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Primary School Teachers' Opinions on the Expert Teacher Training Program Seminar*

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ABSTRACT

The process of becoming an expert teacher, which is one of the career steps of teachers, and the evaluation of this process are important and necessary in terms of education. The general purpose of this study is to obtain the opinions of primary school teachers about the Expert Teacher Training Program Seminar (ETTPS). In the study, a qualitative research approach was adopted, and a case study design was preferred. The data were collected from the primary school teachers who received the aforementioned seminar at the beginning of the fall semester of the 2022–2023 academic year. The research group consisted of 24 primary school teachers who were identified by the maximum diversity sampling method among the primary school teachers working in public primary schools in a province of Turkey. The research data were analyzed using content analysis. Primary school teachers listed the concepts related to expert teaching as experience, seniority, educational status, professional development, presentation skills, and competence. While the primary school teachers stated that the training was both necessary and not necessary, they also stated that the training they received did not contribute to their professional development. Most of the primary school teachers stated that the training they received did not meet their expectations. In addition, it was revealed that the online delivery of the ETTPS caused some problems in terms of time, internet, and devices in terms of follow-up. Primary school teachers offered some suggestions for changing the prerequisites for the current career ladder. In particular, they suggested that the trainings should be long-term, interactive, and face-to-face, and that examples with active participation should be provided for the implementation of different education systems. It is thought that this research will benefit all stakeholders, especially program developers, in terms of the career ladder of the teaching profession.

Keywords:
Expert teacher, primary school teacher, professional development

1. Introduction

The process of educating and training teachers consists of two categories: pre-service and in-service. Pre-service training for teachers will not be sufficient for them to demonstrate efficient and expert performance in their professional lives (Özen, Kılıçoğlu & Kılıçoğlu, 2019). This is because most pre-service training does not provide sufficient clarity on what to teach teachers, how to teach, how teachers will be ready for the profession, and how they will progress in their profession (Raduan & Na, 2020). Professional development of teachers is the main element for an effective teacher model (Eroğlu & Özbek, 2020) because there is important evidence showing that each teacher creates unique contexts in professional development and that the professional development process is dynamic (Girvan, Conneely & Tangney, 2016). For this reason, teachers are expected to change their teaching repertoire over time (Martin, Kragler, Quatroche & Bauserman, 2019).

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In many parts of the world, education reformers are seeking to recruit better teachers and improve education (Mizala & Schneider, 2020). The development of long-term teaching careers is an important issue, and teacher professional development is becoming central to improving teacher quality (Kim & Lee, 2020). Therefore, each country approaches the teaching career structure by acting in line with the expectations and needs of its own education system (Altan & Özmusul, 2022). For example, teachers in Finland are responsible for maintaining their professional skills at all times. The professional skills of teachers are developed and updated through continuous professional development activities (Tarhan, Karaman, Kemppinen & Aerila, 2019). The Finnish government sets high standards for the teaching profession. All teachers must have a master's degree (Federick, 2020). The teaching profession does not have a clearly defined career ladder in Finland. Professional development requirements vary by city. The national government wants each municipality to fund at least three days of compulsory professional development each year. The government does not regulate the type or content of professional development offered to teachers. A Finnish teacher spends seven days a year on professional development. Types of professional development vary; while some municipalities hold large, multi-school educational events, others leave it up to schools to develop in-service programs (National Centre on Education and the Economy [NCEE], 2019).

In Japan, which is another country that stands out with its advanced education model, teaching is a respected profession, and teachers are among the better-paid civil servants. States in Japan invest largely in their new teachers because, although they are theoretically equipped, they do not have the required professional skills. Teachers take are apprentices of experienced masters before teaching full-time. They do not begin active duty until a full year, and master teachers are given one year off from their teaching job to supervise their courses. According to law, a teacher in Japan must receive certain additional training after completing ten years of service after being appointed as a full-time teacher (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2012). Postgraduate education in Japan lasts for two years, and during this time, teachers receive their full salaries from the government (Mete, 2013). Japanese teachers can be promoted in schools during their careers. Career ladders are teacher, head teacher, and principal. There are multiple steps at each level, and each step has performance-and experience-based salary ratings. The teacher level consists of 36 steps; the head teacher level consists of 20 steps; and the principal level consists of 15 steps. Continuing professional development is considered a requirement in the teaching profession in Japan, and each municipal board of education sets the minimum hours a teacher must spend on professional development each year. In a system implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in 2009, Japanese teachers must be up-to-date about skills and practices to renew their teaching certification every 10 years. This includes participating in at least 30 hours of formal professional development (NCEE, 2019). Singapore has the Ministry of Education's Advanced Performance Management System (EPMS), which collects detailed information on the work of all teachers and administers a complex system of rewards and punishments for teacher performance (Ehren & Baxter, 2021). Teacher career steps are an important component of the teacher development system in Singapore. Teachers at the primary and secondary levels can choose between three career paths after showing their willingness and readiness to take on a new role. These paths are teaching, leadership, and expertise. In the teaching path, teachers can continue their own path to become expert teachers. In the leadership path, teachers can be promoted from a leadership position within the school to the position of General Director of Education. In the specialization path, teachers focus on research and teaching policy (NCEE, 2019).

