International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research (IJCER)

Examining Teacher and Administrator Perspectives on the Career Steps in Teaching

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the opnions of teachers and school administrators regarding the Regulation of Teaching Career Steps published by the Ministry of Education. The study group of the research, designed within the framework of the phenomenology research model, one of the qualitative research approachess, consists of a total of 17 participants, taking into account the criterion of having worked as a teacher for ten years or as a specialist teacher for ten years in one of the provinces in the Southeastern Anatolia Region in the 2022-2023 Academic year. Research data were collected through face to face semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. In the analysis of the research data, content analysis was used. Research findings have reached conclusions such as that teaching career steps are insufficient in terms of developing teachers economic, social and personal rights, don't contribute to Professional development, applications are insufficient, the exam is simple, applications will create duality and cause differences among teachers, it shows that the regulation of teaching career steps should be redesigned and solution proposals should be developed to make teachers economic, social and personal rights more comprehensive.

Keywords: Career, Teaching career steps, School administrator, Teacher

Introduction

Education can be defined as a process aimed at ensuring an individual's social adjustment and imparting the new knowledge and skills required by the age. As societies continually evolve, the knowledge and skills expected from individuals also undergo changes in parallel with this development. Fostering a good citizen and a good person is a common goal of all education systems for the advancement of society (Gömleksiz & Akyıldız, 2012).

The progress of societies and the attainment of the well-being levels of developed countries are primarily based on the healthy functioning of education systems. When looking at developed countries, it is observed that they possess a well-prepared education plan along with a teaching staff that is specialized and has acquired specific qualifications (Özan & Kaya, 2009). Whether students can learn in schools, determining the expected outcome in education, and ensuring that educational institutions have the qualities students desire are achieved through the hands of teachers (Urfalı, 2008). The success of the system emphasizes the quality of the teaching profession. The better the quality of the teacher, the better the quality of education provided in schools. Therefore, to cultivate good students, it is essential to have teachers who are experts in their field and are of high quality (Seferoğlu, 2003).

Teaching is considered a profession that requires specialized knowledge and skills (Şişman & Taşdemir, 2008). A teacher is also an individual who shapes the future of society, is a lifelong learner, seizes every opportunity, continuously renews oneself, and holds a respected and significant position in society (Erdem, 2013). They are individuals who, through their attitudes, knowledge, and habits, serve as examples to students and mold them into exemplary individuals. Therefore, teaching goes beyond having expertise in a subject or the authority to control a classroom; it means being individuals with the ability to build humane relationships with the people they teach (Köktaş, 2003). Additionally, they bridge the gap between the world of children and young people

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and that of adults, facilitating understanding between students and their families. They play both an academic role and that of a character educator for students (Kıncal, 2000).

Some resources are required for production in educational services. In the education system, the most crucial resource is human resources (Şişman & Taşdemir, 2008). The structure and operation of schools, which constitute human resources, vary from country to country. Within the school, there are teachers, administrators, and other staff in various roles and statuses in terms of structure and operation (Ada, 2013). Having the qualifications related to be a teacher has been considered sufficient for appointment to specific roles and statuses. Therefore, when it comes to human resources in education, teachers are the first to come to mind (Şişman, 2016).

Various practices focusing on pre-service and in-service training have been implemented worldwide and in Turkey to enhance the quality of teacher education. These practices include, at times, the creation of postgraduate completion programs, providing pedagogical formation to teachers from different disciplines, or utilizing in-service training programs as different approaches. These efforts aim to elevate teachers to a better level both qualitatively and quantitatively (Gündoğdu & Kızıltaş, 2008). Completing higher education is not the end of professional development for teachers; it is the beginning of a developmental process within the profession. The purpose of this developmental process is to assist teachers in the development of their students and contribute to their own professional development, i.e., their career (Bakioğlu & Dervişoğulları, 2016).

