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#### RESEARCH ARTICLE

## The Precarization of Educational Labor: The Examination of Teachers' Job Insecurity Perceptions

Ibrahim Colak  · Yahya Altinkurt 

#### ABSTRACT

**Background/purpose** – In this study, the precarization of educational labor was identified in terms of teachers' job insecurity perceptions. The purpose of the study was to examine the job insecurity perceptions of teachers with permanent, fixed-term, or temporary contracts.

**Materials/methods** – Multiple case design was used in the study. The data of the study were collected from 30 teachers through semi-structured interviews and from 432 teachers using the Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale, which was developed within the scope of the study. Thematic analysis, descriptive statistics, *t*-test, one-way ANOVA, Sidak test, and clustering analysis were used in the analysis of the obtained data.

**Results** – The study's results revealed that teachers perceived intense explicit and implicit job insecurity. Clustering analyses showed that 69% of the participants perceived moderate and high levels of both explicit and implicit job insecurity, whereas 73% perceived moderate and high levels of general job insecurity. Job insecurity had social, psychological, and educational effects. Justification of insecurity, instrumental use of power against job insecurity, acquiescence of job insecurity, and acceptance of job insecurity caused structuration of job insecurity.

**Conclusion** – The study's findings indicate that all teachers should be employed on a permanent contractual basis in order to reduce their perceptions of job insecurity and its effects. The autonomy of teachers within the teaching process should be increased, their employment benefits improved, and they should be economically empowered.

**Keywords** – precarization, job insecurity, educational labor, teacher

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In preparing students who will be the future of today's society, school administrators need to ensure that they are provided with an appropriate learning environment in which to educate them as a whole. This task is closely related to the skills and competencies of school administrators.

French author Olivier Clerc (2009) mentions "Boiled Frog Syndrome" in his book "Invaluable Lessons from a Frog: Seven Life-Enhancing Metaphors." According to the story, if a frog is suddenly dropped into boiling water, it will quickly leap out of the water. However, if the frog is first placed in water of a normal temperature and then the water is slowly heated, the frog will feel less distressed, it will adjust its body temperature according to the water, and will not become aware of any danger. However, when the water starts to boil, the frog uses up all its energy in trying to adapt to the water and dies without making any attempt to jump out. Clerc's metaphor refers to an individual's inability or unwillingness to understand slowly emerging dangers. Individuals do not or cannot oppose or react to these changes which are embellished with deceptive concepts that may appear unthreatening and they may even feel satisfied with the situation. Under the economic policies of capitalism, individuals experience similar situations as described in the frog scenario. Neoliberal policies presented slowly and attractively under an "illusion of freedom" can cause individuals to live undisturbed within a society dominated by fear, risk, competition, inequality, uncertainty, and insecurity, and even to go on to reproduce this social structure themselves. In a competition-based social structure, a myth is emphasized that individuals act freely and make their own choices, which ensures that they remain largely unaware of inequalities that may be increasing on a daily basis.

### 1.1. Neoliberal Policies and the Precarization of Labor

Secure employment, where regular income is provided and the rights of employees are protected, has become less commonplace today, replaced instead by precarious employment and working conditions in which workers are left socially and economically vulnerable due to neoliberal policies. Under such conditions, the exploitation of labor is more readily practiced. As such, employees have to adapt to the flexible and precarious working conditions imposed on them, and in order to succeed they often have to accept or acquiesce to precarization. The employment process, which has become much more flexible under neoliberal policies, results in employees losing control over their work life and often feeling in a state of constant anxiety. This situation brings about uncertainty for the future and a more precarious pattern of life. In this sense, *precarization* refers to the insecurity and uncertainty that employees are exposed to, along with the impact of economic regulations on today's working conditions.

Standing (2016) defined precarization as the process of accustoming employees to accepting precarious working conditions and a precarious life. According to Vatansever (2013), precarization is a process of intimidating employees to the point of accepting their rights being taken away, being deskilled and exploited under ruthless competitive conditions, with the constant fear of being excluded from the system at any moment. As can be understood from these definitions, precarization describes the insecurity encountered in various aspects of the working process and the pressures felt by those working within such a situation. In the literature, the concept of *precariat* is used to express a group of individuals exposed to precarization. *Precariat* consists of the combination of the words *precarious* and *proletariat* (Standing, 2019). As Vatansever and Yalçın (2016) stated, the precariat also

includes white-collar workers who find themselves in a class decline despite having all the educational and professional qualifications supposedly required to advance. The seemingly daily decrease in employment security and professional rights for teachers causes them to be dragged into the precariat group. Individuals' acquiescence of the precarization process is associated with precarious employment policies. Precarious working conditions, which can be seen as a natural result of precarization, are created not only by explicit job insecurity, but also by implicit job insecurity.

### 1.2. Job Insecurity

The most important goal of neoliberal policies in terms of working conditions since the 1980s has been the increased flexibility of labor markets. Flexibility refers to labor that can be moved both easily and at a low cost (Harvey, 2015). Flexible production, fluidity, and the ease of capital movement, which are the main features of the post-Fordist period, radically transform labor. In this flexible, makeshift, ephemeral, and risk-inherent system, labor is exposed to fundamental insecurity. A fixed job and a fixed wage have been largely replaced by temporary jobs within a "global workshop" (Artun, 2014). In an environment where labor has become flexible, today's organizations prefer fixed-term contracts, unpaid internship practices, and part-time employment. Employers can hire employees under the conditions they want and also dismiss them with relative ease (Holtz, 2011). As a result of these flexible employment conditions, many of today's employees face significant problems. The leading problems are the end of permanent contractual employment (Sennett, 2017), the transition to a more risk-inherent employment system (Beck, 2014), relatively lower wages, loss of social security rights, and most importantly, job insecurity (Harvey, 2015).

The literature offers various definitions for the concept of job insecurity perception. In many studies, this perception is expressed as the anxiety that employees feel about the possible loss of their job at some point in the future (De Witte, 2005; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996). On the other hand, other studies have emphasized that the perception of job insecurity is not limited to just employees' anxiety over potentially losing their job (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Ruvio & Rosenblatt, 1999). For example, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) drew attention to the threat that employees may feel towards their work being not only due to potential job loss, but also the loss or weakening of certain characteristics of their job (such as career advancement, income, status, prestige, autonomy, resources, or solidarity) which should also be considered within the context of the perception of job insecurity.

The comprehensive and multidimensional structure of job insecurity was first introduced in a model developed by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984). In this model, job insecurity is handled in two dimensions, namely *the severity of the perceived threat to the job* and *the perceived powerlessness to counter the threat*. Additionally, many other researchers have also emphasized the multidimensional structure of job insecurity, with classifications for job insecurity as cognitive and affective (Borg & Elizur, 1992), quantitative and qualitative (Hellgren et al., 1999), and objective and subjective (De Witte & Näswall, 2003). Within the scope of the current research, teachers' perceptions of job insecurity have been classified under two main dimensions, as "explicit job insecurity" and "implicit job insecurity." This structure was also confirmed by a scale developed within the scope of the current study. Here, *explicit job insecurity* refers to the anxiety teachers may feel about the loss of their job, whilst *implicit job insecurity* refers to the anxiety and powerlessness that

teachers may feel about losing important features of their job (e.g., prestige, autonomy, etc.) or seeing them become under threat.

### *1.3. The Effects of Neoliberal Policies on Teachers*

The transformations seen in education through neoliberal policies have deeply affected both the teaching profession and the teachers who work within it. Among these effects are a transformed image of the role of a teacher, the perception of the teaching profession as a meta, the flexibility of employment conditions in education, the weakening of teachers' employment benefits, the training of an excess supply of teachers, and the introduction of performance evaluations similar to those in business enterprises. According to Şimşek (2018), the teaching profession in Turkey experienced its golden period between the establishment of the Republic in 1923 and 1979, where teachers were accepted as intellectuals who knew how to learn and to teach, whose knowledge was trusted, and who held a close interest in the current social problems of the time. However, the teaching profession has since lost much of its former prestige and position. With projects implemented in Turkey by the World Bank since 1980, it has been envisaged that education should be directed more in line with market conditions, and therefore that teachers should be trained in line with this objective. In addition, teachers' professional activities have begun to be evaluated under the guise of performance and so-called efficiency. The image of the "representative of the enlightenment, idealist and intellectual Republic teacher" of the past has been replaced largely by the image of teachers as mere practitioners or "technician teachers," having lost much of their autonomy and ability to question and react, due to today's neoliberal policies (Ünal, 2005; Yıldız, 2014; Yorulmaz et al., 2021). In order to understand the extent of the insecurity and precarization experienced by today's teachers, it is also required to consider what kind of employment status they have.

Job insecurity, which mainly refers to the insecurity of employment continuity, is an important component of precarization. Employment insecurity is closely related to the status of teachers and the employment contracts that they now work under. In European countries, teachers working in public schools are seen as public officials, although the terms of their contracts and employment conditions may differ by country. In general, two models are used in the employment of teachers: (1) Those employed under contracts of special labor laws (i.e., civil servants or public officials who are not actually civil servants) and (2) those employed under contracts of general labor laws. Teachers who are employed as civil servants generally have greater job security. Out of 43 countries included in the Eurydice report, teachers in nine countries (e.g., Croatia, Poland, and Switzerland) are considered to be public officials but are not actually civil servants. In 17 countries (e.g., Italy, Romania, and the United Kingdom), teachers are employed under general labor law contracts, whilst 17 countries (e.g., Spain, France, and Finland) employ their teachers as civil servants. As to the types of contracts held by teachers across Europe, there are two basic variants: Permanent contracts (contracts of indefinite duration) and fixed-term contracts (contracts of definite duration). Fixed-term contracts expire at a predetermined date and their extension is not certain. Therefore, such contracts lead to reduced job security and generally more flexible working conditions (Eurydice, 2018). Of the teachers working in countries grouped under the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 18% work under fixed-term contracts, with 12% of these teachers are employed under fixed-term contracts of 12 months or less, whilst 6% of them are employed under fixed-term contracts of more than 1 year (OECD, 2020b).

