

Research Article

Teaching as a Professionalism through Teachers' Perspective¹

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate teacher professionalism within the framework of teachers' opinions. For this purpose, 45 teachers working at different educational levels and different types (primary, middle and high school) schools in a city located in eastern part of Turkey were included as participants. The data were collected through interviews and the data were analyzed through the content analysis method. The participants with sufficient professional and personal development level stated that they attended graduate education, read books, and followed the innovations to improve themselves. Also, it was found that teachers should be encouraged and motivated to advance their development. The biggest obstacle for their development, teachers mentioned school administration, parents and students. Teachers suggested that these obstacles must be overcome to increase teachers' willingness to advance their professional and personal skills, and in turn, to increase schools' achievement levels. Suggestions for future research is also provided.

Keywords: Teachers, teacher proficiency, development, professionalism

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Öğretmen Görüşleriyle Öğretmen Profesyonelliğinin İncelenmesi

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, öğretmen profesyonelliğini öğretmen görüşleri çerçevesinde değerlendirmektir. Bu amaçla, Türkiye'nin doğusunda yer alan bir şehirde farklı eğitim seviyelerinde çalışan 45 öğretmen ve farklı tipteki (ilk, orta ve lise) okullar katılımcı olarak dahil edildi. Veriler görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmış ve veriler içerik analizi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Yeterli mesleki ve kişisel gelişim seviyesine sahip katılımcılar lisansüstü eğitime katıldıklarını, kitap okuduklarını ve kendilerini geliştirmek için yenilikleri takip ettiklerini belirtti. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin gelişimlerini ilerletmek için teşvik edilmeleri ve motive edilmeleri gerektiği bulunmuştur. Gelişimlerinin önündeki en büyük engel, öğretmenler okul yönetiminden, ebeveynlerden ve öğrencilerden bahsetti. Öğretmenler, öğretmenlerin mesleki ve kişisel becerilerini geliştirmeye istekli olmalarını ve ardından okulların başarı seviyelerini arttırma isteklerini arttırmak için bu engellerin aşılması gerektiğini önerdi. Gelecekteki araştırmalar için önerilerde bulunuldu.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Öğretmenler, öğretmen yeterliği, gelişim, profesyonellik

Introduction

Education as an entire social process is the change in knowledge and behavior that people gain in order to survive and exist in society. In this process, teachers are considered as a key for achieving the objectives of education. More specifically, teachers contribute the community life through individuals, lead the targeted changes, and guide them (Mattar, 2012), which enables people to live in societies. These contributions make teaching as an extremely important profession. Teachers with high level teaching skills are the basis of good schools; therefore, they are one of the most important investments of skills, knowledge, time, and money (Chanthy, 2016). Teachers are expected to have certain skills. Specifically, in order to understand the needs of students and give importance of their emotions and thoughts, teachers need to have a high level of communication skills (Venter & Poggenpoel 2005). Moreover, teaching requires devotion and self-sacrifice (Akkaya, 2015). In addition to basic skills, teachers need to be also experts in their fields (Ünlü, 2015). As Koşar (2015) stated, teachers who improve their personality and professionalism become more effective in teaching; therefore, all of these qualifications must be improved in order to keep up with the changes in education. In recent years, researchers have focused on teaching, teachers, and effectiveness. At this point, the concepts of professional, professionalism, and teacher professionalism emerge.

While the term *professional* is used for skilled and specialized people (TDK, 2018), professionalism is used for individual's continuous development with personality, professionalism and field expertise and keeping up with the changes (Shantz & Prieur, 1996) and the extent to which individuals can demonstrate their expected competencies in line with their occupations (Lee, 1981). Professionalism, which is used to classify the status of a profession in terms of respectability (Kennedy, 2007), requires that all the details of a job be performed in a thorough manner (Ekiz, 2003). In business, professionalism is considered as the synonym of the word *success* and expresses the expected behavior of individuals in certain occupations (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005). In this scope, teachers working in educational institutions are considered as professionals.

Teachers' willingness to create a school culture by acting collectively constructs a positive school climate, informally demonstrating the professionalism of teachers (Karakaya, 2003, p. 96). Due to its complexity, teacher professionalism has attracted researchers' attention for the last half century in countries including UK, United States of America, Canada, & Austria (Ekiz, 2003). With the increasing importance given to teacher professionalism, different concepts related to the characteristics of professional teaching have emerged. For instance, teacher professionalism is expressed with the terms of postmodern professionalism (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2002) and new professionalism (Hargreaves, 1994). Postmodern professionalism is defined as a combination of collective teaching, autonomy, professionalism, and the emotional and cognitive dimensions of teaching (Ekiz, 2003).

