucial for teachers, the practitioners of the program, to be aware of these connections, believe in their importance, and incorporate them into their teaching during the lesson delivery. Since there are very few studies that directly address the interdisciplinary relationship between history and geography in the literature (Zeren Akbulut, 2019), it is thought that the study will contribute to the field and guide teacher education. Therefore, in the research, the aim was to explore the use of an interdisciplinary approach by incorporating history into geography lessons, particularly from the perspective of teachers, who are the practitioners of this approach. To achieve this goal, the following questions were addressed in the research:

1. What are geography teachers' interest levels in history and the reasons behind their interest levels?
2. What are the opinions of geography teachers regarding the contributions of history to geography instruction?
3. What are the ways and forms in which geography teachers utilize history in their lessons?
4. What are the opinions of geography teachers regarding the support of the geography curriculum and textbooks for collaboration with the history discipline?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The research was designed using a qualitative research method, specifically a case study. In qualitative case studies, there is a search for meaning and understanding (Merriam, 2015). In a case study, the researcher examines a real-life situation, a current condition, or multiple situations within a specific time frame. When describing the situations, the researcher utilizes data obtained from interviews, documents, observations, and other relevant reports (Creswell, 2021). In the research, the aim was to describe geography teachers' interest in historical topics and their use of historical subjects by relating them to the geography curriculum. This description was based on data obtained from interview sessions.

## 2.1. Participants

The research was conducted in the central districts of Erzurum, and it involved 15 teachers who teach geography in secondary education institutions. The participants include 11 males and 4 females. The participants were selected using convenience sampling method (see Merriam, 2015). Five of the participants have 10-15 years of professional experience, four have 15-20 years of professional experience and three have 5-10 years of professional experience. On the other hand, the remaining three participants have 30-35, 20-25 and 0-5 years of professional experience. Some of the participant teachers mentioned that they had taken history courses during their undergraduate studies and that they collaborated with other teachers in group meetings while carrying out their profession. One of the teachers stated that he received training on other disciplines during an elementary school teaching certification program. Another teacher stated that he, individually, attended a course to improve his proficiency in the Turkish language and he read books related to subjects like history, literature, and about the importance of mathematics. Another teacher mentioned that although she did not receive specific training on other disciplines, she used various disciplines in her lessons to ensure permanent learning. However, none of the participant geography teachers have received any specific training in their undergraduate studies or afterwards regarding interdisciplinary learning in geography teaching or utilizing knowledge from other disciplines.

## 2.2. Data Collection Tools

A semi-structured interview form was used to collect data in the research. The preparation of the interview form began with a thorough review of the relevant literature, especially the research of Zeren Akbulut (2019) and specific questions were created. The questions were initially presented to expert faculty members in the field teaching history and geography, and based on their feedback, modifications were made to the questions. Then a piloting of the data collection tool was conducted with two geography teachers. Based on the feedback from the pilot study and the participant teachers' opinions, the data collection tool was finalized with necessary adjustments. The interview form contains questions aimed at revealing the following aspects regarding geography teachers: their experience in receiving training from other disciplines, their interest levels in history and the reasons behind it, their opinions regarding the contributions of history to geography instruction, the extent to which they utilize historical content in their lessons and the ways they use, their opinions on the extent to which geography curriculum and textbooks support collaboration with the history. The interviews took place between March 2021 and December 2021 either face-to-face in the researcher's office or in the schools where the teachers work. However, due to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, some interviews were conducted over the phone. Since detailed answers were received for each question, there was no need to interview the participants a second time. Written consent was obtained from the teachers during face-to-face interviews, and consent was obtained through email for phone interviews for teachers' voluntary participation.

## 2.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of extracting meaning from the data through an inductive and comparative method while seeking answers to research questions (Merriam, 2015). The data obtained from the interviews were transferred to a Word document on a computer. The data was then thoroughly read and analysed using content analysis, a qualitative research technique used in qualitative research. *"In content analysis, the fundamental process involves organizing similar data into specific concepts and themes and interpreting them in a way that the reader can understand"* (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, 259). During the analysis stage, the two researchers independently read the data that had been transcribed, and they created categories based on the content. Afterward, the researchers came together to compare the categories they had created and to ensure the alignment between the data and the categories. Through collaborative discussions, they refined and finalized the categories. In the research, the findings were tabulated, and they were presented with quotations from the participants. An effort was made to include quotations from all participants as much as possible. Quotations from the teachers were labelled with codes such as P (Participant) 1, P2, P3, ..., P15.

## 3. FINDINGS

In this section of the research, the findings were presented with tables and quotations from the participants.