When the employment conditions of teachers in Turkey are examined, it can be seen that teachers are employed under four different types of employment contractual arrangements, although the teachers all carry out essentially the same job. In Turkey, teachers are employed under (1) permanent, (2) fixed-term, or (3) temporary contracts in public schools, or as (4) employed teachers in private education institutions (i.e., private schools). Up until 2005, teachers in Turkey had permanent contracts with relatively high levels of job security; however, they have started to be employed under fixed-term contracts, as well. The number of teachers in Turkey working under fixed-term contracts increased significantly from 18,752 in the 2016/2017 academic year (Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı [Turkish Ministry of National Education], 2017) to 101,730 by the 2019/2020 academic year (Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı [Turkish Ministry of National Education], 2020). The proportion of teachers with fixed-term or temporary contracts in Turkish public schools currently constitutes about 20% of all teaching staff. Many studies in the literature have shown that employees with fixed-term or temporary contracts experience a higher perception of job insecurity than those with permanent contracts (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; Forcella et al., 2009). Therefore, teachers employed under different contracts in Turkey are considered to have different perspectives with regards to their working conditions, and may as a result also experience job insecurity to a different degree. For this reason, the current research aims to examine the job insecurity perceptions of teachers with fixed-term and temporary contracts in Turkey, as well as those employed under permanent contract. This research therefore aims to reveal teachers' subjective perceptions of job insecurity and to compare any differences according to employment contract type.

The literature includes studies that have dealt with the precarization experienced by teachers (Baihaqi & Jahja, 2019; Dağ, 2020; Volchik et al., 2018). In addition, studies have examined the relationships between job insecurity and organizational commitment within educational organizations (Rosenblatt et al., 1999), job stress (Forcella et al., 2009), job satisfaction (Feather & Rauter, 2004), burnout (Breevaart & Tims, 2019), as well as organizational trust and organizational citizenship (Dede, 2017; Gürbüz & Dede, 2016). The study samples of research that have examined teachers' perceptions of job insecurity directly or indirectly in Turkey have included various teacher groups such as private tutors (Yılmaz & Altinkurt, 2011), public and private school teachers (Gürbüz & Dede, 2016), teachers with fixed-term contracts (Karadeniz & Demir, 2010), teachers with temporary contracts (Günerigök & Oğur, 2018), and teachers who have yet to be appointed (Kiraz, 2014). However, no research has been found in the current literature that has addressed the topic of precarization within the framework of job insecurity, and that has holistically examined teachers' job insecurity perceptions according to their employment contract type (i.e., permanent, fixed-term, or temporary contracts). In this context, the precarization of educational labor in the current study is identified in terms of teachers' job insecurity perceptions. The purpose of the current study is to examine the job insecurity perceptions of teachers in Turkey who are employed under permanent, fixed-term, or temporary contracts. In line with this general purpose, answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. How are/what is the level of teachers' perceptions of job insecurity?
  - 1.1. Do teachers' perceptions of job insecurity differ according to gender, marital status, union membership, or seniority variables?
2. How are teachers' views on the effects of job insecurity?
3. How is job insecurity in education structured according to teachers' views?



## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Research Design

Multiple case design was used in the study. In this context, the provinces of Muğla and Mardin were chosen as two distinct situations in terms of their cultural structure, length of service of teachers, and proportional distribution of employment types. While Muğla is one of the provinces in Turkey where the length of service for teachers is the highest (average 15-16 years), Mardin is a province with one of the lowest (average 4-8 years). Although the number of teachers employed under fixed-term contracts is very low in Muğla, Mardin is among the top 10 provinces when it comes to teachers employed under fixed-term contracts (Eğitim Bir Sen, 2018). In the current study, selected cases were first analyzed independently and in-case analysis was performed. In the next step, cross-case analysis was conducted based on case similarities and differences. In the research, semi-structured interviews were conducted first with the teachers in order to perform an in-depth examination of their perceptions of job insecurity. Then, using the Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale developed within the scope of this research, the level of the teachers' job insecurity perceptions were determined and compared according to demographic variables.

### 2.2. Study Group / Population and Sample

In the first stage of the research, data were collected through interviews. The study group of the research was selected from teachers employed in the Muğla and Mardin provinces of Turkey. In determining the study group of the research, maximum variation sampling was used for selection in both cases. Teachers with permanent, fixed-term, and temporary contracts were included in the study so as to purposefully reflect all the current employment contractual variants for teachers working in the Turkish public schooling system. In addition, it was ensured that participants of differing seniority and branches were included in the study group. Table 1 presents demographic information about the teachers interviewed in the study, as well as the duration of the interviews.

**Table 1.** Teachers Constituting the Study Group of the Research

Province	Interview Code	Employment Contract Type	Gender	Seniority (years)	Interview Duration (mins.)
MARDİN	G1	Fixed-term	Male	1	81
	G2	Fixed-term	Male	2.5	73
	G3	Fixed-term	Male	2.5	56
	G4	Permanent	Male	6	44
	G5	Permanent	Female	10	48
	G6	Permanent	Female	12	73
	G7	Permanent	Female	12	69
	G8	Fixed-term	Female	1	33
	G9	Fixed-term	Female	2.5	46
	G10	Fixed-term	Female	1	50
	G11	Temporary	Female	1	28
	G12	Fixed-term	Female	2	47
	G13	Temporary	Male	1	50
	G14	Temporary	Male	2	52
	G15	Fixed-term	Male	2	41
	G16	Permanent	Male	3.5	60
	G17	Fixed-term	Male	2.5	73

Province	Interview Code	Employment Contract Type	Gender	Seniority (years)	Interview Duration (mins.)
MUĞLA	G18	Permanent	Male	22	39
	G19	Permanent	Male	30	36
	G20	Permanent	Male	32	42
	G21	Permanent	Female	23	30
	G22	Permanent	Male	10	91
	G23	Permanent	Male	20	37
	G24	Permanent	Male	20	75
	G25	Fixed-term	Male	1	51
	G26	Temporary	Female	13	42
	G27	Temporary	Female	6	33
	G28	Permanent	Female	27	66
	G29	Temporary	Female	1	35
	G30	Permanent	Female	4	58

In the second stage of the research, data were collected using the “Teachers’ Job Insecurity Scale.” However, it should be noted that permission to apply the scale could only be obtained for Muğla province, hence the population of the research consisted of 13,667 teachers working in public schools in Muğla province during the 2020-2021 academic year. The sample size assumed to accurately represent the population was calculated as being at least 374 in order to achieve a 95% confidence level. In this case, the sample of the study consisted of 432 teachers determined by disproportionate cluster sampling technique. All 432 participants who were applied the scale were employed as teachers on permanent contracts. Of them, 63.9% were female ( $n = 276$ ) and 36.1% male ( $n = 156$ ). In terms of the participant teachers’ seniority 17.8% had been employed as teachers for 10 years or less ( $n = 77$ ), 43.1% had 11-20 years of service ( $n = 186$ ), whilst 39.1% had 21 years or more service ( $n = 169$ ). Additionally, 89.1% of the teachers were married ( $n = 385$ ) and 10.9% were single ( $n = 47$ ), while 72.7% of the teachers ( $n = 314$ ) were union members versus 27.3% ( $n = 118$ ) who were not.

### 2.3. Data Collection Tools

The data collection tools used in the research were a semi-structured interview form and the Teachers’ Job Insecurity Scale, which was developed within the scope of the study. The semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool in each participant teacher’s interview in order to help reveal their perceptions to an in-depth level with regards to job insecurity. First, a draft interview form was prepared based on the literature published on the research subject. Alternative questions were prepared based on the foresight that some questions might not be fully understood or sufficient feedback not forthcoming from the interviewees. In order to obtain a rich level of data from the interviews, probes were created for some of the questions. Expert opinion was then sought with regards to the content validity of the draft interview form. In order to better conduct the actual study interviews, pilot interviews were conducted beforehand with three teachers.

The Teachers’ Job Insecurity Scale (TJIS) was developed following an examination of the findings obtained through the research interviews, as well as being based upon known theoretical models in the literature, and previously developed related scales (Ashford et al., 1989; Borg & Elizur, 1992; Hellgren et al., 1999; O’Neill & Sevastos, 2013; Vander Elst et al., 2014). In this context, a question pool consisting of 45 items was created first in order to determine teachers’ perceptions regarding job insecurity. The teachers’ perceptions for each

item in the scale are determined according to a 5-point, Likert-type rating, ranging from 1 = *I strongly disagree* to 5 = *I strongly agree*. Expert opinion was obtained on the content validity of the items that formed the question pool. The draft scale was applied to 10 teachers to assess its features of intelligibility and answerability. In line with the opinions received, adjustments were applied prior to the 41-item scale being made ready for the pre-test application.

The data used in the scale development were collected during the 2020-2021 academic year. The construct validity of the scale was tested with Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), with each performed using data collected from a different sample group. MacCallum et al. (1999) stated that a sample size of 100-200 is sufficient in cases where factors are distinct and factor loads are high. In the current study, 302 usable data forms were collected for EFA to be applied, and 252 for CFA. Reliability analyses of the scale were conducted with the data collected from the second sample group. After the structure of the scale had been determined, the normality of the distribution and the extreme values were examined and the analyses repeated. The normality of the distribution was determined by skewness and kurtosis coefficients which ranged from -1 to +1 (EFA; skewness coefficients -.10 to .35, kurtosis coefficients -.08 to .06; CFA; skewness coefficients -.15 to .29, kurtosis coefficients -.24 to -.08). For extreme values, z-score values were examined, with values of  $\pm 3$  or more taken as extreme values. Overall, 67.5% of the teachers in the sample group in which EFA analysis was conducted were female ( $n = 204$ ), whilst 32.5% were male ( $n = 98$ ). In terms of the teachers' seniority (i.e., years in the profession), 20.5% had worked for 10 years or less ( $n = 62$ ), 45% had worked as teachers for 11-20 years ( $n = 136$ ), and 34.4% had 21 years or more in the profession ( $n = 104$ ). Of the teachers in the second sample group in which CFA analysis was conducted, 59.9% were female ( $n = 151$ ) and 40.1% were male ( $n = 101$ ). Additionally, 16.3% of the teachers had been in the teaching profession for 10 years or less ( $n = 41$ ), 43.7% had 11-20 years of service ( $n = 110$ ), and 36.1% had taught for 21 years or more ( $n = 91$ ).

Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) value and Barlett Sphericity Test results were applied in order to determine the obtained data's suitability for factor analysis. In the initial analysis, the KMO value was .95 and the Barlett Test of Sphericity [ $\chi^2 = 9379.89$ ,  $p < .01$ ] was found to be significant; showing the data to be suitable for factor analysis. EFA was then performed using the principal component analysis technique, which revealed the scale items to be gathered under eight factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1. These eight factors explained 69.78% of the total variance. However, considering the relevant studies in the literature, the scree plot graph in the analysis process, and the explanatory nature of the factors, it was decided to form the scale with two factors, "Implicit Job Insecurity" and "Explicit Job Insecurity" in line with the findings obtained from the participant teachers' interviews. While *Implicit Job Insecurity* expresses the anxiety and powerlessness perceived by teachers regarding important features of their job seemingly under threat or losing it, *Explicit Job Insecurity* refers to anxiety teachers may experience regarding any potential job loss.

In order for the provisional items to remain in the scale, the criteria were based on factor loads greater than .40 (Şencan, 2005) and a difference of at least .10 between the factor loads of items with high loads across more than one factor (Büyüköztürk, 2014). When the factor loadings of the items in the scale were examined, a total of 10 items were removed because of a high load across more than one factor and the difference between the two load values being less than .10. Apart from items having cross-factor loadings,



considering the explainability feature, 10 items were also excluded from the scale as they were found to be incompatible with other items in the same factor. No items were removed from the scale due to factor loading values of less .40. The removal of scale items started with those having cross-factor loadings, with items removed one at a time and reanalyzed after each process (Çokluk et al., 2012).

After removing a total of 20 items, EFA was reapplied to the newly revised 21-item scale using the Varimax vertical rotation technique. For the 21-item scale, the KMO value was found to be .92 and the Barlett Test of Sphericity [ $\chi^2 = 3757.38$ ,  $p < .01$ ] was significant. The revised scale consists of 10 items within the *Implicit Job Insecurity* factor, with factor loadings, rotated using the Varimax vertical rotation method, shown to vary from .42 to .78. The variance explained by this first factor was calculated as 23.40%. The second factor of the scale, *Explicit Job Insecurity*, consists of 11 items with factor loadings ranging from .46 to .79. The variance explained by this second factor was calculated as 29.45%. When the two factors of the scale were examined together, the rate of variance explained was shown to be 52.85%. As stated by Hair et al. (2010), an explained variance close to 60% is considered sufficient for multifactorial scales in social science research.

CFA was then performed using data obtained from a different sample group using the revised 21-item, two-factor scale that was formed as a result of EFA. Prior to this application, the items in the scale were renumbered. The modification suggestions obtained from CFA were then examined. In this context, error variances of two items (JI5 and JI6) in the Implicit Job Insecurity factor and two items (JI15 and JI16) in the Explicit Job Insecurity factor were correlated due to measuring similar characteristics. Corrections were first applied to JI15 and JI16 [ $\chi^2 = 75.20$ ,  $p < .00$ ], and secondly to JI5 and JI6 [ $\chi^2 = 41.68$ ,  $p < .00$ ]. It was subsequently seen that both corrections separately made a significant contribution to the fit of the model. The findings regarding the goodness of fit values of the model as a result of repeated CFA after modification were:  $\chi^2 / df = 2.62$  (486.75 / 186), CFI = .90, GFI = .85, RMR = .07, SRMR = .05, RMSEA = .08, and IFI = .90. The obtained goodness of fit values indicate that the measurement model of the Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale is acceptable (Hair et al., 2010; Kahn, 2006; Lei & Wu, 2007; Weston & Gore, 2006). As a result of the CFA, the standardized factor loadings of the items were found to range between .47 and .85, and the  $t$ -values of the items ranged between 6.63 and 13.86. The  $t$ -values of all the items were significant at the .01 level.

For the reliability of the Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale, item total correlations, item mean score differences in the lower and upper 27% groups, and Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients were all examined. The item-total correlations of the items were shown to range from .44 to .68 in the Implicit Job Insecurity factor, and from .47 to .78 in the Explicit Job Insecurity factor. Within the scope of the reliability analysis of the developed scale, the differences between the item mean scores of the lower and upper 27% groups formed from the total scores of the test were analyzed. In the analysis, the differences between the lower and upper 27% groups of all items were found to be significant at the  $p < .001$  level. In addition, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients ( $\alpha$ ) were calculated for the reliability of the scale. This coefficient was calculated as .87 for the Implicit Job Insecurity factor, .92 for the Explicit Job Insecurity factor, and .93 for the whole scale. Calculated internal consistency coefficients showed that the reliability of the scale is considered as high. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients were recalculated

for the main application of the study and found to be .86 for the Implicit Job Insecurity factor, .93 for the Explicit Job Insecurity factor, and .93 for the whole scale.

The relationships between the scale's two factors were examined using Pearson ( $r$ ) correlation coefficients. In the analysis, it was seen that a moderate and positive ( $r = .68$ ) relationship exists between Implicit Job Insecurity and Explicit Job Insecurity. A total score can be obtained from the Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale, and it contains no reverse-scored items. Increased scores obtained from either factor or from the whole scale indicates increased perception of job insecurity pertinent to that factor and to the overall job insecurity. For example, while a high score obtained from the Implicit Job Insecurity factor is interpreted as increased anxiety and powerlessness of teachers regarding seeing important features of their job under threat or losing them, a high score obtained from the Explicit Job Insecurity factor is interpreted as increased anxiety about teachers losing their jobs.

#### *2.4. Data Collection Process*

The data of the study were obtained through interviews held during the first stage of the research. Institutional permission to conduct these interviews were received from the Muğla and Mardin Provincial Directorates of National Education. The research interviews were conducted between January and February of 2020 with participant teachers from the study group. The purpose of the study was first explained to the prospective interviewees in advance, and an appointment made if they agreed to be subsequently interviewed. Prior to an interview starting, brief information was given to the teachers about the purpose and content of the research, and permission was requested from the interviewees to audio-record the interview. Overall, only one teacher from Muğla province (permanent employment contract) declined to have their interview audio-recorded. Instead, for this particular interview, written notes were taken by the researcher, and immediately following the interview, the notes were reviewed with the interviewee and any missing information added or corrected. For all 29 other interviews, audio recordings were captured using a voice recorder.

In 15 of the interviews, an assistant also accompanied the researcher in order to make observations and take notes where necessary. This assistant, who contributed as a facilitator in the interviews, provided views in some cases and enabled the participants to express themselves more freely. At the end of the interviews, the observations related to the interview were evaluated with the assistant and recorded by the researcher. The other 15 interviews were conducted solely by the first researcher. Following these interviews, the researcher made notes based on their own observations. Care was taken to maintain a conversational atmosphere throughout the interview process. According to the flow of the conversation, changes were made to the order of the interview questions where it was deemed appropriate. The shortest interview length was 28 minutes, whilst the longest lasted 91 minutes, and with an average of 52 minutes. Following completion of the interviews, the obtained data were analyzed. Next, the "Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale," which was developed within the scope of the current study, was employed as the second data collection tool. Institutional permission was received from Muğla Provincial Directorate of National Education to collect data through application of the scale to teachers working in public schools within the Muğla province during the 2020-2021 academic year.

### 2.5. Data Analysis

Within the scope of the research, audio recordings of 29 teachers along with written notes taken from one interview were analyzed and transcribed into textual format to produce a combined total of 249 pages of interview data. The obtained data were then analyzed according to thematic analysis. To assess the accuracy of the audio recordings to their respective transcripts, four randomly selected interviews were checked separately by a teacher and an instructor, and this revealed no defects in the transcription of the audio recordings.

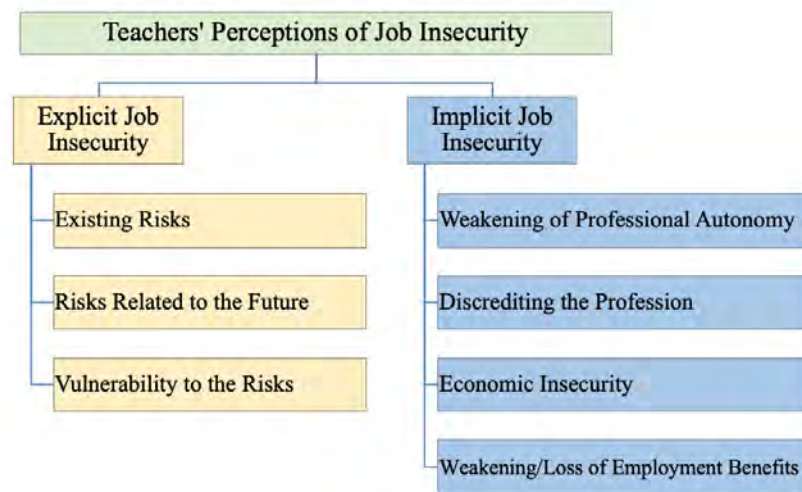
The views obtained from the participants were examined in terms of repetitive patterns from which themes were formed. Similar topics that had been mentioned by different interviewees were brought together under common themes. In the process of creating the themes, the Nvivo program was utilized. The suitability of the themes and the views within each theme were discussed in meetings held by the researchers and an expert lecturer in both the subject matter and of qualitative research. During these meetings, differences of opinion were discussed until a consensus could be reached. The data obtained from the interviews were then reported in detail under the relevant themes. In this context, direct quotations were included and explanations offered regarding each situation as applicable. When reporting direct quotations, square brackets were used where necessary to contribute to the intelligibility of the expressions, with additional wording added by the researchers that were not included in the interview records. The findings obtained from the interviews were then compared and evaluated together with the data obtained from the Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale.

Descriptive statistics, *t*-test and one-way ANOVA were used in the analysis of the data obtained from Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale. Sources of significant differences in the ANOVA tests were determined using the Sidak test. Cluster analysis was performed in order to determine the levels of the teachers' job insecurity perceptions as either low, moderate, or high. Prior to the analysis, the *z*-values were also examined for the extreme data. The skewness and kurtosis coefficients were examined for the normality of the distribution and it was seen that these coefficients were between -1 and +1 (skewness -.01 to .34; kurtosis -.17 to .18) in the sub-dimensions of the scale and in the total score of the whole scale. As such, the distribution of the data was assumed to be normal.