Professional teachers create awareness not only with their own development but also in their environment (Demirkasımoğlu, 2010). More specifically, while professional teachers try to interact effectively with each other (Nartgün, 2008), they also take an active role in students' academic lives in coordination with their colleagues. They make efforts to improve the success levels of the institutions they serve, their colleagues, and their students by developing certain programs and strategies with their colleagues (Muhammad & Jaafar, 2015). Teachers, who are "being good in their own work", "fulfilling the highest standards" and "achieving excellence" as professionals, need to cope with any difficulties and use their skills and experiences related to their profession (Baggini, 2005).

Teacher professionalism comes with the complex transformation in education, the increase in the difficulties in the learning environments due to this transformation, the need for new methods in the solution of these difficulties, the need for students to be more active in classrooms (Gesilva, 1996; Karaca, 2015). In order for schools to achieve their goals, teachers who have the skills to cope with these issues need to be the majority in schools. The desire of teachers to do the best changes their behavior and attitudes significantly, which also increases the level of professionalism. In other words, professionalism is measured by the best and highest standards (Phelps, 2006). While teachers with high level of professionalism have positive reflections on their students (Tschannen-Moran, Parish & DiPaola, 2006), teachers with reluctance in their

professionalism and teachers with different quests other than their professionalism have negative effects on the students (Gaziel, 1995).

When the teaching profession is taken from a professional point of view, expectations from teachers are constantly increasing and changing (Evans, 2011). Teacher professionalism can be examined in the dimensions of behavior, attitude and intellectuality (Çağdaş, 2014). While the behavior dimension includes teachers' degree of fulfillment of the profession requirements, the attitude dimension contains teacher's perspective and perception of the profession. The mental ability dimension includes teachers' having the knowledge and skills required by the profession, developing themselves constantly, mastering their fields, and following the developments in the field. In addition to having expertise in teaching, directing, guiding, training, assessment, and evaluation of students (Jumardin et al., 2014), professional teachers also possess competences in professional self-assessment, professional competence, and special activity (Day, 2007). Teachers with professional skills and knowledge can make a big difference in students' learning since they have sufficient decision-making rights, interrelation and authority among students, colleagues and parents (İlhan, Aslanargün & Shaukat 2015), and use important teaching tools to carry out teaching and training activities (Krull, 2002).

In regard to the definition and characteristics of teaching professions, this study aims to evaluate teacher professionalism through teachers' perspective. Specifically, professional teachers' effort for personal and professional development and the difficulties they face, the effect of individual characteristics on their professional development, the effects of professional teachers on their colleagues and students, the difficulties they face while performing their duties, and their perspectives on teaching are examined.

Method

This qualitative research was carried out by using a case study approach in order to determine the perceptions of teachers on teacher professionalism. The phenomenon pattern focuses on cases that individuals may notice in their environment but not have a detailed idea (Patton, 2005, 104;

Yıldırım & Şimşek 2011, 72). The main purpose of the phenomenological study is to define the nature of the research as clearly as possible without a theoretical framework (Groenewald, 2004).

Participants

The study group consisted of 45 teachers working at different educational levels and different types of schools (primary, secondary and high school) in a city located in eastern part of Turkey. Purposive sampling method for used for participant selection. This helps to identify common and similar aspects between events (Creswell, 2012; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The demographic information about the participants is given in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information about the Participants

Gender	Female	21
	Male	24
School type	Elementary school	15
	Secondary school	10
	High school	20
Teaching experience	<5 years	13
	6-10 years	5
	11-15 years	10
	16-20 years	9
	>21 years	8

Data Collection Tool

In order to obtain teachers' perspectives on professional and personal development, a question pool with 13 questions was created based on the literature. After obtaining expert views (three teachers, two faculty members of the Department of Turkish Language, and two faculty members of the Department of Educational Sciences), six questions were chosen for interviews. In order to make sure the clarity of the questions, interviews were conducted with three teachers who were

not included in the study. Then, the questions were re-formed and become ready for the real interviews. The interview questions were as follows.

1. What do you think about teachers' professional and personal development levels working in your school and what are your colleagues doing to advance their professional and personal skills?
2. Do you think that there are any obstacles to the development of teachers? Please explain. (prompts given as needed)
3. Do you think the professional and personal development levels of teachers change according to age, gender, teaching experience, and school type?
4. Do you think that a teacher who does his job well has an impact on his colleagues and students?
5. What are the problems you encounter while doing your job?
6. What does teaching profession mean to you?

The data was collected in 2017-2018 school year. The researchers made arrangements to meet each teacher individually. At each meeting, the study was introduced to the teachers and they were ensured about confidentiality. After their agreement to participate, they were provided in-print version of the interview form. The forms were collected back by the researchers within a week.