It is thought that regulations for the careers of teachers are necessary in Turkey to find permanent and effective solutions to the problems that arise in the education system (Ural, 2007) because developing teacher career structure can potentially be considered to have a strong effect on teacher motivation (Tournier, Chimier, Childress & Raudonytė 2019). The Ministry of National Education is also in search of new ways to increase the quality of education, improve schools, find solutions to teachers' problems, and increase their motivation. As a result of these searches, a need has arisen to separate the teaching profession into career steps (Bakan, 2013). In this context, the 2023 Education Vision emphasizes the enactment of the "Law of the Teaching Profession", which takes into account the appointment of teachers, their working conditions, promotion, personal rights, and other similar issues.

Career planning, which plays an important role in the professional development of teachers, is the source of teachers' qualifications (Urfalı, 2008). The Civil Servants Law No. 657 provides public servants with the

opportunity to pursue careers. According to this law, a career is defined as "*providing civil servants with the opportunity to advance to the highest ranks in their classes, in accordance with the necessary knowledge for their services and the conditions of their education*". Career ladder of teachers was published in the Official Gazette dated August 13, 2005 and numbered 25905 as "Regulation for Promotion in Teaching Career Ranks" and it was entered into force.

According to this regulation, teaching is divided into three career steps: teacher, expert teacher, and head teacher, following the candidate period. For the title of expert teacher, seven years of seniority in teaching is required, excluding the candidate teaching period, in the application for the examination of promotion in career steps. Those who have completed a master's degree with a dissertation in educational sciences or in their field are exempt from the exam for promotion in the teaching career. The exam consists of tests including multiple-choice questions with a central system. Teachers who get 60 points out of 100 in the exam are considered successful for the title of expert teacher. The Ministry of National Education has determined the rate of expert teachers as 20% and the rate of head teachers as 10% among the total staff of teachers who carry out education and training services (Regulation for Promotion in Teaching Career Ranks, 2005).

When the literature is reviewed, it can be seen that there are studies conducted on teaching career steps (Bakan, 2013; Bakioğlu & Banoğlu, 2013; Bilgin, 2014; Booth, Coldwell, Müller, Perry & Zuccollo, 2021; Canpolat, 2011; Cımbız & Küçüker, 2015; Demir, 2011; Laçin, 2006; McMahon, Forde & Dickson, 2015; Mizala & Schneider, 2020; Tantawy, 2020) and the law of the teaching profession (Altan & Özmusul, 2022; Doğan, 2022). However, it has been observed that the studies on the education process that primary school teachers need to complete in order to become expert teachers are limited (Avcı & Kayıran, 2023; Kandemir, 2023). In order for teachers to reach the next career step with the exam, they must first undergo online training. It is thought that this study will find out positive or negative situations regarding the training process as a result of the evaluations of primary school teachers on ETTPS. Since the results of the study will reflect the opinions of primary school teachers about ETTPS, it is expected that the results will contribute to those who determine education policies. It is thought that the results of the study will lead to conclusions about the current situation since this subject causes public debate and remains up-to-date. In addition, it is expected that the results of the study will reveal a perspective from primary school teachers' point of view due to the fact that there are large numbers of teachers working within the Ministry of National Education. In this context, the main purpose of the study is to examine the opinions of primary teachers on ETTPS subject contents.

2. Method

2.1. Research Model

A qualitative research method was used in this study, which aims to examine the opinions of primary school teachers about ETTPS. Research studies that investigate the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials are often called qualitative research. In this type of research, more emphasis is placed on holistic description, in other words, describing in detail what is going on in a particular event or situation (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2011). A case study design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. The aim is to reach a rich variety of data points that will prove each other. Similar conclusions about a situation are expected to generate examples and experiences (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In this study, it is thought that similar results and examples will be created based on the opinions of the primary school teachers who participated in ETTPS.

2.2. Study Group

24 primary school teachers from Turkey, who were determined according to the maximum diversity sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, participated in the study. The purpose of constructing a sample based on maximum variation is not to create this variation mainly to generalize. On the contrary, the purpose is to try to determine whether there are any common or shared phenomena among the situations created by diversity and reveal different dimensions of the problem according to this diversity (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). For maximum diversity, primary school teachers who were working in villages, towns and city centers and who participated in ETTPS were included in this study. Primary school teachers in the study group were coded as P-1, P-2… Eight of the participants were women, and 18 were men. Six participants are graduates, and 18 participants are undergraduates. The professional seniority of teachers

varies between 11 and 23 years. Four of the participants work in the village, 10 in the district, and 10 in the city center.