## 3. FINDINGS

### 3.1. Findings on Teachers' Perceptions of Job Insecurity

The teachers' perceptions concerning their job insecurity were examined under two themes as explicit job insecurity and implicit job insecurity in line with the findings obtained from the participant teachers' interviews. The themes and sub-themes obtained under this research question are presented visually in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Themes Regarding Teachers' Perceptions of Job Insecurity

Explicit job insecurity stems from the risks that teachers perceive to the continuity of their job. In line with the findings obtained from the research, the risks that led to the perception of explicit job insecurity in the teachers were discussed under three sub-headings: (1) Existing risks; (2) Risks related to the future; and, (3) Vulnerability to the risks. Existing risks include teachers' subjective risk perceptions of job insecurity (slander, use of social media, participation in union actions, false complaints lodged by parents or students) and structural risks (large numbers of unappointed teachers, and flexible employment arrangements). Opinions of some of the interviewees regarding existing risks are as follows:

I don't explain my point of view even on something very simple. For example, I do not use social media in any way, I deleted all of them. All my accounts... Actually, *at least to stay in our profession*. That is to say, we can't even express our opinion comfortably. We have fallen into such a situation now. [G5, Mardin, Permanent, Female, 10 years]

There is always a saying like this. 'There are so many people waiting to be appointed, we do not need you. If you cannot, you will have to leave...' This also puts pressure on people within the profession. [G12, Mardin, Fixed-term, Female, 2 years]

As can be seen, the teachers were worried about losing their jobs due to the risks they perceived, regardless of their employment type. In addition, this concern makes teachers more vulnerable to precarization. In general, even those teachers working under permanent contracts stated there being too many risks, and that they no longer saw their jobs as being secure. In addition, the teachers' employment type was shown to constitute an important risk factor. The interview data showed that teachers with fixed-term and temporary contracts were more worried about losing their jobs due to flexibility of their contractual arrangements. All of the teachers interviewed that had fixed-term contracts reportedly felt insecure in their jobs as it was considered that their contracts could easily be terminated for any reason:

Always, 'I'll terminate your job, I'll terminate your job...' Some principals say this openly, not even in secret... When we do something, the school principal would send us a photo of the contract via WhatsApp, having underlined the 'can be revoked one-

sidedly' clause in the contract with a highlighter pen. [G2, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 2.5 years]

None of the teachers interviewed with temporary employment contracts reportedly felt secure, and each stated that they felt that they could be dismissed at any time:

Not only our tomorrow, but also even an hour from now is not clear... We have no guarantee. There is anxiety felt that we could have to leave at any time. [G27, Muğla, Temporary, Female, 6 years]

I don't think there is any kind of job security anyway. It is not clear that I will continue even in the second semester... You could be suddenly dismissed... Actually, there is considerable uncertainty here. It is like slavery. [G11, Mardin, Temporary, Female, 1 year]

In summary, the existing risks perceived by the interviewed teachers mentioned uncertainty, the perception of explicit job insecurity, and precarization. In addition to existing risks, perceived risks related to the future were also important to the teachers' perceptions of job insecurity. In their interviews, the teachers stated that the following situations that may occur in the future, and which may create a perception of explicit job insecurity: (a) Law No. 657 may be changed; (b) Fixed-term contracts may become commonplace; (c) Public schools may become privatized; and, (d) Performance evaluation similar to that seen in enterprises may be implemented. Teachers working under different types of employment contract mentioned risks for the future as follows:

The repeal of [Law] 657 is frequently brought to the agenda... Now, suppose you join a company; they could fire you whenever they want, and teaching too will face the same situation if [Law] 657 is repealed. [G20, Muğla, Permanent, Male, 32 years]

Maybe all teachers will have fixed-term contracts in the future. Well, it [compulsory duty] may be 10 years, not 4 years, then it will be 20 years. In other words, this system will be completely adopted eventually. [G15, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 2 years]

What if you received a very low score from this [performance] evaluation? What's the purpose? Some form of sanction will be applied; else, why are they undertaking such an evaluation? They will evaluate you in a way, but will guide you accordingly. They will say, 'You are either with us, or you are not.' [G24, Muğla, Permanent, Male, 20 years]

As can be understood from the expressions of the interviewed participants, the risks they foresee for the future in their profession could lead teachers to feel more insecure about their employment. In addition to the existing and future risks, another significant factor that increases explicit job insecurity is with regard to vulnerability to the risks. Vulnerability occurs when teachers feel that they will not be adequately protected if faced with job insecurity for some unfair reason. Some of the interviewed teachers with permanent, fixed-term, and temporary employment contracts mentioned being vulnerable to certain risks:

It doesn't even matter whether or not a certain law exists, various excuses can be made up. So, [Law] 657 is already in force, but there is a method by which it can be changed. That method is found out eventually. Therefore, even that is no guarantee. [G28, Muğla, Permanent, Female, 27 years]



They could terminate my contract for any reason. Well, could I claim that this is against my rights? I can't really, as even if the legal system considers me right, I am not sure it would make much difference. [G15, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 2 years]

While there is no decent law protecting the rights of teachers with fixed-term contracts, there is none to protect us [employed under temporary contracts]. I don't think anyone really thinks about our rights. At least we are not even told when we will be dismissed. [G11, Mardin, Temporary, Female, 1 year]

In addition to the data obtained from the interviews, data were also collected from the teachers through the "Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale," which was developed within the scope of this research. From the analysis, it was revealed that the participant teachers' perceptions of explicit job insecurity were at a moderate level ( $\bar{X} = 2.78$ ,  $S = .85$ ). However, considering that explicit job insecurity poses a clear risk to the continuity of the job and all of the teachers who answered the scale were employed under permanent contracts, it would be more accurate to interpret the finding that the level of perceived job insecurity presented a high level of risk perception. In addition, when this finding was evaluated together with the data obtained from the participant interviews, how high the risk perceptions of the teachers regarding explicit job insecurity was revealed. In the study, the distribution of teachers with low, moderate, or high explicit job insecurity perception was examined by way of cluster analysis. According to the results of that analysis, 133 (31%) of the 432 teachers who took part in the study had a low level, 202 (47%) had a moderate level, and 97 (22%) had a high level of explicit job insecurity perception. As a result of the cluster analysis, finding that 69% of teachers on a permanent employment contract showing a moderate or high level of explicit job insecurity reveals how high the perception of risk is.

The teachers' perceptions of explicit job insecurity did not reveal any significant difference based on the variables of gender [ $t_{(430)} = 1.58$ ;  $p > .05$ ], marital status [ $t_{(430)} = 1.49$ ;  $p > .05$ ], or union membership [ $t_{(430)} = .65$ ;  $p > .05$ ]. However, the teachers' perceptions of explicit job insecurity did present a significant difference according to the seniority variable [ $F_{(2-429)} = 3.56$ ;  $p < .05$ ]. As a result of the Sidak test, it was revealed that the difference was between teachers with 11-20 years of service and those with 21 years or more. The perceptions of explicit job insecurity of teachers with a seniority of 21 years or more service ( $\bar{X} = 2.92$ ,  $S = .85$ ) were higher than those with 11-20 years ( $\bar{X} = 2.69$ ,  $S = .83$ ). In particular, the fact that the teachers with longer service had higher perceptions of explicit job insecurity reveals how serious the situation is.

The second theme that emerged on the teachers' perceptions regarding job insecurity was implicit job insecurity. This refers to the anxiety and powerlessness felt by teachers about the potential loss of important features of their job (e.g., prestige, economic conditions, employment benefits, autonomy, etc.) or seeing them placed under threat. As a result of the interview findings, the teachers' perceptions regarding implicit job insecurity were examined under four main headings: (1) Weakening of professional autonomy; (2) Discrediting the profession; (3) Economic insecurity; and, (4) Weakening/loss of employment benefits. The following are example views of the participant teachers regarding the weakening of their professional autonomy:

When I take any action that they [school principals] do not approve of, they definitely put pressure on us... So you have to do whatever they say, else they can

apply many penalties on you, so teachers can no longer make their own decisions. [G24, Muğla, Permanent, Male, 20 years]

Previously, people worked willingly. I would say they were more idealistic. What enabled this was probably that we saw ourselves as the owner of the job. Gradually, it seems as if our profession has started to become far more mechanized. [G27, Muğla, Permanent, Female, 27 years]

We cannot speak up as we are working under fixed-term contracts, and we do many tasks other than just educate such as cleaning, operating the classroom heater, maintenance of the water tank, etc. [G12, Mardin, Fixed-term, Female, 2 years]

As can be seen, the teachers participating in the research stated having lost their right to speak on professional practices, and that they are also required to perform duties beyond educating in the classroom. This suggests that teachers have largely lost their professional autonomy, causing them to feel powerless and, as a result, experience implicit job insecurity and precarization. Another factor that may increase teachers' perceptions of implicit job insecurity and precarization is the discrediting of their profession. All of the participants in the current study were of the opinion that the teaching profession in Turkey has lost much of its former value and prestige:

I have been a teacher now for 22 years. When I think back to previous years, the perspective towards teachers in society was very different; teaching used to be a respected profession. Teachers used to be considered as presenting an example to their students, like an idol; but now teaching has become a very simplistic and ordinary profession. [G18, Muğla, Permanent, Male, 22 years]

In this school, there are teachers employed under permanent, fixed-term, or temporary contracts. Parents often ask, are they a permanent, fixed-term, or temporary contracted teacher? They will object if they are temporary, maybe consider it if they work under a fixed-term contract, but mostly say they must be permanent teachers. So, even they are grading your qualification to teach. This has become a serious problem, as even other teachers ask as it is how they evaluate you. [G7, Mardin, Permanent, Female, 12 years]

As the participants stated, transformations in the image of teachers and the different employment arrangements in place can lead to a discreditation of the teaching profession. This situation weakens the role performed by teachers and can trigger feelings of implicit job insecurity. Another reason for implicit job insecurity is the economic insecurity experienced by the teachers. The participants in the study emphasized that their current salaries were insufficient and that they had experienced economic difficulties. The participants described their economic concerns as follows:

Economic matters put a lot of pressure on teachers. I have worked in different places... What do they normally talk about in the teachers' room? Lessons are spoken of, as are teaching plans, but in most places, teachers now talk about their financial difficulties. [G1, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 1 year]

They [teachers with temporary contracts] are the ones who don't even get the minimum wage... Imagine, in a school there is a teacher with a fixed-term contract in the class next to you. When compared, maybe you achieved a higher score than them in the KPSS exam [for entry to the Turkish civil service]. However, in the year

they took their KPSS exam, more teachers were recruited and they were luckily appointed as a teacher. Even though you received more points, and maybe you tried harder, you get paid below the minimum wage to teach in the classroom next door to them under a temporary contract... This is a great injustice. [G14, Mardin, Temporary, Male, 2 years]

When the expressions of the participants are examined, the teachers with permanent and fixed-term contracts drew attention to the decreasing purchasing power of their income, while teachers with temporary contracts pointed out that their salaries were below that of the national minimum wage. This situation causes teachers to experience economic worries, to feel powerless, and therefore it increases their perceptions of implicit job insecurity.