Data Analysis

The forms collected from the participants were coded as O1, O2, O3... O45 and transferred into electronic environment. The categories to be used in describing teachers' views on professional and personal development were not identified at the beginning. The data analysis was completed in three stages. In the first stage, researchers individually read all the forms obtained from the teachers and identified main categories. After discussing and coming to consensus about categories, the researchers read the forms individually for clarification purpose. In the second stage, researchers read the forms one more time to identify themes that are suitable for each category. In some cases, one theme was considered as suitable for more than one category. Therefore, those themes were assigned under all categories that are suitable for them. In the last

stage, researchers discussed themes and their categories. Then, the coding between the two encoders were compared. In order to ensure the interrater reliability, a formula developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used ($\text{Reliability} = \text{Consensus} / (\text{Consensus} + \text{Disagreement}) * 100$) and the reliability between the two encoders was calculated as 97.5%. In qualitative studies, reliability level of 90% and more among coders is considered as quite good (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For disagreements, researchers made consensus. As a result, in the study, the desired reliability level was obtained among the encoders that the findings should be reported.

Findings

Participants' thoughts were investigated in order to determine their opinions about professionalism. In line with the findings, answers were grouped and themes were created and interpreted. The participants were asked the following question: What do you think about teachers' professional and personal development levels working in your school and what are your colleagues doing to advance their professional and personal skills? Figure 1 is designed to show participants' answers to the question.

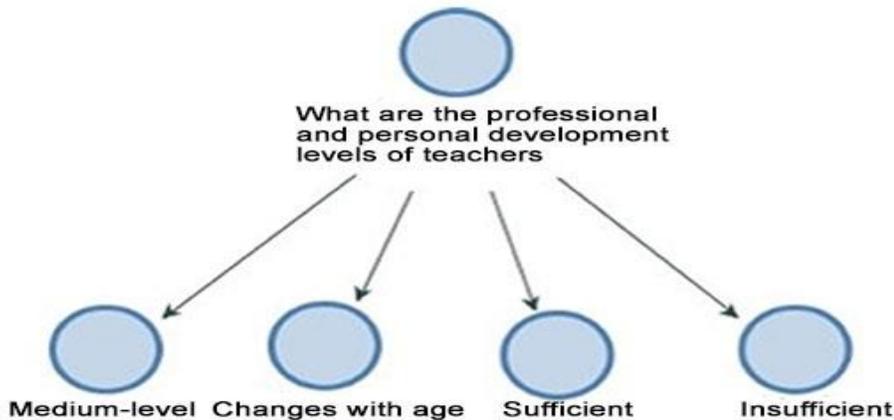


Figure 1. Professional and Personal Development Levels of Teachers

According to the participants' opinions, the teachers' professional and personal development levels were determined as follows: sufficient (n = 24), moderate (n = 12), insufficient (n = 9) and changing according to age (n = 2). The teachers who considered teachers' professional and personal

development levels at the medium level stated that while some teachers advance their professional and personal development through various activities, the others do not have any effort on it and maintain their profession and lives at a monotonous level. Teachers who considered professional and personal development levels as insufficient put emphasis on several aspects including lack of motivation, failure of supervision mechanism, students' low academic achievement, occupational dropout, and economic concerns for insufficient professional and personal development. Example quotes are given below.

O4: *Moderate. As well as very good ones, there are others who do not improve themselves. They attend seminars related to their field. They follow innovations in education. Some are willingly, others are forced by the administrators.*

O6: *It changes according to the average age. Those over the age of 50 are more closed to developments. There are other teachers who use technology, modernize themselves at a low level but are generally open to improvements.*

O10: *Everyone is quite good in the field, they are getting prepared for their classes. They use the smart board effectively. They attend in-service training programs, follow the publications related to their field.*

O11: *I find most of the teachers in our school inadequate on the issues mentioned. Very few teachers are trying to be productive with a sense of responsibility. Few of them carry out professional development activities due to their personal interests. Some of them do not feel responsible for their duties. I don't think this can change unless there are compelling effects and internal motivation.*

In terms of the teachers who considered professional and personal development levels of the teachers as sufficient, how teachers perform professional and personal development is given in Figure 2.