### 3.1. Geography Teachers' Interest Levels in History and the Reasons Behind Their Interest Levels

In the interviews, geography teachers were asked about their interest levels in history and the reasons behind these interest levels. The findings from the interviews were presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1.

*Geography Teachers' Interest Levels in History*

Interest Level	f
High	9
Moderate	5
Low	1

It was observed that the interest of geography teachers in history was mostly at a high level. In the dimension of interest in history, nine teachers responded at a high level, five at a moderate level, and one at a low level. During the interviews, some teachers explained their interest in history with concrete examples. Seven teachers mentioned that they read history books as an indicator of their high interest in history. For instance, Teacher P2 stated that he was currently studying at a second university in the International Relations department, where the courses have a strong emphasis on history and he expressed a high interest in European history, particularly because the resources used in geography lessons were mostly of European origin. Teacher P1 mentioned that he engaged in small-scale studies in the field of historical geography and prepared scientific projects for TUBITAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey). Another teacher shared that he used history books while preparing his master's thesis. The reasons for geography teachers' interest levels in history were presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

*The Reasons for Geography Teachers' Interest Levels in History*

<b>The reasons for interest</b>	<b>cf</b>
Curiosity from the past	7
Professional necessity	5
Influence of the family	2
National sentiments	2
Desire to know their origins	1
Influence of history books	1
Affection towards the Ottoman Empire	1
Desire to learn our history more accurately	1
<b>The reasons for lack of interest</b>	
The memorization required in history	1

The most significant reasons for geography teachers' interest in history are their curiosity from the past and the professional necessity related to their teaching profession. Teachers mentioned the relationship between the two disciplines and the contribution of history to geography regarding professional necessity. The frequency of expressing other opinions is relatively lower. The views of "influence of the family" and "national sentiments" were mentioned twice, while the views on "desire to know their origins," "influence of history books," "affection towards the Ottoman Empire," and "desire to learn our history more accurately" were expressed once each. In this regard, two teachers did not provide a specific reason, while one teacher stated that history requires memorization, and due to lack of memorization skills, his interest in history was lower. The following statement are cited from the teachers' opinions:

P 1: "My interest in history is moderate. It is related to our field of study as geography teachers. There is a saying by Carl Ritter that 'Geography and History are two sisters.' I have engaged in small-scale studies in the field of historical geography. Last year, I prepared a scientific project for TUBITAK...I am currently reading a book titled *Historical Geography* written by a professor from Faculty of Language, History, and Geography in Ankara University.... Generally, geographers ask me how I know so much about history. I love history, and I have had various readings, especially in this field ..."

P 5: "If I were to compare myself to a university student studying history at an undergraduate level, I would consider myself at a moderate level. My father is a graduate of art high school. But we had a large library at our home. Most of these books were history books. I believe there was İsmail Hami Danişment's "Türkiye Tarihi" among them. Bekir Büyükkarın's historical novels such as "Suların Gölgesinde," "Gün Batarken" and "Tanyeri,". I had read them in secondary school. There were also Kara Murat and Tarkan magazines. They were not films, but they were magazines in a weekly publication format, and we used to buy them every week... Can you imagine this? While reading these magazines, I was in the first or second grade of elementary school. These memories take me back to the 1980s..."

P 6: "Let's say it's a moderate level... Maybe we can even say it's slightly above moderate. I have read some of Ahmet Cevdet Paşa's "Tarihi Cevdet," and I have at least skimmed through Yılmaz Öztuna's "Büyük Türkiye Tarihi." I've read two books from "Yalan Söyleyen Tarih Utansın, so I love history. Our history is a mirror of our future. Our interest in history comes from a desire to keep our national feelings at a higher level and to learn about our past more accurately ..."

P 9: "My level of interest in history is high. Everyone might consider it high, but I really have a profound passion for history. In fact, I regret not studying history formally. I've had this curiosity since elementary school. I have read numerous books in historical fields, including historical novels. Of course, historical novels can't be the primary source of learning history. However, when we can make connections and establish links with real historical events, we can approach the subject more consciously."

P 10: "My level of interest in history used to be low in the past, then it became moderate. Now, it is high. My curiosity about history is related to knowing my roots and origins. As time went by, I realized that while describing geography, I started to establish better connections with history. .... I know geography very well, but to explain it better, I need to

*have a good knowledge of history as well. I have researched, asked questions, and learned from the internet to acquire this knowledge. Lately, I have been reading historical books extensively, particularly enjoying informative historical books. Knowing one's past helps establish a stronger connection with geography. It allows me to perceive events more clearly and explain them better. That's why my current interest in history is high".*

P 12: *"My interest level is high. I am interested in civilizations, people, and cultures that lived in the past. My father was also interested in history and used to read a lot of historical books. He used to say, "If a person doesn't know his past, he can't determine his future." I prefer reading historical books because they captivate my interest. The reason behind my interest in history is family-related".*

P 15: *"I am very interested in history, especially reading about Ottoman history. The reasons behind my passion are my deep admiration for the Ottoman Empire and my curiosity about how they managed to sustain their state for 600 years. I find it fascinating to learn about the actions of some Ottoman sultans in maintaining the order of the state, although not all of them".*

### 3.2. Geography Teachers' Opinions on the Contributions of History to Geography Education

Geography teachers' opinions regarding the contributions of history to geography education were asked, and the findings were presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3.