Career, in everyday conversations, refers to an individual's experiences related to progress and success in their professional and work life, as well as the roles they undertake throughout this work experience (Bilgin, 2014). At the same time, a career means the work success based on the expertise employees want to have and achieve, encompassing all the tasks personnel perform throughout their lives (Dolgun, 2012). For some, a career emerges as a result of chance or fate, representing the position related to the work one has engaged in throughout their life (Özgen & Yalçın, 2015). Additionally, it is an honorable pursuit that one enters with aspirations of progress in their youth and continues until retirement (Tortop, Aykaç, Yayman, & Özer, 2013).

Individuals make significant efforts to build a career. Individuals striving to make a career and achieve success in their chosen career path need to determine their career paths. In this context, correctly identifying career paths and areas of expertise is crucial for individuals (Atalay, 2021).

The changing world and rapidly growing economy have led to the emergence of different professions. Therefore, it is observed that each profession has a different specialization area to adapt to the times. After completing medical education, doctors receive the title of medical doctor. They can continue their professional careers with this title or specialize after completing specialization training (Açıkgöz, Ekemen, Zorlu, Yüksel & Ayoğlu, 2019). The industrial revolution provided opportunities for specialization in the field of architecture. As advancements occurred in production, specialization became crucial in the professional field. With specialization, the knowledge and skills required in the field of architecture have also diversified (İlerisoy & Aycı, 2019). However, the situation appears to be different in the teaching profession. In Türkiye, according to the "Regulation on Candidate Teaching and Teaching Career Steps" published in the Official Gazette dated 12.05.2022 and numbered 31833, teaching is divided into three career steps: teacher, specialist teacher, and head teacher. Those who successfully complete the candidacy period are appointed as teachers. Those with at least ten years of service, who complete the professional development activities of specialist teaching, and meet the conditions for becoming a specialist teacher according to this regulation can become specialist teachers. Those with at least ten years of experience as specialist teachers, who complete the professional development activities of head teaching, and meet the conditions for becoming a head teacher according to this regulation can become head teachers (MEB, 2022). Thus, to satisfy teachers and align their priorities in enhancing their careers and motivation, there is a need to converge expectations. In some cases, teachers may need support through training, counseling, coaching, etc. (İbicioğlu, 2011).

When the literature is examined, it is concluded that, based on the regulation introduced in 2005, teachers holding the titles of specialist and head teacher take on more responsibilities, make efforts in their profession, and have a positive impact on other teachers due to the findings obtained in research (Demir, 2011). In a study, it was found that despite the belief that the promotion system in career steps would improve the quality of teachers, the participation of both male and female teachers in this system was limited. As a result, doubts were raised about the necessity of the promotion system in career steps for teacher quality (Özan & Kaya, 2009). In another study on the topic, it was concluded that school administrators are not favorable to the implementation of specialist teaching and find the criteria for selecting specialist teachers inadequate (Göksoy, Sağır & Yenipınar, 2014). Another study indicated that the establishment of career steps contributes to the professional

development of teachers (Kaplan & Gürkan Gülcan, 2020). In a similar research, it emerged that the implementation of the promotion system in the teaching profession would not elevate social status (Ural, 2007). Yet another study revealed that those who want to increase or decrease the impact of the exam scoring agree. The opinion that the career steps exam should include subject-related questions is emphasized (Kazoğlu, 2014).

In accordance with the Regulation on Teaching Career Steps, teachers who qualified based on the multiple-choice exam coordinated by the Ministry of National Education (MEB) and conducted by the Student Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM) in 2005, a single and unique occurrence, have advanced in the teaching career steps and have also gained additional points for promotion to managerial positions. This exam has not been conducted again. The relevant regulation was revisited years later and reorganized and published in the regulation of 2022. In the latest regulation, career steps are influenced not only by the exam but also by the documents obtained by the teacher, the training received, and the projects participated in. Teachers pursuing a thesis or non-thesis master's degree are exempt from the exam. Additionally, there is a limitation based on seniority. It is observed that this regulation has been a subject of discussion in the public and among teachers for a long time. There has been no consensus among teachers, and discussions by education sector unions on the subject have been consistently on the agenda. The uncertainty of professional development and career planning is significant for teachers. It is believed that the opinions of teachers regarding the career steps addressed in this regulation will contribute to the resolution of problems.

