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# Main Challenges in Front of the Teachers to Teach Geography More Effectively: A Phenomenological Research

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the main challenges geography teachers face in providing a more efficient geography education and the solutions teachers come up with against these issues. In order to be more effective in geography teaching, identifying and producing solutions for the issues that geography teachers go through within the context of school administration, students, parents and other branch teachers is among the first measures that need to be taken. Phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. As a part of the study, semi-structured interviews were held with 212 voluntary geography teachers from nine different provinces of Turkey, and the obtained results were analyzed using descriptive analysis. According to the obtained findings, two third of the geography teachers state that they have problems with parents, more than half with the school administration and students, and more than one third with other branch teachers. By extension, it can be seen that the majority of geography teachers face problems with parents, students and school administration, the key shareholders of education. In an effort to turn the current situation around, applied trainings assisted by case studies may be provided to improve geography teachers' conflict management, adolescent psychology, problem solving and communication skills. Furthermore, projects that will turn the socio-cultural environment of the school into a center of attraction and promote participation may be designed to spark parents' interest in education. Lastly, school administrators may be suggested to take measures in terms of both in-service training and material and learning environment that are aimed at inclining teachers towards using student-oriented active learning methods and techniques in order to generate interest and motivation in students towards lessons.

## Keywords

Challenges, Teaching Geography, Phenomenological Research, Geography Teachers, Turkey

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Although it is impossible to provide accurate information about its history, teaching has become a modern profession only after undergoing certain phases. 7). Teaching profession is defined as an occupational field of professional status that requires vocational training, with education-related social, cultural, economic, scientific and technological dimensions (Hacıoğlu and Alkan, 1997; Kaya, Durmaz, 2015, p. 72). Although there are many variables in the field of education that have an impact on success, teachers are the leading factor among the most important ones. 43). Therefore, one can say that an educational system is only as competent as the teachers in it (Kaya, 2012, p. 177).

It is a widely accepted fact that education plays the most important role in a country's development and a prosperous and peaceful living for the society. One of the leading shareholders in providing this education, teachers hold certain traits that affect the quality of education. It is for this reason that teachers take on a critical duty in a country's development and advancement (Özdemir, Yalın ve Sezgin, 2008; Vural, 2004; Erdemir, 2007; Sarı ve Altun, 2015, p. 213). The quality of the education and individual is largely a reflection of the quality of the teacher (Açıkgöz, 2003; Adıgüzel, 2008; Aydın, 2004; Binbaşoğlu, 1995; Demir ve Çamlı, 2011; Erçetin ve Özdemir, 2004; Öztürk, Kaya, Durmaz, 2015, p. 72).

Today, teachers must possess the mental and educational competencies that will allow them to evaluate, select and synthesize the information and earnings students acquire from a broad array of information sources (Aladağ, 2003, p. 8). Teachers are no longer sources of information, but have rather focused their efforts on how and where to use the information, studying its relation with the needs of the individual, society and humanity, its conformance with the requirements of the current age and the society, and render life valuable for all humanity. This, in turn, brings up the issue of quality for the profession of teaching (Duman, 1991, p. 268).

As a matter of fact, the studies in the literature shows the notion that, except for some matters, geography teachers do not possess sufficient skills for teaching and conducting classes effectively is gaining prominence. And this lack of skill can be ranked among the factors that have a negative impact, which prevents students in secondary education institutions from paying attention to and study geography lessons, and seeing it as interesting, fun and topical. 38).

A teacher who aspires to perform their profession in adherence to the modern education and training principles should not be considered as a person who merely gives lectures, holds exams and gives marks; in addition to giving lectures, a teacher should also take on the tasks of organization, management, guidance, observation and evaluation (Temel, 1988, p. 21).

Oğuzkan (1989) defines the attributes of the modern teacher as individuals who adjust their values, look for resources, identify difficulties, establish interdisciplinary links, foster human relations, give counseling on choice of profession and spare time activities, help examining and learning about the environment, assist and lead students in preparing

for their occupation, are regarded as experts in teaching and learning, and well-versed in future processes and making good use of what is available (Oğuzkan, 1989, p. 41).

It is the teacher who will manage the education system and teach individuals. The duty expected from a teacher is to plan and engage in educational and training activities that will contribute to bringing up individuals with universal knowledge, values, skills and manners in line with societal expectations and the goals of the Turkish national education. Teachers should be able to adept themselves to the social and technological developments while doing so (Baki, 2009, p. 62). This adaptation can help generate a readily available and sustainable qualified human resource, through which nations can achieve happiness and prosperity. Teacher is the most crucial person in providing individuals with the insight brought about by the shifting needs of nations necessary for sustaining a happy and prosperous existence, and teaching the ways to utilize this insight (Kaya, 2014).