A final cause of implicit job insecurity is *the weakening or loss of teachers' employment benefits*. It can be seen that the loss of teachers' employment benefits such as assignment to a teaching position, leave entitlement, relocation, and working conditions are affective in terms of implicit job insecurity. Regarding teachers' employment benefits, the following are some of the participants' views:

You don't have the right to relocate [to another area]. When we were appointed, it was said that couples working under fixed-term contracts could be appointed together. Then, they said: 'You will have to choose either your spouse or your job!' Later they did... For example, there is a possibility of couples with fixed-term contracts [both] to be assigned together, or if one of them is on a permanent contract, they can opt to be assigned to where their spouse works on a fixed-term contract. But, what about employees working in private institutions? [G3, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 2.5 years]

Normally, while the permanent teacher is paid 13 Turkish liras for one teaching hour of an additional course, I am paid 11 liras, which is, of course, unfair. We are both in the same field, we teach the same lessons, and we were appointed based on the same KPSS exam [for entry to the Turkish civil service]. [G25, Muğla, Fixed-term, Male, 1 year]

As a result, the participants stated having witnessed significant losses in the employment benefits of teachers over the years; especially with the implementation of the fixed-term employment contracts as from 2016. Newly appointed teachers are no longer able to ask to be relocated [to another area] for a period of 4 years, cannot take advantage of compassionate leave (except for death, birth, and marriage), and receive lower wages for any additional courses that they teach. These losses in teachers' employment benefits made the participants feel uneasy, and caused them to feel powerless within the profession. In other words, the weakening or loss of employment benefits increases teachers' perceptions of implicit job insecurity and brings about precarization.

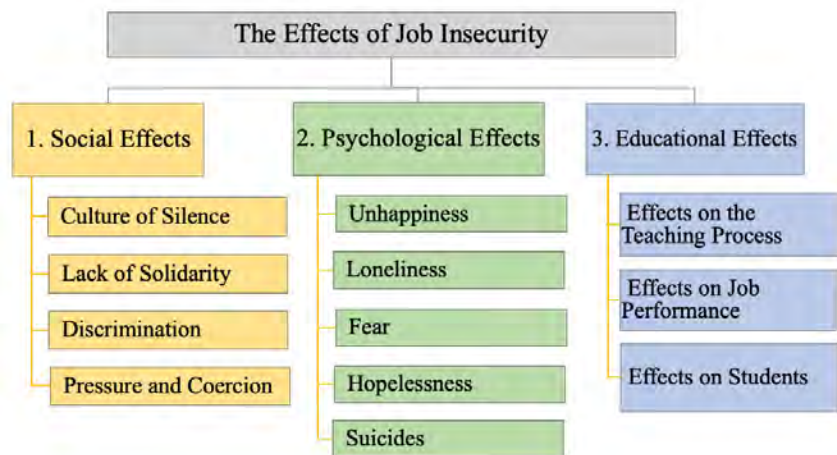
Teachers' perceptions of implicit job insecurity were examined according to teachers employed within the province of Muğla, and based on data collected using the Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale, in addition to the data obtained from interviews. From analysis of the collected data, it was revealed that the participant teachers' perceptions of implicit job insecurity were at a moderate level ( $\bar{X} = 3.18$ ,  $S = .77$ ). This finding, when evaluated together with the data obtained from the interviews, revealed that the participant teachers in the current study had a significant perception of implicit job insecurity. In addition, it was

concluded that the teachers' implicit job insecurity perceptions ( $\bar{X} = 3.18$ ,  $S = .77$ ) were slightly higher than their explicit job insecurity perceptions ( $\bar{X} = 2.78$ ,  $S = .85$ ). In the study, the distribution of teachers with a low, moderate, and high level of implicit job insecurity perception was analyzed using the cluster analysis technique. According to the analysis results, 133 (31%) of the 432 teachers included in the study had a low level of implicit job insecurity perception, 183 (42%) had a moderate level, and 116 (27%) had a high level. The cluster analysis showed at what level this perception was, with 69% of the teachers having a moderate or high level of implicit job insecurity perception, and that all of these teachers were employed under permanent contract. The teachers' perceptions of implicit job insecurity did not show a significant difference according to the variables of gender [ $t_{(430)} = .26$ ;  $p > .05$ ], union membership [ $t_{(430)} = 1.80$ ;  $p > .05$ ], or seniority [ $F_{(2-429)} = 1.51$ ;  $p > .05$ ]. However, the teachers' perceptions of implicit job insecurity did show a significant difference according to the marital status variable [ $t_{(430)} = 2.71$ ;  $p < .05$ ], with the perceptions of implicit job insecurity of single teachers' ( $\bar{X} = 3.47$ ,  $S = .75$ ) shown to be higher than that of married teachers ( $\bar{X} = 3.15$ ,  $S = .77$ ).

When the findings regarding the total score of the Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale were examined, it was seen that the general job insecurity perceptions of teachers were at a moderate level ( $\bar{X} = 2.97$ ,  $S = .74$ ). In the cluster analysis, teachers were examined under 3 clusters in terms of their general job insecurity perceptions as low, moderate, and high. According to the results of the analysis, 119 (27%) out of the 432 teachers in the study had a low level, 219 (51%) had a moderate level, and 94 (22%) had a high level of general job insecurity perception. As a result of the cluster analysis, the fact that 73% of permanent teachers were revealed to have a moderate or high perception of general job insecurity shows how high this perception actually is. Whilst the teachers' perceptions of general job insecurity did not show any significant difference according to the variables of gender [ $t_{(430)} = .82$ ;  $p > .05$ ], union membership [ $t_{(430)} = 1.28$ ;  $p > .05$ ], or seniority [ $F_{(2-429)} = 2.74$ ;  $p > .05$ ]; there was a significant difference revealed for the variable of marital status [ $t_{(430)} = 2.24$ ;  $p < .05$ ]. Single teachers' perceptions of general job insecurity ( $\bar{X} = 3.20$ ,  $S = .79$ ) were higher than married teachers ( $\bar{X} = 2.95$ ,  $S = .73$ ).

### *3.2. Findings on the Effects of Job Insecurity*

As a result of the findings obtained from the participant teachers' interviews, the effects of job insecurity are presented under three themes: (1) Social effects; (2) Psychological effects; and, (3) Educational effects. The themes obtained under this research question are presented visually in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Themes Regarding the Effects of Job Insecurity

It was seen that job insecurity had *social effects* on teachers such as a culture of silence, lack of solidarity, discrimination, pressure, and coercion. Some of the study's participants expressed their views on this issue as follows:

There is a passive and unorganized group of teachers, and then there is a set of teachers who are more obedient and therefore less questioning yet somewhat alienated from their own power. [G23, Muğla, Permanent, Male, 20 years]

The behavior of school administrators towards teachers with a permanent contract is not the same as their behavior towards those with fixed-term contracts. They act as if they [teachers with fixed-term contracts] are from another profession rather being teachers. [G17, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 2.5 years]

The fact that they offer a discount on tea and the fee for school bus service makes those of us with temporary contracts feel lower class. Inevitably. We feel very bad that the difference is highlighted. [G13, Mardin, Temporary, Male, 1 year]

There are many [teachers] with fixed-term contracts in our school and they are forced to do administrative work... If they don't, their score decreases [G15, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 2 years]

As can be understood from the participants' opinions, job insecurity can cause a culture of silence to settle, prevent solidarity among colleagues, negatively affect the attitudes and behaviors of administrators towards teachers, put teachers against each other, and expose teachers to unwarranted pressure. In addition, job insecurity has significant *psychological effects* on teachers. Although explicit job insecurity appears to have a deeper psychological effect, implicit job insecurity also affects teachers in psychological terms. It has been determined that job insecurity causes psychological effects such as unhappiness, loneliness, fear, hopelessness, and suicide. Some of the participants' views on the psychological effects of job insecurity are as follows:

Teaching under a fixed-term contract affects your psychology.... You actually look like a schizophrenic. If you think about job security when you are very good [as a teacher], you can become very demoralized. [G16, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 2.5 years]



People even pay attention to the messages they post [on social media]. They can become really paranoid. [G10, Mardin, Fixed-term, Female, 1 year]

As seen, job insecurity can push teachers to experience unhappiness, and can affect teachers' relationships within their social environment, make them feel isolated as individuals, and cause a culture of fear to settle. In addition, some participants emphasized that job insecurity can even lead to suicide; with a number of participants mentioning the suicide of Saadet, a teacher who committed suicide in 2019. Prior to the event, she had posted on social media that she was "*...sick and tired of hearing that 'your job is hanging by a thread' every day. I couldn't do it any longer because of the mobbing*" (Kurt, 2019).