2.3. Data Collection

A semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers was used to collect the research data. The literature was first reviewed while preparing the interview form. In addition, information about the ETTPS process was obtained by pre-interviewing three primary school teachers. A question pool was created for the research problem by accepting the information received from the teachers and the literature as a reference. Interview questions were evaluated by two primary school teachers and three faculty members. In terms of the reliability of the study, a pilot study was carried out with two primary school teachers. Interviews with the participants were conducted by the researcher; 14 were conducted face-to-face, while 10 were conducted over the phone. The interview lasted between 10 and 20 minutes. In the interviews, a tape recorder was used with the permission of the participants.

2.4. Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to analyze the data. It is possible to reach new concepts and themes that cannot be noticed with descriptive analysis by subjecting the data obtained in the research with content analysis to a more detailed process (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In order to increase the external reliability of the study, explanations of the participants were included, and to increase the internal reliability, two separate coders coded the research data. In this process, first of all, the interview records were turned into written documents. Written documents were examined, and codes were created by grouping similar expressions. In qualitative research, researchers should focus on searching for data codes to create themes in the data analysis process. In this process, researchers reach the themes by forming a common idea and combining large units of information consisting of several codes (Creswell, 2021). During the analysis process, 79 codes were extracted from similar expressions obtained from the participants, and these codes were grouped under 31 sub-themes. While researchers achieved consensus in 73 codes, disagreement emerged in 6 codes. As a result of associating some codes with different sub-themes, reliability calculations between the coders were made. Miles and Huberman's (1994) reliability formula [Reliability=agreement/(agreement+disagreement) *100] was used to calculate the percentage of agreement among the coders, and reliability was calculated as 92%. Research data were presented by quoting directly from the participants.

2.5. Ethical

In this study, all rules stated to be followed within the scope of the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed. Ethical Review Board Name: On Dokuz Mayıs University Ethics Committee Date of Ethics Evaluation Decision: December 30, 2022 Issue Number of Ethics Assessment Document: 2022/1062.

3. Findings

Teachers' views on the definition of expert teaching are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Teachers' views on the definition of expert teaching*

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Views on the definition of expert teaching	Experience	Gained with experience P-1, P-5, P-6, P-8, P-10, P-11, P-13, P-15, P-16, P-20, P-23
	Length of service	Meeting the requirement for a certain number of years P-6, P-16 Having taught for 5 or 10 years P-3, P-4, P-9, P-24
	Education status	Having received post-graduate level in-service training P-24 Having completed four years of undergraduate education P-7 Having completed a master's degree P-3, P-24
	Profession	Following innovations and developments P-8, P-18, P-21 Using up-to-date methods and techniques P-14 Professional self-development P-5, P-16, P-21 Having knowledge in the field P-12 Having a successful career P-5
	Classroom management	Having a command of the class, knowing the needs of the student P-22 Being equipped about classroom management P-18 Organizing the learning environment P-2

When Table 1 is examined, it can be seen that the views of teachers on the decision of expert teaching were grouped under the sub-themes of experience, length of service, education status, professional development, classroom management, and proficiency. When these sub-themes are examined, it can be seen that teachers mostly emphasize experience while defining expert teaching (11 participants). Teachers also defined teaching by emphasizing professional development (7 participants). It was also found that length of service was another important criterion for being an expert teacher (6 participants). When these data are considered, it can be said that expert teaching is mostly associated with the concepts of experience, length of service, education status, professional development, classroom management, and proficiency. Teacher views supporting these findings are presented below:

P-8: *"A teacher who knows himself or /herself, who follows the developments in his or her country and the world, and who has gained experience in the teaching profession is called an expert teacher."*
P-10: *"It refers to a teacher who has discovered the subtleties of the profession and who has the necessary equipment in terms of knowledge, skills, and experience."*
P-14: *"A teacher who uses current methods and techniques of education in his or her classroom, emphasizes child-centered education, and shapes education accordingly."*
Teachers' views on which technological devices were used in following ETTPS are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Devices used in following ETTPS*

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Devices used	Computer	Following training with computers P-1, P-2, P-3, P-4, P-5, P-7, P-8, P-9, P-10, P-11, P-12, P-13, P-14, P-15, P-16, P-17, P-18, P-19, P-21, P-22, P-23, P-24
	Mobile phone	Following trainings with mobile phones P-1, P-3, P-5, P-7, P-8, P-9, P-10, P-11, P-13, P-14, P-15, P-16, P-17, P-19, P-20, P-23, P-24
	Tablet	Following training with tablets P-6, P-9, P-13

When Table 2 is examined, it can be seen that teachers followed ETTPS by using different technological devices. Except for two teachers, all other teachers (22 participants) used computers while following the training. It was also found that all teachers except four (17 participants) also used mobile phones while following trainings. Three teachers (3 participants) stated that they followed the training via tablet. According to the results found, it can be seen that teachers followed the training by using different devices. Some of the teacher's views on this question are as follows:

P-1: *"I followed the training on my mobile phone and computer."*
P-6: *"I used a tablet to follow the training."*
P-20: *"My mobile phone was enough to follow the training. I just listened."*

Teacher views regarding whether the time given to follow ETTPS was sufficient are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. *Teacher views regarding whether the time given for ETTPS was sufficient*