Since teachers constitute one of the most fundamental components of the education system, the problems they are faced with certainly have a direct impact on the education system. As a natural result, teachers struggling with problems will not be able to make the desired contribution to the structure and mechanism of the education system. 294). Moreover, having to perform their professions in such difficult conditions causes teachers to lose their faith in their professions (Gömleksiz, Ülkü, Biçer and Yetkiner, 2010; Sarı and Altun, 2015, p. 213). Like all other teachers, geography teachers, too, perform their duties in accordance with the principles and objectives set out by the Ministry of National Education, and during which they are confronted with various professional problems (Şahin, 2001, p. 60).

It can be said that there are numerous obstacles in the way of geography teachers for providing a better geography education. These, however, can be roughly divided into two categories; system-related problems and problems encountered in the field of geography education. One of the examples to the problems encountered in the field of geography education is teachers' wide use of teaching methods that is based on explaining concepts (Artvinli, 2010a). One of its primary underlying reasons is the overpopulation of classrooms and behavioral training teachers formerly received. On the other hand, the lack of in-service training support for geography teachers and an education that will present them with proper guidance and activity using the necessary and relevant materials can be given among the examples of qualitative problems faced in geography education.

In order to realize targeted earnings and to reach designed targets in students, it is highly important to raise teachers who are program implementers. With this purpose, it needs to increase academic research that would serve raising teachers of higher quality. Besides attitudes of teachers, candidates of teacher and students towards geography courses should be displayed rationally (Geçit, 2010, p. 983). Geography teachers need to follow a more innovative path to be able to provide a more effective geography education. Geography teachers describe how a more innovative teacher should be as follows: more of the trip-observation method, participate in the social projects, attend the conferences and seminars, receive post-graduate education and use educational technologies effectively” (Artvinli, 2017, p. 21).

In another study, regarding the obstacles in the way of an effective geography education, geography teachers state that they run into problems in the application of geography curriculum (Artvinli, 2010b). According to the results of the said study, looking at the most common three items regarding the "obstacles" in the way of the application of geography curriculum that geography teachers "completely agree", "Students coming from primary education lacking sufficient geographical knowledge and skills" ranks number one. This item is followed secondly by "School administration not attaching priority to the application of the program" and "Lack of sufficient support from school administration regarding the material problem and other issues for the application of the program", both sharing the same ratio. And "Classroom environment not being favorable for student-oriented learning" follows them as the third most significant problem. Moreover, the choice of "Program approach seeming hard and complicated due to the insufficiency of the training provided to teachers on realizing program earnings" also ranks high on the list (Artvinli, 2010b, p. 1978-1979). On the other hand, according to Değirmenci and Ilter (2017), the majority of the teachers stated that they aimed to provide their students with skills of "geographical inquiry", "observation", "comparison of patterns", "geographic association of facts" and "make conclusions" through the teaching of current events. These skills were followed by "increase environmental awareness", "maps and graphs reading and interpretation" and "problem solving".

But at the end of graduation, it is obvious that graduate of high school students in Turkey don't have higher order thinking skills or map skills in order to use in their Daily life. One of the main reasons of these results are the barriers and obstacles for teaching geography in an effective way in high schools in Turkey. Thus, drawing upon the above-mentioned studies as well, the question of "What are the major challenges in the way of geography teachers providing a more effective geography education?" has been determined as the main problem of this study with the aim to reveal the most significant obstacles in the way of geography teachers providing a more effective geography teaching in a general and extensive manner. And answers were sought to the following problems to be able to give an answer to the main question of the study:

- I. What is the nature of the problems geography teachers have with *the school administration* in providing a more effective geography teaching?
- II. What is the nature of the problems geography teachers have with *other teachers* in providing a more effective geography teaching?
- III. What is the nature of the problems geography teachers have with *parents* in providing a more effective geography teaching?
- IV. What is the nature of the problems geography teachers have with *students* in providing a more effective geography teaching?
- V. What is the nature of the solutions geography teachers propose for the problems they encounter to provide a more effective geography teaching?

## Methodology

### Research Design

Qualitative research method was used in this study, which is a technique that allows regular analysis of the opinions drawing from individuals' experiences that have been or planned to be realized (Ekiz, 2003; Beldağ ve Geçit, 2017, p. 102). Thus, phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. Phenomenology design focuses on concepts that we are aware of yet lack a deep and comprehensive understanding of (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2013, p. 78). In phenomenology, a common meaning is defined for the prior experiences of multiple people regarding a phenomenon or concept (Creswell, 2013, p. 77).

Data was collected through semi-structured interview, one of the techniques of qualitative research. Interviews are regarded as a strong method since they eliminate the restrictions faced in the tests and surveys that are based on writing and filling out, and reveal the data, views, experiences and emotions of individuals in a more effective manner. Semi-structured interviews are conducted based on the previously prepared interview forms. The interviewees are asked systematic and appropriate questions. The interviewees have the freedom to express whatever they want in any way they wish. Depending on the course of the interview, the surveyor may influence the course of the interview through different side or sub-questions, allowing the individual to elaborate on their answers. With this technique, the survey can obtain systematic and comparable information. Semi-structured interview technique is favored and preferred by researchers due to the certain level of standard and flexibility it offers (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2006; Gökçe, 2009, p. 726). This study is limited to the views of 212 geography teachers serving in 9 different provinces of Turkey. The problems identified in the study and the proposed solutions are limited to the problems geography teachers have with the school administration, students and parents, and the solutions they proposed to the problems.

