

Science Teachers' Views on the Teaching Profession Law

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to reveal the views of science teachers about the Teaching Profession Law (TPL). Case study, one of the qualitative study designs, was used in the study. The participants of the study consisted of 10 science teachers working in Van province in the 2022-2023 academic year. Data were collected with a semi-structured interview form consisting of six questions. The collected data were analysed by content analysis by three researchers. When the results of the study are analysed, it is seen that science teachers stated that the TPL is inadequate in solving professional problems. The majority of the teachers who participated in the study stated that they expected that the regulation made by the law would bring discrimination among teachers and reduce teacher prestige. Some science teachers who participated in the study welcomed the economic improvement provided by the law. In order to improve the study, quantitative and qualitative studies can be conducted by increasing the number of participants. Teacher problems and expectations can be reconsidered, and new regulations can be introduced.

Keywords: Teaching Profession Law, Science Teachers, Teacher Problems, Personal Rights.

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, teaching has been seen as one of the most respected professions because it is the transmitter of social values and culture to future generations, a bridge between knowledge and students, and a profession that raises individuals needed by the social structure. In Turkish culture, which has adopted the principle that those who know and those who do not know are not the same, those who have knowledge are highly valued and those who teach knowledge have always been highly valued. The meanings attributed to the teaching profession in Turkey have caused teachers to feel responsibility towards society (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2017). Even though the teaching profession has a very important place in the eyes of the society, it is seen that until 2022, there was no legal regulation directly related to the teaching profession.

Teachers are at the heart of the execution of education and training activities (Beyhan & Yıldız, 2021). A teacher who is defined as successful in his/her profession is a teacher who

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will serve the expectations of the society and the development of the individual and who has a good understanding of contemporary knowledge. At the same time, efficiency in education and training is one of the most important problems in today's education and training activities (Bilen, 1996; Karaduman & Kavan, 2021). In this context, it is thought that in order to increase efficiency in education, teachers' professional problems should be solved, and their professional development should be planned in a healthy way by minimizing their problems. Because teachers fulfil their duties and responsibilities within the lines specified by the law and in this context, they have some rights. The duties and responsibilities in the law and the rights of teachers should be in balance. It is important to make the necessary financial and administrative arrangements for teaching, which is a difficult profession requiring high responsibility. In this context, as in other professions, various laws and regulations have been enacted around the world. Countries such as the UK, Germany, Canada, China, and Australia have enacted laws on the teaching profession (Türk Eğitim Derneği Düşünce Kuruluşu [TEDMEM], 2018).

In Turkey, the start of work on the teaching profession law was announced with the 2023 Education Vision document announced to the public on 23.10.20218. As a result of nearly three years of work, the Teaching Profession Law (TPL) No. 7354, which was adopted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on February 3, 2022 and aimed to regulate the appointment and professional development of teachers in charge of carrying out education and training services and their advancement in career steps, was published in the Official Gazette on February 14, 2022 and entered into force. This law defines teaching as "a specialized profession that takes on the duties of education and training and related administrative tasks" (Teaching Profession Law, 2022). According to the law, the education and training compensation of teachers who have earned the title of specialist teacher and head teacher will be improved. In this context, the education compensation paid to specialist teachers will be increased from 20 percent to 60 percent, and the education compensation paid to head teachers will be increased from 40 percent to 120 percent. The additional indicators of teachers working in the first grade will be increased to 3600. In addition, arrangements will be made for teachers in other grades according to this increase (TPL, 2022).