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Time given	Not sufficient	Too much content, too little time P-4, P-11, P-16, P-19, P-24 Time was insufficient due to summer vacation P-10, P-13, P-15, P-17, P-21 Time was insufficient when followed actively and carefully P-6, P-22, P-23 The content was intense; there was no time to discuss or research P-5, P-8 Time was insufficient because teachers' availability was not considered P-14, P-18, P-21 Training and time were not consistent P-1
	Sufficient	Time was sufficient for training P-2, P-3, P-7, P-9, P-12, P-20

When Table 3 is examined, it can be seen that most of the teachers (19 participants) thought the time given for ETTPS was not sufficient. Teachers attributed insufficient time to videos' being too many and too long (6 participants) and to trainings' being planned for summer vacation. Contrary to this finding, there are also teachers who think that the time given was sufficient. According to these findings, it was seen that the teachers had problems in terms of the time given while following ETTPS. The views of some teachers on this finding are as follows:

P-3: *"I think the time was sufficient when used efficiently.*
P-4: *"Too much content; I think that the time is short for such intense content. In addition, the training I received in such a short time was not sufficient for me."*
P-6: *"It is not sufficient if it is followed very actively and carefully. In other words, the time is insufficient if it is watched completely carefully."*
P-14: *"Time was not sufficient. In terms of time, it was difficult for the teachers and me to be on summer vacation. We had trouble focusing."*

Teachers' views on whether ETTPS is necessary are given in Table 4.

Table 4. *Teachers' views on whether ETTPS is necessary*

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Whether ETTPS is necessary	Not necessary	Training is not necessary P-2, P-4, P-6, P-7, P-8, P-9, P-11, P-13, P-17, P-18, P-20, P-22, P-23
	Necessary	Training is necessary P-1, P-10, P-14, P-16, P-21
	Difference in form	Trainings are necessary, but the content and timing should be planned differently P-3, P-5, P-12, P-15, P-19, P-24

When Table 4 is examined, most of the teachers (13 participants) pointed out that the training was not necessary. Some teachers (P-2, P-4, P-7, P-13, P-17, P-20) stated that they were not unfamiliar with many parts of the educational content and that they encountered these contents during their undergraduate or graduate education. Teachers stated that the training did not serve its purpose (P-6), did not contribute to the teacher (P-8), was not applicable in the classroom environment (P-9), did not motivate the teachers (P-18), and their presentation style was not appropriate (P-22). However, there were also teachers (5 participants) who thought that ETTPS was necessary. The trainings were considered necessary because they changed teachers' perspectives and included current topics (P-14), supported knowledge (P-16), reminded what had been learned before (P-10), ensured that deficiencies were seen (P-1) and because there was going to be an exam (P-21). There were also teachers (6 participants) who thought that ETTPS was necessary but who argued that there should be formal differences such as the content, presentation, and time of the trainings. Some of the teachers' thoughts on these findings are as follows:

P-2: *"The content could have been arranged in a way that would be more beneficial to the teaching profession. I could not make a connection between the content given here and being an expert teacher."*
P-4: *"These trainings do not contribute to my teaching. We have already learned the content of the training given at the undergraduate level."*
P-5: *"There may be training, but it shouldn't be like this. It was reduced to a monetary gain. This situation was portrayed differently in the eyes of teachers. Teachers want expert teaching just for the money. If there was no financial return, teachers' perspectives might have been different."*

Teacher views on whether ETTPS contributes to the professional development of teachers are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. *Teacher views on whether ETTPS contributes to the professional development of teachers*

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Contribution of ETTPS to Professional Development	Contributed	Did not contribute to professional development P-1, P-2, P-3, P-4, P-6, P-7, P-8, P-9, P-11, P-15, P-16, P-17, P-18, P-20, P-21, P-22, P-23, P-24
	Did not contribute	Contributed to professional development P-10, P-14
	Partly	Partly contributed to professional development P-5, P-12, P-13, P-19

When Table 5 is examined, a great majority of teachers did not think that the trainings contributed to their professional development (18 participants). They thought that this might be due to the fact that the content of trainings was not rich and the trainings were insufficient in equipping teachers with knowledge and skills (P-2), the trainings were not followed carefully since teachers who received graduate education were exempt from the exam (P-3), the presentation of content was ineffective (P-4, P-8, P-9, P-23, P-24), the content of training included information that could be accessed anytime and anywhere (P-11), trainings were theoretical and far from practice (P-15), trainings did not make any contributions that could directly be transferred to the classroom (P-17), trainings included uniform and repetitive information (P-18) and covered known subjects

(P-22). On the other hand, two teachers (P-10, P-14) stated that ETTPS contributed to professional development. Teachers emphasized that ETTPS contributed to professional development because it updated previous information (P-10) and included information about new methods, techniques, and strategies (P-14). In addition, it can also be seen from Table 5 that ETTPS made a limited contribution to teachers. Some of the teachers' thoughts on the subject are as follows:

> **P-3:** *"It has not contributed to my professional development. Most of it was within the scope of the courses I knew and took academically. Since I was also exempt from the exam, I did not watch it carefully."*
> **P-5:** *"I can say that we were just familiar with some basic concepts. It might make a small contribution."*
> **P-8:** *"Teachers provide professional development when they see their own shortcomings and become educators who research, criticize, and question to make up for these deficiencies while continuing their professional lives."*

Table 6 shows views on whether ETTPS met teacher expectations.

