

Effects of the Teaching Profession Law on the Teaching Profession: A Case Study

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the effect of the teaching profession law on the teaching profession. In this study, the qualitative research method and case study design were used. Participants of the research were 10 school administrators and 19 teachers working in public schools in Konya, Türkiye, during the spring term of the 2021-2022 academic year. Sampling method of research is maximum variety. According to this study, the law is criticized for limiting the teaching profession to exams and the economic return of the exam. The law is also seen as inadequate as the problems and expectations of the teaching profession are enacted without adequately taking the opinions of the teachers. The career steps examination has a limited contribution to the teaching profession. The teaching profession requires the interaction of various elements such as training, examination, activities. Based on the findings, the teaching profession law can be revised through the opinions of the stakeholders. Issues related to the profession, especially the prestige of the teaching profession, can be included in the law.

Keywords: Teaching profession, Teaching Profession Law, Qualitative Research

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Introduction

The teaching profession continues to be one of the controversial issues in the education systems. The understanding of the teaching profession and the training need of teachers are among the topics discussed (Atak, 2019; Pesen, 2004). In order for the teaching profession to be fulfilled at the desired level, the subject of professionalization and related education should be considered (Bayar & Kösterelioğlu, 2014). An understanding of education-oriented approach has a positive effect on teachers and the school climate (Tofur & Balıkçı, 2018).

In the Turkish Education System, certain conditions must be met to teach. The teacher candidate must be graduated from one of the education faculties of the universities in Türkiye. Or he should receive pedagogical formation training from the university in Türkiye. After receiving these trainings, the candidate must take the Public Personnel Selection Exam (PPSE) organized by the Measurement Selection and Placement Center Presidency (SSPCP).

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After this stage, the candidate teacher is appointed by applying to the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), taking into account the ranking of points and the general and special conditions in article 48 of the civil servants law no 657 (MoNE, 2015). Teachers appointed as candidate teachers by the Ministry of National Education then continue their professional development in accordance with the Teaching Profession Law No. 7354. The development of the Candidate Teacher in the Turkish Education System continues as follows: Under normal conditions, after the candidate receives the necessary training and passes the exams within a period of 1 year, the candidate passes from the teaching stage to the teaching stage. After teaching for 10 years at this stage, he/she is subjected to 180 hours of training if there is no investigation or criminal action against him. After this training, he takes the exam. If he is successful, he gets 70 points or more, and goes to the expert teaching stage. After teaching for 10 years after the expert teaching stage, if there is no investigation or criminal action against him, this time he receives 240 hours of training. After receiving the training, he takes the exam again. If he is successful, he gets 70 points or more, and goes to the head teacher stage. After each stage that the teacher candidate passes, there are developments in the personal rights specified in the Teaching Profession Law. In this law, This law also takes postgraduate education into account. According to the law, those who take postgraduate education are exempt from exams (MoNE, 2022).

Theoretical Background

The teaching profession has deeply affected both individuals and societies throughout the ages. Being considered beneficial and important for society, the teaching profession both adapts to the changes in the environment and provides a healthy reflection of those changes to society (Vaillant, 2007). Teaching has been considered a valuable profession from the past to the present. This is because it is effective both in the academic success of students and in forming their personalities (Karataş, 2020). Therefore, teachers have a vital role in students' education, knowledge and motivation (Kara, 2020). Topçu (1997) describes teachers as an artist who is patient in their works, prepares students for the future financially and morally, and is devoted to their profession. In addition, the teaching profession inculcates not only knowledge and skills, but also values and moral education (Campbell, 2008; Menter & Flores, 2021). Some suggestions that Fullan, and Hargreaves (1991) recommend for teachers are as follows: Being prepared for the profession both internally and actively, appreciating the total person in working with others, monitoring their work, knowing the importance of their profession, being respectful and unifying different views, balancing work and life, committing to continuous improvement and perpetual learning, and monitoring and strengthening the connection between their development and students' development. The teaching profession must contain many qualities. These include paying attention to behavior, making plans, influencing, pioneering environmentally beneficial works, being open to innovations in the field of education and expertise, displaying a critical approach, having the ability to express oneself, and engaging in scientific studies (Raymond, 2006).