Educational policies and practices have direct or indirect effects on teachers. Especially in education systems with centralized administration and strong public bureaucracy, decisions taken from the centre can have a direct impact on schools. Decisions taken about teachers, who take on the main task in the execution of education and training activities, directly affect their psychology, motivation, ways of doing business, level of commitment to work, peace, happiness, in short, their welfare (Altan & Özmusul, 2022). In a study conducted by Güven and Toker-Gökçe (2018), teachers stated that they felt themselves in a state of professional uncertainty and helplessness, and therefore their professional prestige was low. In the study conducted by Coşkun-Keskin and Yüceer (2017), it is seen that there is a low rate of valuing the teaching profession in the society. The researchers stated that this situation is due to reasons such as low socio-economic life levels of teachers, low sanctioning power towards students and not being applied, decreasing the reputation of the teaching profession, and decreasing the quality of teacher training. Similarly Haris (2000) and Cobb (1999) stated that

teaching as a profession is the driving force of changes in the society and therefore the professional development of teachers is much more important than other professions. Bozbayındır (2019), on the other hand, stated that the factors that negatively affect the teaching profession are low financial opportunities, insufficient personal rights, and the proliferation of news in the media that lower the reputation of the profession. With the TPL, which came into force in order to eliminate these negative situations and further develop the teaching profession, it is aimed to ensure the professional development of teachers, increase their welfare levels, and restore professional reputation to the society.

The fact that an organization has a healthy functioning structure is an issue that directly affects productivity. In order to maintain this functioning structure, practices that make the employees of the organization feel good about themselves should be carried out, and their needs and expectations should also be met. In this context, the health of teachers in educational institutions ensures that the school and the education system are also efficient (Işıkhan, 2003). It is seen that teachers have problems such as insufficient economic earnings, limited opportunities for individual development and professional advancement, and recently, their prestige in the eyes of the society has tended to decline. In addition, it has been determined in the literature review that teachers have problems arising from the physical conditions of schools and administrators, programs implemented in education, personal rights, and social status (Tayhan & Gündüz, 2022). It is considered that these problems have negative effects on teachers and reduce their productivity. In addition, it is thought that it is important for teachers, who are the direct addressees of the law, to evaluate the benefits that the TPL, which was enacted to solve the aforementioned problems, will provide for the solution of these problems.

A science teacher is an educator who enables students to recognize daily life and interpret the natural concepts they encounter in daily life. A good science teacher is defined as a person who knows what the concept of science is, who clearly understands what our environment is composed of and how it develops, and who has developed himself/herself professionally (Morgil & Yılmaz, 1999). In another study, it is stated that the success of science education will increase the level of development of countries. For this, it is necessary to train science teachers with pre-service qualifications and to include practices that will allow them to improve themselves while on duty (Avcı & Kayıran, 2023). In this context, ensuring the professional development, motivation and welfare of science teachers is considered to be an important issue for the success of science education. For this purpose, in our study, the opinions of science teachers about the TPL, which is thought to bring solutions to the problems of the teaching profession, were included. The aim of this study is to determine the views of science teachers on the Law on Teaching Profession and to evaluate the benefits of the law on professional development and personal rights of teachers. It is considered that the evaluation of the TPL with the views of science teachers who are involved in education-training activities may enable the possible amendment and review process to be more effective and beneficial.

2. METHODOLOGY

Since the study aimed to describe the views of science teachers on the teaching profession law in detail and in detail, case study method, which is a qualitative approach model, was used in the study. The greatest benefit of the case study method is that it allows the researcher to concentrate on a particular issue or situation. The data obtained with this method allows the researcher to explain important details in terms of cause and effect and the interrelationships between variables (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), in case studies, a limited system is analysed and examined in depth. It is suggested that it would be more accurate to use case studies in studies when it is tried to obtain information about individuals and events with first-hand sources and when research problems are revealed in an explanatory and descriptive way (Çepni, 2011).

2.1. Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 10 science teachers working in different schools in Van province in the 2022-2023 academic year. The participants were selected by purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling is a method that accelerates the research activity. In this method, the researcher includes situations that meet the criteria determined in line with a predetermined purpose, close and not difficult to reach (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In this study, the criterion used to determine the participants was that they were working as science teachers. The professional seniority of the participants ranged from one year to fifteen years. Five of the participants were female and five were male and their ages ranged between 23 and 42. One of the participants had a master's degree and the others had a bachelor's degree.