Research Objective: The primary objective of this research is to examine the opinions of teachers and school administrators regarding the Regulation on Teaching Career Steps published by the Ministry of National Education. In line with this main objective, answers are sought to the following questions from teachers and school administrators:

1. What are the opinions of teachers and school administrators regarding the teaching career steps in terms of improving the economic, social, and personal rights of teachers?

2. What are the opinions of teachers and school administrators regarding the teaching career steps in terms of the professional development of teachers?

3. What are the opinions of teachers and school administrators regarding the trainings specified in the teaching career steps regulation?

4. What are the opinions of teachers and school administrators regarding the exam specified in the teaching career steps regulation and the planned exam?

5. What are the opinions of teachers and school administrators regarding the career steps specified in the teaching career steps regulation?

6. What are the opinions of teachers and school administrators regarding the effects of organizing the teaching profession according to career steps on our education system?

7. What are the opinions of teachers on how they can be made more willing for professional development?

Methodology

Research Model

In this research, adopting the phenomenological research model from qualitative research approaches, the study explores the opinions of teachers regarding the teaching career steps outlined in the Teacher Profession Law. Phenomenological research aims to question and reach the essence of experiences related to a phenomenon. In this regard, experience is crucial in phenomenological research, distinguishing it from other qualitative research methods conducted through interviews. Unlike other basic qualitative research methods, interviews may not always focus on questioning experiences. For instance, to uncover the meanings attributed to teaching by someone who has never been a teacher, you can collect data through interviews, but you cannot reveal their experiences as a teacher. Therefore, this research is not a phenomenological study but rather a basic qualitative research. However, if you attempt to grasp the meanings attributed to teaching based on the experiences of someone who has been a teacher, then it becomes a phenomenological study (Ersoy, 2019). In this study, teachers who have ten years of teaching experience, including ten years as specialist teachers, were chosen as

the phenomenon. The experiences and opinions of teachers about the teaching career steps that open the way to becoming a specialist teacher or head teacher were interpreted and reflected in the study.

Study Group

The study group of the research consists of teachers working in official educational institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in one of the provinces in the Southeastern Anatolia Region during the 2022-2023 academic year, in accordance with the research model. The study group was determined using a purposive sampling method called "criterion sampling." Criterion sampling involves selecting the sample based on criteria predetermined by the researcher. The criteria for sampling can be created by the researcher or can be based on a pre-existing criterion list (Baş & Ukturan, 2017). The main criteria for this study are having ten years of teaching experience or ten years of specialist teaching experience in official educational institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. Following these criteria, participants in the research were determined by seeking the opinions of specialist teachers, and teachers with experience related to the Teacher Profession Law were identified. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the identified teachers, providing brief information about the purpose and method of the research. All teachers who agreed to the face-to-face interview voluntarily participated in the research. Accordingly, the research was conducted with 17 participants who have ten years of teaching experience or ten years of specialist teaching experience in official educational institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education.

Data Collection and Analysis

The research data were collected through a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher. Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to outline the main points of a specific topic and also ask questions relevant to their own areas, while providing flexibility during the interview to adapt to new situations that may arise (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Semi-structured interviews can be conducted one-on-one in a question-and-answer format or with multiple individuals in a group setting. When conducted with a single person, the researcher has the opportunity to delve deeper into the person's responses and opinions (Güler, Halıcıoğlu & Taşğın, 2015). In the research, a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher was used to determine the teachers' views on the subject. The interview questions were prepared in line with the research's purpose, based on a review of the literature and obtaining expert opinions. To ensure clarity and comprehensibility of the expressions in the prepared interview form, a pre-application was conducted with a teacher. The interview form, shaped by expert opinions and the results of the pre-application, consists of two parts. The first part includes demographic information with 4 questions. The second part contains 7 open-ended questions.

