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## Depiction of the Relationship between Human and Nature in the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Geography Textbook

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**Abstract.** Today, education plays an important role in people's lives. Textbooks still maintain their status in the education system. Therefore, the information contained in textbooks is very important. As the data source of this study, the 9th grade geography textbook, which was accepted as a textbook for 5 years starting from the 2019-2020 academic year with the decision of the Board of Education and Board of Education of the Ministry of National Education dated 18.04.2019 and numbered 8, was used. The aim of the research is to investigate how the relationship between human and nature is handled in the mentioned textbooks. This study was conducted using the basic qualitative research design among qualitative research designs. The data obtained through document analysis were subjected to descriptive analysis. As a result of the research, it was found that while the effects of nature on human beings in the textbooks were generally described with negative expressions, the effects of human beings on nature were described both positively and negatively.

**Keywords.** Human and nature, textbook, geography.

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Books are one of the most important tools that people have used for centuries to access knowledge. Despite today's age of technology, books are still very important in education. The education system relies on books as the basis for students' academic success. Textbooks play an important role in students' learning process and contribute to their success. Textbooks are used as a basic resource in students' learning process. There are many definitions of textbooks. According to Alaylıoğlu and Oğuzkan (1976), a textbook is "a book recommended to students and teachers as a basic resource for a school, class and course prepared in accordance with the criteria determined by the Ministry of National Education". Robert (2002), on the other hand, defines a textbook as "a printed work prepared for students within the framework of the information stipulated in the program in order to facilitate educational processes". There are many studies in the literature that define textbooks (Bamberger, 1975; Choppin, 1992; etc.).

The textbooks provide comprehensive coverage of the topics that students need to learn. In addition to these topics, the examples in the textbooks help students to better understand the topics. Textbooks also help students to be more active in lessons. The exercises, tests and quizzes in the textbooks help students to better understand the topics and reinforce what they have learned. Therefore, the information in textbooks should be carefully selected. There are some principles for selecting information. Seguin (1989) combines these principles into 8 categories. He defines these categories as "accuracy, precision, timeliness, objectivity, contribution to social goals, development of learning experiences and skills, advancement of concepts and skills, and interdisciplinarity". Güneş (2022) divides the content characteristics of textbooks into three categories: scientific, sociological and educational. Textbooks also help students use their time efficiently. After learning the information in the textbooks, students can use the internet to learn more. However, internet sources are not always accessible and reliable. Textbooks, on the other hand, contain information compiled from reliable sources and help students use their time efficiently. There are many studies in the literature that emphasize the importance of textbooks in education (Keleş, 2001; Şahin, 2004; etc.).

### **The Importance of Learning Geography**

Geography is one of the oldest and fundamental fields of study, dating back to ancient Greece. No matter how long time passes, our world is still changing. Learning geography is a way to learn more about the world, which is important for a better understanding of it. It involves the study of physical phenomena such as mountains, rivers and oceans, as well as human activities such as agriculture, urbanization and globalization, helping us to understand the complex interactions

between humans and the natural world and how these interactions impact our lives and the health of our planet (H. Doğanay & S. Doğanay 2022).

One of the most important benefits of geography education is that it provides us with a global perspective. It is necessary to understand and participate in the world's physical, economic and social systems and an increasingly globalized society. Demiralp (2007) emphasizes the importance of materials in geography education. He argues that a properly selected material offers a better educational space. Geography allows us to understand and adapt to different cultures, languages and traditions globally. Understanding global issues such as inequality, poverty and migration helps us to approach others with more empathy and compassion and work towards a more just world. Furthermore, as geography is an interdisciplinary field that brings together a range of disciplines, it also provides an opportunity to learn about related disciplines, e.g. geology, ecology, anthropology and economics, etc. It is also extremely important in understanding world history, how humans have changed nature and much more. Unfortunately, studies on geography education in Türkiye give very little attention to issues such as environmental education (İncekara 2011).

Geography also reveals the distribution and value of the world's natural resources. These resources include minerals, oil, water, forests, agricultural land, biodiversity and many more. With the world's population growing, the sustainability of natural resources is a major concern. Geography makes people aware of how to conserve these resources and use them more wisely. Geography education is also extremely important to keep up with technological developments in the modern world. Technologies such as geographical information systems and satellite imagery are used to track changes on Earth. These technologies help to predict natural disasters, map landforms, monitor water resources and much more. Geography learning informs people about the use and limitations of these technologies (Ünlü 2014).