*Geography Teachers' Opinions Regarding the Contributions of History to Geography Education*

Opinions	F
Believe that there is a contribution	15
Believe that there is no contribution	-

As seen in Table 3, all participating geography teachers believe that history contributes to geography education. The teachers' opinions regarding the contributions of history to geography education were presented in Table 4.

Table 4.

*Contributions of History to Geography According to Geography Teachers*

Contributions	f
Making certain topics understandable	7
Attracting and capturing students' interest and attention	3
Understanding geological eras	2
Instilling a sense of national consciousness	2
Ensuring permanent learning	1
Deepening the subjects	1
Enabling the teacher to have a better grasp of the topics taught	1
Making the lesson enjoyable	1
Showing the impact of geography on historical events	1
Helping students grasp the geographical importance of Turkey	1
Helping students understand our relationships with neighbouring countries	1
Developing children's perspectives on events	1
Raising conscious citizens.	1

Geography teachers have expressed that history is related to geography, specially making significant contributions to the fields of human geography and economic geography. Geography teachers have stated that history contributes most to explaining, understanding, and concretizing geography topics. The second-ranked opinion of teachers is that history is beneficial in attracting students' attention to the subject and fostering their interest and motivation. The third-ranked opinion is about its contributions to understanding geological eras and instilling a sense of national consciousness. Teachers have expressed their opinions once regarding the following contributions of history: ensuring permanent learning, deepening the subjects, enabling the teacher to have a better grasp of the topics, making the lesson enjoyable, showing the impact of geography on historical events, helping students grasp the geographical importance of Turkey, introducing our neighbours and understanding our relationships with them, developing children's perspectives on events, and nurturing conscious citizens. Some teacher opinions are quoted as follows:

P 2: *"Having a high level of historical knowledge allows me to explain events more profoundly.... For instance, when discussing economic policies, we need to cover the economic policies that started with the establishment of our republic. These topics are also part of history. While others may have a superficial understanding of these topics, my affinity for history enables me to delve deeper and provide more information. When talking about population, for example, we refer to the first population census. Why did the Ottoman Empire feel the need for a census? Initially, they conducted male population counts. Why male population? However, without understanding the reasons behind these*

counts, students may fail to grasp their significance fully. Therefore, we need to relate these censuses to historical events. When students ask why such a census was conducted, we can explain that this was done to assess the available manpower for military purposes, especially during times of war. Nevertheless, in Scandinavian countries, the census served different purposes and was not related to war. When we fail to convey this broader perspective to students, and neglect explaining the military needs during the Ottoman Empire's decline, the topic remains superficially understood".

P 5: "In geography, there are geological eras, and in history, there are historical ages. When I explain the oldest geological eras, I tell the children, "You know about historical ages, right? Geological eras are like them." They have been familiar with historical ages since childhood, from around the fourth grade of elementary school, so I try to convey that these are also geographical ages. They encounter geological eras for the first time in the 9th grade".

P6: "Of course, history and geography are the foundation of social sciences.... When explaining the physical structure of the Caucasus, I make a reference to the Caucasian Front to capture the students' attention. We ask why the Caucasus is important for us... Similarly, when discussing Cyprus, I mention that it was once entirely connected to Turkey before the Mediterranean submerged, and I talk about the Cyprus Peace Operation.... When we delve into history, we can instantly go back to the conquest of Cyprus and even as far back as the 1500s. What does this lead to? When we correctly present the connection and relationship between history and geography, we see that they complement each other. History and geography are interconnected; when we integrate them, the enjoyment of the lesson and the appreciation for geography increase. By simplifying the content to the students' level, they find joy in learning. It is essential to convey both national history and national geography. History can be national, and so can geography. The area we live in is our national geography. I am one of the teachers who enjoy using these connections, and I cannot separate them".

