

CHALLENGES AND ADVANTAGES OF WORKING ABROAD: TURKISH AND TURKISH CULTURE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

Abstract: This paper aims to determine the problems and gains of Turkish teachers employed in Europe. The research was designed in the survey model and the basic qualitative approach. The sample group of the study consists of 210 Turkish teachers who work in Germany, France, England, and Switzerland. The data were collected by an open-ended survey and analysed by the descriptive analysis method. The results revealed that teachers experienced adaptation problems in language and communication, housing, a feeling of loneliness, prejudices, a new educational environment, and cultural diversity. Besides, they had social problems, family affairs, relationships with associations, health, and economic issues. Furthermore, teachers had professional, personal, social, and financial gains.

Keywords: teacher professional development, professional problems, teaching abroad, working abroad, teacher problems

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INTRODUCTION

With the end of the Second World War, the industry in Europe began to develop rapidly and created a need for workers. Therefore, people who have financial difficulties in Turkey constitute an essential part of the migration to many European countries. Although Turkish citizens went there to earn money and return to their country in the early years, most of them eventually settled and started living there. According to the data of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2017), approximately 5.5 million of the 6 million Turkish people living abroad live in Western European countries. These people, who started a new life abroad, tried to maintain their cultural values on one hand while trying to adapt to the social and cultural structure of the countries where they live on the other side. One of the biggest problems they experienced in this process was related to the education of their children.

The school process has a significant impact on the identity formation of the child and the process of acculturation. Teachers are one of the most essential factors to shape society, because, they shape individuals and, accordingly, the whole community. Knowing their crucial role in the creation of new generations, Atatürk (1924) said teachers as “Teachers, the new generation will be your masterpiece” just in the early years of the Turkish Republic. Supporting this point, Gündoğdu, Üstündağ, Altın, Yolcu, Çirakoğlu & Eken (2019) found that the quality of teachers, profession-love, and openness to improvement are the most influential factors on character/values education. Furthermore, they bring up all the workforce in society. Therefore, the teaching profession continues to maintain its importance in every culture. However, as in every job, many different problems are experienced in the teaching profession.

Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone is entitled to realization, following the organization and resources of each state, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.” Besides, Article 25 states that “Choosing the type of

education to be given to children is primarily the right of parents.” As seen, the desire of foreigners living abroad to teach their children their mother language, culture, and history is primarily a problem of human rights. It is mainly the responsibility of the country, sending its citizens to that country to meet such requests. The country sending its citizens must make special efforts to ensure that its citizens learn their mother language, following international agreements, and with the approval and cooperation of the host country.

Turkey sends Turkish and Turkish Culture for teachers to the countries through agreements made between countries. Therefore, approximately 1,726 teachers and 48 lecturers, who are assigned in various countries abroad, are still serving with the decision of the Inter-Ministerial Joint Culture Commission (Ministry of National Education [MNE] 2017). These teachers teach mainly in Turkish, Turkish Language and Literature, English, German, French, Class, Guidance, Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, Social Studies branches in Germany, France, England, and Switzerland. Most of these teachers work in Germany, Arabia, and France. There are 505 teachers in Germany, 370 in Saudi Arabia, and 192 teachers in France. Besides, there are 151 teachers in the Republic of Northern Cyprus, 93 in Kyrgyzstan, 80 in Azerbaijan, and one for each teacher in the USA, Albania, and Bahrain. The Ministry of National Education assigns these teachers for five years in these countries.

Pickering (2008) emphasized that teachers have many issues such as student requests that arise simultaneously, excessive workload, lack of time, insufficient resources, insufficient administrative support, inclusive students, student behaviors, inadequate professional support, and the need for continuous change. Although these problems vary from school to school and from region to region, many teachers experience similar issues. For instance, Toker-Gökçe (2013) emphasizes that the negativity of the characteristics of the region where the school is located leads problems that teachers be affected when starting the profession.

Adaptation problems are one of the leading difficulties experienced by teachers when they

change places. Özdemir, Civelek, Çetin, Karapınar, and Özel (2015) and Güvendir (2017) state that teachers who are alien to the culture of the region where they are employed and who have a restrictive social environment have difficulty in feeling that they belong to that region and the institution they work. In this context, it may be inevitable that teachers employed abroad will encounter various problems.

In general, the problems experienced by teachers are categorized as socially, economically, and professionally. For a teacher living in another country, social factors such as language, traditions, religion, norms, and communication styles of that country may lead to adaptation problems. Frederiksen (2014) states that one of the essential difficulties experienced by teachers working abroad is that they do not know the mother language of that country. He also said that teachers avoid speaking even if they know the language, thinking that they will be ridiculed for pronunciation errors. Gündoğdu (2014) and Halicioğlu (2015) revealed that teachers wanted these tasks to gain experience abroad and to learn the language. However, they experience culture shock even on their way from the airport to their destination when they arrive at their new place of duty no matter how ready they are for their mission abroad.

Teachers working abroad are also homesick (Frederiksen, 2014; Halicioğlu, 2015). These teachers experience cultural shock in this new environment with which they are not familiar (Halicioğlu, 2015), so they feel lonely (Akman, 2017). On the other hand, Cevahir (2013) found that these teachers had problems adapting to their former lives when they completed their duties and returned to their countries. Adapting to this new environment in every sense is the first step that teachers need to take to do their tasks. Seminars, which they attended before starting their responsibilities, are inadequate because they provide only general information. In addition to loneliness, these teachers working abroad are also experiencing economic problems (Akman, 2017). The said financial problems include housing, transportation, and health expenditures (Gündoğdu, 2014).