Table 6. *Teacher views on whether ETTPS met teacher expectations*

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Whether ETTPS met expectations	Did not meet expectations	It did not meet expectations P-2, P-3, P-4, P-5, P-6, P-7, P-8, P-9, P-10, P-11, P-12, P-13, P-14, P-15, P-16, P-17, P-18, P-20, P-21, P-22, P-23, P-24
	Partly	It met expectations to a limited extent P-1, P-19

When Table 6 is examined, it can be seen that except for two teachers (P-1, P-19), the teachers (22 participants) stated that ETTPS did not meet teachers' expectations. It was found that teachers had various views on why ETTPS did not meet expectations. These views were the presentation of training content (P-3, P-12, P-17, P-21), considering the trainings only as a monetary gain (P-5), use of high level of academic language (P-6), trainings not being directly related with the field (P-7), insufficiency of trainings in motivating teachers and not going beyond what is known (P-8, P-9, P-10), the thought that content will not work sufficiently in classroom management (P-10), the thought that the trainings are unnecessary and made just for formality (P-11, P-12), the content being far from the kitchen of education, being away from the field and being just theoretical (P-15), the fact that trainings are for all branches without making any discrimination (P-17) and the thought that trainings will not contribute to professional development of teachers (P-22). On the other hand, two teachers (P-1, P-19) stated that ETTPS met their expectations partly. The views of some teachers on these findings are as follows:

> **P-10:** *"It did not meet my expectations. I would expect information that we can use actively in the classroom. Due to the increasing social and psychological weariness of society day by day, I would expect the content of the subject to include the necessary information about the psychology of children, the interpretation of their behavior and the elimination of their social deficiencies."*
> **P-19:** *"I can say that it met my expectations to a small degree."*
> **P-21:** *"The trainings are not prepared professionally, in a planned way, and efficiently. The Ministry already states that it will become content regulation in the coming years."*

Teachers' views on how the conditions of becoming an expert teacher can be determined differently from the current situation are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. *Teachers' views on how the conditions of becoming a expert teacher can be determined differently from the current situation*

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Criteria for being a expert teacher	Performance evaluation	Projects and studies carried out in the institution should be taken into account P-5, P-8, P-21, P-22 Not the exam, but the teacher's performance should be taken into account P-6, P-11, P-12, P-21 Qualification should be given free of exam as a result of working in the profession for a certain period of time and evaluating different stakeholders P-7, P-8 The success of students educated by teachers should be a criterion P-12, P-15

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
	Professional experience	Creating a CV for the professional development of the teaching profession P-1 Qualifications should be given free of exam as a result of working in the profession for a certain period of time P-4, P-5, P-16, P-20, P-23 The length of service should be taken into consideration P-6, P-10, P-15 Requirement of a reasonable amount of time for gaining experience P-8 Qualifications should be given to every teacher with professional experience P-9, P-13, P-17 Qualification should be given to every teacher free of exam after an applied education P-19 Supervising teachers in the classroom by looking at their professional experience P-22
	Postgraduate	Qualifications should be given after a master's degree P-3, P-4, P-17, P-21 Qualification should be given to teachers with postgraduate education free of any conditions P-5, P-8, P-11
	Education	Trainings on how to better integrate technology into lessons P-2, P-24 Trainings on multicultural structure P-2 Planning not distance but face-to-face trainings P-24
	Different branches	Different trainings for each branch P-2, P-24

When Table 7 is examined, it can be seen that the sub-themes of performance evaluation (10 participants) and professional experience (15 participants) were more prominent. The teachers stated that a portfolio regarding the professional past of teachers can be created by giving the title of expert teacher (P-1), teachers' works in their institutions can be evaluated (P-5, P-6, P-22), teachers may be subject to evaluation by the education inspector, school administration, and a professionally experienced educator (P-7), stakeholders such as national education, school management, and parents can be evaluated (P-8), teachers' performance can be associated with digital portfolios regarding students' academic output (P-15). In addition, teachers advocated that teachers should be given the title of expert teacher free of exam as a result of a reasonable professional experience such as 5, 8, or 10 years (P-4, P-5, P-6, P-16), as a result of evaluating all the aspects of teachers' professional life free of exam (P-8) and as a result of an internship with an experienced teacher.