Climate change, natural disasters and resource depletion are some of the most important problems facing the world today. Geography provides the knowledge and skills needed to solve these problems and collaborate on solutions. In addition, learning about the impact of humans on the planet helps us make informed decisions on issues such as transportation, energy consumption and urbanization. Studying geography is also important to contribute to the process of developing well-informed and responsible citizens with a strong sense of citizenship, global awareness and competence (Atmaca & Çamurcu 2020).

As a result, learning geography is a way to learn more about the world, which helps us understand human interactions, natural resources, cultures, and many other things around the world. Geography education is also extremely important to contribute to solving global problems. According to Çimen (2021), geography education Türkiye is still not at a sufficient level. Improving this education is one of the main goals.

### **The relationship between Human and Nature**

The relationship between humans and nature is a complex and multifaceted one that has evolved over thousands of years. Humans were initially dependent on nature for survival. Throughout history, humans have interacted with the natural world in different ways. Starting with hunting and gathering, the relationship has come a long way to agriculture and industrialization. Early humans were often nomadic communities, moving around in search of food and resources. Hunting and gathering for food was the main livelihood and people had to adapt to the rhythms of the natural world to survive. As human societies became more settled and agriculture was developed, the relationship between man and nature began to change. People began to grow crops and domesticate animals, which allowed them to produce more food and support large populations (Güneş, 2018).

In the 19th century, the industrial revolution marked a major turning point in the relationship between man and nature. The development of machinery and the use of fossil fuels led to unprecedented levels of economic growth and prosperity, but it also led to widespread pollution and environmental degradation. This has continued to the present day, and the global economy has become overly dependent on the use of non-renewable resources and the exploitation of natural habitats. More recently, however, there has been growing concern about the impact of these interactions on the environment and the need for a more sustainable relationship with nature (Karaca 2007). Human negative impacts on nature. Humans have a significant impact on the natural world. In recent years, the negative impacts of humans on nature have become increasingly evident. As the population increases, so does our pressure on the environment. We can categorize the negative impacts on the environment as follows.

- **Habitat destruction:** One of the most significant negative impacts of humans on wildlife is habitat destruction. As we have expanded our cities, farms, and infrastructure, we have cleared large areas of natural habitats, destroying the homes and breeding grounds of countless species. This has led to reduced biodiversity and the extinction of many species (Yıldırım 2019).

- **Climate change:** Human activities have a profound impact on wildlife, and climate change is one of these impacts. The burning of fossil fuels, deforestation and other human activities have led to increased greenhouse gas emissions. These greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere and cause global temperatures to rise. This leads to melting glaciers, rising sea levels and changes in weather patterns that have serious impacts on ecosystems worldwide (Demirbaş & Aydin 2020).

- **Pollution:** Pollution is another major negative impact of humans on wildlife. We have introduced many chemicals and pollutants into the environment, such as pesticides, fertilizers, and industrial waste. These pollutants cause soil, water and air pollution and can have a range of negative impacts on ecosystems and their associated organisms (Menteşe 2017).

- **Destruction of freshwater resources.** Freshwater resources, such as rivers and lakes, have also been damaged and polluted by human activities, leading to droughts, loss of ecosystems and diminishing freshwater resources. This leads to problems such as water scarcity with serious consequences for agricultural productivity, energy production and human health (Imanov, Mammadov, Abdullayev 2014).

- **Overfishing:** Humans also have a significant impact on the world's oceans and nature. Overfishing has led to the depletion of fish and other animal populations and reduced biodiversity in many areas. This also has negative impacts on human communities that depend on fish for food and income.

- **Invasive species:** Another negative impact of humans on wildlife is the introduction of invasive species. When we moved around the world, we introduced non-native species in new environments. These species can outcompete native species and disrupt ecosystems. Invasive species pose a major threat to biodiversity and have significant economic impacts (Kekillioğlu & Bıçak 2022).

In conclusion, no one can deny the huge and negative impact of humans on nature. Everyone needs to take responsibility to reduce our impact and protect the rest of our planet for future generations.

Positive human impacts on nature. The relationship between humans and nature has often been portrayed as one in which humans have a damaging and destructive impact on nature. Indeed, human negative activities have had a significant impact on the planet, but it is important to recognize that humans also have positive impacts on nature. We can categorize the positive impacts of humans on the earth as follows.

- **Conservation:** Humans have played an important role in conservation efforts around the world, protecting endangered species and preserving natural habitats. Thanks to conservation efforts, many species, such as the black eagle and gray wolf in the United States, have been saved from extinction. Conservation efforts have also led to the formation of national parks and protected areas, thus protecting natural habitats and increasing diversity (Koç & Soykan, 2020).

- **Restoration:** People are investing in the restoration of natural habitats that have been destroyed or degraded. This includes initiatives such as restoration and wetland restoration that help regeneration.