P 7: "History has significant contributions to geography education in the tenth grade including topics like cultural centres, geographical discoveries, and transportation systems and in the eleventh grade including the history of civilizations and the first civilizations established in Anatolia. These are the contributions of history to geography education. For example, we refer to Anatolia as the cradle of civilizations. Which civilizations were established? how long did they last, and what cultural heritage did they leave behind? We then synthesize this knowledge with geography to deliver the information. History significantly aids us, especially in these areas. History contributes to understanding and teaching geographical topics by making abstract concepts more concrete. Let me illustrate this with an example: For instance, where was the Urartian established geographically? In Van. History helps us understand by concretising them through topics like the Urartian's early agricultural systems, the fortresses they left behind, and the artifacts found there ...".

P13: "...When talking about human events, such as migration, we inevitably refer to history. History and geography are intertwined in a way particularly in human geography. I believe that history contributes significantly to geography. When I explain the historical context first and then delve into geographical topics, it becomes easier to understand. Sometimes students interrupt the class, saying, "Our lesson is not about history!" However, there are certain topics, such as the migration of tribes or settled life, where we must use history while teaching them".

P 14: "To explain the current situation of any country, one needs to know its historical development. For example, in China, there was a one-child policy, but now it has been changed to a two-child policy. What factors have influenced this policy change? History contributes to understanding historical processes. Especially in human and economic geography, history makes contribution".

P 15: "Exactly, of course. While discussing geographical areas, plains, and geographical locations, we can provide examples of their historical development. People have struggled to possess these lands. We can use this while explaining the geographical location of Anatolia, emphasizing its suitable climate and soil".

### 3.3. The Way and Forms of History Geography Teachers Use in the Lessons

One of the questions asked to geography teachers is about their utilization of history in their lessons and, if they do use history, how they utilize it. The findings were presented in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5.  
*Geography Teachers' Utilization of History in Their Lessons*

Utilization Status	F
Utilizing	15
Not utilizing	-

As seen in Table 5, all geography teachers make use of history. It can be observed that the teachers share the idea that "utilizing history is a necessity", according to the viewpoint of participant P2. The teachers expressed the frequency of their utilization of



history as follows: “generally,” “when necessary,” intensively,” “to the best of their ability,” “frequently,” and “whenever possible.” The forms of teachers’ utilization of history were shown in Table 6.

Table 6.

*The Forms of Geography Teachers’ Utilization of History*

Forms of Utilization	F
Mentioning historical processes of topics	11
Talking about origins (firsts)	6
Presenting topics by relating them to history	6
Discussing the impact of historical events on geography	5
Utilizing emotions and consciousness transfer	4
Establishing connections between historical ages and geological eras	2
Demonstrating changes	2
Applying the principle of relevance to current events	2
Explaining the history of geography and geographers	1
Screening documentaries related to history	1

It is observed that geography teachers most frequently utilize history in the form of “mentioning historical processes, in other words, chronological development” of topics. The views that teachers mentioned with the same frequency afterwards are “talking about origins (firsts)” and “presenting topics by relating them to history.” Teachers have expressed that they utilize history in discussing topics related to origins (firsts), such as the first settlements, the first civilizations, the first cultural centres, the first population census, and the first forest fire. Regarding the association of topics with history, teachers have stated that they refer to history in appropriate subjects and teach their lessons by providing examples from history. The forms of utilization that teachers have mentioned ranked moderate are “discussing the impact of historical events on geography” and “utilizing emotions and consciousness transfer.” Especially regarding the utilization of emotions and consciousness transfer, it is observed that teachers emphasize national sentiments. Teachers have mentioned the forms of “establishing connections between historical ages and geological eras,” “demonstrating changes,” and “applying the principle of relevance to current events” two times each. On the other hand, the forms of “explaining the history of geography and geographers” and “screening documentaries related to history” were mentioned once each and ranked lower in the responses. Some teachers during the interviews state that incorporating the first two forms of utilization, demonstrating changes, and explaining the history of geography and geographers have already been required by the curriculum. Here are some quotes from the teachers’ opinions:

*P 1: “We utilize history within the topics in our curriculum. For instance, when discussing transportation, I talk about the history of transportation and mention the efforts of Abdulaziz and Abdulhamit in this field. While delivering our lessons, especially in economic geography and human geography, I delve into historical processes. When explaining industry, I mention the Izmir Economic Congress. Similarly, when teaching population geography, I talk about the historical development of the population”.*

*P 2: “In my lessons, I frequently utilize history. For instance, the reason for the emergence of the first civilizations in this region can be attributed to the availability of geographical location. We can say that the climate has a significant effect on the presence of the first civilizations in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Mediterranean basin. When explaining why the historical artifacts of civilizations in Mesopotamia did not reach our time, we refer to the geographical climate. We also discuss the Egyptian civilization, highlighting that its historical significance as a strong civilization and its distinctiveness can be attributed to the desert landscapes that surrounded it”.*