2.2. Data Collection Tool

Since this study aims to examine the views of science teachers on TPL, a semi-structured interview form was prepared as a data collection tool. In order to prepare the semi-structured interview form, a literature review was conducted to have an idea about the subject (Çepni, 2011). As a result of this review, a question pool consisting of nine questions was created. Two faculty members, one from science education and one from Turkish education, were consulted about the question pool. In line with the expert opinions, deficiencies related to the interview questions were eliminated and necessary revisions were made. One of the questions removed from the interview form was “*What are your thoughts on the reflections of the head teacher and specialist teacher career steps brought by the Teaching Profession Law on the parents?*” is in the form. It was effective in removing this question that it was similar to another question in the interview form and that it was a repetitive question. Another question that was removed from the interview form was “*What are your thoughts on the transfer of information by the academicians presenting the expert and head teacher videos to the other party?*” is in the form. The reason for the removal of the problem can be explained by the fact that the study does not serve its purpose. At the end of this process, a total of six questions were prepared to obtain teachers' opinions. The questions in the semi-structured interview form are given in Appendix-1.

2.3. Validity and Reliability

While validity is defined as the fact that the findings obtained in the research reflect the reality, reliability is defined as the consistency and repeatability of the research results (Golafshani, 2003). In order to ensure content validity in this study with qualitative research design, expert opinion was taken while preparing the questions and a literature study was conducted. The questions were used as they were without any changes. For internal validity, the data were analysed as they were. Coding was done by three experts in the field. For external validity, the data were recorded with a recording device. In order to increase reliability, sufficient time was given to the interviewees. Personal inferences were avoided during the interviews. Before the interview, a short conversation was held to put the teachers at ease.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data obtained through semi-structured interviews were analysed by content analysis. Content analysis is a method that involves a series of procedures in order to obtain meaningful inferences from the text and includes inferences that vary according to the theoretical and meaningful interests of the researcher (Weber, 1990). The information of the teachers who participated in the interview was kept confidential. Teachers were given codes as T₁, T₂, T₃....T₁₀. After the interviews with the teachers were audio-recorded, all of the data were transcribed without any changes. First, the data obtained were examined in depth by three researchers and the data were analysed as categories, themes, and codes. In order to determine the consistency of the themes and codes, Miles and Huberman (1994) used the inter-coder reliability formula ($\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Number of Agreements}}{\text{Total Number of Codes}}$). Inter-coder reliability for data analysis was calculated as .82. The codes obtained as a result of the analysis are presented as themes in the findings section.

3. FINDINGS

In this part of the study, the findings of the data obtained from the semi-structured interview form are presented. The codes obtained from the data were categorized under a total of six themes. Figure 1 shows these themes.