### Participants

The principles that must be considered in determining the sample size are; the focus of the study, the amount of data, and institutional sampling (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2006, p. 114). For that reason, with a purposeful and easily accessible sampling approach, 212 geography teachers, who could be reached from among the 680 teachers giving geography lessons in Adıyaman, Ankara, Antalya, Artvin, Denizli, Isparta, İzmir, Kahramanmaraş and Trabzon in Turkey, participated in the study. Demographic information of the geography teachers who participated in the study was given on Table 1.

Table 1  
*Demographic Characteristics of Geography Teachers*

Characteristics	Dimensions	f	%
Gender	Female	78	36.8
	Male	134	63.2
Age Group	Younger than 25	2	0.9
	26-30	18	8.5
	31-35	27	12.8

	36 and older	165	77.8
	0-5	12	5.7
	6-10	36	16.7
Working experience (year)	11-15	32	15.1
	16-20	40	18.9
	21-25	62	29.2
	26 and more	30	14.4
School Types	Science and Social Sciences High School	10	4.7
	Anatolian High School	98	46.2
	Imam-Hatip High School	42	19.8
	Vocational High School	62	29.3
Educational Level	Training Institute or Bachelor's Completed	18	8.5
	Undergraduate	130	61.3
	Master's Degree	62	29.3
	Doctorate Degree	2	0.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>212</b>	<b>100</b>

According to the table, all of the geography teachers serve in the Ministry of National Education (MEB). 78 of the geography teachers were females and 134 were males. Their professional seniority ranges between 1 year and 36 years. Of the geography teachers who participated in the study, 36 serves in İzmir, 31 in Kahramanmaraş, 27 in Antalya, 27 in Isparta, 22 in Denizli, 21 in Ankara, 19 in Adıyaman, 15 in Trabzon and 14 in Artvin. Of the geography teachers who participated in the study, 46.2% serve in Anatolian High School, 29.3% in Vocational High School, 19.8% in Imam Hatip High School, and 4.7% in Science and Social Sciences High School. Of the geography teachers who participated in the study, 61.3% had Undergraduate, 29.3% had Master's, 8.5% had Training Institute or Bachelor's completed, and 0.9% had Doctorate degrees.

Table 2

*Distribution of the Geography Teachers Who Participated in the Study According to the Provinces They Serve*

No	City	Frequency (F)	Percentage ( % )
1	Adıyaman	19	8.9
2	Ankara	21	9.9
3	Antalya	27	12.7
4	Artvin	14	6.6
5	Denizli	22	10.4
6	İzmir	36	17.0
7	Isparta	27	12.7
8	Kahramanmaraş	31	14.7
9	Trabzon	15	7.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Data Collection Tool**

"Problems Geography Teachers Are Faced with and Proposed Solutions" form prepared by the researcher was used to determine thoughts and opinions of the geography teachers in the research group. In the form, participants were asked ranking questions and open-ended questions listed under four parts. The form comprises of items developed by the researchers, with the first part aiming to determine personal information about the teachers filling out the form, the second part aiming to determine information regarding the environment of the school where teachers serve, the third part aiming to determine the problems teachers have with their colleagues, the school administration, students and parents while practicing their profession, and the fourth part aims to determine the solutions teachers propose for the problems they encounter. The measurement form was initially applied to a group of 14 individuals, and the Cronbach Alpha value was calculated to be 0.84. For reliability purposes, the related form was checked by two academics from geography education field, 3 teachers an administrator who serve as geography teachers in secondary education institutions, and was ready for application after several refinements.

### **Collection and Analysis of Data**

The data collection tool, which was developed for the purpose of determining the problems geography teachers face and their views regarding the solution of these problems, was lastly checked in terms of language by a Literature teacher, and was ready for application after the final check. After permits were obtained from the related institutions, schools were visited to hold interviews with the principals regarding the study. During the interviews, principals were informed about the purpose and methodology of the study and how answers are obtained, and the data collection tool was applied to geography teachers on a voluntary basis.

Before moving on to the data analysis phase of the study, the filled-out forms were assigned scale numbers from 1 to 212. The answers given by teachers to each item were analyzed through grounded theory and constant comparison analysis methods that are used for data analysis in qualitative studies. The primary purpose of this analysis method is to identify the themes within the data sets and develop new theories based on these themes (Leech ve Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Glaser ve Strauss, 1967; Özdemir, 2010, p. 336). Constant comparison analysis method used in the analysis of quantitative data comprises of two basic stages. In the first stage, the data are read and compared to each other. Thus, relevant data are gathered under certain concepts or categories. In the second stage, main themes are initially identified based on the concepts and categories, and then these themes are turned into propositional statements and hypothesis sentences are formed (Have, 2004, p. 136).

