

## The Efficacy of Geography Teachers According to Secondary School Students' Views in Turkey (Karabük Case)

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this research is to put forth the efficiency of geography teachers in teaching and learning process and providing cooperation between schools and parents according to the views of secondary school students. The study group of the research involved 263 secondary students in Karabük City in 2009-2010 academic year. As data gathering tool in the research, the survey which was developed by Gökçe (2002) was used. In the analysis of the datum, frequency and percentage was used. According to the results of the research; geography teachers carry out their lessons according to weekly schedule, they use sufficient examples during the course, do necessary repetitions, manage the classroom well, give equal rights and opportunities to everyone in the classroom, be tolerant to students, teach the lesson in an understandable way with suitable methods, be patient and calm, however they do not use body language sufficiently, give rewards when students deserve, take the students to outdoor trips, do group work or have the students play games adequately. 66.2% of the secondary school students find their teachers very successful, 32.7% successful and 1.1% hardly successful.

**Key words:** Secondary education • Geography teachers' efficiency • Students' views • Geography education

### INTRODUCTION

Main constituents of quality education is teachers. Because teachers have significant places in terms of providing communication and interaction, they apply the curriculum in classroom atmosphere, organize educational process in other words, they provide the validity of education and interact with students, they also have direct relations with students out of educational process. Since teachers are the models for students they also have the effect of shaping societies. A teacher is accepted as organizer of the educational process in every phase of education with high qualifications along with general culture and vocational background and skills.

Since the students have primary relations with teachers nobody can influence them more than teachers at school. The relations between teachers and students either help them improve themselves in terms of knowledge and moral values or prevents their improvements. Everything starts and ends with the relations between teachers and students [1]. Teachers are expected to be educators and trainers as well. In order

to be a good trainer a teacher should have sufficient educational skills with an understanding of the educational system and policies and the competency to provide the coherence in between the present level and the other levels in the system [2].

These features of a good teacher were determined after some researches [3-5]. Knowledge, discipline, teaching technique, assiduity, language skills, courtesy, motivation skills, the justice feeling, cooperation, optimism, punctuality, controlling oneself, personal enterprise skills, caring for personal needs, the ability to take the students' interests, voice, vocational interest, sincerity, patience, charity and honesty.

A geography teacher is the one that knows and tries to apply how to acquire the necessary knowledge, skill and attitudes to which student age groups with the right methods in the frames of related legislations and approved curriculum by the ministry of education [6]. Determining the efficacy and fertility of geography teachers from the secondary students' point of view will contribute to put forth both the expected attitudes and behaviours of geography teachers and the expectations

of students. Secondary school students may form some considerations through their teacher preferences and educational process inside the classroom regarding their developmental properties. Taking this into account it was tried to determine the efficacy level of teachers through students' point of view.

Determining the efficacy of geography teachers through secondary students' point of view, will contribute to improve the qualifications of teachers in secondary education and more influential teaching and learning processes. Hence it will be possible to reach the planned objectives and educate more qualified generations. It means that fertility and quality in education will be reached in secondary education.

The general aim of this research is to determine the efficacy of geography teachers based on secondary school students' point of view.

**Problem Statement:** Following questions were tried to answer in accordance with this aim.

- To what extent are the geography teachers influential in the teaching-learning process in the classroom?
- To what extent are the geography teachers influential in the communication and interaction process with the students?
- To what extent are the geography teachers influential in providing relations with parents and cooperation with school and parents?
- To what extent are the geography teachers successful according to secondary school students' considerations?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Research Model:** This study aiming to determine the efficacy of geography teachers according to secondary education students is a descriptive (survey) type research. Survey models are the research approaches aim to describe a present or past situation as is [7].