Nagel and Brown (2003) list the professional problems experienced by teachers in the form of lack of time, poor relations with administrators and colleagues, crowded classes, insufficient resources, excess workload, and problematic student behaviors. In this context, teachers working abroad are likely to have professional problems in terms of mastering a different curriculum, knowing the student structure, establishing close relations with colleagues, and communicating with administrators. For example, Arıcı and Kırkkılıç (2017) found that teachers working in Germany had problems because their textbooks, materials and course time were insufficient, and students and parents were indifferent to Turkish lessons. Erol ve Güner (2017) revealed that the problem for teachers in France is that they had to teach late and in multigrade classes, that the students are old, and that the course time is insufficient.

Santoro (2011) states that the teachers' stress wears them down and de-energizes them. In line with this opinion, Başar, and Doğan (2015) state that teachers feel weak and alone when they do not receive enough attention and support from administrators and colleagues. Cevahir (2013) revealed that teachers working abroad had trouble finding students to teach. Yaman and Dağtaş (2015) showed that teachers working in the UK had various problems such as finding materials, lack of necessary experience abroad, and level differences between students in the classroom.

Working in a foreign country brings individual gains in addition to the problems. Working abroad raises the global awareness of teachers for teaching. Teachers become more open-minded and critical about educational practices and get rid of their dogmatic thinking since they encounter a different culture. Thus, they can develop international instructional strategies with their ideas. Teachers working in a foreign country establish their pedagogical skills in providing students with the ability to understand multiple perspectives and understand the matters from different angles (Shiveley and Misco, 2015). Cook (2009) examined American educators who had been in Japan for a short time; and concluded that this experience gave teachers new points of view in social, political, and economic fields. Shiveley

and Misco (2015) found in their study that working abroad makes teachers more open-minded and provides them with a better understanding of the American Education system. He also concluded that the most significant opportunity for teachers other than personal development and classroom experience was personal enrichment. Finally, the authors found that teachers with experience abroad have the potential to understand different cultures and gain the ability to understand the weaknesses and strengths of their education systems.

Frederiksen (2014) mentioned the benefits and disadvantages of working in a foreign country. Making friends from different environments, meeting different people, and learning a new language are the gains of teachers. Moreover, the reasons for teachers to choose abroad were mostly higher salaries and better conditions. Several authors (Adler, 1975; Cushner and Brislin 1996; Weaver 2000 as cited in Halicioğlu, 2015) state that culture shock, which as a negative result of working abroad, improves people psychologically, contributes positively to the person in this context and therefore should be considered as a remarkable experience. Gündoğdu (2014) also found that working abroad provides to teachers in learning languages, gaining work experience elsewhere, recognizing different cultures, and gaining professional experience. This research aims to examine the challenges and benefits of these teachers. The research questions are as follows.

1. What are the adaptation problems experienced by teachers?
2. What are the social difficulties experienced by teachers?
3. What are the professional problems encountered by teachers?
4. What are the managerial challenges experienced by teachers?
5. What are the gains of teachers?

This study is supposed to guide administrators in the maintenance and improvement of education abroad and the measures to be taken. Besides, the results of the research are supposed to guide those who consider going abroad to work about the situations and problems they will encounter. Furthermore, this study is essential in terms of being the first study conducted on a large number

of teachers in four different countries in Europe (France, Germany, Switzerland, England) with a broad scope.

METHOD

This research was carried out using the survey model and the basic qualitative approach. The basic qualitative approach, referred to by various authors as “general qualitative” (Kahlke, 2014; Percy, Kostere and Kostere, 2015), simple qualitative or interpretive qualitative (Merriam, 2013) approach, examines people's subjective opinions, attitudes, beliefs or experiences about the outside world (Percy, Kostere and Kostere, 2015). Basic qualitative research, like other qualitative types, tries to provide how people interpret, construct, or make sense of their worlds and experiences. This type of research is epistemologically social constructivist and explains theoretically by focusing on (1) how people understand their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what their own experiences mean (Merriam, 2013). The basic qualitative approach is appropriate when a complete qualitative screening approach is desired (Percy, Kostere, and Kostere, 2015). In other words, this approach is research that cannot be guided by one of the known qualitative methodologies, such as phenomenology, ethnography, and embedded theory, the dominant trio of qualitative research (Kahlke, 2014).

In the basic qualitative approach, data collection aims to obtain more diverse views, ideas, or reflections and to go less “in-depth” in doing so. For data collection in a basic qualitative approach, data collection methods that allow people to report their opinions about things other than themselves are used. To this end, data were collected through semi- or fully structured interviews, surveys, or questionnaires. The focus of data collection is not the inner world or psychological state of the individual as in other qualitative approaches, but rather his/her perception of the external, real world. Also, reliability study is not required in this approach because the data is not measurable (Percy, Kostere and Kostere, 2015).