### **Findings**

This part of the study consists of the findings regarding the problems the geography teachers, who participated in the study in line with the main objective of the study, have with the school administration, teachers, students and parents as well as the answers they gave for the proposed solutions. The obtained data was explained and interpreted in the

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form of tables. The findings were listed under five main headings in accordance with the sub-problems of the study.

The main area of employment for the graduates of four-year geography and geography teaching departments in Turkey is the official secondary education institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education (MEB). Moreover, private teaching institutions, which rapidly raised in number during 1990s, and study centers, which appeared after 2000s, also became an important area of employment. Additionally, the goal to increase the number of private schools that was included in the government programs and development plans after 2005 and the incentives provided to that end resulted in private schools becoming another important area of employment.

The number of geography teachers employed in official secondary education institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education that provide formal education located in 81 provinces as of the date of 7 January 2018 is 11,285, the required number of employed teachers according to the norm staffing guide is 11,375, and the norm deficit is 90 (MEB, 2018). The difference between the number of employed teachers and the required number of employed teachers being 90 is an acceptable value. Because, this number was 1,609 in January 7, 2012 (Kaya, 2014, p. 796).

Of the 11,375 geography teachers serving in MEB, 20 of them have doctorate degree, 831 have master's with thesis degree, 3,267 have master's without thesis degree, and 7,257 have undergraduate degree. In other words, 63.8% of geography teachers holds undergraduate degree while 36,2% hold post-graduate education degree. When the educational levels of geography teachers are evaluated based on Turkey average, the rate of teachers with post-graduate education is four times above the country average (See Table 1).

### **Problems between Geography Teachers and the School Administration**

This section aimed to determine the rate at which geography teachers have problems with the school administration. Accordingly, 42.7% of the geography teachers who participated in the study stated that they did not have any problems with the school administration while 56.6% stated that they did (Table 3). The findings show that one out of every two geography teachers in our country has problems with the school administration.

Table 3

*Distribution of Geography Teachers According to Their Relation with the School Administration*

Do you face any problems with the school management? While practicing your profession?	F	%
Yes	120	56.6
No	90	42.5
No Answer	2	0.9
Total	212	100



And the distribution of the answers regarding what kind of problems the geography teachers who stated that they have problems with the school management face are given in table 4. The given answers were sorted from the most emphasized to the least emphasized according to how many times a problem is marked.

Table 4

*Distribution of the Problems between the School Management and Geography Teachers*

<b>Problems with the school management</b>		F	%
1	Lack of knowledge about the geography curriculum	98	26.8
2	Lack of interest and concern towards the activities that are planned to be carried out for effective geography teaching.	62	16.9
3	Failing to supply the educational materials required for a qualified education and training	58	15.9
4	Lack of promoting participation in personal and vocational development activities	42	11.5
5	Prioritizing an exam-oriented education over an education that provide fundamental knowledge, skills and value	20	5.4
6	Lack of emphasis on activities aimed at the development of low-level, disinterested students coming from a lower learning level.	18	4.9
7	Putting more emphasis on numerical courses	16	4.4
8	Lack of effective disciplinary practices against unfavorable student behavior	14	3.9
9	Lack of sufficient support in problems with parents	12	3.3
10	Not placing as much emphasis on the quality of education and training as the school maintenance	10	2.7
11	Inducement regarding unionization	6	1.6
12	Discrimination between teachers	5	1.4
13	Not referring to teachers' opinions in decision making processes for the school	4	1.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>365</b>	<b>100</b>

The greatest problems experienced with the school administration are ranked as the lack of knowledge about the geography curriculum (26.8%), lack of interest and concern towards the activities that are planned to be carried out for effective geography teaching (16.9%), failing to supply the educational materials required for a qualified education and training (15.9%) and lack of promoting participation in personal and vocational development activities (11.5%).

**Problems between Geography Teachers and Other Teachers**

69.8% of the geography teachers who participated in the survey stated that they did not have problems with teachers while 30.2% stated otherwise. When an evaluation is made considering the ratios, it can be said that approximately two thirds of the geography teachers do not have problems with the other teachers. The answers of the geography teachers who responded to this question with 'yes' are further examined in Table 6.