All interviews were individually conducted face-to-face by the researcher on pre-determined dates after contacting the teachers in advance. The interviews took place at the schools where the participants were employed and lasted approximately 50-60 minutes. In this context, research data were collected through the semi-structured interview form provided to the participants.

In the analysis of research data, content analysis was employed. Content analysis is fundamentally about bringing together similar data into specific concepts and themes, and organizing and interpreting these concepts in a way that the reader will understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). In this research, the notes taken by the researcher during the interviews, as well as the data obtained from the interview form, were transcribed verbatim into the interview form without any alterations in a computer environment. Each interview form for each participant was individually read and evaluated. Based on the sub-objectives and interview questions of the research, a thematic framework was created for data analysis. To ensure the reliability of the research, expert opinions were sought to confirm whether the opinions given under the themes in the research matched those themes. Considering the evaluations of the researchers and the expert regarding the opinions that should be included in the themes, the numbers of "agreement" and "disagreement" were determined. The reliability of the research was calculated using the formula of Miles & Huberman (1994) (Reliability = [Number of Agreements / (Total number of Agreements + Disagreements)] X100). Depending on the size and range of the coding schema, it was observed that there was a 90% and above agreement between the assessments of the researcher and the expert. Thus, the desired level of reliability was achieved. In this reliability study specific to the research, a reliability rate of 94% was obtained. In the final stage, the opinions of the teachers were interpreted within the framework of the identified themes, presented with quotes, and supported by the study. Due to the confidentiality of the participants' identities, participants are referred to by code names "Ö1, Ö2, Ö3,... Ö17" instead of their real names in the research report.

Findings and Interpretation

Data Related to the First Sub-Problem

The first question of the semi-structured interview form is "Do you think teacher career stages aim to improve teachers' economic, social, and personal rights, and why?" When the data related to the first sub-problem is examined, sub-codes are reached as developes, partially developes, and do not developes.

Table 1. *Objectives of Teaching Career Ranks*

		f	%	Example Sentences
1.	Developes	2	12	Ö17: "Yes, because it is based on experience."
2.	Partially developes	5	29	Ö6: "Partially yes. However, the extent of its success is debatable. While it can be argued that it has achieved its goal more economically, I do not think it has succeeded in achieving its goal socially and in terms of rights."
3.	Does not develop	10	59	Ö2: "No, because I think it lacks in terms of personal and economic rights."
	TOTAL	**17**	**100**	

When the data related to the first sub-problem in Table 1 is examined, 12% of the participants stated that teaching career ranks develop teachers' economic, social, and legal rights by providing experience. 29% expressed that although it achieves its economic goal, it partially develops in terms of social and legal rights, citing reasons such as not affecting retirement, teachers not being sufficiently informed, the need for expansion in scope, and the necessity of making improvements not only in the economy. 59% state that the teaching career ranks are insufficient in improving teachers' economic, social, and legal rights, expressing opinions such as the need for a more comprehensive law and alternative practices instead of exams, indicating that it does not develop.

Data Regarding the Second Sub-Problem

The second question of the semi-structured interview form is: "Do you think that the career steps in teaching contribute to the professional development of teachers, and why?" When examining the data related to the second sub-problem, the sub-codes are identified as "contributes, partially contributes, and does not contribute."

Table 2. *The Contribution of Teaching Career Steps to Teachers' Professional Development*

		f	%	Example Sentences
1.	Contributes	1	6	Ö15: "We encountered many new concepts that will contribute to teachers."
2.	Partially contributes	2	12	Ö17: "As the years of experience increase, it can be a career step."
3.	Does not contribute	14	82	Ö8: "I don't think that the career steps in teaching contribute to the professional development of teachers. Because the provided trainings were limited to watching videos, which inevitably forced teachers to pretend as if they had watched those videos. Instead, this process could have been completed through hands-on training."
	TOTAL	**17**	**100**	

When examining the data related to the second sub-problem presented in Table 2, it is observed that 6% of the participants stated that the teaching career steps contribute to the professional development of teachers by introducing them to new concepts that will benefit teachers. 12% expressed the opinion that career steps contribute partially to the professional development of teachers, citing the need for practical studies instead of theory and the lack of environment and materials for practical applications. However, 82% of the participants agreed that the provided training did not contribute to teachers, emphasizing that the training was limited to

watching videos, which were watched forcefully. They mentioned that the training sessions ended with an exam, and the professional law only focused on career steps, damaging the professional reputation.