SAMPLE

In the basic qualitative research, an example is selected to obtain data, and information is searched for real-world events and processes or experiences of the selected sample. Data collection aims to collect more diverse views, ideas, or reflections and to go less “in-depth” in doing so. Therefore, unlike other qualitative approaches, a sample to represent the more substantial part of the universe is chosen. Thus, in this approach, a larger sample is generally achieved than that used by other qualitative methods, because the larger sample has a more widespread representation power (Percy, Kostere and Kostere, 2015).

The majority of 759 teachers employed in Europe by Turkey are located in France, Germany, the UK, and Switzerland. In this context, the research group of the research consists of 210 Turkish and Turkish Culture teachers working in these countries. It was not possible to collect data by contacting the said teachers through official channels. Therefore, data were collected from those who volunteered to participate in the research by snowball sampling method to the extent of accessibility. Coşkun, Altunışık and Yıldırım (2017) state that in the snowball sampling method, the first-person access to the researcher, who is primarily within the research universe is determined first. The next unit is reached with the information to be obtained from this unit, which goes on one after the other. In this way, the sample volume of the first single-unit increases as a snowball grows when rolling. As a result, the sample of the research consists of 210 teachers working in Germany, France, England, and Switzerland.

Half of the participants work in Germany (n=107), one third in France (n=78), and very few in Switzerland (n=16) and England (n=9). More than half of these teachers were male (n=127), and fewer were female (n=83). While more than half of the participants had a bachelor's degree (n=153), one-third had a master's degree (n=51) and a doctor's degree (n=6). The branches of the participants are as follows: English (n=79), Primary School Teaching (n=49), German (n=28), French (n=17), Turkish (n=13), Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge (n=11), Turkish language and literature (n=4), guidance (n=4), mathematics

(n=1), social studies (n=3) and child development (n=1). A quarter of the participants (n=52) were assigned abroad for the second time. 20% (n=43) of the others were in their fourth year, 20% (n=42) in their third year, 17% (n=36) in their second year, 11% (n=23) in their last year and 7% (n=14) in their first year. Most of the participants were married (n=131), and few were single (n=79). Given the professional seniority, 36% (n=75) were employed for 11-15 years, 31% (n=65) were employed for 21 years or more, 21% (n=45) were employed for 16-20 years and 12% (n=25) were employed for 10 years and under

DATA COLLECTION TOOL AND PROCESS

Jansen (2010) states that in qualitative research, data is collected with open-ended questions or in different formats, but it is rarely mentioned as qualitative survey in this field. According to Patton (1990), participants write their answers to open-ended questions. Therefore, these answers are considered a kind of document. Percy, Kostere, and Kostere (2015) state that there were semi- or fully structured verbal or written interviews among data collection methods in basic qualitative research. In these qualitative interviews, the questions were configured beforehand based on the researcher's prior knowledge and are looking for more information on this structuring. Whetzel and others (2003) state that the written, structured interview as an alternative to verbal interview as it was more flexible and cost-effective in gathering detailed information from the participants. In this context, the data required for the research was obtained through written, structured interviews. Researchers prepared an open-ended question form to determine the compliance, professional, social, managerial problems, and gains of teachers working in Europe. In the question form, participants were asked to answer the open-ended questions posed to them, questioning the sub-problems of the research. Participants were also asked to write what they would like to add.

After obtaining the official permits, the question form was sent to 16 Consultancy Services and Attache's Offices in Germany, France, England, and Switzerland through the Department for Missions Abroad of the Ministry of National Education to reach all teachers working in these

countries. In this context, 759 teachers were tried to be achieved; however, 232 teachers participated in the study voluntarily. Since it was seen that 22 forms were left blank during the preliminary analysis of the question forms obtained from the said participants, data from 210 teachers were taken into consideration.

DATA ANALYSIS

Patton (1990) suggests that researchers may behave flexibly in the qualitative analysis unless they contradict with invariant rules and guidelines for content transfer. In this context, a descriptive study was performed in the analysis of the data obtained from the research, as a result of the literature review and within the framework of the themes created during the study. One of the processes used in the analysis of qualitative data is descriptive analysis. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013) point out that qualitative data analysis, which includes summarizing and interpreting data according to pre-determined topics is descriptive. Since the primary purpose of this type of analysis is to present the results to the reader in a summarized and interpreted form, the researcher can often include direct quotations to reflect the views of the participants. In this context, data analysis consists of stages such as creating

categories, classifying these categories and data, naming groups utilizing the themes obtained in the literature. In this process, primarily, the data collected from the question forms were transferred to the computer environment in the same manner. Thus, raw data were obtained. This data has been arranged according to serving the purpose of the research.

This data was then thematised in line with the sub-objectives of the study and interpreted in a descriptive narrative. Participants have been coded according to the countries in which they work and gender. Moreover, all the participants are numbered differently. In this context, the encodings were made in such a way as to refer to PGF=female participant in Germany, PGM=male participant in Germany, PFF=female participant in France, PFM= male participant in France, PSF=female participant in Switzerland, PSM=male participant in Switzerland, PEF=female participant in England, PEM=male participant in England.