Table 5

*Distribution of Geography Teachers According to Their Relation with Other Teachers*

Do you encounter any problems with other teachers when practicing your profession?	F	%
Yes	64	30.2
No	148	69.8
No Answer	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6

*Distribution of the Problems between Other Teachers and Geography Teachers*

<b>Problems with Teachers</b>	F	%
1 Conducting classes based on course books rather than the curriculum	26	25.5
2 Failure to fairly share the teaching materials	20	19.6
3 Disagreements that arise in group activities	18	17.6
4 Failure to implement the decisions taken in meetings	14	13.7
5 Different practices in similar situations due to poor communication with students and parents	11	10.8
6 Exhibiting different attitudes and behaviors towards children with insufficient academic levels and unruly behavior	9	8.8
7 Different practices in measurement and evaluation	4	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100</b>

The greatest problems experienced with other teachers are ranked as conducting classes based on course books rather than the curriculum (25.5%), failure to fairly share the teaching materials (19.6%), disagreements that arise in group activities (17.6%) and Failure to implement the decisions taken in meetings (13.7%).

**Problems between Geography Teachers and Students**

43.8% of the geography teachers who participated in the survey stated that they did not have problems with students while 56.6% stated otherwise. An evaluation made considering the ratios in Table 7, reveals that every one teacher out of two has problems with students.

Table 7

*Distribution of Geography Teachers According to Their Relation with Students*

Do you encounter any problems with students when practicing your profession?	F	%
Yes	120	56.6
No	92	43.4
No Answer	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100</b>

Details about what problems the geography teachers who state that they have problems with students are faced with are shown extensively in Table 8.

Table 8

*Distribution of the Problems between Students and Geography Teachers*

<b>Problems with Students</b>		F	%
1	Low academic level of students	118	25.7
2	Lack of interest in courses among students	80	17.4
3	Failure to bring educational materials to in-class and out-of-class activities	62	13.4
4	Students showing up in courses without any prior preparation/study	54	11.7
5	Lingering behavioral disorders among students that have not been eliminated in the family or primary education	50	10.9
6	Weak sense of belonging among students towards school and education	43	9.4
7	Differences in the academical, social, economic and cultural levels of students	35	7.6
8	Parents' lack of interest in their children and education	18	3.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>

The problems geography teachers have with students are ranked as low academic level of students (25.7%), lack of interest in courses among students (17.4%), failure to bring educational materials to in-class and out-of-class activities (13.4%), students showing up in courses without any prior preparation/study (11.7%), lingering behavioral disorders among students that have not been eliminated in the family or primary education (10.9%), Weak sense of belonging among students towards school and education (9.4%), differences in the academical, social, economic and cultural levels of students (7.6%), parents' lack of interest in their children and education (3.9%).

**Problems between Geography Teachers and Parents**

34% of the geography teachers who participated in the survey stated that they did not have problems with parents while 66% stated otherwise. An evaluation made considering the ratios in Table 9, reveals that every two teachers out of three have problems with parents.

Table 9

*Distribution of Geography Teachers According to Their Relation with Parents*

Do you encounter any problems with parents when practicing your profession?	F	%
Yes	140	66.0
No	72	34.0
No Answer	0	0.0
Total	212	100

And the distribution of the problems the geography teachers who stated that they have problems with parents face are given in table 10.

Table 10  
*Distribution of the Problems between Parents and Geography Teachers*

<b>Problems with Parents</b>		F	%
1	Parent's lack of interest in education and training	104	24.9
2	Courses and activities not being consolidated at home	84	20.1
3	Lack of participation to meetings and activities	78	18.6
4	Failure in the timely meeting of the materials that are necessary for children's development	55	13.2
5	Lack of support in the activities that are necessary for children's academic development	47	11.2
6	Lack of participation in and support for activities that are/will be carried out for children with behavioral disorders who are disinterested in school and education	26	6.2
7	Avoiding responsibility towards ensuring a good education for their children and laying all responsibility on the school	24	5.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>418</b>	<b>100</b>

Problems that geography teachers have with parents were analyzed and classified according to their content. As a result of the categorization, the problems geography teachers have with parents are ranked as Parent's lack of interest in education and training (24.9%), courses and activities not being consolidated at home (20.1%), lack of participation to meetings and activities (18.6%), failure in the timely meeting of the materials that are necessary for children's development (13.2%), lack of support in the activities that are necessary for children's academic development (11.2%), Lack of participation in and support for activities that are/will be carried out for children with behavioral disorders who are disinterested in school and education (6.2%), and Avoiding responsibility towards ensuring a good education for their children and laying all responsibility on the school (5.8%).

### **Solutions Geography Teachers Proposed to the Problems They Face**

This last section includes findings regarding the solutions geography teachers proposed to the problems they are inquired about in the data collection tool and have with variables such as the school administration, other teachers, students and parents.