*P 3: “Yes, I try to utilize history as much as possible in my lessons. Especially when discussing migration, I use the historical development of migrations”.*

*P 6: “...For example, I mostly utilize history through verbal lecturing. When necessary, I mention historical events briefly during the lessons. I also use history for conveying emotions and consciousness to my students....”.*

*P 7: “Especially regarding history, we can emphasize the historical days of our city, or at least the city where we teach and receive education. For instance, Atatürk’s arrival in Erzurum and the Erzurum Congress are directly related to both history and the historical and geographical aspects of Erzurum. Apart from these, we are currently in May. The conquest of Istanbul took place on May 29th. Perhaps it is one of the greatest victories in Turkish history, and it is essential to emphasize these topics. While describing the geography, I mention these subjects. However, when narrating Atatürk’s arrival in Erzurum, I provide independent information. While discussing topics related to Atatürk, I also offer independent facts about the city. Regarding the conquest of Istanbul, let’s assume that today is May 29th, and I have a class to teach. Here’s how I approach it: After entering the classroom, before introducing my geography lesson, using the principle of relevance in education, I ask questions like, ‘What is significant about today? What does this date remind you of?’ This way, we can create an activity that not only imparts geographical knowledge to our students but also encourages them to understand their past, fostering a connection with history”.*



P 8: "Certainly yes... I benefit from it when connecting historical eras with geological eras. Moreover, the evolution of geography as a scientific discipline throughout history, the works of ancient Turkish or foreign geographers and their academic studies, the history of cartography, the developmental process and stages of maps, the changes in economic activities and settlements throughout history, population censuses in history, and the transformations in population policies... These are the ones that come to my mind. These topics, especially when linked to history, help to enrich our lessons".

P11: "I use history in almost every lesson. To instil a sense of patriotism in children, I provide relevant historical examples during discussions. When describing countries, I motivate students by incorporating historical topics into the lessons."

P 12: "I try my best to incorporate history into geography lessons. However, due to time constraints and the need to cover the subject matter, I cannot use it as extensively. Nevertheless, whenever I use historical content, I find that showing a documentary related to the topic helps students grasp the subject better".

### 3.4. Geography Teachers' Opinions Regarding the Collaboration of Geography Curriculum and Textbooks with the Discipline of History

Geography teachers were asked about their opinions on the collaboration of the geography curriculum and textbooks with the discipline of history. The findings were presented in Table 7.

Table 7.

*The Level of Support for Collaboration Between the Geography Curriculum and Textbooks with the Discipline of History According to Geography Teachers*

	Adequate	Adequate but needs to be improved	Inadequate	Not specified
Curriculum	1	6	6	2
Textbook	1	5	7	2

It was identified that geography teachers considered the integration of history into the curriculum and textbooks inadequate. However, it is also observed that in almost equal frequency, they consider the curriculum and textbooks adequate but believe there are areas that need to be improved. One of the teachers (P 4) stated that historical topics are included in the textbooks as reading texts and suggested that instead of brief excerpts, there should be more extensive content about history. Another teacher (P 10) suggested that historical information should be presented in textbooks in the form of information pool. On the other hand, another teacher (P 5) proposed that the historical context from the first unit should be integrated into other units throughout the curriculum. Two teachers (P 8 and P10) emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts, particularly the integration of history and geography through group studies. In addition, two teachers (P 9 and P 15) pointed out that the intensity of the curriculum hinders the integration of history with geography. However, three teachers (P2, P7, P10) pointed out that the main responsibility for integrating history lies with the teacher. P2, who finds the textbook inadequate, expressed his views as follows: "I see that there is a lack of historical topics in the geography textbook. In fact, the reflection of history depends more on the teacher than the book." Here are some quotes from the teachers' opinions:

P 4: "Yes, it has been supported... History should be given more inclusion in the geography curriculum and textbooks, with a perspective that draws more lessons from the past. Historical topics are generally presented as reading texts in the textbooks. The content should be covered more extensively".

P 5: "Adding the historical development of geography and Turkish geographers and scientists interested in geography to the 9th-grade geography textbook is a beneficial step. However, in my opinion, this first unit can be interspersed. This should not only be limited to the first unit but spread throughout all units. For example, when explaining Earth's roundness, we should mention Galileo, who was the first to propose this idea. When historical context is provided at the right moment, children are more likely to remember it. Because when everything is presented all at once, it ends abruptly. The child doesn't go back and revisit that unit again. At the beginning of the four-year education process, during the first exam, the child studies. In the remaining 3.5 years, there is no need to go back that content. The initial efforts are good. Hopefully, there will be more to come. There are positive developments, but it's not entirely adequate yet".