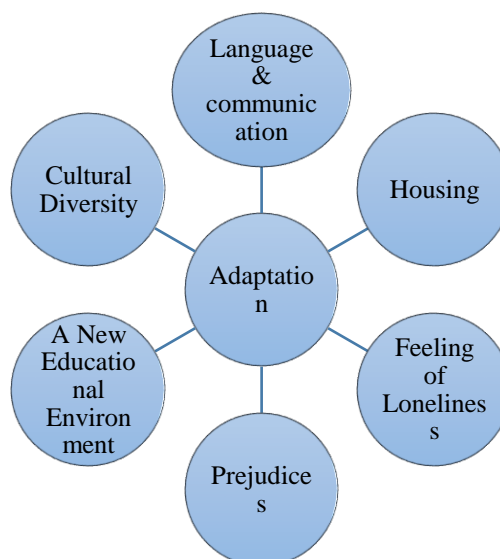
FINDINGS

According to the results, most of the participants had adaptation problems while few, who came to the country in the same area for the second time, did not.

ADAPTATION PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS

The results revealed six general themes of the participants' adaptation problems (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Adaptation problems experienced by participants



The results indicated that the participants had adaptation problems. Because they did not know the language of the country in which they were charged. Besides, some of the participants stated that they could not find an affordable house, and they had to stay with people they did not know or in places such as dormitories. Some teachers stated that they had to start working without solving the housing problem, and they affected negatively in the first year. Some of the views of the participants are as follows:

PGF22: “..Some of the school principals and some government officials refused to communicate in English even though they knew English, or expressed that they only want to speak German.”

PGF7: “It is difficult to find a house. We had to spend the night in a place like a hostel for 2.5 months. Obtaining residence, procedures required for this, filling out forms. You needed someone for all of them. How we will start schools, with whom we will deal... ...Finding a house is difficult, and when you find it, you need to prove that you are the right tenant... ...You need to document your earnings while you rent the house, and we receive this document from the consulate. However, my homeowner did not find the document I received from the Turkish consulate sufficient; I was able to rent the house under the guarantee of my sister, who is a German citizen who lives in another city of German and has a good job and income.”

Some participants revealed that wavered because they could not adapt to a different culture at first. Besides, some participants indicated that they had adaptation problems with Turks living in that country. Furthermore, they mentioned that starting to work in an educational environment with different rules also causes adaptation problems. Participants indicated that they were unable to adapt to education and school culture for a long time, primarily due to a lack of prior knowledge about the student and parent profiles and the fact that their working hours were different from those

in Turkey. Some of the views of the participants are as follows:

PGF9: “Cultural differences caused distress. I had difficulties because language, food, and entertainment were different from those of my own country.”

PGM67: “The Turkish people here are about to lose their identity. They are in the mindset of Turkey as it was fifty years ago. The imams are like sheikhs; they are almost going to stone the teacher. When I asked why you behave differently like this, they said 'professional difference.' What am I to understand from this?!... What should I tell these people?!...”

PFM9: “I had problems with the lifestyle of Turkish society here and the perspective from which they look at life and events. Even though they live in Europe, their perspectives on life, education, and social and cultural issues were far from the present, and it took time to build relationships.”

PFM15: “The Turks here and the Turks in Turkey are like two separate nations. They exclude those who are not like themselves. They are attracting us into their fights.”

PGM18: “It was a little challenging to contribute to the culture of students who grew up between two languages and two cultures and who did not fully belong to either language/culture.”

The participants emphasised that they had adaptation problems because of prejudices against them. Finally, the feeling of loneliness appeared both the result of and the reason for the adaptation problem. Some of the statements regarding these issues are as follows:

PGF8: “Interesting things in a small residential area, like German teachers not wanting one to enter the teachers' room or holding themselves at a distance... In short, they caused a loss of self-confidence. Therefore, you also experience the feeling of loneliness. The first year goes by with terrible feelings.”

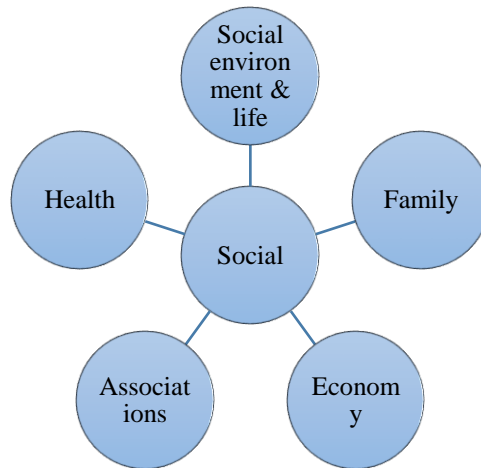
PGM26: “A sense of foreignness brought about by a different culture.”

PFF1: “The most negative impact of your overseas duty is to stay away from your family and friends and to get lonely.”

SOCIAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS

Social problems experienced by teachers are classified under five main headings (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Social problems experienced by participants



The participants revealed that they had difficulty to find friends in the country where they were charged. Besides, they just made friends with the Turkish people, only within the professional framework. Some of the participants' statements are as follows:

PGF4: "Longing for family, friends, and in short, the homesickness is difficult; it seems that it is invaluable to share with people in the same language and culture."

PFF11: "You are all alone here. I've been here for four years, and I do not have a proper French friend. Unfortunately, our citizens love imams and exclude teachers. Language is also a handicap. French is a complicated language."

PGM32: "It is a very vicious cycle in terms of the social environment... The presence of people around you who watch your work, you, your life, and who constantly judge you and who look for incompetencies can irritate you from time to time."