Table 11  
*Solutions Geography Teachers Proposed to the Problems They Have with the School Administration*

<b>Proposed Solutions to the Problems with the School Administration</b>		F	%
1	Educational administrative should undergo training about the curriculum	100	23.4
2	Educational materials that are essential for a qualified education and training should be provided	78	18.3
3	The school administration should give permission for and ensure participation in and support for the activities planned for effective geography teaching and ensure	70	16.4

4	The necessary permits should be granted for ensuring participation in personal and vocational development activities	60	14.0
5	Knowledge, skill and value oriented education should be prioritized over an exam-oriented education	30	7.0
6	Efforts should be made towards supporting students with low academic level who are disinterested in courses	26	6.1
7	School guidance service should be granted greater authority and responsibility to be able to win over the students who display negative behavior, and held accountable for the obtained results.	22	5.2
8	Verbal courses should be valued and prioritized as much as numerical courses	16	3.8
9	There should be no discrimination between teachers, a fair and just sense of administration should be aimed	12	2.8
10	Teachers should not be left unsupported in problems with parents	8	1.9
11	Union activities should not be involved in school's functioning	6	1.4
12	Teachers should be more involved in decision making processes	4	0.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>426</b>	<b>100</b>

The solutions geography teachers proposed for the problems they stated to have with the school management are ranked as follows; educational administrative should undergo training about the curriculum (23.4%), educational materials that are essential for a qualified education and training should be provided (18.3%), the school administration should give permission for and ensure participation in and support for the activities planned for effective geography teaching and ensure (16.4%), the necessary permits should be granted for ensuring participation in personal and vocational development activities (14.0%), knowledge, skill and value oriented education should be prioritized over an exam-oriented education (7.0%).

Table 12

*Solutions Geography Teachers Proposed to the Problems They Have with Other Teachers*

<b>Proposed Solutions to the Problems with Teachers</b>		<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
1	The school administration and group leaders should conduct observations and inspections to ensure that educational activities are based on the curriculum	22	28.6
2	The school administration should make plans according to a certain program for fair distribution of educational materials	18	23.4
3	The school administration should provide job descriptions and establish boundaries to avoid disagreements that arise during group activities	13	16.9
4	The school administration should carry out observations and inspections for the application of the decisions taken during meetings	10	12.9
5	Applied trainings should be organized to establish good communication with students and parents	7	9.1
6	Applied trainings should be organized on how to treat children with low academic level who exhibit unruly behavior	4	5.2
7	Minimum standards should be set for practices the measurement and evaluation works will be based on	3	3.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>

The solutions geography teachers proposed for the problems they stated to have with other teachers are ranked as follows; the school administration and group leaders should conduct observations and inspections to ensure that educational activities are based on the curriculum (28.6%), the school administration should make plans according to a certain program for fair distribution of educational materials (23.4%), the school administration should provide job descriptions and establish boundaries to avoid disagreements that arise during group activities (16.9%), the school administration should carry out observations and inspections for the application of the decisions taken during meetings (12.9%).

Table 13

*Solutions Geography Teachers Proposed to the Problems They Have with Students*

<b>Proposed Solutions to the Problems with Students</b>		<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Training classes should be organized to improve students' academic levels	122	27.8
2	Teachers should utilize student-oriented active learning methods and techniques to stimulate students' interest in courses	90	20.5
3	Award and punishment method should be used to ensure that students bring materials to in-class and out-of-class activities	52	11.9
4	Teachers should provide students with encouraging and fun exercises to ensure that they come to the class prepared	48	11.0
5	School guidance service should carry out identification and rehabilitation efforts to eliminate behavioral disorders among students	40	9.2
6	The school administration should turn the school into a center of attraction by organizing social, cultural and athleticism activities to boost students' sense of belonging towards school and education	32	7.3
7	The school guidance service should take measures to ensure that the differences in students' academical, social, economic and cultural levels do not conflict with the school culture	30	6.8
8	The school guidance service and teachers should organize various social and cultural activities to ensure that parents pay more attention to their children	24	5.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>440</b>	<b>100</b>

The highest-ranking solutions geography teachers proposed for the problems they stated to have with students are as follows; training classes should be organized to improve students' academic levels (27.8%), teachers should utilize student-oriented active learning methods and techniques to stimulate students' interest in courses (20.5%) award and punishment method should be used to ensure that students bring materials to in-class and out-of-class activities (11.9%). These are ensued by the following proposed solutions; teachers should provide students with encouraging and fun exercises to ensure that they come to the class prepared (11.0%), school guidance service should carry out identification and rehabilitation efforts to eliminate behavioral disorders among students (9.2%), the school administration should turn the school into a center of attraction by organizing social, cultural and athleticism activities to boost students' sense of belonging towards school and education (7.3%), the school guidance service should take measures to ensure that the differences in students' academical, social, economic and cultural levels do not conflict with the school culture (6.8%), the school guidance service and teachers

should organize various social and cultural activities to ensure that parents pay more attention to their children (5.5%).