Approaches put forward in terms of the teaching profession bring the responsibilities of the teacher to the agenda. The responsibilities of the teacher include the ability to teach students, communication with families, close interaction with the environment inside and outside the school, continuous and increasing professional development, and fulfillment of professional studies (Creasy, 2015). To fulfill the expectations, teachers should be autonomous and take responsibility in a balanced and connected way with their duties (Bayhan, 2011), they should constantly increase their knowledge, skills, and standards to develop their capacities, and they should have a comfortable working opportunity to address the environment as well as students (Clark, 2011). Having the appropriate standards and an autonomous environment will contribute to the realization of the teaching profession at the desired level. One reason why the teaching profession is given such importance is that it can affect the social and political changes of society deeply (Hilferty, 2008). The fact that the teacher can influence society naturally affects the school (Özerdem, 2022).

To meet the desired conditions for the teaching profession, teachers must acquire various skills and receive training (Hilferty, 2008; Kissock & Richardson, 2010). According to Ayas (2009), since teaching has a key role in the education system, teachers should be provided with adequate training during both university education and profession in order to be well trained and better equipped. The training

will contribute to the fulfillment of the key roles of teachers in the school because training is an indispensable element in the teaching profession. The training provided will also be instrumental in being resilient to professional challenges (Menter & Flores, 2021). Besides, teachers' attitudes towards the profession will develop positively and thus success in school will increase (Engin & Koç, 2014).

In order for the desired developments to occur in the teaching profession, it is necessary to avoid factors that may negatively affect the profession. These factors include insufficient education, low wages, and undesirable conditions (working environment, insufficient opportunities for development, etc.) (Agarao-Fernandez & de Guzman, 2006); problems related to personal rights, undesired living conditions, inability to be employed (Atak, 2019); the uncertainty of the conditions they will live in in the future (social-economic) and the concerns brought by these uncertainties (Çelikel, 2019); the poor image of the teaching profession and poor social perception towards the teaching profession (Erarslan, 2022). In terms of solving the stated problems, it is necessary to improve teachers' belonging to the organization and to ensure their participation in activities such as conferences for their professional life (Rimmer & Floyd, 2020), and educational circles should work with governments in a solution-oriented manner. In addition, an attitude towards working in cooperation should be created, and communication channels should be constantly open (Gannon, 2005).

The teaching profession is seen as a way of serving society. The degree to which the profession is carried out in accordance with its purpose can directly affect the countries' development levels. Therefore, governments can arrange regulations related to the teaching profession. For example, teaching in Australia is based on professionalism, a performance-based culture and accountability (Mayer & Mills, 2021). Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland focus on activities that need to be done and achieved in the teaching profession. Norway follows the notion that the teaching profession is compulsory (Klette, 2002). According to the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018, the teaching profession is seen as a process that continues to be learned at school in Finland, which is in the best European group in the Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] (Ceylan, Özdoğan Özbal, Sever & Boyacı, 2020). Giving teachers the autonomy to prepare their own curricula and allowing them to receive continuing education for professional development plays an important role in making the teaching a learning-oriented profession (Sahlberg, 2018). There are differences in the historical development of the teaching profession in the United States [USA] and South Korea, in terms of organizational image and institutionalization of development. These differences are because of the harmony between institutions and teachers' unions as well as the attitude towards the teaching profession (Yeom, 2005).

In the Turkish education system, there are regulations related to the teaching profession. The most recent and current example of this is the Teaching Profession Law No. 7354, which was published in the Official Gazette 31750 on 14.02.2022. The 3rd article of the law includes the definition of the teaching profession, the working conditions of the teachers, the preparatory work for the profession, and the career steps for the profession (Ministry of National Education [MEB], 2022):

- (1) Teaching is a specialized profession that undertakes education and training and related management duties. Teachers are obliged to perform these duties in accordance with the aims and basic principles of Turkish National Education and the ethical principles of the teaching profession.
- (2) Working conditions of teachers are regulated to achieve the objectives set for raising the quality of education.
- (3) Preparation for the teaching profession is provided by general culture, special field education and pedagogical formation / teaching profession knowledge.
- (4) The teaching profession is divided into three career steps: teacher after the candidate teaching period, specialist teacher, and head teacher.

Significance of the Study

Research emphasizes the increasing importance of the teaching profession (Atak, 2019; Bayhan, 2011; Clark, 2018). In addition, studies show that different countries adopt different approaches to the teaching profession (Sahlberg, 2018; Yeom, 2005). Considering the Turkish education system, the Teaching Profession Law enacted in 2022 is an important regulation for the teaching profession. This arrangement draws attention to the teaching profession once again. Therefore, it is thought that evaluating the current situation together with the latest developments and research in the literature will contribute to a better understanding of the teaching profession. In addition, it is thought that the research will contribute to the development of education policies and to reveal the relevant legislation texts. Also, since the current research will provide up-to-date data on the subject, it will enable a more detailed analysis in the context of the teaching profession with the education systems of different countries.