Moreover, the biggest problem of teachers working in France, Germany, and Switzerland was the lack of health insurance. Teachers who had their parents indicated that they had a more significant health problem. Some of the views of the participants are as follows:

PFM3: "The lack of an agreement between the two countries on health constitutes a serious financial sum."

PFF7: "It is a problem that we make our health-related expenses at our own expense and that we prepare many documents, make photocopies, translate them and send them to Turkey and that we wait for months to get our payments back. Full consideration is not taken back."

While those who were alone had longed for their family, those who had their family had problems related to their spouses' inability to work and not knowing the language of that country. Furthermore, their children had issues getting used

to the schools, and some of them could continue their education. Some participant views are as follows:

PFM29: "I have remained separate from my wife and child. Because my wife had returned to Turkey after two years."

PGF38: "My children could not find friends. All Turkish children were repulsive."

In addition, teachers were welcomed by the authorities of the school/parent-teacher association formed by the Turkish community. This association organized the first communication between the teachers and the principals of the schools. As a result, this association saw itself as the head of teachers and tried to manage these teachers. Some of the views of the participants on this issue are as follows:

PFM6: "Associations do not attach teachers the importance they attached to imams."

PFF28: "Turkish associations think that they are our bosses, they want us to live like them, to meet with people they meet and they want us to be tied to their apron strings. They meddle in the content of the programs we do, and they do not want different groups to be called in the events we hold."

The economic problems included insufficient salary, receiving a late salary, high rents, health expenses, and residence tax. Some of the views of the participants are as follows:

PGF42: "I did not receive a salary for the first four months of the year I arrived, and I receive my salary late every year in December-January. For these reasons, I am having economic problems."

PEF2: "House rents are too high. We have to rent a room. The fares are too high."

PGM18: "The religious officials assigned here have a ready-made lodging, but the teachers' pay high rents.

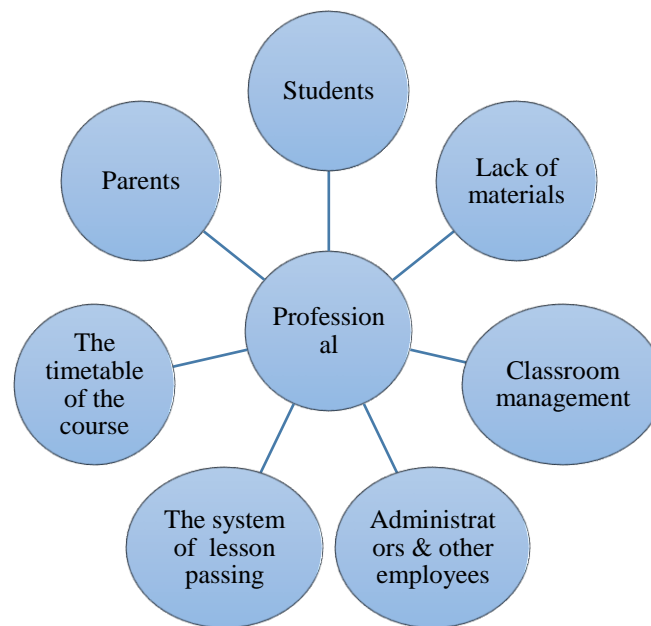
PGF4: "Not being able to live in a comfortable house, having to make do with makeshift items, not

being able to get into a good car, that is, living standards cannot be the same as another German teacher here, you have to cut back on the expenses to make a living."

PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS

The professional problems included seven themes (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Professional problems experienced by participants



According to the findings, the low level of readiness of the students was the primary professional problem experienced by the teachers. Since the Turkish lesson did not evaluate in the passing system and the lessons were held after school or at weekends, the students were usually come to class tired and reluctant. There In addition, lack of materials and unsuitable classrooms mostly decreased teachers' motivation.

Besides, parents' adverse treatment towards these teachers also affected their achievement. Moreover, since some of the school principals did not show enthusiasm to these teachers, these teachers had problems with other staff in schools. Some of the participants' statements about their professional issues are as follows:

PGM11: "Students behave more differently in Turkish lessons than they have in their German school."

PGF4: "Children's indifference and their low educational level when compared to the students in Turkey."

PEM5: "The reluctance of the students and the fact that they attend the classes with the force of their family are the general problems."

PGF4: "Not being able to have the same rights as the other teachers, not having a class, not being able to enter to the teachers' room as you do not have the school key, the remote and prejudiced attitudes of the principals due to the political and social reasons; these all cause to feel myself like a extraneous in the school environment."

PGM17: "The fact that we who come here as the cultural ambassadors with the idea of representing our state are perceived as representing the current government. The fact that every action of the current government good or bad is reflected in us; unfortunately, our work depends on the political conditions. The Status of the relationship between Turkey and the country we work in has a direct impact on our working conditions. Concerning this impact, we can teach at schools, or we can encounter school administrations that do not want us to open classes and make things difficult for us."

PFF14: "As we do our lessons after school, the teachers do not appreciate us as a teacher, they do not even greet. They do not give us a certain classroom at

school we make our lessons always in different places at school. They do not provide us with necessary materials even though we have a right to have. Moreover, the provincial directorates of national education send our work permit certificate late. The schools start in September, but we can start our lessons only at the end of October and when it is June we are asked to finish our classes one month before the schools are closed. We cannot give grades to the school reports of the students."