P 8: "I cannot say it is adequate for the program. There are inevitably some difficulties... In the new curriculum, there is not much connection between geography and history. Only in the initial topics, there is a historical process of geography, with examples of the interaction between nature and humans. In addition to that, there is also a history of cartography. In the old curriculum, interdisciplinary connections were not very intense... However, this matter absolutely requires collaborative efforts and coordination. When we discuss this in our group meetings, we write it down on paper, but we don't implement it..., emphasis should be placed on the collaboration between teams, especially on history and geography cooperation".

*P 10: "As of now, it is inadequate. For instance, our ninth and tenth-grade curricula have changed. Significant historians have been added to the ninth-grade geography curriculum. However, the topics related to history are quite inadequate. This inadequacy applies to the history curriculum as well. For example, when describing Sarıkamış, there should be an information pool about the harsh continental climate of eastern Anatolia. Neither in history nor in geography has there been much interdisciplinary connection. These connections can be provided to students within information pool. This connection is insufficient across all grade levels. There is no such connection in the textbooks. Only in ninth grades, where there are more class hours available, these topics can be addressed more comprehensively. This can be achieved through the teacher's own efforts. It can be carried out with teachers during group meetings".*

*P13: "I don't believe that the geography curriculum adequately incorporates history. However, I believe that history books should include more information about geography. Currently, there is significant focus on migration in history, but not enough attention is given to other topics related to geography".*

*P 14: "In the 9th grade, we can mention the historical development of geography. Apart from that, there isn't much. Aristotle, Piri Reis, etc., have contributed to geography. In the 11th grade, there is the historical development of economic policies and population policies implemented in Turkey. The human geography topics in the 11th and 12th grades are also relevant to history. In my opinion, this is normal and adequate. Could there be a better program than this? More benefit could be derived from history".*

#### 4. RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the research, it was observed that geography teachers, during their undergraduate studies, take courses from other disciplines. However, they do not receive an education that specifically utilizes knowledge from other disciplines in geography education, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. It is understood that, apart from establishing collaboration with other disciplines during subject group meetings, some teachers personally show interest in other disciplines by participating in relevant courses and reading books. The fact that teachers do not receive training in this content during their undergraduate education or professional careers suggests a lack of an interdisciplinary teaching approach. Indeed, it is suggested in conducted studies that teacher candidates should be provided with interdisciplinary education during their teacher training process (Sağdıç & Demirkaya, 2014), and teachers should receive in-service training on interdisciplinary education during their professional career (Zeren Akbulut, 2019). These recommendations also indicate that there is a lack of an interdisciplinary approach in the teacher training and in-service education programs implemented in Turkey.

It has been observed that geography teachers generally have a high interest level in history. In terms of interest in history, nine teachers responded with high, five with moderate, and one with low interest level. The most significant reasons for geography teachers' interest in history are their longstanding curiosity about history and the professional necessity.

Teachers have mentioned the relationship between the two disciplines and the contribution of history to geography in terms of professional necessity. The views on "family influence," "national sentiments," "desire to know one's origins," "historical artifacts in the library," "love for the Ottoman history," and "the desire to learn our past more accurately" were expressed less frequently. In a research conducted by Jolley and Ayala (2015) with three history teachers and one geography teacher, it was revealed that the teachers were individually interested in geology and archaeology (due to its relevance to historical content), even though they were not directly related to geoarchaeology. Furthermore, they demonstrated personal efforts to acquire more knowledge in these areas. Without even program requirements, it is observed that teachers' individual curiosity enables them to acquire knowledge in different fields.

All geography teachers who participated in the research believe that history contributes to geography education. Teachers stated that history particularly plays a significant role in explaining, understanding, and making geography topics more tangible. Teachers also expressed their views on various contributions of history to geography education, including attracting students' attention and ensuring interest and motivation, understanding geological eras, fostering national consciousness, facilitating permanent learning, deepening the subjects, enabling teachers to be competent on topics, making the lessons enjoyable, demonstrating the impact of geography on historical events, helping students grasp the geographical significance of Turkey, introducing neighboring countries and understanding our relations with them, developing children's perspectives on events, and contributing to citizenship education. In the research conducted by Zeren Akbulut (2019), geography and history teachers expressed their views on the benefits of interdisciplinary teaching including creating cultural awareness, developing expression skills, enhancing transferability of knowledge, fostering analytical thinking and communication skills, and contributing to academic achievement.