Aim of the Study

This study aimed to examine the effect of the teaching profession law on the teaching profession. To achieve this goal, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the views of school administrators and teachers on the teaching profession law?
2. What are the views of school administrators and teachers on the examination process carried out within the scope of the teaching profession law?
3. What are the suggestions of school administrators and teachers for the development of the teaching profession?

Method

This part consisted of the research design, participant group, data collection and analysis.

Research Design

In this study, qualitative research method was used. Qualitative research is a research method based on the in-depth and systematic transfer of participants' views (Merriam, 2015; Neuman, 2006). In this study, case study was preferred as a design. The Teaching Profession Law -Law No. 7354-, which entered into force in 2022, was determined as a case. The law is important as a case study in two respects. The first, it includes an important regulation for the teaching profession. Secondly, as stated in the relevant literature, it involves a finite regulation – to enter into force in 2022 –. According to Merriam (2015), a case study is "*an in-depth description and examination of a finite system*" (p. 40). Christensen, Johnson, and Turner (2015) define a case study as "*an intense and detailed description and analysis of one or more cases (situations)*" (p. 416). They state that what is meant by the situation is a system with certain boundaries such as person, group, organization, and activity.

Participant Group

Participants consisted of 10 school administrators and 19 teachers working in public schools in Konya, Turkey, during the spring term of the 2021-2022 academic year. Recruiting both school administrators and teachers could provide different perspectives and experiences. It might also contribute to the reliability and validity of the research. Considering the views and suggestions of school administrators and teachers working in different school types, maximum variety sampling was used. Miles and Huberman (2015, p. 28) argue that convenience sampling can be preferred in terms of time, money and flexibility, and maximum variety sampling can be preferred in terms of reflecting the differences. Table 1 presents the data related to the participant group.

Table 1
Participant Group

Position in the School	School Administrator		Teacher	
	Social Sciences	Natural Sciences	Special Education	
Branch	21	6	2	
School Type	Pre-School	Primary School	Middle School	High School
Term in Office as School Administrator	0-5 years	6-11 years	12-17 years	18 and above
Term in Office as Teacher	0-5 years	6-11 years	12-17 years	18 and above
	3	4	3	
	1	7	9	12

As can be seen in Table 1, most of the participants were teachers -19 participants-. Majority of the participants were in the social sciences branch -21 participants-. The participants were from different types of schools and form a balanced distribution. The seniority of the school administrators was between 6 and 17 years. There was a balanced distribution in the seniority of school administrators. However, the same did not apply to teaching seniority. The weight of those who have taught for 12 years or more was striking -21 participants-.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected through interviews and documents. Interview questions were prepared based on the literature and by taking the views of two school administrators, two academicians working in the field, and a language-expression expert. The pilot study was made with two participants, and the interview form was revised. It is consisted of two parts. The first part included questions about the demographic information of the participants (Table 1). The second part involved questions about the research topic. The questions were about the relationship of the relevant law with the teaching profession, the contribution of the career steps examination to the teaching profession, and suggestions about the teaching profession. The second data collection tool was documents. They were the official documents of the Ministry of National Education (such as Teaching Profession Law No. 7354, Specialist Teacher Training Program/Head Teacher Training Program, Teaching Career Steps Written Examination Announcement 2022, statistics published by the Ministry of National Education on 19.06.2022), and the book *Rethinking Education in Turkey*, written by the Minister of National Education (Prof. Dr. Mahmut Özer). Official documents are used while performing document analysis (Christensen, Johnson, and Turner, 2015; Patton, 2014). Descriptive analysis was used to reflect the views of the participants. The descriptive analysis helps reveal the views of the participants in a meaningful way (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Content analysis was also used to reach new meanings from the data in terms of school administration. The goal of content analysis is to discover new meanings through systematic analysis of data (Krippendorff, 2004). Regarding ethics, individual and institutional permissions were obtained. Participants signed a consent form. Besides, permission was obtained from the Konya Provincial Directorate of National Education with its letter dated 07.09.2022 and numbered 56865791. Participants were given nicknames.