- **Forest reforestation:** Deforestation is a major environmental problem, but people are also contributing to forest reforestation efforts. Trees are important for absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and providing habitat for wildlife. Forest reforestation efforts have been successful in many regions around the world, for example in China, where the government has launched a major reforestation campaign and is working to prevent desertification and improve air quality.

- **Sustainable agriculture:** Agriculture is a major cause of environmental degradation, but sustainable agricultural practices can positively impact wildlife. For example, organic farming uses natural methods to control insects and fertilize plants. This reduces the amount of chemicals released into the environment. Sustainable agricultural practices can also help protect soil and water resources, reduce erosion and improve water quality (Şahin & Göcen, 2021).

- **Clean energy:** The development of clean energy technologies such as solar and wind energy has a positive impact on the environment by reducing the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere. Clean energy technologies are becoming more economical and widespread and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels (Koç & Kaya, 2015).

In conclusion, as can be seen from the literature review, humans have a great impact on nature. The relationship between humans and nature is complex and multifaceted and has evolved throughout human history. Although human activities have many negative impacts on the environment, there is a growing need for a more sustainable and harmonious relationship with nature. By working towards this goal, we can ensure a better future for ourselves and our world.

For this, it is important to look at how this issue affects school education. Because a good future can only be achieved through the right education. The aim of this article is to contribute to the literature on this topic. The type of research, research group, data collection tools, validity and reliability, data collection techniques, analysis of the data should be detailed in the method sec

## Method

### Research Model

This study was conducted based on the basic qualitative research design among the designs of qualitative research method. Basic qualitative research is one of the most frequently used designs in the field of education. Basic qualitative research are studies conducted to understand a phenomenon in general, to see and explore how people make sense of life and the world. In this design, data are collected through observation, interview, and document analysis (Merriam, 2018.). Since this research also focuses on discovering a meaning and how this meaning is portrayed, the basic qualitative research design was used in the research. In short, the main purpose of this research is to discover and describe a meaning. In this research, it was attempted to make sense of and explain how the relationship between human and nature is portrayed in 9th grade geography books.

### Source of Data

The data source of this research is the 9th grade geography textbook, which was "accepted as a textbook for 5 years starting from the 2019-2020 academic year with the board decision of the Ministry of National Education Board of Education and Board of Education dated 18.04.2019 and numbered 8". The reason for choosing 9th grade is that the relationship between human and nature is mostly included in this curriculum. In addition, the book accepted by the Ministry of National Education, which is easily accessible by everyone, was used as a data source, not private publishing houses. First, a literature review was conducted on the place and importance of textbooks in education, the importance of geography education and the human-nature relationship.

### Data Analysis

In this study, data were collected through document analysis. "Document analysis involves the analysis of written material containing information about the phenomena and events targeted for research" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 189). Descriptive analysis method was used in the research. "In the descriptive analysis method, in which the data are analyzed according to predetermined themes, the researcher can also present the data in accordance with the research questions and dimensions" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 239).

## Results

Nature is seen as an indispensable resource for human beings to survive. Human meets his various needs by using nature and nature provides man with various resources to sustain his life.

However, today, increasing population, industrialization and technological developments have complicated the relationship between humans and nature. Therefore, geography textbooks are very important to help students understand the relationship between humans and nature and gain awareness about the sustainable use of natural resources. Table 1 shows the chapters and lessons in the analyzed textbook where there are findings on the relationship between human and nature. The topic was analyzed under the titles "The impact of nature on people's personal lives" and "The effects of human activities on nature".

Table 1.

*Chapters and Lessons of the Textbook*

<b>Section</b>	<b>Lesson</b>
Human and Geography	Human and Nature Geography from Yesterday to Today
Climate Knowledge	Atmosphere and Weather Phenomena Weather and Climate Climate Elements (Temperature) Climate Elements (Pressure and Winds) Climate Elements (Humidity and Precipitation) Climate Types on Earth and Vegetation
Human Systems	Settlements from Past to Present. Settlement Types and Textures Affecting Settlement in Türkiye Factors
Regions and Countries	Distinguishing Regions Criteria Used Region Boundaries
Environment and Society	Our Needs and the Natural Environment Human-induced changes in the natural environn

**The impact of nature on people's personal lives.**

Nature has a significant impact on people's personal lives. People survive and increase their well-being by taking advantage of the resource's nature provides. But nature also has an impact on people's health, state of mind and social life. Nature influences everything from the way people live, the way they dress, the variety of crops they plant and grow. The textbook mentions the effects of nature on people's lives quite often. It emphasizes that people must wear thinner clothes in hot places



and thicker clothes in cold places, that climate is important in the variety of crops grown, and that people generally live in areas with a moderate climate and suitable for life.