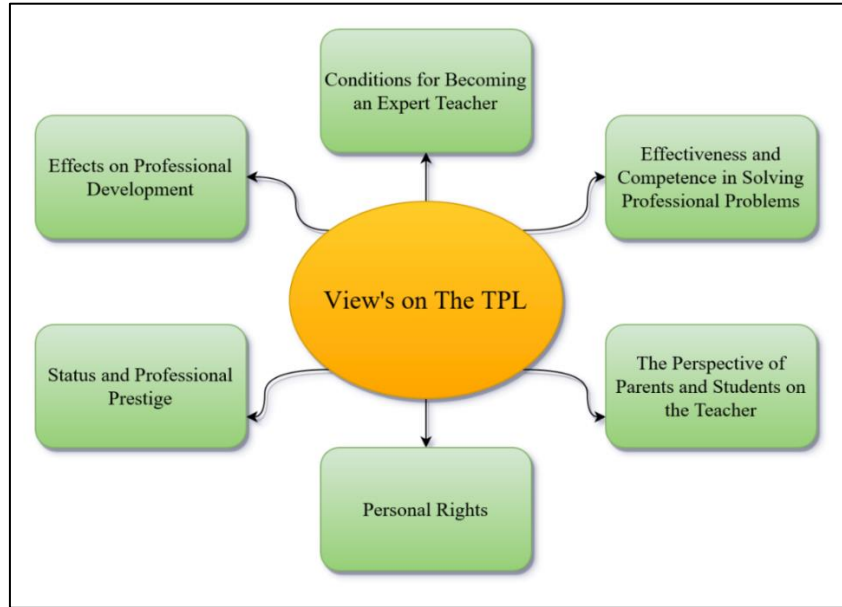


Figure 1. Themes related to Teachers' Views on TPL

According to Figure 1, it is seen that science teachers' views on TPL are grouped under six themes. These themes are: *effects on professional development, conditions for becoming an expert teacher, effectiveness and competence in solving professional problems, status and professional prestige, personal rights, and the perspective of parents and students on the teacher.* The codes related to these themes are given below with examples from the participants' statements.

3.1. Findings Related to the Theme of Effects on Professional Development

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the opinions of science teachers about the TPL, it was determined that the relevant law has positive and negative contributions to professional development. The codes related to this theme are given in Table 1.

Table 1. *The Effect of the Specialization Examination Introduced by the TPL on Teachers' Professional Development*

Theme	Category	Codes	T ₁	T ₂	T ₃	T ₄	T ₅	T ₆	T ₇	T ₈	T ₉	T ₁₀	f	
Impact on Professional Development	Positive Impact	Increase in income		+									1	
		Contribution to professional development				+			+				2	
		Vocational training videos are useful		+		+			+				3	
	Negative Impact	Grouping		+		+	+					+	+	4
		No contribution to professional development				+		+	+				+	4
		Loss of value in the eyes of the student				+	+							2
		Negative contribution due to out-of-field exam									+	+		2
		Conflict with parents		+									+	2
		Resentment of the profession		+										1

Table 1 shows that the participants had different views on the theme of the impact of TPL on professional development. While three of the participants reported that the TPL had a positive effect on professional development, seven of them reported that it had a negative effect. The participants who expressed negative opinions generally stated that title and grade differences in the teaching profession would lead to grouping and that students and parents would have negative opinions about teachers.

T₁: I find it wrong to use titles indicating status such as expert teacher for professions, especially for the teaching profession. Such titles will cause grouping among teachers, competition among parents and negativity in students' view of teachers.

Participants who expressed positive opinions stated that the TPL would contribute positively to professional development and increase financial income.

T₂: As a result of the exchange of ideas I made with the teachers, I saw that mostly everyone saw it positively for the income it would provide financially.

T₄: I think that teachers who strive for the specialization exam will benefit from this professionally.

3.2. Findings Related to the Theme of Conditions for Becoming an Expert Teacher

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the opinions of science teachers about the TPL, it was determined that the relevant law has positive and negative contributions to the conditions for becoming an expert teacher. The codes related to this theme are given in Table 2.

Table 2. *Opinions on the Working Time and Written Examination Requirements Introduced by the TPL*

Theme	Category	Codes	T ₁	T ₂	T ₃	T ₄	T ₅	T ₆	T ₇	T ₈	T ₉	T ₁₀	f	
Conditions for Becoming an Expert Teacher	Negative	There should be no exam	+	+	+		+	+					5	
		Acceptance of all postgraduate courses	+									+	+	3
		5 years of service instead of 10 years			+							+		2
		No year requirement for master's and doctoral degree holders				+	+							2
		There should be no working time requirement										+	+	2
		Only working time should be required					+							1
	Positive	Different conditions should be sought instead of an exam				+				+			+	3
		10 years of service is enough						+						1

Table 2 shows that the participants generally had negative opinions about the requirements of completing 10 years of service and being successful in the written exam, which were introduced with the TPL. Only one of the participants expressed a positive opinion only about the service requirement.

T₄: *I think that the 10-year requirement for expert teaching is appropriate.*

Ten of the participants expressed negative opinions about the conditions required for expert teaching. Seven of the participants stated that there should not be an exam for expert teaching, different conditions should be sought instead of an exam or only a working time requirement should be sought, and three of them stated that it is wrong to give the right to expert teaching to those who have a master's degree in subjects other than educational sciences.