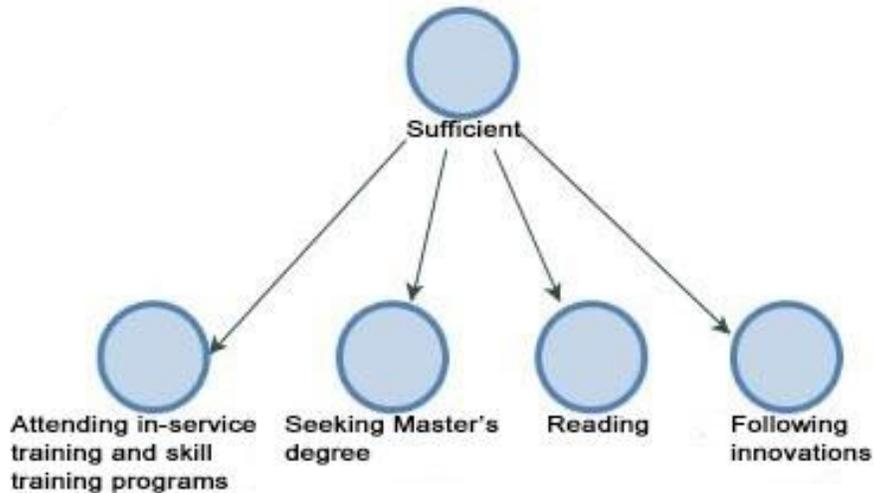


Figure 2. Things Teachers do to Improve their Professional and Personal Development Levels

Teachers stated that they attend various seminars and programs (n=8), seeking Master's degree (n=6), reading articles and books related to their field (n=4), and follow innovations with current publications and developing technologies (n=6). Examples of teachers' views are as follows:

O13: *The professional competence of the teachers working in our school is very good and they carry out cultural and sportive activities and read academic books in order to develop themselves.*

O1: *No one can interfere with information. To anyone who wants to improve, everything is clear. All of us are doing our best because we serve in a quality school. We are improving ourselves in the field. We read books as much as we can.*

O8: *Everyone is quite good in their field, they are getting ready for their classes. They use the smart board effectively. They attend seminars and in-service training programs, and follow the publications about their field.*

O27: *Our teachers in our school are trying to seek master's and doctorate degree to improve themselves. It is noteworthy that we have friends who seek doctorate degree for personal development. It can be said that there will be progress in this area in the future.*

The possible obstacles that cause teachers not to improve their professional and personal skills were investigated. The findings are given in Figure 3.

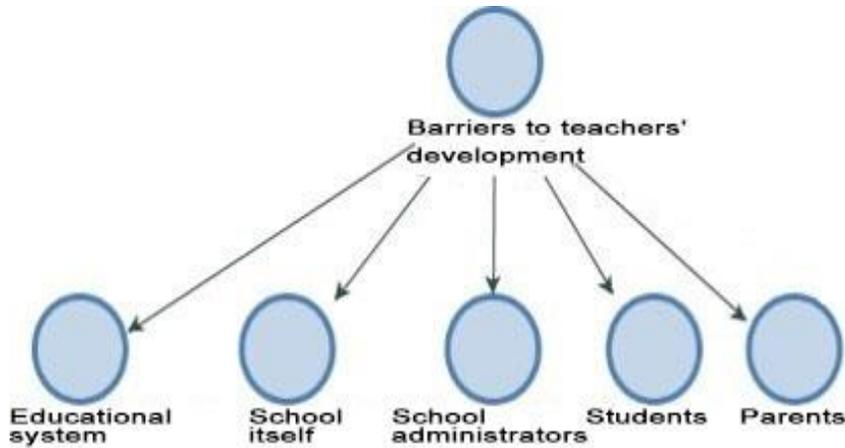


Figure 3. Barriers to Teachers' Development

The answers given by the teachers were categorized as school management (n = 20), parents (n = 14), students (n = 12), type of school (n = 8), and education system (n = 7). Among the participants, seven stated that there was no obstacle in front of the teachers' development by saying that no obstacle could stand in front of a teacher who wanted to improve himself. They also stated that the teachers who developed themselves personally and professionally were supported by the school administrators, colleagues, and parents. On the other hand, other teachers who pointed out school administration as an obstacle stated that the school administration did not provide enough motivation and teachers did not see the appreciation for their effort. Also, similar complaints were drawn for parents. Teachers mentioned the following barriers in terms of parents: parents' education level, their inadequate attention toward their children, their excessive pressure on teachers, and parents' lack of support for such development. Teachers also mentioned that students' lack of interest in the courses, their negative attitudes and behaviors in the classroom, and the lack of future anxiety were other barriers for teachers' improvement. Teachers also discussed schools' physical conditions as another obstacle. Example quotes are as follows.

O20: *students' unwilling to learn, non-enthusiasm of learning in students, and parents not asking about their children's status, not attending meetings are main barriers. Also, the materials in the school, they decrease our motivation.*

O13: *The biggest obstacle is the teacher itself. Although not in our school, there are administrative practices that limit teachers in other schools.*

O20: *The low level of education in terms of school environment and parent profile has negative effects, also the administrators not acting equally among the teachers,*

the negative attitudes and behaviors of the students constitute an obstacle, the interference of the parents to the education-teaching affairs, students stand behind their negative behaviors.