Data Regarding the Third Sub-Problem
The data regarding the third sub-problem were examined, and the sub-codes were determined as not suitable for its purpose, too intense, not necessary, can be improved, sufficient, and insufficient.

Table 3. *Evaluation of the Training Programs Included*

		f	%	Example Sentences
1.	Not suitable for the purpose	2	12	Ö13: "The content of the training programs does not align with the realities of the field. The training provided in the programs is far from meeting the real needs of teachers."
2.	Too intensive	2	12	Ö8: "I find it seemingly useful, but I can say that useful topics get lost in such an intense program within a short period."
3.	Not necessary	2	12	Ö17: "I find it very unnecessary."
4.	Can be improved	2	12	Ö11: "Correct studies, but I think they are not sufficient; practical applications in the field should be one-to-one."
5.	Adequate	3	17	Ö9: "Good theoretically."
6.	Insufficient	6	35	Ö12: "There were deficiencies in the practical knowledge because the information written in the school conditions was difficult to implement at the same time."
	TOTAL	**17**	**100**	

When the data regarding the third sub-problem in Table 3 is examined, 12% of the participants state that the content of the training programs does not align with the realities of the field, citing this as a reason for being inadequate for its purpose. 12% express that the intensive program causes the disappearance of the main topics. 12% indicate that it is unnecessary. 12% express that the training programs are not interesting enough, the studies are not sufficient, and the practices need to be increased, suggesting that they can be improved. 17% state that the training programs are sufficient, while 35% believe that the regulation was hastily made, the implementation does not align with the training programs, and therefore, they are inadequate.

Data Regarding the Fourth Sub-Problem
The data for the fourth sub-problem, obtained from the fourth question of the semi-structured interview form, which is "How do you evaluate the exam conducted for the teaching career ladder?" was examined. The data revealed the following sub-codes: inclusive, incompatible with education, formality, simple, and unnecessary.

Table 4. *Evaluation of the Conducted Exam*

		f	%	Example Sentences
1.	Comprehensive	2	12	Ö13: "Considering the quality of the provided education and societal expectations, it was an exam that met the expectations."
2.	Incompatible with education	2	12	Ö9: "Irrelevant to the given training program."
3.	Formality	2	12	Ö6: "The ease of the exam has prevented it from being selective."
4.	Simple	5	29	Ö8: "The exam was quite simple. It seemed more like an assessment of reading skills rather than evaluating the candidates' knowledge. Conducting such an exam for the sacred profession of teaching would, in my opinion, further diminish the respect for the teaching profession in society."
5.	Unnecessary	6	35	Ö11: "Unnecessary. Our knowledge and experience cannot be measured with a single exam."
	TOTAL	**17**	**100**	

When examining the data for the fourth sub-problem presented in Table 4, 12% of the participants expressed that the conducted exam was inclusive, taking into account the quality of the provided education and societal expectations. Another 12% stated that the exam was incompatible with the education. Additionally, 12% believed that the exam was easy and did not measure the required level, indicating that it was a formality. Furthermore, 29% thought that the exam did not achieve its purpose, as it assessed reading skills rather than knowledge, making it a simple exam. Finally, 35% argued that the exam did not measure knowledge and experience, and considering factors such as the impact of the exam on the quality of teaching, they deemed it unnecessary, proposing to evaluate experience and years of service instead.