Another important effect of teachers' job insecurity is on the quality of education that they deliver. When the interview transcripts were examined, it was seen that the teachers' perceptions about job insecurity affected not only themselves and their social environment, but also the quality of their teaching. Explicit and implicit job insecurity can cause educational effects in three different ways: (a) Effects on the teaching process; (b) Effects on job performance; and, (c) Effects on students. The opinions of some of the participants regarding these effects are as follows:

We don't take risks. Everything that we do is very superficial. We learn to 'do like' and 'we do like'...We need to think and question more, and we need to give examples from daily life, but we can't do any of these right now as students or a parent can make a complaint about us all too easily. That's why we try not to take any risks [when teaching]. [G23, Muğla, Permanent, Male, 20 years]

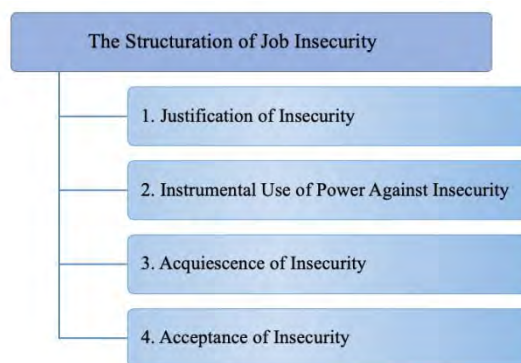
In order for me to do my job well, I need to feel secure as a teacher.... But, as teachers with fixed-term contracts, we may not always be able to make a great contribution to our students due to constant thoughts about what will happen tomorrow. Increased use of fixed-term teaching contracts will eventually reflect negatively on the entire education system. [G17, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 2.5 years]

I am the sixth teacher to teach a single class at the school where I currently work. It's a deplorable situation. Those kids expect something from you. On the first day that I entered [the classroom], the children asked me, 'Sir, you won't leave us too, will you?' Think about it, a new teacher facing a question of whether they would stay around, and that's even before hearing a 'hello.' [G14, Mardin, Temporary, Male, 2 years]

As stated by the participant teachers, job insecurity can affect the teaching process, the performance of teachers, and also their students. Teachers' experiences of explicit job insecurity can affect the teaching process, preventing them from teaching their classes with any degree of comfort. The teachers employed under fixed-term or temporary contracts, who have a tendency more than permanent teachers to experience explicit and implicit job insecurity regarding the future of their jobs, can see their motivation and job performance reduce, which ultimately reflects negatively on the education that they are being employed to provide. In addition, it is seen that teaching under a temporary contract, which is an insecure type of employment, can directly affect the success and motivation of students by causing them to change jobs constantly.

### 3.3. Findings on the Structuration of Job Insecurity in Education

Teachers can develop defense mechanisms or take certain precautions in order to better cope with the multifaceted and profound effects of job insecurity they may face. These measures can be seen as strategies to overcome the effects of insecurity. However, in terms of the education system, such coping strategies result in the legitimation and reproduction of precarization. The structuration of insecurity can be defined as the reproduction and internalization of structural insecurity produced by the system through teachers' practices. From the findings obtained from the participant teachers' interviews, four themes related to the structuration of the perception of job insecurity in education were reached: (1) Justification of insecurity; (2) Instrumental use of power against insecurity; (3) Acquiescence of insecurity; and, (4) Acceptance of insecurity. The themes obtained under this research question are presented visually in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Themes Regarding the Structuration of Job Insecurity

*The justification of insecurity* can be defined as the rationalization of practices that can lead to explicit and implicit job insecurity. From the teachers' interviews in the current study, it was determined that they attempted to justify the practices that caused explicit or implicit job insecurity through rationalization:

The fixed-term contract can actually be a beautiful thing. After a year, you may understand that you have certain shortcomings. When there is a feeling of loss, you attempt to do your job more wholeheartedly. However, if there is no feeling of loss, or you constantly believe that there is no problem, you will likely perform with indifference after a while. [G1, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 1 year]

In fact, I support what has been done on the subject of teaching contracts. In the past, teachers stayed for 6 months, or at most for 1 year. They were somehow escaping immediately to work in the western provinces [of Turkey]. Students therefore had many different teachers before they even finished primary school; with their teachers changing every semester or every year. In this respect, 3 or 4 years of compulsory duty is not unreasonable. [G17, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 2.5 years]

In addition, some teachers see themselves as the cause of the problem, which shows that their feelings of insecurity are perhaps justified and that their powerlessness is therefore rationalized.

During the candidacy process, people were just appointed [as teachers]; but most of our friends had to wait a while and struggled to be appointed. They say, I started out in my job facing great difficulties, so I should do what they say. We don't know our

rights, or about the law. So, actually, it's partly our own fault as we don't know our own rights. [G3, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 2.5 years]

As can be seen, some of the teachers attempted to justify the practices that can result in explicit and implicit job insecurity. In this regard, some of the participant teachers stated that the presence of job-based anxiety could actually increase their professional performance, prevent negative behaviors, and that fixed-term and temporary contracts are necessary in order to keep teachers working in certain regions of the country, and to prevent students from constantly having new teachers appointed to their classroom. In addition, some of the participants rationalized this situation by stating that job insecurity and powerlessness can occur as a natural result of teachers not developing themselves sufficiently and not seeking to uphold their employment rights. In this context, the justification of insecurity brings about the structuration and reproduction of precarization.

Another reason attributed to the structuration of insecurity is *the instrumental use of power against insecurity*. Some of the teachers interviewed within the scope of the current research stated that they would attempt to resolve the problems of job security through bilateral relations, or by taking sides with certain union movements, or that they witnessed such situations. The opinions of some of the study's participants on this subject are as follows:

For example, I was afraid of everything last year. At the moment, an acquaintance of mine knows a senior executive quite closely, so I am feeling very comfortable right now. In some cases, I really think that the *game should be played according to the rules* though. [G12, Mardin, Fixed-term, Female, 2 years]

If you are in a workers union which is politically close to the government, you can feel safe; there is no problem. But if you are non-union member or joined a union not close to the government, you will definitely face significant difficulties because of your opinion. You may also feel pressure at school. [G17, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 2.5 years]

The opinions of some of the study's participants showed that power can be used instrumentally against job insecurity. The instrumental use of power can be seen as a way to avoid insecurity or problems in the workplace. However, the instrumental use of power can also increase ethical violations by leading teachers towards nepotism and certain groups may suffer as a result. Within this framework, the instrumental use of power against insecurity brings about the structuration of precarization.

Another reason for the structuration of job insecurity is *the acquiescence of insecurity*. Acquiescing insecurity describes teachers' loss of belief that they can overcome insecurity and change the practices that are causing their insecurity, and it can also indicate their adaptation to this situation. Therefore, acquiescence can also be said to express the state of a person's desperation. Opinions of some of the participants on this subject are as follows:

We would come [start out as a teacher] even if they said you will have to stay for 7 years. We have no other choice. [G9, Mardin, Fixed-term, Female, 2.5 years]

There are some teachers who cannot be appointed at all; there are others who are worse off than me. When I look at them, I feel grateful...We lack certain rights, but at least we were appointed to a job. [G9, Mardin, Fixed-term, Female, 2.5 years]

When you see so many unappointed teachers, you feel happy just to be accepted as a temporary teacher... Actually, it is not something to be happy about, but they force you to be happy. However, this also means that when so many teachers fail to be employed, they can give you half the money that a regular teacher receives, and you should be thankful for it... And in the end, you happily accept this situation. [G11, Mardin, Temporary, Female, 1 year]

The opinions of the participants show that teachers can acquiesce by thinking that they have no other choice, and in considering those teachers who face worse conditions than themselves. This can be seen as a kind of *defense mechanism* developed to reduce the effects of job insecurity. In other words, acquiescence can be helpful in helping to deal with insecurity. However, such behaviors bring about the internalization of insecurity and the structuration of precarization.

One final reason attributed to the structuration of job insecurity is *the acceptance of insecurity*. From the participant teachers' interviews, it was seen that they attempted to cope with this perception by accepting the explicit and implicit job insecurity over time. The fact that insecurity is seen as being somewhat normalized due to it having become widespread means that insecurity is now accepted by some teachers.

Later, people saw that new appointments with permanent contracts had stopped and that everyone was starting out with fixed-term contracts. So, they just got used to it. [G3, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 2.5 years]

This situation [having a temporary contract] has been inured now. For example, my friend who works as a temporary teacher says that he will not be appointed anyway. He found a school to work. He wants to continue this way. [G25, Muğla, Fixed-term, Male, 1 year]

It is understood that most of the teachers interviewed within the scope of the current research felt that they were ready to move to another job should they lose their current position. Making alternative professional plans is an indication that the precarious situation faced by some teachers is becoming more accepted.

If this job ends sometime, or if one day I am unfairly or otherwise dismissed from this position, then of course I always have other options. I am not helpless. [G17, Mardin, Fixed-term, Male, 2.5 years]

When the opinions of the participants are examined, it can be seen that some teachers accept the precarious form of their current employment and the decreased rights that entails. The fact that insecurity is seen as normalized due to it having become widespread, and that alternative professional plans are made to mitigate against the perception of job insecurity indicates that insecurity is now accepted. The acceptance of precarious practices indicates that this situation has been internalized and that insecurity is now structured. As a result, it is understood from the data obtained from the participant teachers' interviews that justification of insecurity, instrumental use of power against insecurity, acquiescence of insecurity, and acceptance of insecurity cause job insecurity to be structured.

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, the precarization of educational labor was discussed within the framework of teachers' perceptions of job insecurity. Within this framework, teachers' perceptions of job insecurity were examined first, after which their views on the effects of job insecurity were presented, and finally, structuration of job insecurity within the teaching and education context was explained. The first sub-purpose of the study was to determine teachers' perceptions and levels of job insecurity. As a result of the findings obtained from interviews held with participant teachers, their perceptions with regards to job insecurity were examined under two sub-headings; as *explicit job insecurity* and *implicit job insecurity*. The results obtained from both the interviews and a measurement scale developed within the scope of the current study showed that teachers have considerable levels of explicit and implicit job insecurity perception.