T₅: *I can say that the year requirement and the written exam practice introduced with the TPL may seriously offend the teacher community.*

T₇: *It can be said to be reasonable for the study period, but I definitely do not find it right to have an exam.*

T₈: *Working time should not be taken as a basis. If a written exam is to be held, questions should be asked from each teacher's field.*

3.3. Findings Related to the Theme of Effectiveness and Competence in Solving Professional Problems

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the opinions of science teachers about the TPL, it was determined that the relevant law has sufficient and insufficient aspects for solving professional problems. The codes related to this theme are given in Table 3.

Table 3. *Opinions on the Effectiveness and Sufficiency of the TPL in Solving Professional Problems*

Theme	Category	Codes	T ₁	T ₂	T ₃	T ₄	T ₅	T ₆	T ₇	T ₈	T ₉	T ₁₀	f	
Solving Professional Problems	Adequate	Being effective and sufficient in solving problems		+				+					2	
		Adding value to the profession						+					1	
	Inadequate	Not effective and sufficient	+		+		+		+	+	+	+	7	
		It only brings career advancement in the profession				+			+				2	
		Creating new problems									+		+	2
		No solution to economic problems					+					+		2

Table 3 shows that the majority of the participants stated that the TPK was not effective and sufficient in solving teachers' professional problems. Eight of the participants stated that the TPK is inadequate in solving the problems, while two of them stated that it is sufficient. Those who thought that the law was inadequate argued that the law only regulated the professional career steps, which caused new problems such as grouping, and that the law was inadequate regarding economic issues, which are among the biggest problems of teachers.

T₄: *Career steps are only one aspect in solving professional problems. It should not be overlooked that titles will not solve problems and may even create different problems.*

T₇: *I do not think that the TPL will bring much innovation in solving the professional problems of teachers. In my opinion, the implementation of the title change in officialdom will not be very effective in practice.*

T₁₀: *The TPL is not effective and sufficient for solving professional issues. Instead of solving professional problems, it has brought career steps and title regulation. With this regulation, there will be economic grouping among teachers.*

Two participants who stated that the TPL is sufficient stated that this law will be effective and sufficient in solving professional problems, that it will add value to the profession and that this law is a necessity.

T₂: *It is an application that teachers need a lot, and it is late.*

T₆: *Even the enactment of a law on teaching is an important step towards our profession reaching the value it deserves.*

3.4. Findings Related to the Theme of Status and Professional Prestige

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the opinions of science teachers regarding the TPL, it was determined that there were positive and negative opinions regarding the status and professional prestige of the relevant law. The codes related to this theme are given in Table 4.

Table 4. *Opinions on the Changes brought by the TPL to the Social Status and Professional Prestige of Teachers*

Theme	Category	Codes	T ₁	T ₂	T ₃	T ₄	T ₅	T ₆	T ₇	T ₈	T ₉	T ₁₀	f	
Status and Professional Respect	Negative	Reduces dignity							+	+	+	+	4	
		Discrimination in the eyes of parents	+			+								2
		Discrimination in the eyes of students	+											1
		Inadequate economic dignity		+										1
		Hasty editing			+			+						2
		Classification	+											1
	Discrediting the exam											+	1	
	Positive	Economic contribution						+						1
		Increases prestige						+						1
		Increasing the importance given to the profession						+						1

Table 4 shows that the participants had negative opinions about whether the TPL would bring about any changes in teachers' social status and professional prestige. Nine of the participants expressed negative opinions and only one of them expressed positive opinions. The participants reported that the TPL would reduce professional prestige and that teachers would be subjected to discrimination in the eyes of parents and students.

T₄: *I don't think it will bring any prestige, on the contrary, I think that the teacher will be categorized as head teacher, expert teacher in the eyes of the parents and the prestige of the teacher will decrease.*

T₅: *Statuses granted with a written exam will lead to disruptions in the functioning of the profession and will reduce the prestige of the profession over time.*

Some participants stated that the law was enacted in a hurry.