Data Regarding the Fifth Sub-Problem
The fifth question of the semi-structured interview form is 'Could you please write your opinions on the practices related to the career stages in the Regulation on Internship and Career Stages of Teaching Career?'. Based on these data, the subcodes have been identified as 'adequate,' 'unapplicable,' 'not inclusive,' and 'dysfunctional.'

Table 5. *Opinions on the Practices*

		f	%	Example Sentences
1.	Sufficient	2	12	Ö14: "It is good for teacher development."
2.	Not applicable	4	24	Ö10: "I think the regulation is coercive."
3.	Not comprehensive	5	29	Ö13: "There is a general consensus in the community that it is a regulation far from meeting the expectations of teachers."
4.	Ineffective	6	35	Ö2: "I believe that the implementation of career ladder practices in the regulation will disrupt harmony and order within schools and among the teaching staff."
	TOTAL	**17**	**100**	

When examining the data regarding the fifth sub-problem presented in Table 5, 12% of the participants stated that the practices are sufficient for teacher development. 24% expressed that the applied regulation is imposing, making it unworkable. 29% mentioned that it is a regulation far from meeting the expectations of teachers, the training in practice is lacking in evaluation, and it is not inclusive due to not including every teacher regardless of years of experience. 35% indicated that these new practices, being incomplete and disrupting order within the school, are dysfunctional.

Data Regarding the Sixth Sub-Problem.
The sixth question of the semi-structured interview form is "What are your thoughts on the effects of organizing the teaching profession according to career steps on our education system?" According to this, partial effectiveness, improvement, and negative contribution have been identified as sub-codes.

Table 6. *The Effects of Career Steps on Our Education System*

		f	%	Example Sentences
1.	Partially effective	1	6	Ö6: "There will be partially positive results. However, education is a whole. It should be supported from all aspects."
2.	Improves	3	18	Ö8: "I think there will be positive effects if it is done meaningfully and made effective."
3.	Negative Contribution	13	76	Ö7: "Creating differences among teachers can have a negative impact."
	TOTAL	**17**	**100**	

When examining the data provided in Table 6 regarding the sixth sub-problem, it is observed that 6% of the participants believe that there will be partially positive results, and 18% express that if effectively implemented, it could positively improve the education system. However, 76% of the participants agree that organizing the teaching profession according to career steps may create differences among teachers, and this situation could have negative effects on our education system.

Data Regarding the Seventh Sub-Problem

The seventh question of the semi-structured interview form is "In your opinion, how can teachers be made more willing for professional development?" According to the data, sub-codes have been identified as valuing their opinions, increasing their training, recognizing their contributions, and improving their benefits.

Table 7. *Motivating Teachers for Professional Development*

	f	%	Example Sentences
1. Valuing their opinions	2	12	Ö1: "Valuing teachers."
2. Increasing training opportunities	3	18	Ö7: "By undergoing practical trainings."
3. Valuing their contributions	3	18	Ö16: "By soliciting their opinions. It would be more successful if based on voluntariness."
4. Improving their welfare rights	9	52	Ö2: "Every teacher is already an expert in their field; therefore, if teachers' professional and economic rights are at a sufficient level, their professional development will increase accordingly."
TOTAL	**17**	**100**	

When examining the data related to the seventh sub-problem in Table 7, 12% of the participants express that valuing teachers and considering their opinions are essential to making teachers' professional development more willing. 18% mention that various forms of training, such as practical workshops and seminar programs throughout the year, can contribute to creating more energetic, scientific, critical, and collaborative teaching staff. Another 18% suggest that by seeking teachers' opinions, considering contributions, and operating on a voluntary basis, their professional development can be made more willing. Finally, 52% agree that improving teachers' professional and economic rights will increase their motivation for professional development.