Validity and Reliability

Regarding research validity and reliability, four of the strategies stated by Christensen et al. (2015) were used: i) Data triangulation: 29 interviews -10 school administrators and 19 teachers- and 4 documents - They were the official documents of the Ministry of National Education (such as Teaching Profession Law No. 7354, Specialist Teacher Training Program/Head Teacher Training Program, Teaching Career Steps Written Examination Announcement 2022, statistics published by the Ministry of National Education on 19.06.2022), and the book *Rethinking Education in Turkey*, written by the Minister of National Education (Prof. Dr. Mahmut Özer)- were utilized. ii) External audit: The study process was completed considering the evaluations of two academicians publishing qualitative study in the field. During the study process, the opinions of two academicians were taken. The study report was reviewed by taking their opinions. iii) Direct quotation: Opinions that would contribute to the

study were presented in the findings and comments section. Direct quotations about the study are in the findings and interpretations section. iv) Reflexivity: Comments were made through direct quotations. Results were reached through comments. Based on the data -direct quotations-, there are three themes in the study. These themes are also in the findings and interpretations section.

Findings and Interpretations

This part included the findings and interpretations obtained from the interviews and documents.

Findings and Interpretations Obtained from the Interviews

Analysis revealed three themes: the relationship of the teaching profession law with the teaching profession, the interaction of the career steps examination with the teaching profession, and suggestions about the teaching profession.

Theme 1: Relationship of the Teaching Profession Law with the Teaching Profession

Most of the participants agreed that the Teaching Profession Law enacted in 2022 was far from expectations and had insufficient content. Only three participants (participants 10, 19, 28) expressed favored the law. According to participants, the law enacted was not a solution to the problems related to the teaching profession, its scope was insufficient and limited, and it could not be a solution to the problems of the teaching profession. Here are their expectations from the law, which did not come true: Instead of the exam, seniority and experience should have been taken as a basis. For example, Participant 2 said, *"...The application of career steps is good, but I do not think it is right to do this with any exam."* Participant 11 voiced, *"...Only training and length of service should be considered."* Within the scope of the law, articles on the personal rights, duties and responsibilities, training, education, status, and prestige of the teacher should have been included, but these were not included in the law. Regarding teachers' rights, Participant 9 stated, *"...Teachers' training, qualifications, duties and powers, rights and obligations, appointments, retirements, personal rights, and working conditions should have been enacted in a better way."* Participant 18 underlined the dignity of the teacher as *"...there must be a law that will increase the prestige of the profession."*

The training should have been done face-to-face, not with videos. Training should be reflected in practice. However, the law does not include such regulations. For instance, Participant 4 said, *"...You cannot become an expert by watching videos and taking an exam. Instead, organizing face-to-face professional training will both motivate the teacher and contribute to the teacher professionally."*

There were expectations about what would happen after career steps were achieved, but there are no articles in the law regarding this situation. Participants believed that the exam alone would not be sufficient for the evaluation process. For example, Participant 20 argued this issue as *"... It will be more appropriate to evaluate career studies by criteria such as years of service, professional studies attended, and projects carried out, not by the examination system."* Participant 14 said, *"...It may be interpreted from the current law that professional development is based on rote learning and that it will be considered sufficient in the next 10 years. However, the requirements of the age are constantly changing."* Finally, the Law should be implemented by taking the opinions of teachers. Ignoring their views will cause problems within the school as well. Measures should have been taken with the Law regarding this situation. Participant 26 underlined this situation, which is objectionable in terms of school culture, as *"Each teacher has to take an exam related to his/her field."* Participant 17 voiced the following problem: *"...it is in a nature that will disrupt the school climate and culture by segregating the teachers."*

The researchers argue that the law should be inclusive, taking into account all aspects of the teaching profession. It should be prepared to solve teachers' problems by taking into account their opinions. Using only examinations as a tool of dynamism to be brought to the profession with career steps is not appropriate. Career steps should be considered a process for the development of teachers. Measures should also be taken for preparation for the process, implementation of the process and post-process stages.