T₃: *Since it is a law enacted in a hurry, I think it cannot contribute positively to the social status and professional prestige of teachers. I think a more comprehensive and detailed law is needed for specialized professions.*

A participant who expressed a positive opinion stated that the TPL will increase professional prestige and increase professional reputation with the economic benefit it will provide. In this context

T₅: *Professional prestige will increase with the increase in economic income and giving status to teachers.*

3.5. Findings Related to the Theme of Personal Rights

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the opinions of science teachers about the TPL, it was determined that there were positive and negative opinions about the status and professional prestige of the relevant law. The codes related to this theme are given in Table 5.

Table 5. *Opinions on the Improvements Provided by the TPL on Teachers' Personal Rights*

Theme	Category	Codes	T ₁	T ₂	T ₃	T ₄	T ₅	T ₆	T ₇	T ₈	T ₉	T ₁₀	f	
Personal Rights	Negative	Inadequate	+			+	+	+	+		+	+	7	
		Discrimination		+				+	+				+	4
		Does not cover everyone				+	+					+	+	4
		Working conditions are not improved				+							+	2
		Lack of occupational safety											+	1
		On-the-job training not included											+	1
	Positive	Economic contribution		+		+				+		+		4
		Title		+							+			2
		Working hours		+						+	+			3
		Permits									+			1

When Table 5 is analysed, it can be seen that the participants mostly expressed negative opinions about the improvements provided by the TPL in terms of teachers' personal rights. Eight of the participants were neutral, one of them was positive, and four of them expressed both positive and negative opinions. Participants stated that the TPL did not provide sufficient improvements in terms of personal rights and did not bring an arrangement that covers all teachers.

T₆: *A salary increase based only on the exam does not improve the personal rights of teachers. It also causes discrimination among teachers, as some teachers can become specialists and others cannot.*

T₁₀: *I think that the TPL does not sufficiently improve the working conditions and professional security of teachers, and since it does not bring any regulation on*

contracted teachers, it causes discrimination, in other words, the law is inadequate.

Some participants stated that the TPL brought improvements in their personal rights by providing economic contributions and new titles.

T₁: With the introduction of new titles as well as economic contributions, the TPL improves personal rights, but it does not provide sufficient improvement in other problems.

3.6. Findings Related to the Theme of the perspective of Parents and Students on the Teacher

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the opinions of science teachers about the TPL, it was determined that they had negative opinions about the place of the teacher in the eyes of parents and students. The codes related to this theme are given in Table 6.

Table 6. *Thoughts on the Changes in Parents' and Students' Views of Teachers as a Result of the Statuses Introduced by the TPL*

Theme	Category	Codes	T ₁	T ₂	T ₃	T ₄	T ₅	T ₆	T ₇	T ₈	T ₉	T ₁₀	f	
Teacher's Place in the Eyes of Parents and Students	Negative	Discrimination	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	10	
		Insecurity	+						+	+	+		4	
		Reduces Dignity				+								1
		Low motivation among teachers		+					+				+	3
		Excessively high expectations				+							+	2
		Psychological pressure on teachers		+										1

Table 6 shows that all participants stated that the expert teacher and head teacher statuses introduced by the TPL would negatively affect parents' and students' opinions about teachers. Again, all participants stated that the new regulation would cause discrimination against teachers in the eyes of parents and students. In addition, the participants suggested that parents and students would feel insecurity towards teachers who could not gain the status of expert teacher and head teacher.

T₂: Teaching would be more valuable in the eyes of parents and students if there was a real specialization process and extra effort and training in this field, but gaining these titles with only an exam can lead to meaningless tension and reluctance.

T₃: I think that there will be unnecessary pressure and high expectations on teachers who receive the status of specialist teacher and head teacher, and it will cause discrimination among teachers if those who do not have a title receive less salary by doing the same job.