In line with the findings obtained in the research, there are other researches that emphasize the importance of this interdisciplinary approach as a significant factor in fostering active student learning (Fisher, 1998 as cited in Hassen, 2015). Vale et al. (2012, as cited in Jolley and Ayala, 2015) also state that in curricula designed with an interdisciplinary approach, students using collaborative interdisciplinary methods will increase their motivation to solve new problems, strengthen their own discipline-specific skills, and learn interdisciplinary communication practices. Jolley and Ayala (2015) state that the interdisciplinary approach, supported by pre-developed curricula and additional resources, will largely contribute to students

in geography education. These positive findings are parallel to the results of this research. According to Karvanková and Popjaková (2018), geography, as a science, lies at the intersection of social, technical, and natural sciences. Due to its content, geography can easily relate to social themes such as social sciences, education, and history. In addition, Karvanková and Popjaková (2018) state that teachers are not very successful in fostering a holistic perspective in their students regarding nature and its interconnected components. They point out that students have difficulty understanding geography topics because they cannot establish connections between them. The reason for this difficulty is attributed to traditional teaching methods and indirectly to the curriculum. Karvanková and Popjaková (2018) argue that the fundamental way to learn a subject effectively and permanently is to present it with all its components and connections. In this regard, they propose that an interdisciplinary approach is the key principle. These views align with the findings of this research, which suggest that history, and accordingly an interdisciplinary approach, facilitate permanent and effective learning in geography lessons. Jolley and Ayala (2015), in line with the mentioned studies, reached the conclusion that students not only achieve geoarchaeological gains but also see the benefits of connecting disciplines to each other. They expressed that such an approach is enjoyable and fun. There are also various studies indicating that delivering geography topics through an interdisciplinary approach is found to be quite enjoyable by students (Craven, 2011; Greenwood, 2013; Jolley & Ayala, 2015). In Craven's (2011) research, which examined an inspiring series of case studies on geography education in schools in the United Kingdom, students prepared a personal heritage and learning journal that included researching their names (first names and surnames), family origins, and changing communities. The statement "students had the opportunity to examine the streets they lived in and see how they changed over time" provides content that supports the teachers' view in the research regarding the contribution of using history in geography education to citizenship education.

All geography teachers utilize history. It is observed that the teachers share K 2' opinion, "*using history is a necessity.*" It is observed that teachers mostly benefit from history in the form of "discussing the historical processes of topics, in other words, chronological development of topics". Teachers have then expressed their use of history in the following order: "mentioning firsts (origins or roots)," "narrating topics by relating them to history," "discussing the impact of geography on historical events," "using it for emotion and consciousness transfer," "establishing connections between historical ages and geological eras," "showing change," "utilizing the principle of relevance," "explaining the history of geography and geographers", and "showing documentaries related to history." During the subject group meetings, some teachers have stated that the ways of discussing historical processes and origins, as well as demonstrating change and explaining the history of geography and geographers, are already required by the curriculum. Sağdıç and Demirkaya (2014) emphasize that the interdisciplinary teaching method is not only a requirement of the curriculum but also a method that geography teachers sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously apply, and this method is indispensable. Furthermore, Sağdıç and Demirkaya (2014) refer to the fact that geography teachers mostly communicate with history teachers, and this connection is closely related to the emergence of history and geography sciences, fundamentally based on the relationship between time and place. Indeed, the teachers' expression of establishing a connection between history and geography while explaining topics during the research supports the notion that it is a natural process. This conclusion further supports that geography teachers establish connections with historical topics while presenting their subjects and utilize history to make the topics more concrete and easily understandable. In the research conducted by Alim and Doğanay (2016), geography teachers expressed that when it comes to collaboration in geography classes, especially in the 10th and 12th grades, they consider history as the primary subject with which they can cooperate due to shared topics. In the research conducted by Zeren Akbulut (2019), geography teachers similarly identified various topics where connections could be established between history and geography. Craven's research (2011) likely supports the view that geography teachers can benefit from history for "emotional and conscious transfer." Craven's (2011) historical geography study aimed to encourage students and teachers to think about themselves, their identity, belonging, and their place within their communities in an interdisciplinary manner.

The compatibility of curricula and textbooks is essential in establishing interdisciplinary relationships between subjects. The findings from Scoffham's research (2016) regarding the growing emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches as students' progress through different grade levels align with the notion that teachers sometimes establish connections with historical topics out of necessity due to curriculum requirements. According to Scoffham (2016), as students advance to higher grades, the topics become more comprehensive, leading to an increase in the content supporting interdisciplinary subjects. Consequently, the research concludes that as students progress to higher grade levels, there is a more pronounced emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches supported by the curriculum. In contrast, Greenwood (2013) concluded that as the grade level advances in primary school, there is a decline in curriculum-based interdisciplinary connections between subjects. Greenwood (2013) pointed out that topics are presented more broadly in elementary school and as the grade level increases, a more discipline-focused approach is adopted. The reason for this shift is attributed to the Irish education system's requirement for more discipline-focused examinations. The studies conducted by Scoffham (2016) and Greenwood (2013) have indicated that one of the most crucial factors for the implementation of an interdisciplinary approach in schools is the support of the relevant curriculum for this approach. Greenwood (2013) mentions in his research that, when explaining why teachers opt for cross-curricular approaches at certain levels, a considerable number of teachers cited the school's policy of using interdisciplinary approaches. In Turkey, since lessons are mainly conducted according to centralized educational programs rather than individual school policies, the teachers in the research stated that they established connections based on the curriculum's outlined relationships. Our research revealed that geography teachers perceive the program and textbooks as inadequate in terms of incorporating them with history. It was observed in almost equal frequency that teachers found the program and textbooks adequate, but they also believed that there were aspects that needed improvement. Teachers have suggested several