Theme 2: Interaction of the Career Steps Examination with the Teaching Profession

Participants found no relationship between the career steps examination and the teaching profession. Participant 6 expressed, *"I don't see any relationship."* Here are the reasons for this situation: Distance education: Teachers receive distance education. Participant 18 advocated face-to-face education instead of distance education: *"Some training needs to be face-to-face and more fluent..."* However, participants emphasized the need for training and stated that they benefited from the training provided. Participant 28 said, *"With this exam, teachers were given an educational perspective. Teachers were informed about the psychological and social development of the students regarding their age groups."*

Exam time: According to participants, preparing for the exam to be held in November 2022 in the summer months limited their opportunities to take a vacation. For example, participants complained about this issue as *"The timing is wrong..."* (Participant 15) and *"...coinciding with the summer vacation period is a huge handicap."* (Participant 12).

Criterion: Participants argued that seniority and experience should be taken as the basis, not the exam. Participant 24 said, *"...I think that the arrangement to be made should be based on experience, not exams..."*. Participant 3 *"voiced," "... certain year intervals can be determined, and thus teachers who have worked in those years can be paid a little higher..."*

Besides, participants found the current exam process more professional compared to the previous one held for the first time in 2006. Participant 1 said, *" Compared to the previous one, the ministry prepared a more professional exam."* Participant 14 *voiced, "...Compared to the previous exam, this exam did not evaluate all subjects in the same category..."*

The researchers believe that the participants did not find the career ladder exam appropriate for the teaching profession. They emphasize that seniority should be brought to the fore in terms of evaluation criteria. However, the current exam is more professional and has a branch-based structure compared to the previous exam.

Theme 3: Suggestions about the Teaching Profession

Based on the teaching profession law, the participants stated their expectations for the teaching profession and the desired regulations under two themes. They underlined the necessity of the following elements to make the teaching profession better: Education should be the basis while making arrangements. Participants divide the training into two categories: The education to be received through education faculties before starting the profession and the education to be given during the profession. The training will contribute to the renewal and development needs of teachers at every stage of the teaching profession. For example, Participant 21 argued that *"...Faculties of education should be more comprehensive and selective..."* Participant 23 underlined the importance of faculties of education as *"Faculties of education should be preferred by the students with the highest score..."* Participant 24 stated that *"...faculties of education should be reconsidered and reorganized..."*

Participants did not see the training to be covered in the profession as separate from other training. They underlined the importance of educational activities for professional development. For example, Participant 25 emphasized that *"...in-service training courses should be responsive..."* Participant 16 *"In-service training can be expanded on critical issues related to the teaching profession and on the use of technology."*

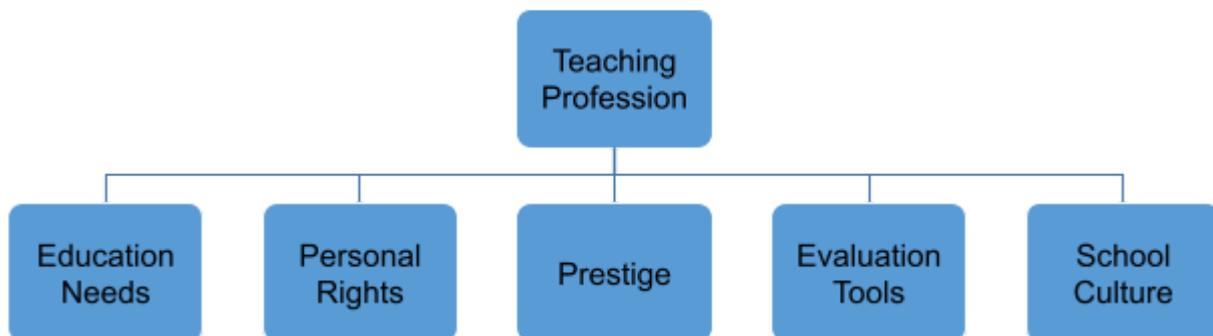
The second element of the model regarding the teaching profession is to consider the personal rights of teachers. Participants argue that reaching the desired level of personal rights will bring many benefits to the teacher and the school. Participant 3 argued that *"The status, personal rights and working conditions of teachers need to be regulated so that teachers regain their roles that are disappearing in society."* Participant 19 expected his rights to be legally guaranteed by saying *"First of all, I think that structural arrangements should be made to strengthen teachers' hand."* The third element of the model is the status of teachers. This situation, which is stated in the other two themes, shows how much teachers care about their prestige in society. Participants valued the place of the profession in society. Participant 13 mentioned this point in the personal rights part while Participant 18 said, *"Works that aim to increase the prestige of the profession..."* The fourth element of the model

is the evaluation of teachers' work. Participants advocated that the evaluation process should include not only career steps examinations but also seniority and works of teachers. Participant 2 said, "...I would like career steps to be based on performance and education other than the exam, and there should be objective criteria regarding this." Participant 20 stated that "...the training teachers received on career steps should be evaluated with their projects." Finally, according to participants, if attention is paid to the mentioned issues, the desired culture can be formed in the school, the teachers can be motivated, and the work peace in the school can be formed. Participant 1 said, "...I think it is more important to make teachers adopt the school culture." Participant 11 voiced, "...Supporting teachers financially and morally, ensuring that their working conditions are freer, supporting teachers' right to education, not confronting parents, considering teacher satisfaction as well as parent satisfaction."