From the participant interviews, it was concluded that "existing risks," "risks related to the future," and "vulnerability to the risks" are determinative in the perceptions of teachers' explicit job insecurity, which is considered as the anxiety associated with the potential to lose one's job. Existing risks consist of teachers' subjective risk perceptions of job insecurity and structural risks. Subjective risk perceptions consist of situations such as being slandered, using social media, participating in union action, and false complaints lodged by parents or students. The risks here stem from the concerns that teachers have over easily been subjected to some form of employment-related injustice. Structural risks include the large number of unappointed teachers and flexible employment contract types (e.g., fixed-term and temporary contracts). When the results obtained from the interviews regarding existing risks were analyzed in terms of employment contract type, it may be said that teachers of all employment types have explicit job insecurity perceptions due to the risks they face on a daily basis. For example, one teacher employed on a permanent contract stated that "*being a permanent teacher is not an assurance either,*" which may be considered as an example of explicit job insecurity. However, it may also be said that teachers with fixed-term or temporary employment contracts experience explicit job insecurity much more distinctly due to the structural risks to which they are exposed, in addition to their subjective risk perceptions.

The first of the structural risks is the flexibilization of employment through the systemic training of a reserve workforce, namely surplus teachers. Data from the Turkish national Measuring, Selection, and Placement Center, which is responsible for large-scale examinations such as the national university entrance exam, shows that as of 2020, there were a total of 471,506 qualified teachers waiting to be appointed to teaching positions throughout Turkey (Ölçme, Seçme, & Yerleştirme Merkezi [Measuring, Selection, & Placement Center], 2020). However, only 21,407 teachers were actually appointed in 2021. As stated in the TEDMEM 2021 Education Evaluation Report, the number of teachers appointed in 2021 was at the lowest level of the past 16 years (TEDMEM, 2022). When the number of teachers appointed annually is considered together with the number of qualified teachers waiting for appointment and teacher candidates studying in faculties of education, it is predicted that the number of teachers waiting for appointment will continue to increase. In this regard, Standing (2019) expressed that many young people have graduated from university with a diploma and debts to repay. In addition, Standing drew attention to the growth of the precariat as a result of the flexibilization of labor, and stated that unemployment is a part of the precariat's life. Numerous other studies have been published



with regards to Turkey's teachers who wait to be appointed (Çinkır & Kurum, 2017; Günerigök & Oğur, 2018; Kiraz, 2014). Such high numbers of teachers awaiting appointment may lead to precarious conditions being accepted much more easily as teachers may think that their place could very easily be filled if they were to leave. As Bourdieu (2006) stated, the existence of a large reserve workforce gives employees a sense of privilege, but one that also includes vulnerability and threat.

The second structural risk relates to fixed-term and temporary employment contracts, which are among the flexible means used to employ teachers in Turkey. It has been observed that the number of teachers employed in Turkey under fixed-term or temporary contracts has increased in recent years. According to the National Education Statistics (Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı [Turkish Ministry of National Education], 2020), there were 101,730 teachers working under fixed-term contracts throughout Turkey during the 2019-2020 academic year. Since 2016, this number has increased annually with all newly employed teachers having been appointed on a fixed-term contractual basis. Also, the number of temporary teachers employed in Turkey during the same period was 80,583 (Türk Eğitim Sen, 2020). In this context, 9.9% of teachers working in public state schools are employed on fixed-term contracts and 7.9% have temporary contracts. Increases in the numbers of teachers with fixed-term or temporary contracts has shown that a flexible employment model has become central to the Turkish education system. It is also associated with the flexibilization of teacher employment on a worldwide scale too. The flexible employment model, which is widely preferred in the United States with applications similar to charter schools, have also become widespread in Anglo-Saxon countries, especially in England and Australia, with the neoliberal policies of the 1980s and 1990s that have supported the appointment of new teachers under short-term contracts (Campbell, 2010; Conley, 2002). In Turkey, this type of policy began to become widespread in other areas of the public sector in the 1980s, and then in the field of education from the 2000s. In this context, teachers are being systematically exposed to increased levels of derivative fear (Bauman, 2006) and precarization. In the current study's participant interviews, the teachers with fixed-term or temporary contracts often stated that *their jobs were hanging by a thread* (as in were perceived as being subject to imminent change or termination).

When the interview data obtained within the scope of the current research were examined, the risks that teachers perceive regarding their future in terms of explicit job insecurity are as follows: Law No. 657 could be changed, fixed-term contracts may become more widespread, public schools may become privatized, a performance evaluation system similar to those used within business enterprises may be implemented. These perceived risks related to the future can increase the uncertainty experienced by teachers and cause them to experience explicit job insecurity. Standing (2019) drew attention to flexible working relations having become a necessity in the global labor process. Standing defined the precariousness of jobs as *numerical flexibility*, and stated that it is considered easier to control temporary workers through fear by leaving them vulnerable. Vulnerability to risks forms another determinant of explicit job insecurity, with teachers considering that they are left inadequately protected if faced with job insecurity for whatever reason. Vulnerability to risks is an important component of job insecurity, and which increases employees' perceptions of insecurity. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) stated that the lack of protection mechanisms such as employment contracts, uncertain expectations, and an

authoritarian structure, as well as going beyond the standard functioning can result in vulnerability.

In addition to the interviews that were conducted, teachers' perceptions of explicit job insecurity were also examined from data obtained through application of the Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale, which was developed within the scope of the current research. From the findings, it was concluded that the teachers included in the study have a moderate level of explicit job insecurity perception. However, considering that all of the teachers who responded to the scale were employed under permanent contracts, it would be more accurate to interpret that their perception as being a high level of job insecurity, with 69% of the teachers having a moderate or high level of explicit job insecurity perception. Similarly, in a study conducted by Eğitim Sen (2018) with 2,424 teachers, it was concluded that 70% were afraid of losing their jobs. The results obtained from the scale applied in the current study also support the results obtained from the participant interviews, in which some permanent teachers mentioned that they also experienced job insecurity to a significant extent. It is thought-provoking that the participant teachers exhibited such high levels of explicit job insecurity perception. Teachers with explicit job insecurity can later exhibit precarization behaviors such as acquiescence and silence, and which may cause structuration of job insecurity.

The second dimension of teachers' perceptions regarding job insecurity is *implicit job insecurity*. The results obtained from both the participant interviews and application of the Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale have shown that the teachers in the current study experienced a significant amount of implicit job insecurity. In light of the current study's data pertaining to the teachers' interviews, it was concluded that the weakening of professional autonomy, discrediting of the profession, economic insecurity, and the weakening or loss of employment benefits can result in implicit job insecurity in teachers.

Decreases seen in teachers' rights to speak up on professional practices and their being assigned non-education duties may *weaken their professional autonomy as teachers*. Currently, teachers in Turkey have very little autonomy over school resources, the curriculum they teach, or student assessment policies (OECD, 2016). Due to the highly centralized structure of the Turkish education system, teachers' autonomy is largely limited by law as well as national regulations. Weakening professional autonomy is closely related to transformations seen in the teaching profession, with fundamental changes having taken place over time with regards to the roles of teachers who were previously accepted as intellectuals trusted with having the knowledge and know how to teach, and who were closely interested in the current social problems. This transformation, known as *new professionalism*, has required an increase in managerial control over teachers, a decrease in teachers' authority over their jobs, and less reference to their expertise and professional knowledge (Buyruk & Akbaş, 2021; Robertson, 1996).

In addition, *economic insecurity* is also effective in teachers' perceptions of implicit job insecurity. As of January 1, 2021, the salary of a teacher in Turkey with a fixed-term contract who has just started working and is in the 9<sup>th</sup> degree 1<sup>st</sup> level is 4,607 TL. According to research conducted by Türk-İş in February 2021, the hunger threshold for a family of four is 2,719 TL, whilst the poverty line is 8,856 TL. As can be seen, teachers' salaries are almost half that of the poverty line to support a family of four. According to research by Eğitim Sen (2018), 57% of teachers in Turkey stated that their salaries did not reflect their work at all; and 70% stated that they would leave the profession if they received a better job offer.

International studies have also drawn attention to the low level of salaries paid to teachers in Turkey (OECD, 2020a). The decrease in purchasing power may cause teachers to feel insecure and thereby more obliged to accept the pressures placed upon them. Therefore, it may be said that economic insecurity can bring about powerlessness and precarization. Other reasons why teachers may experience implicit job insecurity are the *discrediting of the profession* and the *weakening or loss of their employment benefits*. In the current research, the results obtained from the Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale also support the findings of the participant interviews. The results showed that 69% of the participant teachers had either a moderate or high level of implicit job insecurity perception. Therefore, it may be said that teachers experience implicit job insecurity to a considerable extent.

When the total scores obtained from the Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale were examined, it was concluded that the teachers had a moderate level of general job insecurity perception. In addition, it was determined that 73% of the teachers had a moderate or high level of general job insecurity perception. In the literature, other studies match with this finding (Dede, 2017; Karanfil & Doğan, 2020). The current study also examined whether or not teachers' perceptions of job insecurity differed according to certain demographic variables. The teachers' job insecurity perceptions were compared based on gender, marital status, union membership, and seniority. The teachers' perceptions of job insecurity did not show a significant difference in either the sub-dimensions or total scale score according to the variables of *gender* or *union membership*. Similarly, Valibayova (2018) found that the job insecurity perceptions of research assistants did not vary according to gender; and Karcioğlu and Balkaya (2018) concluded that job insecurity perceptions did not change according to union membership as a variable. However, the current study found that the *marital status* variable showed teachers' perceptions of job insecurity differed significantly in the dimension of implicit job insecurity and in the total scale score. Single teachers' implicit and general job insecurity perceptions were found to be significantly higher than for married teachers. This may be due to the social support provided by the spouses of married teachers (Näswall & De Witte, 2003) or to a positive marriage experience raising the level of trust of individuals in organizations (Ravanera & Rajulton, 2010). According to the variable of *seniority*, teachers' perceptions of job insecurity differed significantly, but only in the dimension of explicit job insecurity, in which teachers with a seniority of 21 years or more were higher than those of teachers with a seniority of 11-20 years. The reason for teachers in the highest seniority group experiencing higher explicit job insecurity and precarization may be, in a sense, "the thought of retiring without any problems," as these teachers generally had greater family responsibilities. This may also be due to higher re-employability concerns of senior teachers. The fact that permanent and more senior teachers have a higher perception of explicit job insecurity reveals how high the risk factor is in terms of the precarization of labor.