T₁₀: Parents and students will feel distrust towards teachers who do not have the title of specialist teacher and head teacher. In addition, this situation will negatively affect teachers' motivation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The problems of teachers have been discussed in National Education Councils and scientific conferences from the past to the present, and even non-governmental organizations interested in education and training activities have been conducting studies. When past studies on the solution of teacher problems are examined, it is seen that the problems in question are similar. One of the oldest problems of the Turkish education system is teacher problems. Studies on the problems of the Turkish education system have also focused on teacher problems. Teachers have had many problems such as training, employment, personal rights and in-service training, and these problems have been the subject of various scientific studies. The most important problems of teachers were determined as low income, decrease in their prestige in the eyes of society, frequently changing education and training programs and legislation (Demir & Arı, 2013). In this study, the views of science teachers working in the province of Van on the Teaching Profession Law (TPL) were revealed. It was analysed whether the TPL brought improvements in terms of teachers' personal rights and what science teachers' opinions were about the innovations brought by the law. Data were collected from 10 science teachers about the TPL and then themes, categories and codes were created to contribute to the field.

Participants stated that the TPL is insufficient to solve the professional problems of teachers. They stated that it did not solve the problems in this regard, especially because the economic improvement made was insufficient. The attractiveness of the teaching profession is decreasing in our country. The most prominent reason for this is the inadequacy of teacher salaries. As Demir and Arı (2013) stated, the social status of the teaching profession has regressed. The participants in the study stated that the TPL would negatively affect the educational environment by creating new problems such as grouping among teachers. It was argued that the fact that the law only introduced career steps in the profession was not a sufficient solution and therefore a more comprehensive law should be enacted. In the study, a small number of science teachers stated that they thought that the law was sufficient in solving professional problems and would contribute to the profession. As a matter of fact, in a study conducted with Turkish teachers, teachers stated that the Regulation on Advancement in the Teaching Career Steps did not meet the expectations. As a positive aspect of this law, Turkish teachers stated that the teaching profession is very important for it to be a career profession (Kaplan & Gülden, 2023). It was concluded that the results of the studies conducted with teachers from different branches in the literature (Genç & Balyer, 2023; Gül & Güngör, 2022) are similar to the views of science teachers in this study.

The teachers who participated in the study stated that the conditions for becoming an expert teacher and head teacher introduced by the TPL should be changed. In particular, they stated that instead of the 10-year working condition, a five-year working condition should be sought, or different conditions should be sought without any exam, and teachers with master's degrees from departments other than educational sciences should not be given the right to direct transition to specialist teaching. Science teachers who expressed positive opinions on this issue stated that the 10-year requirement for the exam was sufficient. The majority of science teachers stated that the exam for specialist teacher and head teacher with the TPL was

inadequate and would not contribute to professional development. In a study on this subject, teachers and administrators stated that the Teaching Career Steps exam was unnecessary. Some participants stated that the teaching career ladder practice would separate teachers and cause them to compete. They also emphasized that the team spirit would disappear and the school climate would be negatively affected (Genç & Balyer, 2023). It can be said that the views of science teachers in this study support the results of studies on this subject in the literature.

They stated that the exam conducted with the TPL was insufficient in terms of contributing to professional development because it included subjects other than the branch field of science teachers. The importance of teachers' professional development is also supported by studies in the literature. Similar results were found in the study conducted by Bakioglu and Banoğlu (2013). The researchers found that teachers had a view of specialist teaching as an empty title, that it could cause conflict of interest, and that it would create negative attitudes towards the examination system. In another study on this subject, teachers drew attention to the unnecessary use of exams. Teachers participating in the study stated that there should be a career system based on seniority instead of exams. On the other hand, they stated that the training and exam applied within the scope of the law would not contribute to professional development (Özdemir, Doğan & Demirkol, 2022).