Table 14

*Solutions Geography Teachers Proposed to the Problems They Have with Parents*

<b>Proposed Solutions to the Problems with Parents</b>		<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
1	The school administration and guidance service should organize different periodic activities to stimulate students' interest in education and training	80	22.8
2	Teachers and the school guidance service should organize meetings and family visits aimed at parents to inform them about the direct and indirect effects of consolidating courses and activities at home on children's development.	70	19.9
3	Meetings and events should be enriched with encouraging and fun activities to ensure parents' participation in meetings and events	54	15.3
4	Parents should be provided with evidence-based applied trainings to inform them about the necessary practices towards improving children's academic level	47	13.4
5	Experts should provide face-to-face training to families to inform them about the necessary practices towards winning over the children with behavioral disorders who are disinterested in school and education	42	11.8
6	Families should be provided applied trainings assisted with demonstrations to inform them about the possible/necessary practices towards ensuring a qualified education for their children	34	9.6
7	Families should be informed about the timely obtainment of the materials necessary for their children's development	22	6.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>351</b>	<b>100</b>

The highest ranking solutions geography teachers proposed for the problems they stated to have with students are as follows; the school administration and guidance service should organize different periodic activities to stimulate students' interest in education and training (22.8%), Teachers and the school guidance service should organize meetings and family visits aimed at parents to inform them about the direct and indirect effects of consolidating courses and activities at home on children's development (19.9%). These are ensued by the following proposed solutions; Meetings and events should be enriched with encouraging and fun activities to ensure parents' participation in meetings and events (15.3%), parents should be provided with evidence-based applied trainings to inform them about the necessary practices towards improving children's academic level (13.4%), experts should provide face-to-face training to families to inform them about the necessary practices towards winning over the children with behavioral disorders who are disinterested in school and education (11.8%), families should be provided applied trainings assisted with demonstrations to inform them about the possible/necessary practices towards ensuring a qualified education for their children (9.6%), Families should be informed about the timely obtainment of the materials necessary for their children's development (6.2%).

## **Results and Discussion**

It is a fact that in Turkey, the profession of teaching is carried out under difficult conditions, and it is a fact that everybody agrees on a neutral side. In the literature survey conducted in Turkey on teacher problems, there were many studies on teachers' problems like (MEB, 1982; MEB, 1982a; Tekişik, 1986; Afşin, 1988; Güler, 1999; Yapıcı, 2003; Taneri, 2004; Maraşlı, 2007; Karabulut, 2007; Aydın, 2008; Aydın, 2009; Bozpolat, 2009; Ekinci, 2010; Sarı, 2011; Geçer ve Özel, 2012; Demir ve Arı, 2013; Polat, 2014; Öztürk, Kaya ve Durmaz, 2015), many studies have been carried out on geography teaching and problems. When these studies are examined, the titles are drawn attention like “Geography teaching and problems in higher education institutions during the Republican period” of Koçman (1999), Kayan (2000)'s “geography Education in Turkish universities”, Şahin (2001)'s “a research on the Vocational problems of secondary education teachers” and Şahin (2003)'s “geography teaching in Turkey”, problems and solutions”, “the effectiveness and problems of Geography Education” of Akınoğlu (2005); “the satisfaction of the work of the Geography teachers in secondary education institutions” of Duman (2006); “the problems of geography education in teacher education in Turkey” of Gökçe (2009); “the stress resources of the Geography teachers” in Kaya and Alim (2015), but a study on the problems experienced by Geography teachers during the practice of their profession could not be reached.

The results obtained in this research with the participation of the 2012 geography teacher in order to determine the work that needs to be done in order to solve the problems experienced by the geography teachers while performing their professions are listed below:

While 56.6% of geography teachers stated that they had problems with school management and 42.5% said that they did not have problems, 0.9% said that they did not. According to this finding, it can be concluded that one of the two geography teachers had problems with school administration.

Thirteen problems were identified in which geography teachers lived with school administration while doing their jobs. Among the problems experienced are that school management does not have knowledge about geography education program, 26.8% was first ranked, while it was followed by the lack of interest and indifference of school management to the activities required for effective geography teaching, 16.9% of school management did not meet the teaching materials required for qualified education and teaching, 15.9% of school management.

Geography teachers have developed twelve proposals to solve problems they face with school management. Among the solution proposals developed, education for educational managers was first with 23.4%, and managers for qualified education and training should meet the need for teaching materials 18.3%, should allow school administration for planned activities for effective geography education, should provide participation and should support 16.4%, managers should grant permission to participate in personal and professional development activities 14.0%.



30.2% of geography teachers had problems with teachers and 69% stated that they did not have problems. According to this finding, about two-thirds of the geography teachers who participated in the survey did not have problems with the teachers.

The problems that geography teachers experienced with their colleagues were grouped under seven headings. Geography teachers in the problems they experienced with their colleagues, while the course book was the first place with 25.5% instead of the teaching program, it was followed by 19.6%, and differences in ideas arising from mass activities 17.6%, and 13.7% of the decisions taken in meetings were not implemented.

Geography teachers have developed seven recommendations for solving their problems with their colleagues. In order to make sure that the school management and the district heads are in the first place with 28.6%, school management should plan for the fair sharing of teaching materials within a certain program 23.4%, defining the boundaries by defining the definitions of the school management duties in order to avoid the differences in the public activities 16.9%. For the implementation of the decisions taken in the meetings, the school administration's supervision and monitoring is indicated as 12.9%.