The participants were asked to evaluate the professional and personal development of the teachers in terms of certain variables including gender, school they work for, teaching experience, and age. The findings are represented in Figure 4.

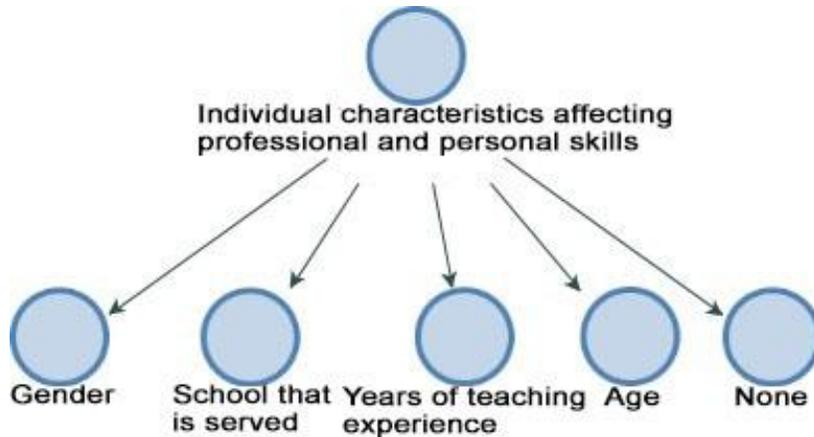


Figure 4. Personal Characteristics Affecting Teachers' Professional and Personal Development Levels

Participant opinions are grouped as follows: age (n = 31), school (n = 30), teaching experience (n = 16), gender (n = 10) and none (n = 3). In the light of these opinions, it is seen that age and the type of school in which the teachers work come to the fore. Some teachers stated that age brings experience so that older teachers are more productive in terms of professional and personal development. However, the majority stated that young teachers are more open to innovations. In terms of schools, participants stated that teachers who work in successful schools tend to improve their professional and personal skills. Also, teachers who work in private schools feel pressure to meet the expectations of the school administration and parents so that they are more likely to improve their skills. In terms of teaching experience, participants stated that the increase in teaching experience reflects in their professional and personal skills positively. However, they added that some teachers with high teaching experience did not prefer to update their knowledge and skills due to their burnout level. The views of participants reveal that female teachers are more open to innovations and have higher motivation to advance their professional and personal skills. Example quotes are given below.

O24: Age, teaching experience and type of school. It cannot be compared to a negative teacher who has been working for years and who is new in teaching. The school is an important factor since the teacher working in a private school has to constantly renew herself.

O21: Younger teachers are more active and willing to develop themselves. In addition, the school in which he works has a great impact.

O19: There may be problems in different types of schools. Because some schools prefer high-rated students, some schools accept students with low academic achievement. This brings some problems.

O5: I see tiredness and professional burnout in our colleagues who are close to retirement. In science high schools, private schools and schools near high socio-economic neighborhoods, I think that a teacher motivates himself and tries to improve himself.

O2: As far as I observe, female teachers are more open to innovations. If the female is single, they can be more attentive and idealistic. Teachers married with children may not spend enough time for development.

The participants were asked whether the teachers with high professional level/thought to have left any influence on the other teachers and students. The categories are given in Figure 6.

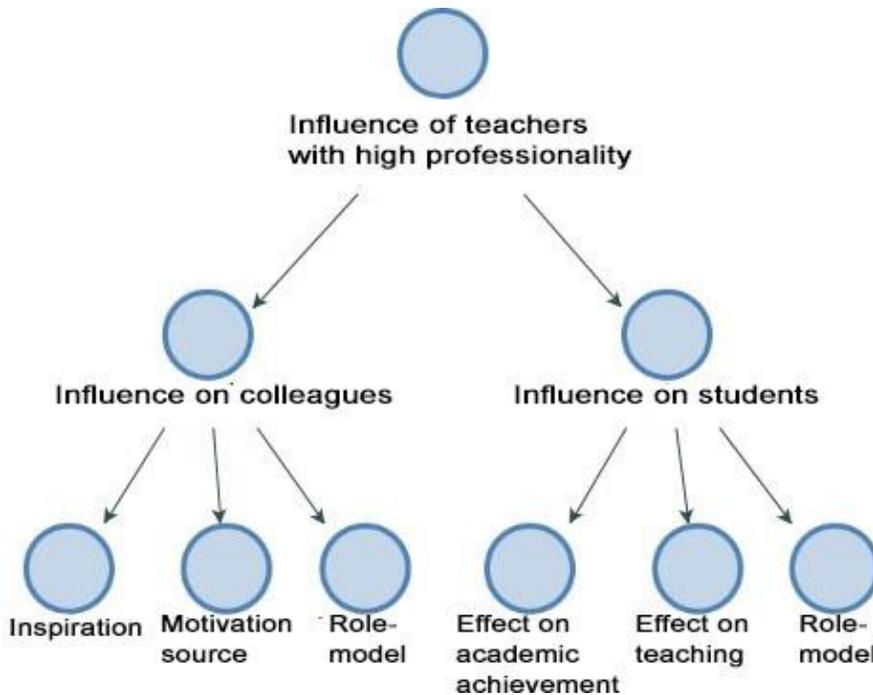


Figure 5. The Effects of Teachers with High Professionalism on their Colleagues and Students