**Study Group:** The universe of the research is comprised of the students at high schools in Karabük city center in 2009-2010 academic year. The sampling of the study is randomly chosen. In such a preference, sampling is chosen randomly from a particular list. The important thing is the chosen items should be of similar features [8]. The sampling of the study is composed of 263 students with similar features in Karabük city center. Distribution of the research students' frequency and percentage according to gender was presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the research students' frequency and percentage according to gender

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Girls	148	56.3
Boys	115	43.7
Total	263	100

As seen in Table 1, 115 (43.7 %) of the students are boys and 148 (56.3 %) of them are girls in the research group.

**Tool of Data Collection:** The survey applied for determining secondary school students' considerations towards the efficacy of geography teachers was developed by the use of [9]. In order to rearrange and provide validity and reliability of the data gathering tool, the survey was applied over 90 students as samplers. The KMO value is 70 and reliability coefficient is 90 of the survey that involves 39 sub headings. These values indicate high validity and reliability of the survey [10]. The participants were asked to reply the statements in the survey as a triad rating as "1-Yes", "2-Partly" and "3-No".

**Analysis of the Data:** The data gathered from the replies of the secondary school students were analysed via SPSS 15.0 statistical programme. The analysis of the data were presented in four different tables and frequency and percentage were used in the analysis of data.

**Findings and Interpretations:** In this section the findings gathered at the end of the research were presented as tables and interpreted.

**Findings Towards the First Sub Problem:** Findings related to "To what extent are the geography teachers effective in the teaching and learning process in class?" sub problem were presented as percentage and frequency.

When the findings were examined in Table 2, a great majority of the students stated that geography teachers give examples during the lessons (90.5 %), apply the weekly Schedule (85.6 %), have tolerance and good intention (85.6 %), repeat the problematic points (83.3 %) and manage the class well (78.3 %). However 89.7 % of the secondary school students stated that geography teachers do not arrange classroom games during the lesson, 89.4 % of them state that they do not organize school excursions, 53.2 % state that they do not organize groupwork activities, 51 % stated that they were not rewarded by the teachers when they were successful.

Table 2: Distribution of students' views towards geography teachers' efficacy in teaching and learning process in class

No	Statements	Yes		Partly		No	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Our geography teacher teaches according to the weekly Schedule.	224	85.6	34	12.9	5	1.9
2	Our geography teacher gives examples during the lesson.	238	90.5	25	9.5	-	-
3	Our geography teacher moves inside the class all the time.	116	44.1	105	39.9	42	16.0
4	Our geography teacher repeats the problematic points.	219	83.3	38	14.4	6	2.3
5	Our geography teacher teaches without sitting still.	102	38.8	96	36.5	65	24.7
6	Our geography teacher asks questions about the former studied parts.	179	68.1	71	27.0	13	4.9
7	Our geography teacher writes clearly and neatly on the blackboard.	121	46.0	90	34.2	52	19.8
8	Our geography teacher lets us have some rest when we are exhausted.	138	52.5	78	29.7	47	17.9
9	Our geography teacher manages the class well.	206	78.3	45	17.1	12	4.6
10	Our geography teacher arranges games in the lesson.	7	2.7	20	7.6	236	89.7
11	Our geography teacher organizes groupwork activities in the class.	35	13.3	88	33.5	140	53.2
12	Our geography teacher checks our homework.	153	58.2	83	31.6	27	10.3
13	Our geography teacher uses audio-visual materials during the lesson.	76	28.9	96	36.5	91	34.6
14	Our geography teacher gives rewards to us when we are successful.	53	20.2	76	28.9	134	51.0
15	Our geography teacher is always tolerated and have good intention.	225	85.6	33	12.5	5	1.9
16	Our geography teacher joins classroom activities together with us.	98	37.3	100	38.0	65	24.7
17	Our geography teacher takes us to excursions around school.	11	4.2	17	6.5	235	89.4

Table 3: Distribution of students' views towards the efficacy of geography teachers in the process of communication and interaction