Participants stated that the TPL would have negative effects on teachers' social status and professional prestige. They stated that it would create teacher discrimination especially in the eyes of parents and students, and that teachers who did not receive the titles of specialist teacher and head teacher would be perceived as unsuccessful and create a negative climate in the school environment. They also think that the law is inadequate because the economic improvement only covers teachers who receive the title and is an inadequate improvement in terms of quantity. They also think that the exam is inadequate in measuring teacher quality and that it is a discrediting practice for teachers who cannot pass the exam. Similarly, Can (2016) states in his study that the teaching profession has lost its reputation in the society. It is thought that teachers who will be differentiated as a result of such a classification may be characterized as quality-quality teachers in the society. A small number of participants welcomed the economic improvement and professional career steps that the law would provide. In another study, teachers stated that they found the content of the law incomplete, that there were some deficiencies in the law, and that it had some benefits as well (Gül & Güngör, 2022). Therefore, it can be said that in the studies on the TPL, teachers' views on the law are similar.

According to the results of the research, science teachers stated that the TPL is an inadequate law in terms of covering the solution of all problems that teachers have. The majority of the teachers stated that the law would bring discrimination among teachers and also negatively affect the perception of teachers in terms of parents and students. In the study conducted by Bayar, Üstün and Zengin (2020), they stated that giving too much tolerance to parents and students would reduce the reputation of the teaching profession. It is thought that this situation will reduce the professional power of the teacher in both in-class and out-of-class environments and cause the teacher to become a worthless profession in the eyes of society. This situation was also expressed in the studies conducted by Ünsal (2018), Akyüz (1978)

and Coşkun Keskin and Yüceer (2017). In addition, teachers stated that an increase in economic income would be a positive improvement. The results obtained in this study are summarized below.

Science teachers who participated in the study stated that there were some limitations in the enactment of the TPL, since the opinions of all stakeholders of education were not taken. These limitations are; it is stated that the exam will not contribute to the profession of the teachers, and the periods specified for the specialist and the head teacher are long. In addition, the teachers emphasized that the use of non-thesis master's degrees as specialists and head teachers is unfair for teachers with master's degrees with thesis. Finally, teachers stated that it would not be fair to use teachers' postgraduate degrees outside the field in their career steps. It has been determined that the views of science teachers regarding the limitation of the TPL largely overlap with the results of the studies available in the literature (Genç & Balyer, 2023; Gül & Güngör, 2022). Science teachers were positively faced with the fact that their salaries would increase thanks to this law and that the reputation of the teaching profession would increase thanks to the career ladder. This result is largely similar to the results of the studies available in the literature (Avcı & Kayıran, 2023; Kaplan & Gülden, 2023; İş & Birel, 2022).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the results of the research, the TPL can be reorganized based on teacher needs and problems. At the same time, the law can be inclusive of all teachers, not only teachers based on a certain number of years.

Teachers' professional prestige can be restored by increasing their economic income and providing in-service trainings to support their professional development.

The career ladder for teachers can be restructured not only within the framework of a single exam, but also taking into account their current and past work. All stakeholders of the education system, especially teachers, can be included in the studies for the professional law.

The scope of the study can be expanded, and qualitative and quantitative studies can be conducted with more science teachers.

This study was carried out before the Law on the Teaching Profession was enacted. It is recommended to take the opinions of teachers after this law is enacted. Thus, it can be ensured that the theory-practice integrity of the law can be seen more clearly.

Longitudinal studies can be conducted with teacher candidates about the Teaching Profession Law.

6. ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Appendix-1: Semi-Structured Interview Form

1. What are your views on the effects of the expert teacher exam introduced by the Teaching Profession Law on the professional development of teachers?
2. What are your thoughts on the working period and the written exam as conditions for becoming an expert teacher according to the Teaching Profession Law? Can different conditions be sought in this regard?
3. What are your thoughts on the effectiveness and adequacy of the Teaching Profession Law in solving teachers' professional problems?
4. Will the Teaching Profession Law bring about any changes in the social status and professional prestige of teachers?
5. What improvements can the Teaching Profession Law provide in terms of teachers' personal rights?
6. How might the status of head teacher and specialist teacher introduced by the Teaching Profession Law bring about changes in the views and opinions of parents and students about teachers?