According to the textbook, nature also influences the materials used to build structures on the land and the type of food people eat.

*Landforms also affect our lives. Agriculture is limited and transportation conditions are difficult in places where there are more hills. For example, in Afghanistan, there are few places suitable for agriculture due to the ruggedness and transportation is not developed here. We can give Hakkâri as an example of such places in our country. (Baranaydin, Aydin & Tekbaş 2022. p13)*

As can be seen from the quote, there is a narrative that nature makes people's lives difficult. The general narration also proceeds in this direction. Although the textbook does not directly use negative expressions about the effect of nature on human life, it uses a negative perspective when describing the subject. Even when describing the positive and beautiful aspects of nature, it emphasizes the negative aspects of this subject. We can give the following excerpt as an example.

*Another effect of landforms on our lives is that they enable the development of tourism. Some landforms such as beaches, waterfalls, volcanic mountains, fairy chimneys, lakes and caves make important contributions to tourism. On the other hand, the ruggedness of landforms negatively affects tourism as it makes transportation difficult. (Baranaydin, Aydin & Tekbaş 2022. p13)*

### **The effects of human activities on nature.**

Humans can create significant changes in the world because of their interactions with nature. People, who live their lives by making use of natural resources, shape nature through activities such as agriculture and animal husbandry practices, industrial activities, mining, energy production and urbanization. These interactions have both positive and negative aspects.

The negative impacts of humans on nature are also quite serious. Factors such as industrial activities, greenhouse gas emissions, pollution and uncontrolled use of natural resources disrupt the balance of natural ecosystems and lead to the depletion of natural resources. Humans also cause environmental pollution by releasing their wastes that cause air, soil and water pollution into nature. As a result of this pollution, air quality deteriorates, species living in water disappear, human and animal health is affected, forests are destroyed, and climate change can also be caused. All these

impacts cause serious damage to the health of ecosystems and negatively affect the sustainable use of natural resources. The negative impacts of humans on nature disrupt the balance of nature, leading to the depletion of natural resources and a decrease in the quality of life.

Of course, human beings do not only have negative impacts on nature, but also positive ones, and they can be seen in many areas. First, by exploring and understanding nature, people are working for the protection and sustainability of their environment. As a result of these efforts, many projects are emerging that prevent pollution of the environment, loss of soil fertility, depletion of water resources and destruction of natural habitats. Humans also manage natural resources through agriculture and forestry activities. The correct implementation of these activities leads to beneficial outcomes such as keeping soil fertile, protecting water resources, preventing erosion, increasing biodiversity and maintaining air quality. Ultimately, the positive impact of humans on nature makes our world a better place through the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources.

In conclusion, human interactions with nature should be evaluated together with their positive and negative aspects. Sustainable use of natural resources, adoption of environmentally friendly practices and taking the necessary measures to protect nature can help to increase the positive aspects of human interactions with nature and reduce their negative effects. The textbook adequately addresses this issue. Both positive and negative impacts of humans on nature are explained, diversified and examples are given to support the discourse. We can look at the following excerpt about the positive effects of humans on nature.

*The natural conditions we live in directly affect our lives. On the other hand, people make many changes in nature to get rid of the negative effects of nature. For example, thanks to the Suez Canal, transportation between the Mediterranean coasts and the coasts of South and East Asia has become much shorter. We can give many examples of this situation in our country. The July 15 Martyrs, Fatih Sultan Mehmet and Yavuz Sultan Selim bridges and the Ovit Tunnel are some of them. Tunnels and viaducts are built to provide transportation in rugged terrains, and the natural environment is changed to process mines. (Baranaydin, Aydin & Tekbaş 2022. p14)*

He also mentions the negative effects of humans on nature. Let's look at another quote on this subject.

*The mixing of industrial wastes with water, the unconscious use of fertilizers and chemical pesticides in agriculture, and the random*

*dumping of garbage in the natural environment are some of the reasons that lead to water pollution. For example, in Bangladesh, water pollution has reached an advanced level because of the addition of various wastes to water. A similar situation exists in Chad, Mali, Niger, and Senegal. (Baranaydin, Aydin & Tekbas 2022. p199)*