Teacher opinions were categorized as students (n = 33), colleagues (n = 30). The teachers stated that they have positive effects on students by becoming role model, respecting students more, encouraging students to have self-confidence, and providing more effective instruction in the classrooms.

In terms of their influence on colleagues, they stated that they were role-models for other teachers and they were appreciated and respected by their colleagues. In addition, by sharing new information with colleagues, they believe that they create a motivation among colleagues, which creates a positive energy. Some of these thoughts are as follows.

O10: *Very effective. A teacher who is good at his profession is very effective in educating students for the future. The teacher, who does his job with pleasure, constantly trains his student. It makes them successful.*

O12: *As in any profession, the teacher's ability to do his job has an impact especially on the students. The teacher who does his job well is the teacher who likes his work and his students more and makes the lesson more enjoyable.*

O21: *A teacher who does his job well is beneficial to both students and colleagues. A teacher can be influenced by the methods and techniques of the other teacher and renew himself. A good teacher will have an impact on the student as he will be a good role model for children.*

O40: *Yes. Among the teachers who are good in the profession, other teachers who do not want to get lost so they get inspired.*

O33: *Discipline in the classroom depends on his / her job and self-confidence. The teacher who develops by revising himself transfers the feeling of self-confidence and is respected. This increases our motivation.*

Another sub-objective of the study is to identify the problems that teachers face while performing their professions. The participants' opinions and the problems faced by the teachers in performing their professions are presented in Figure 7.

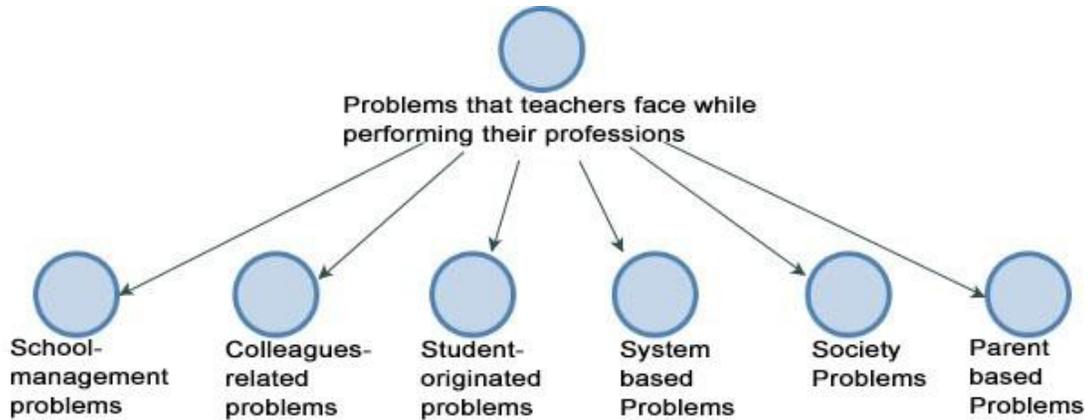


Figure 6. What Are the Problems You Face While Doing Your Job?

According to the opinions of the teachers, there were six main categories: school-management problems (n = 9), colleagues-related problems (n = 3), student-originated problems (n = 18), system-based problems (n = 7), society based problems (n = 4), and parent-based problems (n = 14). Specifically, student-originated problems include negative attitudes and behaviors of students in the classrooms, low level of readiness, low motivation, negative prejudices against the courses, and low level of academic achievement. In terms of parents, insufficient or excessive expectations from students/teachers, concerns only about grade, lack of support to teachers are considered as problems that teachers face while performing their professions. Specifically, they stated that the parents try to intervene in the learning environment in private schools and they see some courses unnecessary, which cause students to lose their interest.

Another source of problems is the problems arising from the school administration. Unfair distribution of tasks among teachers, unequal ways to treat teachers, exhibition of different attitudes and behaviors toward each teacher working in the same school are the main issues teachers face. In terms of system-based problems, teachers stated that crowded classrooms, excessive hours of classes, frequent changes in the education system and curricula, lack of sufficient time for personal and academic development, and overload of paperwork are other issues teachers face. The participant teachers also mentioned society based problems by discussing that the teaching profession is discredited and teachers are not economically comfortable. Example quotes are given below.