Discussion and Conclusion

The developments and changes in educational activities necessitate teachers to enhance and renew themselves (Kaya, 2007). For these reasons, the Ministry of National Education of Türkiye has undertaken various efforts to increase the quality of the teaching profession, encourage teachers to engage in scientific research, and make the teaching profession more productive, aiming to transform it into a career profession (Deniz, 2009). One of these regulations is the 'Regulation on Candidate Teaching and Teaching Career Stages,' published in the Official Gazette in 2022. Gathering the opinions of teachers and school administrators regarding observations, findings, potential challenges, and proposed solutions related to this regulation has been deemed important. The expressed views within the scope of the research are considered valuable data for the study and may provide insights to researchers interested in similar topics.

The main purpose of the research is to examine the opinions of teachers and school administrators regarding the Career Stages Regulation for Teaching, published by the Ministry of National Education. When the findings related to the opinions on "the views of teachers on the career stages of teaching in terms of improving their economic, social, and personal rights" are examined in line with the aim of the research, it is observed that most teachers and school administrators express that improving the economic, social, and personal rights of teachers is distant, and some parts of the practices are positively evaluated. In the literature review on the subject, it is found that due to the lack of continuity and unplanned implementation of this regulation, it could not fully serve its purpose (Demir, 2011). Additionally, the opinion has emerged that teachers cannot elevate their social status in terms of respect, recognition, and success (Ural, 2007). There are problems related to status, economic, social, and personal rights in human resources in education (Şişman & Taşdemir, 2008). These problems negatively affect the performance of teachers, hindering the realization of the goals of education and reducing job satisfaction (Erdem, 2010).

When examining the findings related to the opinions on "the views of teachers on the career stages of teaching in terms of contributing to the professional development of teachers," it is observed that most participants express that the "Regulation on Candidate Teaching and Teaching Career Stages" published in the Official Gazette dated May 12, 2022 (No: 31833) did not contribute to the professional development of teachers. They mention that teachers are subjected to exams after the training, the training consists only of watching videos, and the training provided by this regulation is inadequate. Other research results in the literature support the

findings of this research, indicating that the career stages of teaching do not contribute to professional development. According to Gümüşeli (2005), the primary purpose of the career stages of teaching is to contribute to teachers' professional development and enhance their qualifications. However, due to the simplicity and formality of the exams conducted at the end of these trainings, it is stated that they do not contribute to professional development. Kaplan and Gülcan (2020) also obtained results in their research indicating that career stages would not contribute to the professional development of teachers and would disrupt job sharing.

When examining the findings related to the opinions on "the training included in the teaching career stages regulation," it is observed that there is a consensus among participants that the training is inadequate due to significant differences between the training and practices, failure to achieve its purpose, lack of interest, and the creation of these programs without careful consideration. Some participants, however, expressed that the training programs are sufficient. Similar results are found in other studies when examining this focus of opinions. In particular, Özdemir, Doğan and Demirkol (2022) stated that remote education is prone to misuse, and it cannot be precisely determined whether participants watch the training videos. Dağlı (2007) concluded that seniority should be a fundamental element in career stages, objective criteria should be used in evaluating performance, face-to-face in-service training should be given great importance, and career advancement should be achieved through postgraduate education.

When examining the findings related to the opinions on "the exam included in the teaching career stages regulation and planned to be conducted," it is evident that opinions highlighting the simplicity, unnecessary nature, and lack of compatibility with education are prevalent. The conclusion is drawn that the exam does not measure teachers' knowledge, lowers the quality of teachers, fails to achieve its purpose, is a formality, and is incompatible with education, and it is considered simple. Opinions also emerge suggesting a focus on experience rather than the exam, considering years of service, and making domain and regulatory knowledge prerequisites. This situation is similar to Kocakaya's (2006) proposal for incorporating performance-based objective criteria instead of an exam in career stages. The deficiencies such as the absence of questions related to subject knowledge and not considering experience in the exam resemble the opinions of teachers about the past expert teacher exam, as observed in the studies of Dağlı (2007).