When describing the effects of human beings on nature, the textbook first talks about the effects themselves and then shows examples related to this subject. However, as it can be seen from the quotations, it shows examples from both the world and Türkiye when describing positive effects. In fact, there are more examples from Türkiye. But when it comes to negative effects, most of the examples given after the narration belong to the world. Almost no examples are given on this subject in Türkiye. Türkiye is mentioned only when describing the damages caused by pesticides. Giving examples by associating them with the immediate environment will enable children to better understand and internalize the subject. The future generation that learns about nature and grows up fully understanding the effects of human beings on it will make more effort to protect it.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The relationship between humans and nature has always been a very important issue. Because while humans survive by using natural resources, they also provide a meaningful impact on nature. This interaction has become increasingly evident on a global scale over time. Therefore, it is of great importance to reveal the impact of human activities on nature and to take measures for a sustainable future. This article examines how the 9th grade geography textbook approaches the relationship between humans and nature. The book deals with human interactions with nature, covering topics such as deforestation, degradation erosion, water resources management, climate change, destruction of nature and tourism. It also discusses the impact of human activities on the natural world from a global perspective. In general, the textbook describes the effects of nature on human beings from a negative perspective, while the effects of human beings on nature are described both positively and negatively. The book does not give much space to issues related to sustainable development.

The article emphasizes how humans are limited in their interactions with nature, a key point of the book. Human activities can change and completely destroy the essence of nature. However, in order to conserve the resources that nature provides, humans need to cooperate with nature in a mutual way. Steps taken for this purpose are crucial for protecting nature and ensuring a sustainable future. Therefore, it is important to examine how this issue is reflected in education. This study aims to contribute to future changes in textbooks.

Many studies have been conducted on the topics covered in geography textbooks. Sezen and Şanlı (2017) investigated the phenomenon of migration in Geography curricula and textbooks. As a result, they determined that the subject is mainly Türkiye-centered, the international dimension and current migration movements are not sufficiently reflected, important concepts and legal regulations related to migration are missing in the content, and the information used is insufficient in terms of current and scientific aspects. This situation makes it difficult for students to understand the phenomenon of migration from a holistic and global perspective. Some of the findings are in line with this study. In this study, the fact that current issues are given less space, that examples are given from Türkiye when the positive part of the subject is explained and only from a certain part of the world when the negative part is explained makes it difficult to understand the subject with a holistic and global perspective.

Sözcü and Aydınöz (2019) examined 9th grade geography learning outcomes according to the revised Bloom's taxonomy. They determined that most of the achievements focused on conceptual knowledge, that is, generalizations and classifications. According to their research results, factual knowledge is 20% and procedural knowledge is only 12%. Important topics such as map skills are not covered sufficiently and metacognitive knowledge is almost non-existent. This deficiency makes it difficult for students to think more deeply. In the cognitive process, there are many learning outcomes in the comprehension dimension, but very few in higher level dimensions such as application and analysis. There are no outcomes in the creation dimension. According to their study, the program was weak in meeting the main purpose of geography.

In the 9th grade geography textbook, it is concluded that there is little information on the subject and that it is not reinforced with practical lessons. These results are similar to the findings of Yaman and Topçu (2022) on their own subject. In their study on "Examining the 9th Grade Geography Curriculum on the Axis of National Identity", it is seen that the 9th grade geography curriculum seems to be sufficient in terms of subjects and achievements in gaining national identity awareness, but there are deficiencies in terms of quality. In their study, it is suggested that the curriculum should be enriched with introductory trips, field studies and concrete activities in order to increase the permanence of these achievements, although it supports students to recognize the geography they live in historically and culturally and to understand the importance of natural and cultural heritage.

Tomal (2019) conducted a study on another geography textbook used in the 9th grade and found that teachers generally considered the content dimension of the book subject to the research sufficient, but they thought that the visuals and assessment and evaluation questions should be increased.

The study conducted by Gül (2013) revealed that environmental problems are not just pollution or unconscious use; it is a complex issue with social, political, economic and cultural dimensions. It is emphasized that a strong environmental awareness should be created for a solution, and the environment should be approached not as an object of consumption but as a common heritage that needs to be protected. In order to minimize the damage of technological progress to the environment, environment-centered ethics should be adopted instead of anthropocentric, environmental education should be expanded, an ecological citizenship model should be developed and a sustainable human-nature relationship should be established. As a result, this study shows how important education is in accordance with this study.

### **Recommendations**

It is important to learn and teach about nature. The better this subject is portrayed in textbooks; the better students will grasp the subject. As a result of the research, we can make some suggestions. First, this subject can be given more space in order to make children love and understand nature. While explaining both positive and negative aspects, examples from the world and Türkiye can be given. This will help children to understand the subject well and not to get caught up in the notion that bad examples are only in a certain place. Our future is very important. To protect it, sustainable development is becoming more and more important today. Therefore, topics related to this subject can be given more space.

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