O37: *The most important problem is that students have low profile. Students who pushed us and who wanted to get more every day carry us further.*

O34: *The situation and movements of the student who does not come to the high achievement level and considers reading and writing as persecution.*

O23: *Disrespecting the course by the parents, Thinking of the informatics course as other artistic or sporting activities as a free-time activity, not being satisfied with the grades, the informatics course being seen as an internet and game lesson.*

O41: *While doing my job, the lack of equipment of our school is our most important problem. Sometimes we try to solve this problem with our own, sometimes equipment and tools, we can obtain from students and from outside the school.*

O39: *The work environment is uncomfortable due to poorly arranged curriculum, negative attitudes of the administration, unfair treatment among teachers by the administrators.*

O44: *Lesson hours and inadequate students. Classes are crowded and we cannot use our time efficiently. I'm improving myself academically. I'm spending more time on development.*

O45: *The biggest problem that I have encountered in doing my job is that people are prejudiced. The loss of importance of the teacher profile, discrediting the profession. I'm struggling to change that.*

O24: *There is no unity between teachers. Everyone should put their hands under the stone.*

In this study, the last question to answer was to determine how the participants describe the teaching profession. The questions asked to teachers was “what does your profession mean to you?” The findings are given in Figure 6.

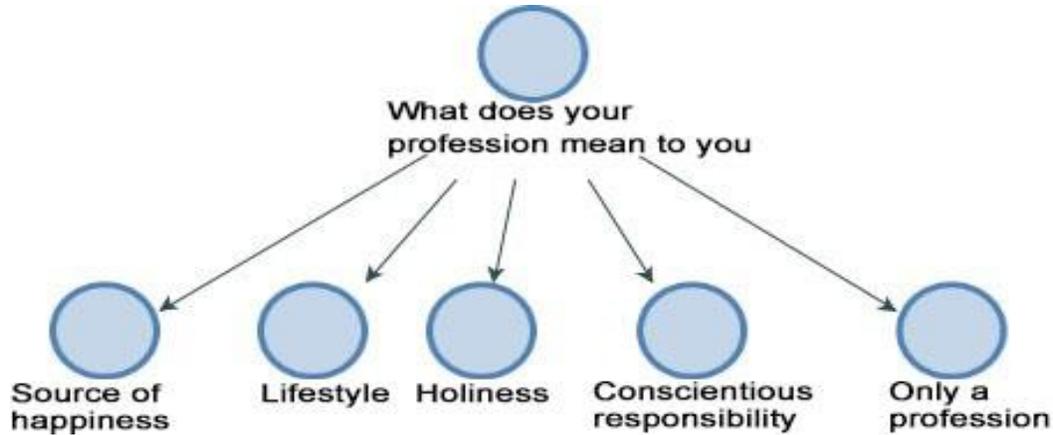


Figure 7. The Meaning of Teaching Profession According to the Teachers

The definitions of teacher profession based on teachers are categorized as source of happiness (n = 17), lifestyle (n = 13), conscientious responsibility (n = 11), holiness (n = 6), and only a profession (n = 3). When the themes were examined, it was observed that the spiritual aspect of the teaching profession was dominant. Teachers, who see their profession as a source of happiness, stated that it is a very special job to train people; they see their profession as an art whose raw material is human; they perform the profession of their dreams; and it is a great pleasure and happiness for them to teach. Participants who expressed teaching as a lifestyle stated that the way their students consider their teachers as a role-model, interaction with different people, the happiness due to teaching new information to people are the main reasons to consider teaching as a lifestyle. Teachers mentioning conscientious responsibility for teaching clearly stated that teaching cannot be done for salary. They mentioned the importance of touching students' lives, preparing them for life, shaping future generations in the construction of the society, and educating children of different characteristics. Teachers who pointed out the holiness of the teaching profession emphasized the fact that the teaching is a profession of the prophet, it is a sacrifice that requires patience and the weight of the spiritual aspects. Example quotes are provided below.

O2: *It is very nice to train people and I love my profession. I do my best. I become happy as I train successful students.*

O29: *It is a profession which is very laborious and its fatigue is forgotten when it is paid for. Understanding people, answering one by one, patience and knowing that you will take place in their heart.*

O17: *I see it as a branch of art whose material is human. I haven't had Monday's syndrome in my four-year teaching life.*

O11: *I think teaching is life itself. Life teaches us many things. However, the person I call teacher is the one who is with us in this process and guided us to learn the right things.*

O36: *I can describe my profession as touching or guiding lives, being light to them. This is both a great responsibility and a great opportunity.*

O39: *Our profession is truly sacred. Because it is a challenging process that wants to give direction, shape and make it right for young people. It is an indescribable pleasure to start undergraduate education and visit the school after graduation. It makes me love my profession more and seek answers to the question of how to be more productive.*

O45: *I'm playing my role on the stage. I get paid and the salary covers my expenses.*

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the phenomenology design of qualitative research method was used to determine teachers' opinions about their teaching professionalism. The study was conducted with the inclusion of 45 teachers working in primary, secondary and high schools in a city located in eastern part of Turkey.