When looking at the findings regarding the opinions on "the practices related to the teaching career stages in the regulation," most participants expressed views that these practices are dysfunctional, non-inclusive, and impractical for teaching career stages. Particularly, they mentioned that the practices are imposed by a regulation, do not meet expectations, lack adequate evaluations, do not consider experience, have deficiencies, and may lead to divisions within schools. However, some participants stated that the mentioned practices are sufficient for teacher development. Other studies in the literature support these research findings, suggesting that the practices related to teaching career stages are inadequate. In Çelikten's (2008) study, it was anticipated that the practices related to teaching career stages in the regulation would lead to problems in supervisor-subordinate relationships and intra-organizational hierarchy, create negative emotions and attitudes among teachers, cause division among teachers, and lead to groupings. Turan (2007) also found in his study that teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the process of promotion and career development in teaching career stages, indicating that the process did not meet their expectations. The overall dissatisfaction of teachers reflects the shortcomings in the career development process. Additionally, teachers have negative views about the limited number of expert teacher and chief teacher positions and the continuation of this practice in the future. Based on all this data, it can be concluded that the process in teaching career stages, involving confusion in supervisor-subordinate relationships among teachers who are not expert or chief teachers, not meeting teachers' expectations, being implemented with deficiencies in the regulation, and the likelihood that the practices in teaching career stages will not continue, leads to a negative reception of these practices.

When examining the findings related to opinions on "the effects of organizing the teaching profession according to career stages on our education system," it is observed that some participants believe it will result in partially positive outcomes, making it partially effective. On the other hand, some participants expressed that if the practices become more meaningful, they could improve our education system. However, a significant number of participants seem to agree that creating differences among teachers (such as titles, salary differences, and creating divisions among teachers) would ultimately have a negative impact on the education system. When reviewing the literature in the focus of research findings, two main problems stand out in Turkish education system: the problem of training teachers and the problem related to the professional development of trained teachers. It has been emphasized that a teacher having a good career is possible by ensuring that they are well trained both before and during service, taking advantage of opportunities for professional development (Şahin,

2008). Therefore, many administrators and teachers partly believe that organizing the profession according to career stages could be beneficial (Küçük & Aksakal, 2007).

'Views on How Teachers Can Be Made More Willing for Professional Development' were examined, and the majority of participants expressed a common opinion that teachers can be made more willing for professional development by improving their financial benefits, acknowledging their contributions, increasing training opportunities, subjecting them to various seminar programs, and valuing their opinions. Other studies in the literature support the findings of this research. In the study conducted by Özdemir, Doğan and Demirkol (2022), it was concluded that there is no benefit other than a salary increase related to the material gains that teachers will obtain in career ladder applications. According to Cerit (2021), the Hawthorne studies resulted in the conclusion that salary does not increase efficiency as expected.

In conclusion, it is observed that teachers and school administrators have a negative attitude towards the career levels in teaching. They attribute this negativity to teachers not improving their economic, social, and personal rights. They express that in-service training being conducted online does not contribute to their professional development. They find the training programs inadequate because they believe they do not have practical implications. They consider the exam unnecessary, as they think it is simple and does not measure knowledge. Overall, they believe that the practices would create a division among teachers, rendering them ineffective. They argue that it would have a negative impact on the education system. Finally, the consensus is that, for professional development, it is crucial to first improve the teachers' personal rights.

Recommendations

Based on the obtained results, the following recommendations can be made:

- A more comprehensive regulation can be issued to improve teachers' economic, social, and welfare rights.
- Face-to-face training for professional development can be planned, ensuring practical applicability.
- New regulations can be implemented to align education programs with their intended goals, making them usable in practice, and ensuring they are not overly burdensome.
- Instead of relying solely on exams, assessment and evaluation based on experience and years of service can be considered.
- Meaningful and effective programs can be added to Turkish education system.
- More effective legal regulations can be established for the professional development of teachers.

Author (s) Contribution Rate
The contribution rates of the authors are equal.

Conflicts of Interest
There is no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval
In this study, all the rules specified within the scope of the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were adhered to. Additionally, approval for this study was obtained from the Dicle University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with the decision number and date of 452833 on 23.02.2023.

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