56.6% of geography teachers stated that they had problems with students and 43.4% said that they did not have problems. According to this finding, one of the two geography teachers who participated in the study had no problems with the students.

Eight problems that geography teachers experienced with their students were identified while performing their professions. Among the problems experienced, the students' academic levels were low with 25.7%, while the students' interest in the lesson was low with 17.4%, the teachers' materials were not brought to the in-class and out-of-class activities and 13.4%, the students were unprepared to the class and 11.7% from the study.

Geography teachers have developed eight solutions to solve problems they have experienced with students. Among the proposed solutions, 27.8% of the courses were placed in the first place, while 20.5% of the teachers' student-centred active learning methods and techniques to increase the interest of their students in the courses, and 11.9% of the awards and penalties for bringing teaching materials to in-class and out-of-class activities were given. 11.0% of the teachers have given the students fun activities that encourage them to come prepared for the lesson.

66.0% of geography teachers stated that they had problems with parents and 34.0% said that they did not have problems. According to this finding, about two-thirds of the geography teachers who participated in the survey had problems with their parents.

Seven problems have been identified in which geography teachers live with parents. In the problems faced with parents, the lack of parents' education and education was the first with 24.9%, followed by the lack of support of classes and schools at home, 20.1% of participation in meetings and activities, 18.6% of participation in meetings and activities, and 13.2% of the necessary materials for children's development were not removed on time.

Geography teachers, the suggestions they developed to solve the problems they experienced with parents were grouped under seven items. Among the solution proposals developed, the school management and guidance service periodically organizes different studies to increase parents' interest in education and education with 22.8%, while it is stated as 19.9% of the meetings and family visits that describe the direct effects of the teacher and school guidance service on the development of the parents' courses and activities. In order to ensure parents' participation in meetings and activities, the enrichment of meetings and activities with stimulating fun activities is set to 15.3%. 13.4% of the parents were given evidence-based applied training on the studies to improve the academic level of children.

The results of the research draw attention to various problems in teacher training, geography education, learning-teaching environment. Some scientific studies that support the results of the study explain the problems of the learning-teaching environment in geography education as follows: classroom environments are not suitable for geography education. There are no geography classrooms. There is not enough equipment and equipment to be used in geography courses in classrooms. Classes are crowded and physical conditions are bad. Teachers cannot create interesting learning environments. (Akinoğlu, 2005; Güngördü, 2002; Koçman ve Sütgibi, 2004; Öztürk, 2002; Sekin ve Ünlü, 2002).

The lack of the teaching materials required for qualified education and instruction by the school administration causes various problems in geography education for the learning-teaching environment. Some scientific studies that support this situation explain the problems of the learning-teaching environment in geography education as follows: classroom environments are not suitable for geography education. There are no geography classrooms. There is not enough equipment and equipment to be used in geography courses in classrooms. Classes are crowded and physical conditions are bad. Teachers cannot create interesting learning environments (Akinoğlu, 2005; Güngördü, 2002; Koçman ve Sütgibi, 2004; Öztürk, 2002; Sekin ve Ünlü, 2002; Gökçe, 2009). The suggestions developed for this proposed solution for learning-teaching environment are supported by a large number of scientific studies. Research should address the needs of school administrations in such a way as to enable teachers to remove geography, statistics and memorabilia by presenting the richness of the learning-teaching environment with tools, technical equipment, geography classrooms and laboratories for qualified geography education. (Akengin ve Kayalı, 2003; Akinoğlu, 2005; Bednarz, Burkill, Lidstone, & Rawling, 2000; Campbell, 2007; Cohen et al., 2004; Healey, 2003; Svingen, 1994).

## **Suggestions**

In line with the findings and results obtained in the research, the following suggestions are given:

Provincial Directorate of National Education should conduct periodic research in order to determine the problems experienced by teachers in performing their professions and the work to be done in order to eliminate these problems. Training staff should organize

practical trainings supported by case studies to improve conflict management, problem solving and communication skills.

Teachers should be encouraged to attend various courses, seminars, symposiums and meetings for personal and professional development. Legal arrangements should be made for granting the necessary permits. Educational institutions managers should consider teachers' views more so as not to eliminate and repeat the problems that teachers face and adopt a democratic participatory management approach that supports them to implement the work they offer.

Within the Provincial / District National Education directorates, the units where experts can be consulted should be established. In order to make qualified education taking into consideration the courses and teaching programs, the necessary teaching materials must be met in a timely and complete manner. School-based development programs should be developed in order to increase school membership and to ensure that children with inadequate academic levels, adaptation to school and behavioral problems have the same level of access to their peers.

In order to increase the interest of parents in education, meetings should be organized to encourage participation in the school to transform the school into a center of attraction in harmony with the socio-cultural environment in which the school is located. School administrators should take measures to increase the interest and motivation of their students for teachers to use student-centred active learning methods and techniques.

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