No	Statements	Yes		Partly		No	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Our geography teacher begins the lesson with a smile.	211	80.2	46	17.5	6	2.3
2	Our geography teacher gives equal opportunities to everybody.	222	84.4	30	11.4	11	4.2
3	Our geography teacher speaks plainly and clearly.	224	85.2	34	12.9	5	1.9
4	Our geography teacher presents the lesson comprehensively.	224	85.2	36	13.7	3	1.1
5	Our geography teacher listens to us and tries to understand us.	212	80.6	46	17.5	5	1.9
6	Our geography teacher keeps his/her promises.	224	85.6	35	13.3	4	1.5
7	Our geography teacher uses body language (hands, arms, gestures and mimicry, ... etc.) during the lesson.	195	74.1	63	24.0	5	1.9
8	Our geography teacher uses his/her tone of voice appropriately.	206	78.3	46	17.5	11	4.2
9	Our geography teacher replies our questions.	246	93.5	15	5.7	2	0.8
10	Our geography teacher behaves calmly and patiently.	233	88.6	29	11.0	1	0.4
11	Our geography teacher takes our interests and desires into consideration.	184	70.0	71	27.0	8	3.0
12	Our geography teacher helps us in the class when we have a problem.	170	64.6	70	26.6	23	8.7

Table 4: Distribution of Students' Views Towards the Efficacy of Geography Teachers in Providing School-family Cooperation

No	Expressions	Yes		Partly		No	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Our geography teacher organizes parents' meeting	77	29.3	51	19.4	135	51.3
2	Our geography teacher gives information to our parents about us.	118	44.9	62	23.6	83	31.6
3	Our geography teacher gives importance to our parents.	157	59.7	70	26.6	36	13.7
4	Our geography teacher meets our parents when they come to school.	208	79.1	33	12.5	22	8.4
5	Our geography teacher calls our parents to school when necessary.	136	51.7	48	18.3	79	30.0
6	Our geography teacher asks our teacher to participate in the school activities when necessary.	92	35.0	78	29.7	93	35.4
7	Our geography teacher have good relations with our parents.	173	65.8	61	23.2	29	11.0

Table 5: Distribution of secondary school students' views on to what extent are the geography teachers successful

No	STATEMENTS	f	%
1	Our geography teacher is very successful	174	66.2
2	Our geography teacher is successful at medium level	86	32.7
3	Our geography teacher is less successful	3	1.1
	Total	263	100.0

Also 39.9 % of the secondary school students state that their teachers move during the lesson and 38 % of them state that their teachers join the classroom activities together with the students.

**Findings Towards the Second Sub Problem:** The findings towards “To what extent are the geography teachers influential in the process of communication and interaction with the students?” sub problem in the survey were stated as percentage and frequency of the questions.

When the data in Table 3 examined secondary school students stated that they found the geography teachers effective in the communication and interaction process. 93.5 % of them stated that geography teachers answer their questions, 88.6 % behave calm and patiently, 85.2 % speak clearly and comprehensively, 85.2 % present the lesson in an understandable manner, 80.2 % begin the lesson with a smile.

**Findings Towards the Third Sub Problem:** The findings towards “To what extent are the geography teachers influential in providing school-family and parents’ cooperation?” sub problem were expressed as the percentage and frequency distribution.

When the data in Table 4 examined, most of the secondary school students stated that their geography teacher meets their parents (79.1 %), have good relations with parents (65.8 %), gives importance to their parents (59.7 %). However 51.3 % of the secondary school students state that their geography teachers do not organize parents’ meeting.

**Findings Towards Fourth Sub Problem:** The findings towards “To what extent are the geography teachers successful according to secondary school students” sub problem in the survey were presented in percentage and frequency alongside the questions.