PGM15: "In some of the schools, I had the feeling that my presence was not desired in the teachers' room."

PSF6: "First of all, the fact that our lesson is based on voluntariness and the mark of it is invalid psychologically creates at the students an impression of the unnecessary of the lesson."

PGM16: "The parents behave to the Turkish teachers in a manner that they cannot show this attitude to German teachers. Even sometimes, they act capriciously. "-He has an exam tomorrow, so I will not

send him to your class today. -He did not want to come. - You talk about Atatürk or -You talk about religion in the lesson, so I do not want my child to be in such an environment ...": It is possible to hear such kind of objections from the parents. Furthermore, they negotiate with us in this way: "I send my child to your course, but I do not want him to participate in the activities for the 23rd April celebrations."

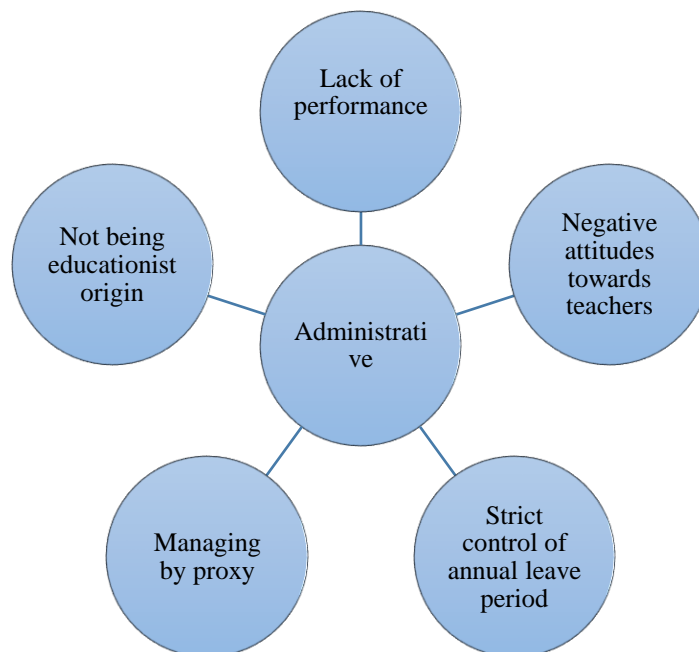
PFM12: "Some parents do not show respect to Turkish teachers as they do French teachers; therefore, I have to feel apprehension constantly about the reactions I will receive about my work."

Uysal & Gündoğdu (2019) remind, teachers focus content knowledge during the teaching phase at first. However, the results revealed that the participants seem to have challenges related to multivariate factors to their job at schools.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS

The teachers have to work with administrators (consultancy and attaché) abroad. The participants' administrative problems with these administrators included five main headings (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Administrative Problems experienced by the teachers



The results showed that the administrators did not care about teachers. The officers acted as if they were the chief of the teachers because of the lack of administrators in that area. Since most of the administrators did not have work tenure, they

worked for a short period and went back without being productive. Moreover, most of the administrators were not educators; therefore, they could not understand the teachers' problems. Some of the statements of the teachers are as follows:

PFM35: "I think that as teachers, we are isolated in our region. During my tenure, the attache has not found any solution to the recurring problems of the teachers in education, teaching, social, economic, or any other subjects. I do not think that we have a representative who can find solutions to the problems of a teacher as it is done for a religious official who is on duty abroad."

PGM44: "Attaches leave teachers on their own apart from meeting at the airport. Unfortunately, we do not receive any interest from our institution as the religious affairs and religious attache show to a religious official."

PGF11: "They stand behind teachers by no means. They do not solve any of our problems. Moreover, they put pressure in various ways."

PSM1: "Counsellors come to work for a short time, and they go back without learning the job."

PGM13: "Although we are teachers abroad, we have 30 days of annual leave. During the holiday period of the schools, even though we do not have a duty, we have to stay in our house according to the legislation. The ones who exceed the leave period face a prosecution, get a disciplinary punishment, and our payments with which we live are reduced."

PFF6: "Attache is nothing more than a name and a label. We do not have any contact with them. They had left us alone from the first time when we arrived here... When there is a problem, the only accused is always

'the teacher'... That is us 'the teachers' who represent our state... For example, none of my directors or French colleagues know counselor or attaché... We are the ones they have the official relation with on behalf of Turkey. However, I think that the authorities are not aware of this. The attache or the consultancy does nothing to make us feel relevant and valuable. Their attitude towards us is like this: "Do not reflect us any of your problems and have it your way." We are afraid to voice our demands and rights. I could not think of any organization abroad whose communication is such a grave with its employees."