The participants' views about their and other teachers' professional and personal development levels varied. It is noteworthy that, with a total of nine opinions, it has been determined that teachers' professional and personal development levels are not sufficient. Teachers are one of the critical parameters that affect instruction in classrooms (Özden, 2002); therefore, it is important to support the professional and personal development of teachers and to constantly motivate them in achieving the aims of education (Hildebrandt & Eom 2011). Specifically, the participants stating that their professional and personal development levels were sufficient expressed that they sought graduate degree despite the difficulties they face, participated in training programs, and constantly followed innovations to improve themselves. Based on the teachers' views, it is concluded that graduate education and in-service trainings are important for teachers to keep up with scientific developments and keep their knowledge up-to-date. This view is also supported by Şişman (2002),

Akpınar (2012), and Toprak and Taşğın, 2017. This implies that encouragement of teachers to enroll graduate schools in order to increase their professionalism as well as the effectiveness of schools. Future studies may consider focusing on the effects of graduate education and in-service training programs on teachers' professional and personal development. Such investigation may lead stakeholders to consider the aspects of effective support for teachers.

Another critical findings of the study is the barriers that discourage teachers to improve their professional and personal development, and in turn, decrease school achievement. Teachers mentioned school administration as one of the barriers. There are other studies that support this finding (Yirci, 2017; Çekin, 2015; Bakioğlu & Yıldız, 2014; Karaca, 2015). For school administrators who are the key variable for school achievement, it is unfortunate for them to be labeled as a barrier for teachers' professional and personal development. Indeed, teachers should be motivated continuously for instructional purposes and the obstacles in front of their professional and personal development should be eliminated by the school administrators (Güngör, Altınkaynak & Aksoy, 2018). Future research should expand the characteristics of school administration in order to identify the relationship between teachers and school administration and the attitudes of school administrators that teachers perceived as negative.

Parents' attitudes towards teachers and courses are also considered as a barrier by the participant teachers in this study. In addition to the fact that the parents were not interested in the education of their children, it was determined that parents' high levels of expectations also forced the teachers. In order to eliminate parent related problems, school-parent cooperation needs to be supported, which may encourage parents to visit schools not just annual meetings but other times as well (Gelişli, 2017; Kocabaş, 2016). Students are also considered a critical aspect in teachers' development. Specifically, it is found that their inappropriate behaviors and lack of responsibility decrease teachers' motivation. Similar results were found in other studies as well (Sürücü & Ünal, 2018). Another obstacle to the professional and personal development of teachers was gathered in the school theme. The analysis of the participants' views emphasized the inadequacy of the physical facilities and materials of the schools. It is known that the opportunities offered to teachers and students are lower in public schools compared to private schools (Sever, Kaysılı, & Soylu

2016). At this point, the necessity of improving the physical and educational facilities of public schools emerges (Petek & Önder, 2015).

According to participant opinions, it was determined that teachers' professional and personal development were affected by gender, school they serve, educational experience, and age. Even though teaching experience is stated to be important for the professional and personal development of teachers, there are opinions that teachers' desire to develop themselves decreases as years of teaching increases. This situation leads to the conclusion that while professional and personal development is positively related to years of teaching, the desire for development is negatively related with years of teaching. At this point, it is critical for policymakers to develop new policies to increase teachers' willingness to advance their professional and personal skills (Gökulu, 2017; Önder, 2018).

Another important point is that teachers working in private schools feel more obligated to continue their professional and personal development comparing with the other teachers who serve in public schools. It is thought-provoking that the teachers who work in schools with poor academic achievement have lower levels of professional and personal development than their colleagues who work in schools with higher achievement levels, which is also supported by Yılmaz & Altinkurt (2011) and Çapri & Adnan, (2007). The fact that the ratio of public schools to all schools in the Turkish education system is around 95% makes this situation more important. Future research may focus on specifically on schools to find out possible solutions for the low desire of professional and personal development.

Finally, it was determined that teachers who consider themselves with high professionalism level are an inspiration for their colleagues and they increase their motivation by becoming role-models for other teachers (Çekin, 2015). Similar conclusion might be drawn for students as well. Teachers with high professionalism considered themselves as a person touching young people's lives and shaping their future. In short, future research should employ other variables that affect teachers' willingness for professional and personal development in order to identify the factors causing low level willingness for development.

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