improvements including more extensive historical content in textbooks, presenting historical information in an information pool, integrating historical aspects from the first unit into other units, reducing the curriculum's intensity, and placing particular importance on history-geography collaboration through subject group studies. In a research conducted by Zeren Akbulut (2019) with history and geography teachers, geography teachers presented recommendations on how to implement interdisciplinary approaches such as providing in-service training on the application of interdisciplinary methods, preparing textbooks that showcase examples of such practices, and designing curricula across different subject areas and simultaneously, and incorporating history and geography courses in teacher education programs at education faculties. In a research conducted by Alim and Doğanay (2016), it was revealed that nearly all geography teachers believed that interdepartmental collaboration and cooperation among colleagues enhance success.

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations can be proposed:

Živković et al. (2017) asserted that in order for teachers to integrate innovative teaching models into their daily instructional practices, they should be introduced to these models during their learning process and be given continuous professional development to keep them motivated. Interdisciplinary teaching approach provides more dynamism in the planning and implementation of a specific problem. The connection between the science and social sciences curricula and the geography curriculum highlights the importance of providing students with interdisciplinary access to geographical phenomena, processes, and laws, enabling them to acquire more productive, permanent, and practical knowledge (Živković et al. 2017). Therefore, based on the results of this research and other related research (Baerwald, 2010; Bryce, 1886; Greenwood, 2013; Jolley & Ayala, 2015; Scoffham, 2016; Živković et al., 2017), it is believed that adopting an interdisciplinary approach for all subjects and preparing curricula accordingly would contribute to an increase in the quality of education. The strong interdependence between history and geography subjects requires an interdisciplinary approach.

Another suggestion is to enrich geography teachers' understanding of geography teaching by diversifying their approaches and incorporating effective teaching methods that involve exploring various knowledge domains (Bryce, 1886). Bryce (1886) articulates his intention in his lessons to explore the intersections between geography and history studies and to reflect on the kind of geographical knowledge that a history teacher requires for success. This notion emphasizes the importance of not only geography teachers but also history teachers adopting an interdisciplinary approach by incorporating geography into their teaching. This emphasis highlights the necessity for geography teachers to receive training in interdisciplinary teaching methods.

Through the implementation of an interdisciplinary approach in teaching, students can gain a clearer understanding of the subject matter across various disciplines. According to the Nuffield Primary History website (as cited in Hayes, 2010), 'interdisciplinary learning' is seen as a creative method to enrich children's knowledge, skills, and comprehension and motivates them to learn through interconnected topics. Thus, it is believed that crossing the boundaries of disciplines will enable children to embark on explorations that stimulate their imagination and encourage active questioning, initiative-taking, and engaging in discussions about various topics.

Lastly, providing training to teacher candidates who will implement geography teaching programs based on an interdisciplinary approach is crucial for their future professional careers. Teacher candidates should not only receive instruction on other disciplines but should also undergo practical training in implementing interdisciplinary teaching. Sağdıç and Demirkaya (2014) highlights the importance of including training on how to implement interdisciplinary teaching in the teacher training process for educators who will be practitioners of an interdisciplinary program. Additionally, as highlighted in the literature (Zeren Akbulut, 2019), in-service training should also be provided to current teachers to equip them with interdisciplinary education.

### **Research and Publication Ethics Statement**

Ethical issues were taken into consideration in the research. First of all, ethical approval was obtained for the research with the decision of Atatürk University, Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee, Educational Sciences Unit Ethics Committee dated 18.02.2021 and numbered 02/11. Before the interviews, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research and that their identity information would be kept confidential and their consent was obtained with the voluntary participation form.

### **Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article**

It can be said that the authors took responsibility in all stages of the study. However, the first author played a more active role in data analysis and writing the findings section, the second author played a more active role in data analysis, writing the introduction and discussion section, and the third author played a more active role in data collection.

### **Statement of Interest**

The authors declared no conflicts of interest with respect to the research.

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