The second sub-purpose of the current study was to determine teachers' views on the effects of job insecurity. In the interviews conducted with some of the participant teachers, it was concluded that job insecurity has certain social, psychological, and educational effects. Therefore, it can be said that the perception of job insecurity has negative effects on individual, social relations, and the quality of education. In the literature, studies have examined the results of job insecurity perception as experienced by employees (Jiang, 2018; Valibayova, 2018), in which the negative effects of job insecurity on the psychological and physical health and wellbeing of employees and on their attitudes towards work were

revealed. In the current study, it was concluded that job insecurity can have *social effects* such as causing a culture of silence, lack of solidarity, discrimination, as well as pressure and coercion. The findings obtained from the participant interviews showed that job insecurity increases teachers' silence behaviors. Berntson et al. (2010), in their research with 725 white-collar employees, also concluded that job insecurity increased employees' silence behaviors. The interviews conducted within the scope of this research showed that especially teachers with fixed-term contracts are unlikely to exhibit any critical attitude or express their opinions and wishes openly due to fears of job insecurity. Karadeniz and Demir (2010) reached very similar results to the current research in their interviews conducted with teachers working under fixed-term contracts in Turkey. It may therefore be stated that the variable of trust plays an important role in the relationship between job insecurity and *lack of solidarity*. Studies in the literature have highlighted that the perception of job insecurity reduces the level of employees' trust (Gürbüz & Dede, 2016; Sverke et al., 2002). Teachers working under differing contractual forms of employment can experience a reduction in their level of trust, which can cause them to not show sufficient solidarity with their teaching colleagues. In addition, the non-unionization policies of neoliberalism that eliminates solidarity or policies that make existing solidarity organizations dysfunctional can bring about a lack of solidarity. In the current study, it was concluded that the differences in contractual employment type may negatively affect relations amongst teachers. Contract type may be something perceived by teachers as a status difference, and as such may cause *discrimination*, competition, and conflict amongst teachers. In addition, working in an insecure type of employment may cause teachers to be exposed to various *pressures and coercions*. In the literature, there are studies that match with this finding of the current research. For example, De Cuyper et al. (2009), in their study with 693 employees, concluded that job insecurity is associated with bullying behaviors in the workplace.

In the current study, it was concluded that job insecurity may have *psychological effects* on teachers such as unhappiness, loneliness, fear, and hopelessness. Some teachers, on the other hand, mentioned that job insecurity can lead to suicide. In the literature, studies have examined the psychological consequences of job insecurity perception experienced by employees (Burchell, 2011; Marchand & Blanc, 2011). In these various studies, it was concluded that job insecurity can have a significant effect on psychological health, stress, anger, anxiety, and even depression. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) stated that anticipating a stressful situation can have a similar negative effect as actually experiencing it. From this perspective, the consequences of experiencing anxiety over potentially losing one's job can be as traumatic as the consequences of actually becoming unemployed. In the current study, some participants stated that insecurity can lead teachers towards depression and suggested that such a situation may be behind some teacher suicides. Two teachers employed in Turkey with fixed-term contracts committed suicide in 2019. In addition, up to 2017, a total of 42 unappointed teachers, including temporarily assigned teachers, had committed suicide (Karabağlı, 2018). While there may of course be many underlying reasons for suicide, job insecurity (especially explicit insecurity) is also thought to play an important role as long-term exposure to job insecurity and its effects can cause mental, emotional, and physical burnout in employees (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995).

According to the findings of the current research, job insecurity experienced by teachers also has *educational effects* as well as social and psychological. The effects of job insecurity on the individual and their reflections on the organization can negatively affect the

performance of organizations. In this context, job insecurity is a phenomenon that can also negatively affect the quality of education that teachers deliver. In this study, it was concluded that job insecurity prevents teachers from taking the initiative in lessons and that it can reduce their motivation and thereby their performance as educators. Therefore, it may be said that teachers' exposure to increased levels of job insecurity will also decrease student achievement due to the negative effect on the quality of education delivered. It has been concluded that the use of temporary contracts for the employment of teachers, which is a particularly insecure type of employment, has direct negative effects on the quality of education these teachers are likely to deliver. Frequent changes of temporary contracted teachers can result in them being unable to connect with both the students they are assigned to teach and also the students' parents. Or, even if they are able, it can cause difficulties when they are dismissed and replaced by yet another teacher. In the participant interviews of the current research, a temporary teacher who started working in a primary school was asked by a student on his first day, "*Sir, you won't leave us too, will you?*" This question, having been posed by a young student to their teacher, really shows how deeply students can be affected by the frequent changing of their teachers.

The third sub-objective of the research was to determine how job insecurity in education is structured. From the research findings, it has been concluded that the structural insecurity created by the system is reproduced and structured through teachers' practices. At the same time, teachers can reproduce the conditions that make it possible for such behaviors to occur. The participant interviews conducted within the study have shown that there are four main reasons for the structuration of job insecurity in education: Justification of insecurity; Instrumental use of power against insecurity; Acquiescence of insecurity; and, Acceptance of insecurity. *The justification of insecurity* is the rationalization and justification of regulations and practices that cause job insecurity. That precarious situations can potentially sound reasonable to employees can be effective in rationalizing insecurity, as it can lead to the production of logical justifications for insecurity. The rationalization of action, as Giddens (1999) emphasized, plays an important role in the structuration of practices. When this situation is considered in terms of insecurity, the rationalization of insecurity can bring about the structuration and reproduction of insecurity.

Another reason for the structuration of insecurity is *the instrumental use of power*. The risk and uncertainty created by neoliberal policies, and the experiencing fear because of them, can cause teachers to use power instrumentally in order to maintain their current position (Yorulmaz, 2021). As a matter of fact, some participants in the current study mentioned that insecurity led them, as teachers, to utilize power instrumentally. It may be said, therefore, that the instrumental use of power is related to the power distance perceptions of individuals. In other words, individuals with a perception of high power distance can also find it normal to use power instrumentally, as they justify the privilege held by the powerful. Those who work within an insecure environment may even find the instrumental use of power to be somewhat necessary. This is because employees may think that when they use power instrumentally, they can more easily carry out their work and sometimes even gain benefit (Çolak et al., 2022; Yorulmaz et al., 2018). However, the instrumental use of power can also bring about significant problems, causing not only the structuration of insecurity, but also the violation of ethical principles. For example, the instrumental use of power in competitive environments can lead to results at the expense of harming certain individuals (Van Knippenberg et al., 2001). Therefore, it may be said that



increased job insecurity may cause the reproduction of precarity by increasing both instrumental behaviors and ethical violations.

*Acquiescence of insecurity* is another reason for the reproduction and structuration of job insecurity. The helplessness experienced in the face of job insecurity causes teachers to adapt to the situation even if they fail to internalize it. Teachers experiencing feelings of helplessness, as well as considering teachers working in worse conditions than themselves, can lead to acquiescence of job insecurity. In the participant interviews held within the scope of the current research, the teachers stated that they acquiesced the situation they were in by expressing their desperation: “...We had to accept,” “...We do not have certain rights, but at least we were appointed.” In this context, acquiescence can be seen as a way to mitigate the effects of insecurity. However, in terms of the system, this means the legitimation and reproduction of precarization. Dyne et al. (2003) emphasized that acquiescence is associated with enduring and surrendering. Acquiescence can lead employees to passive behaviors and make them reluctant to make an effort. In this sense, acquiescence is the state of believing that no matter what employees do, they cannot change the situation (Yorulmaz et al., 2018) or make any tangible difference.

Finally, *acceptance of insecurity* is an important reason for the reproduction and structuring of job insecurity. Moreover, acceptance is a structured form of insecurity as acceptance shows that job insecurity has been accepted without question and has now become the norm; thus precarization of labor has also taken place. With the precarization of labor, employees accept and internalize precarious conditions, oppression, reduction of their rights, and exploitation.

## 7. SUGGESTIONS

Future research may be conducted that aims to relate the Intellectual Level Scale to variables such as organizational behavior, school climate, leadership skills, and job satisfaction. In addition, the scale may be adapted for teachers and other educational administrators.

The basis of job insecurity perception is the contractual nature of a person's employment. As the current research has shown, workers employed with temporary or fixed-term contracts experience more insecurity than those employed under permanent contracts. Therefore, it is recommended that all teachers in Turkey should be employed on a permanent basis in order to reduce teachers' perceptions of job insecurity and its detrimental effects. In addition, with regards to the training of teachers, steps should be taken to better plan the numbers of teachers to be trained by considering the national teacher demand, instead of promoting policies that cause flexibility in employment.

The autonomy level of teachers within the teaching process should be increased, their employment benefits improved, and they should be economically empowered. In addition, school principals should display a more constructive attitude instead of being authoritarian, oppressive, or exhibiting threatening behaviors, to value the expertise of the teachers in their schools, and to support their autonomy. School principals should also afford teachers the right to participate in decision-making, and should distribute tasks and resources more fairly. In this way, a more healthy and open school climate can exist where teachers will be less likely to experience insecurity. Teachers' exposure to reduced levels of insecurity and less precarization will help reduce the powerlessness, pressure, fear, and anxiety

experienced by teachers, which will positively reflect on teachers, students, and will enrich society as a whole through improved quality of education.

This study was limited to data obtained within the scope of the interview form and the Teachers' Job Insecurity Scale. The research established that teachers' job insecurity has social, psychological, and also educational effects; however, further research could be conducted in order to reveal the effects of job insecurity on other areas, such as family life. In addition, future studies could be conducted that aim to reveal the relationships between job insecurity and variables such as job satisfaction, burnout, performance, school climate, teacher autonomy, power distance, and intention to leave.

## DECLARATIONS

**Author Contributions** I.C.: Literature review, conceptualization, methodology, data collection, data analysis, results interpretation, reporting, and original manuscript preparation. Y.A.: Conceptualization, methodology, results interpretation, review-editing, formal correction, and supervision. Both authors have read and approved the final version of the article.

**Conflicts of Interest** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**Ethical Approval** All procedures at every stage of the research were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee. Also, permission was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University under decision no. 234, dated December 27, 2019.

**Data Availability** The data acquired and analyzed during this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

**Note** This study was produced from the first author's doctoral dissertation, prepared under the supervision of the second author.

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