The teachers stated that teachers who complete their postgraduate education should get the title of expert teacher (P-3, P-4, P-5, P-8, P-11, P-17) because it is advocated that postgraduate education makes teachers experts since it requires research in the field (P-3). Some teacher views are as follows:

> **P-1:** *"A portfolio can be created for the professional background of the teacher, taking into account the work done by the teacher."*
> **P-2:** *"For example, there are three or four immigrant students in our class. Trainings could be given on how we would follow these students in the education and training process because that's our problem."*
> **P-7:** *"A process can be followed as in candidate teaching. In other words, by keeping the duration of the candidate teacher longer, the teacher who gains experience can receive the title of expert teacher as a result of the evaluation of the inspector, the school administration, and a more senior teacher."*

Table 8 shows teacher views on problems experienced while following ETTPS.

Table 8. *Teacher views on problems experienced while following ETTPS*

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes
Problems experienced while following ETTPS	Time	Summer vacation P-2, P-5, P-7, P-8, P-13, P-15, P-17, P-18, P-21, P-22, P-23 Too much content, too little time P-10, P-19
	Internet	Connection problems at the beginning of the training P-1, P-4, P-24 Internet problems P-11, P-21 Internet sometimes not working P-12 Not accessing the internet due to moving P-17
	Family	Difficulty due to having small children P-3 The spouse's being a teacher also P-3, P-8 I had to spend time with my family P-11, P-22

	Presentation of the training	Difficulty watching the training for hours P-5 A cold and boring educational environment P-1, P-14, P-16
	Motivation	Low motivation for the training P-1, P-5 Lack of concentration due to the way educators presented P-11
	Device	Had difficulties because the phone screen was small P-3 Having one computer was a problem since my spouse had to watch too P-8

When Table 8 is examined, it can be seen that the problems experienced by teachers while following ETTPS were gathered under the sub-themes of time, internet, family, presentation of the training, motivation, and device. The most prominent problem among teachers was the fact that the training took place during the summer vacation (11 participants).

The teachers stated that they felt mentally exhausted after a long education period and therefore could not be motivated for the training (P-2, P-5). They also stated that since the relocation of teachers was in the summer period (P-8, P-21), this affected their education plans negatively (P-15). In addition, it was observed that there were problems related to the internet (P-1, P-12, P-17). Teachers also stated that they could not spend enough time with their families during the summer vacation because of the training (P-11, P-22) and teachers with small children (P-3) stated that they had difficulty following the training. The teachers stated that the way training was presented was boring and monotonous (P-1, P-14, P-16) and it was a difficult process to be in front of the screen for hours (P-5). Another problem experienced in following the training was problems resulting from the device. Some teacher views regarding the findings are as follows:

> **P-2:** *"The training was boring. It could have been more fun. Those who gave the training only read from the screen; after a while, it became more boring. We can't pay enough attention when that happens."*
> **P-17:** *"I had problems accessing the internet since I was moving my house. If the videos were downloadable, they could be watched later. Being in the holiday period created reluctance."*
> **P-22:** *"Being in the summer period was a problem. I have four children; I have to take care of them. Because summer vacation is my right, I need to take time for myself and my family."*

Table 9 shows teachers' suggestions on the process of expert teaching.

Table 9. *Teachers' suggestions on the process of expert teaching*

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Suggestions	Suggestions for the training	There should be no exams at the end of the training; teachers should gain experience P-1 Trainings should be planned similarly to the graduate education process P-3, P-13, P-14 Trainings should be planned specific for branches P-6, P-13, P-17, P-18, P-19, P-24 More competent people in the field should provide the training P-10, P-15, P-19, P-20 More practical training should be planned for fields P-15, P-23 Training should be interactive, not one-sided P-6, P-10, P-19, P-23 Training time should be longer and more flexible P-15, P-17, P-19 Training should take place face-to-face P-8, P-9, P-17, P-24 Training should be planned at the local level P-1
	Suggestions for the title	It is not right to give qualifications with the current education and system P-12, P-13, P-14, P-21 Expert teaching may cause conflicts, but the consequences should be well thought out P-5, P-21 Professional development should be followed, and process-based specialization should be provided P-2, P-7, P-18, P-21 Qualification should be given only to those with a postgraduate degree or to those with a certain length of service P-4 Qualification should be given by following in the classroom P-22 There is no need for this title; a teacher is already an expert P-11

When Table 9 is examined, there were suggestions such as planning trainings not at the level of ministry, but at local lives by the province and town directorates (P-1), giving qualification not through seminars and video, but to those who have postgraduate degree (P-3), to plan interactive trainings in which teachers participate actively (P-6, P-23), to create a system that allows for qualification not with a theoretical approach, but through practice (P-7), to plan a face-to-face training where teachers work (P-8), to plan training not within a short period of time, but by considering the needs of teachers (P-10, P-13), to present examples to know education systems of different countries (P-16), to provide a longer and more flexible training (P-15, P-17, P-19). Teachers also have suggestions about the title of expert teaching. Some teachers made suggestions for a qualification rejecting the existing education and exam system (P-12, P-13, P-14, P-21), while others suggested a long-term qualification integrated with the professional development process (P-2, P-4, P-7, P-18, P-21). In addition to this, some teachers also stated that being given the title of expert teacher would have negative consequences (P-5, P-11) and could harm organizational culture and parent-teacher communication. Some teachers views on these findings are as follows:

> **P-3:** *"Expert teacher training should never be in the form of seminars and videos. Education must be in the form of a master's degree education that includes at least two years."*
> **P-5:** *"If there is a serious salary difference when expert teaching is introduced, this will create income inequality among teachers. As a result, people's perspectives towards each other will change because there will be problems among teachers who do the same job and who share the same school and the same teacher's room."*
> **P-21:** *"Since the teachers will be divided into categories by the parents, it may cause conflicts between the teacher and the parent. If there will be an expert teaching practice, it should be a process-based assessment."*

4. Conclusion and Discussion

From the teachers' point of view, expert teaching is a process-based career progression, not being subject to a specific training and examination. Participants associate expert teaching with experience, seniority, educational status, professional development, classroom management, and proficiency variables in this process. It is understood that the participants followed expert teacher training on different technological devices. However, the majority of the participants agree that more than the time given for the training is needed. The number of teachers who think that these trainings are not necessary constitutes the majority of the participants. Teachers think that training does not contribute to their professional development. In addition, it is seen that the participants experience problems due to time, internet, and special reasons while following the training. Therefore, it is understood that they are faced with an educational process that needs to meet their expectations. Based on all these, the participants believe that the conditions for becoming a specialist teacher should differ from the current situation. Thus, suggestions were developed by the participants for both the education process and the title of expert teacher. When the literature is examined, results supporting the participants' definitions of expert teaching have been reached. In the research of Avcı and Kayıran (2023), the competence of teachers was named as teaching experience. Göksoy, Sağır and Yenipınar (2014) concluded in their study with school administrators that an expert teacher should guide the education and training activities, reflect their experiences in the field, be competent in their own field, and have a command of the legislation. According to the findings of Öztürk and Gönülaçar's (2019) study, teaching is learned through teachers' own experiences throughout the process.

When the participant views on the other findings of the study were examined, the teachers stated that they followed ETTPS on devices such as computers, tablets, and mobile phones. The reason why teachers follow the trainings on the computer may be due to their desire to read the texts of the presented content more easily. In addition, the inability of some teachers to be in front of the computer all the time for various reasons may have caused teachers to follow the trainings on their mobile phones. The fact that there are different opinions among the teachers about whether the time given to the training is sufficient or not may be due to the different special situations of the teachers. Factors such as the marital status of the teachers, the number of children, the place where they spend their summer vacations, and their health status may have caused disagreements about the duration of the training.

While the majority of the teachers argued that the training was not necessary, some stated that it was. Differences of opinion among teachers about whether the trainings are necessary or not may be due to the differences in the expectations and needs of the teachers for the trainings. According to Cımbız and Küçüker

(2015)'s study, it was seen that the majority of the participants stated that it is necessary for teachers to be promoted in their careers. Gökmenoğlu, Beyazova and Kılıçoğlu's (2015) study found that along with physical features such as providing a suitable environment and equipment in professional development programs, trainings should take needs into account, be up-to-date, support the theory with practice, continue throughout life, and occur in cooperation.

A great majority of teachers agreed that the training does not contribute to professional development. In parallel with these results, in the research conducted by Avcı and Kayıran (2023), it was firmly concluded that the expert teacher training program did not contribute to the general qualifications of the teaching profession. An expert education model should be used in teachers' career progression and professional development (Şendağ & Gedik, 2015). because the lack of an education model that is not expert and does not contribute to the learner may have caused low motivation in teachers regarding the training. According to Chimier and Tournier (2019), a good career has the potential to affect teacher motivation positively. In parallel with this, in a study conducted by Cımbız and Küçüker (2015), it was concluded that the advancement of teachers in their careers has positive effects on professional development and motivation. According to Tantawy's (2020) research, the professional development of teachers improves their sense of personal competence, increases their motivation, enables them to gain classroom management skills, develops content knowledge, and ensures efficient use of teaching methods. In their study, Muchanje, Njuguna, Kalai, and Bironga (2016) concluded that there is an important relationship between teachers' career development and their participation in professional development programs. In addition, there are also studies (Cavendish, Barrenechea, Young, Diaz & Avalos, 2021) indicating that traditional professional development programs are not effective.

While most of the teachers stated that ETTPS did not meet their expectations, a few teachers stated that it met their expectations partially. These results are supported by the research results of Avcı and Kayıran (2023). Similarly, Baş, Kibar Furtun, Kapusızoğlu, and Ulu Aslan (2023) found in their research that the expert teacher exam did not meet teachers' expectations. While planning trainings for the professional development of teachers, the principle of adaptability should be emphasized because it is seen that many of the applications are not suitable for the class level of teachers or are insufficient to respond to their needs (Altun, 2020). When the literature is reviewed, it can be seen in a study conducted by İş and Birel (2022) on teacher views regarding the Law of Teaching Profession, which also includes items about expert teaching. It was concluded that the law does not fully meet the expectations and needs of teachers; this law will cause more separation among teachers; it is not egalitarian and fair; and it will not give reputation to teachers as it prioritizes materiality rather than qualification.