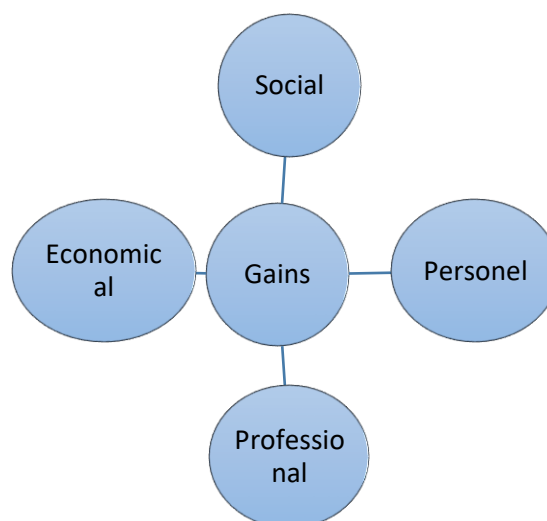
PFM51: "...The idea that they need just religious officials and they can deal with the Turkish language with their children by themselves is widespread in this society... There are many examples; the teacher who is considered as the most valuable teacher by the consultancy carries out congregational activities and damages the state financially, but he pretends to be such a perfect teacher that you think that he is the best teacher ever in Europe. Another teacher has close contacts with illegal associations, leaves to be a teacher, and decides to rest in France, but probably the consultancy learns this as the latest. Another teacher comes and commits suicide after six months, and it is said and attributed that he has already had psychological problems."

THE GAINS TEACHERS HAVE THROUGH WORKING ABROAD

Almost all of the participants agree that working abroad contributes them to a lot of avocationally.

The gains of the participants are grouped under four main headings (Figure 5).

Figure 5. The gains of the participants



Almost all of the participants indicated that they consider this duty is as an excellent opportunity for

their social and cultural development. Travelling in Europe quickly and making new friends were

among the social gains that the teachers had. Also, they were able to observe the Turkish population living in Europe closely; in this way, they could see their own culture from an external perspective. Therefore, they could recognize cultural differences and got cultural richness. They could be free from their prejudices, and in this way, they can see the world from a new perspective. Finally, some of their family members took advantage of learning a foreign language and education. Some of the statements of the teachers are as follows:

PGF28: "My perspective on life has changed. I realized that the world is on the way of becoming a small village. Everywhere there are people from all nationalities, and they know how to live together."

PFM9: "I had the opportunity to meet with a different group of students and parents. Sharing life with people from diverse cultures provides us to realize many things; respect, empathy, sharing, and so on. I had the opportunity to have an external perspective on myself and the society. In addition to this, I have seen my rights, my mistakes, and my shortcomings."

PGF7: "I was able to see my country from an objective point of view. I am learning a new language and meeting people from many different countries. While talking with people on historical and political issues, I can see the dogmas both in their minds and the ones in my mind. I question the trueness of the things we have been taught, and I read more to understand different points of view."

The results revealed that the teachers got self-confidence, living alone in a foreign country. They learned a new language or developed their knowledge of a foreign language. Also, they became open to learning, had the desire to research and read, and gained different perspectives. Their perception degree improved. Finally, they learned to be patient once again, they started to think universally and began to cope with difficulties, and they tended towards academic studies. Some statements about this subject are as follows:

PFF2: "Living alone in a foreign country contributed to the development of my ability to travel alone to different foreign countries."

PSM1: "When I came here, I have known English. In the region I work, the people speak Italian, so I have learned Italian and Spanish."

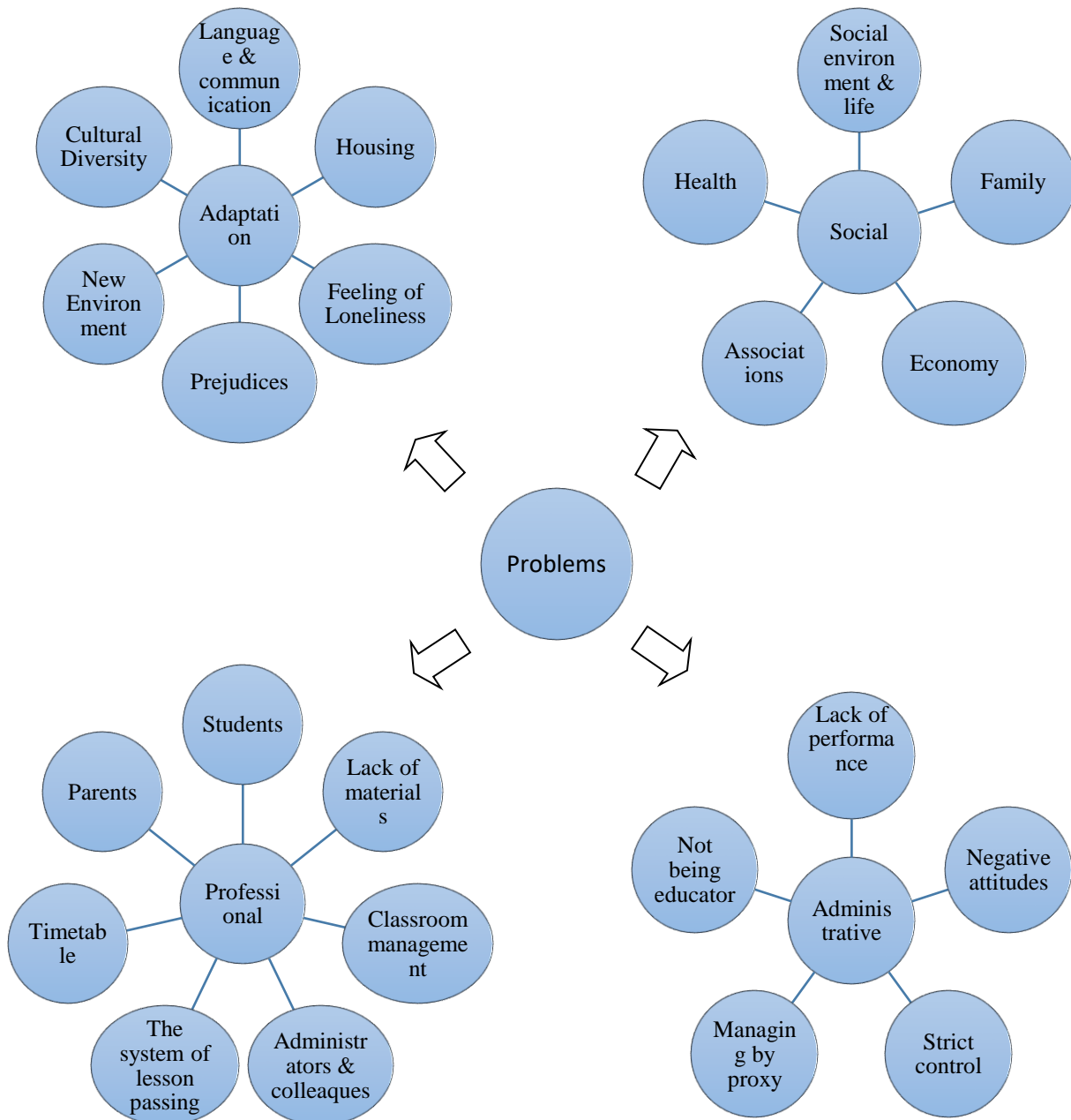
PGF6: "I have learned to be more patient and to be more powerful emotionally. I improved my German."