When the findings in Table 5 examined, a great majority of secondary students (66.2 %) stated that they find their geography teachers successful, 32.7 % of them consider as medium level and 1.1 % find their teacher less successful.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results, interpretations and suggestions emerged from the findings of the research were stated as follows. Secondary school students stated that geography teachers give examples, apply the weekly Schedule, show

tolerance and good intention, repeat ambiguous themes and provide discipline during geography lessons. However secondary school students again state that geography teachers do not arrange games and excursions sufficiently, do not have the students do groupwork activities and finally do not give rewards adequately when necessary. Accordingly, geography teachers are found influential in general by the secondary school students in teaching and learning process ( Karabük city). If the teachers take the interests, needs and developmental features of students into consideration in the classroom activities, the success of the process is supposed to be beter.

In order for the teachers to be effective they should know the school programme, realize the aims of the school, these aims should be relevant to the teachers’ own aims, educate themselves, adapt themselves to the changes both at school and in the society, do their best in all dimensions, interpret the school curriculum appropriately, localize the curriculum themes, provide the relations among teachers, teachers and students, teachers and directors, teachers and inspectors in a democratic platform. This way they should provide the interest and support of people, realize the inner or external pressure groups towards them or school and have a role in directing them through the aims of the school. In order to fulfil these roles sufficiently, teachers should have adequate preservice education [11].

53.2 % of the secondary school students stated that geography teachers do not organize groupwork activities. Le Heron, Baker & McEwen (2006), Lyman & Foyle (1991), Nicholas & Miller (1993), Ayдын (2009) and Cöpkun (2004) concluded in their studies that applying cooperative learning (groupwork) method increase the student success, attitude and motivation towards lessons [12-16].

A majority of the secondary school students stated that geography teachers answer their questions, teach the lesson in an understandable way, speak clearly, start the lesson with a smile, help in solving the problems in the classroom and try to listen and understand them. According to Gökçe (2002) communication and interaction process in the class forms the basis of learning. If there is a democratic, tolerated and respectful atmosphere in the classroom the relation between students and teachers will be qualified. Teachers’ being just and use their tone of voice efficiently has a determining effect in the success of the teaching process. Teachers can provide efficacy and productivity in correlation with the success in communication and interaction process [9].

Primary teacher behaviour of the teacher in classroom atmosphere is of crucial importance in students' learning. Students tend to relate the teachers' behaviours and activities with lesson theme that is being taught. Hence, classroom behaviours of the teachers should be consistent with the theme and should make their learning easier [17].

In order for the teachers to be effective, they should be given an adequate pre-service education, school training and teacher experience applications, they should have suitable working conditions, they should be given opportunities to develop themselves, such people with qualities like tolerance, human love, teaching desire should be teachers, they should also be given a very good vocational guidance to be efficient in their jobs [18].

A majority of secondary school students state that geography teachers have good relations with their parents, they meet their parents when they visit school and give importance to them whereas they make a few parents' meeting. The purpose of school and family cooperation is to educate students in a more qualified way and prepare them for the future life. Teachers' having enough sensibility and give importance to this process will contribute to increase the success of the students.

A great majority of the students found geography teachers very successful whereas a few of them considered them at mediocre or lower levels. It draws attention that a great majority of the secondary students find geography teachers very successful. Because the success of the teaching and learning process is related to the teacher – student interaction to a great extent.

The following suggestions were developed in the light of the results emerged from the research:

- In order to increase the efficacy of geography teachers in the teaching-learning process various seminars of specialists should be organized by the relevant people.
- Geography teachers should be active in the class, move around the class, use body language, should be just among the students, they should involve the students in the classroom activities. They also give importance to student centered approaches, groupwork and projects.
- Geography teachers give importance to school and family cooperation and organize parents' meetings.
- Geography teachers should organize school excursions to provide permanent learning.

- Various programs and some related activities through acquiring vocational and personal qualities to geography teachers should be organized. In order to improve vocational capacities of teachers seminars and in-service activities should be arranged.
- Geography teachers should love students, be tolerant, friendly and perceptive. There should be a mutual interaction and cooperation atmosphere on the basis of respect and love.
- This study was carried out in Karabük city towards determining the efficacy of geography teachers. Extensive and wider researches should be carried out.

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