In addition, in a study by Bakan (2013), it was found that the career steps exam is not suitable for all teachers, and if it is to be conducted, it should be conducted separately for each branch. On the contrary, Tantawy (2020) confirms that career steps do not have a negative effect on teachers' commitment to their professional development. Booth et al. (2021) found that teachers' professional development needs may be different. In addition, the opinions of teachers and teachers' unions can be taken into accountwhile making career plans (Tosun & Sarpkaya, 2014). As a matter of fact, teachers' expectations and needs can be taken into account while preparing training for teachers' career advancement and professional development.

According to the results of the study, the criteria for giving the title of expert teacher to teachers can be organized by considering teachers' performance, professional experience, and postgraduate education. It was also found that teachers thought that in order to become expert teachers, it was necessary to plan separate trainings for each branch and rearrange the training contents to be given to teachers. In a study conducted by Göksoy et al. (2014) on school managers, it was concluded that while determining expert teachers, fields such as field knowledge, professional seniority, projects and competitions, references, senior management decisions, postgraduate education, awards and punishments received, in-service trainings they participated in, communication skills, taking roles and tasks in commissions and studies, pedagogical formation, and child development should be considered. In parallel with this, Doğan (2022) found in his study that the advancement of teachers in their careers should be based on seniority, not exams. In his study, Demir (2011) found that while teachers are advancing in their careers, a product- and process-oriented method rather than an exam-oriented method would be more appropriate. According to Booth et al. (2021) some teachers may want to develop with a formal graduate program and others with an optional research and inquiry-based approach. According to the findings obtained, the criteria for becoming an expert teacher can be rearranged

as a result of a multi-faceted evaluation because a single exam may be insufficient to measure whether a teacher is an expert or not.

The teachers stated that they experienced time, internet, and device-related problems while following ETTPS. In addition, teachers stated that they were not sufficiently motivated for the trainings, they could not show the necessary care to their families because they followed the trainings, they could not have time for them, and they found the presentation of the trainings boring and ineffective. Some teachers' relocation during the summer vacation may have created a basis for problems such as time, internet, and devices. The fact that the training takes place during the summer vacation is not a desired situation for the participants. This result coincides with the findings obtained in Kandemir's (2023) study. In addition, the ineffectiveness of the presentation of the training may have prevented teachers from being motivated. According to Chimier and Tournier (2019), career should be designed in such a way that it does not introduce elements that reduce motivation.

According to the findings of the study, the teachers made suggestions for the title of expert teacher and expert teacher training. Considering the suggestions for the title of expert teacher, there are suggestions for a long-term specialization integrated with the professional development process, rejecting the current education and examination system. Güneş (2016) also argued that process-based learning teachers should be trained. In addition, teachers expressed their concerns that giving the title of expert teacher will have negative consequences and may harm the organizational culture and parent-teacher communication. This result, reported by Başar et al. (2023), is supported by the research results. In addition, in Taşkaya's (2007) study, some participants stated that giving titles to teachers, was motivating, while others pointed out that titles would cause discrimination among teachers, which would lead to unrest in the working environment. Similarly, it was found in Demir's (2011) study that teachers can have negative feelings and attitudes towards each other when they are grouped into career steps such as teacher and expert teacher. In the study conducted by Bakan (2013), it was concluded that teachers considered the practice of promotion in career steps very positively. The suggestions of the participants regarding the specialist teacher education process also differ. Some opinions argue that it should be done face-to-face. However, the result obtained in Kandemir's (2023) research is opposite to this situation. In addition, the participants focus on the fact that the training should be interactive, not one-sided, and that special training should be prepared by considering each branch's needs. Studies have shown that teachers have similar experiences in their career stages. For this reason, it can be said that the needs of teachers can be met if the trainings are prepared by considering the professional development stages of teachers (Aydın, 2018) because teachers' thoughts on professional development are important (Martin et al., 2019). In addition, teachers should be encouraged without competing with each other in this process, and the evaluation should be perceived as fair and transparent (Chimier & Tournier, 2019).

5. Limitations and Recommendations

ETTPS is a program for all branches. However, the study group for the research consists of primary school teachers. This situation is considered a limitation of the research. In addition, teachers are advancing in their careers as specialist teachers and head teachers. Another limitation of this study is that it is aimed at specialist teachers. In line with the results of the study, it can be recommended:

-for policy to reorganize the content of ETTPS and to carry out the training face-to-face,
-to give the title of expert teacher without an exam by considering the process of professional development,
-to make decisions about the duration and time of ETTPS by consulting teachers,
-Politicians can take into account the criticism and suggestions of teachers and non-governmental organizations when making arrangements for teachers' professional careers,
-In this study, ETTPS, which is included in teachers' career structure, is emphasized. However, the career structuring of teachers can be examined in more detail with comparative studies on the process of expert teaching and head teacher training.

7. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

There is no conflict of interest between the authors regarding this research's conduct, writing, and publication.

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