PSF1: "I had the opportunity to learn a second language. I improved my general knowledge and fund of knowledge by attending the courses given by the universities or institutions in the countries where I work."

PSF2: "I was able to experience how people from different cultures live together, and the educational system of Switzerland."

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

According to the findings, teachers problems related to working abroad included adaptation problems, social problems, professional problems, and administrative problems (Figure 6).



The results revealed that teachers experienced adaptation problems because of a new educational environment, language, and communication, cultural differences, housing problems, feeling of loneliness, and prejudices. These findings are in line with the results of Ekmekçi (2012) Cevahir (2013), Gündoğdu (2014), and Akman (2015). This study reveals that teachers had problems due to economic reasons such as health expenses and housing problems, and low salary. Moreover, teachers received their salary late, which led to problems in making their compulsory payments such as rent. These findings of the research are consistent with the studies of Cevahir (2013) and

Gündoğdu (2014), Akman (2017) and Arıcı and Kırkkılıç (2017).

The results revealed that the heads of the parent-teacher associations pretended to be the supervisor of these teachers which caused problems. This result is similar to the study of Arıcı and Kırkkılıç (2017). In this regard, the administrators need to take measurements to prevent these misconducts. Turkish and Turkish culture lessons were not included in the evaluation system. Therefore, teachers lived in disciplinary problems in classes. Moreover, parents ignored Turkish lesson and did not show respect to these teachers as they showed

to the other teachers at schools. Furthermore, since the levels of students were different from each other, teachers had to prepare different activities for each child. However, they had difficulties in these activities because of material inadequacy. These findings are similar to Corzo Ramirez Contreras (2011), Ekmekçi (2012) Güngör (2015); Arıcı and Kırkkılıç (2017) and Erol and Güner (2017).

The results show that, there was classroom adequacy for Turkish lessons, in general. Some principles were biased towards teachers and Turkish lessons. For this reason, they did not help teachers to reach potential students and to use school equipment. These findings are similar to Cevahir's study (2013).

This study also reveals that the teachers were left alone by the administrators abroad. Administrators were interested in the documents and did not support teachers to improve themselves or to solve their problems in schools. Besides, they did not respect teachers and sometimes acted with their emotions and according to their political views. Furthermore, they did not administer fairly, and they did not act equally to all teachers. Finally, they punished teachers frequently. Therefore, teachers felt worthless. These findings are supported by the results of Arıcı and Kırkkılıç (2017).

On the other hand, through working abroad, teachers have personal, professional, social, and financial gains. They learn a new language or improve their communication skills. They had the

opportunity to know different cultures and to travel comfortably. Moreover, they could compare the educational approach, school systems, and teachers' performance between Turkey and abroad. Furthermore, they could develop their teaching skills. These findings are similar to Cook's (2009) Frederiksen's (2014) Gündoğdu's (2014) and Shiveley and Misco's (2015) results.

It is recommended that the Ministry selects the teachers to be sent abroad from those who know the language of the country. Besides, these teachers should participate in an orientation program before going abroad. Also, the Ministry needs to select capable and educator administrators to abroad. Furthermore, teachers can often be brought together through cultural and social events. In this way, communication and cooperation among teachers can be supported. Finally, the teachers should be supported by resource and course material.

In this study, kinds of challenges and benefits of teachers were presented, but they were not examined deeply. In this context, it is recommended to other researchers to make similar studies phenomenologically. Furthermore, studies comparing different countries with this subject are recommended. Finally, the findings are supposed to guide the policymakers in other countries that have similar practices.

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