According to the researchers, valuing the teaching profession has an impact on the environment, starting with school. Valuing the teaching profession is also important in terms of shaping the school culture in the desired direction. Figure 1 presents the model, which is based on the opinions of the participants regarding the teaching profession.

Figure 1

Model for the Teaching Profession



As is seen in Figure 1, the teaching profession includes different components and is based on the implementation of these components together. It also requires qualifications that encompass both the individual and professional life of the teacher. Finally, it can be stated that Figure 1 indicates a model for the profession to be fulfilled in a process and without neglecting each component.

Findings and Interpretations Obtained from the Documents

Two official documents, one official website and the book (*Rethinking Education in Turkey*) written by the Minister of National Education (Prof. Dr. Mahmut Özer) including his views on the subject were reviewed. In qualitative research, official reports can be used as documents (Christensen, Johnson, and Turner, 2015; Patton, 2014).

1. Teaching Profession Law No. 7354 published in the Official Gazette dated 14.02.2022: The law, which consists of 3 parts and 12 articles, aims "to regulate the appointments and professional development of teachers in charge of carrying out education and training services, and their development in career steps." (MEB, 2022). In addition to defining the teaching profession, the Law presents an approach that prioritizes explaining the teaching career steps starting from Article 6 after mentioning the qualifications and selection of teachers and being a candidate teacher.

2. Specialist Teacher Training Program/Head Teacher Training Program and Teaching Career Steps Written Examination Announcement 2022: The document consists of 6 titles and 2 appendices. The document includes explanations regarding the exam, training program, professional studies, and exemption from the exam as specified in the relevant law. The appendix involves the exam schedule and exam topics (MEB, 2022).

3. Statistics published by the Ministry of National Education on 19.06.2022 on its website: Official statistics provide data on the teaching career steps examination. The Minister stated that "603 thousand 864 applications were received for the Teaching Career Steps Training. 533 thousand 359 of these applications were made for being specialist teaching and 70 thousand 505 for being a head teacher." (MEB, 2022).

4. The book written by the Minister of National Education (Prof. Dr. Mahmut Özer) (*Rethinking Education in Turkey*): The author expresses his views on the Teaching Profession Law in the second part of the book (p. 137-142). The author also mentions 4 areas in order to find solutions to the problems arising from practice, and one of these areas is the empowerment of teachers (Özer, 2022).

Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

Investigating the impact of the teaching profession law upon the teaching profession, the present study has reported various deficiencies of the related law enacted in 2022. The law was criticized for limiting the teaching profession to exams and the economic return of the exam. The law is also seen as inadequate as the problems and expectations of the teaching profession are enacted without adequately taking the opinions of the teachers. However, the professional determinant includes the fact that the teacher feels comfortable while performing his/her duty, that his/her duty-responsibilities are clear and that his performance in teaching is considered (Özerdem, 2022). The other determinants are the socio-economic structure of the teaching profession (Torun, 2010), the prestige of the teaching profession, economic regulations, and professional development studies (Warwick, 2014). According to the TALIS 2018 report, 73.9% of teachers in Turkey do not agree with the following statement: "I think the teaching profession is valued in society." (Ceylan, Özdoğan Özal, Sever & Boyacı, 2020). Regulations for teachers' personal rights have positive reflections on the school, such as increased motivation, increased performance, and quality at work (Chamberlin, Wragg, Haynes & Wragg, 2002). Although the teaching profession is beloved and sincerely accepted and includes social-economic concerns (Çelikel, 2019), the efforts for development and renewal indicate that there are continues efforts in line with the purpose of the teaching profession (Akbaşlı & Balıkçı, 2013). Teacher must internalize and develop a professional understanding of teaching. The teachers' awareness of their roles is also important in terms of professional values (De Ruyter & Kole, 2009). The findings of this research show similarities with the literature (socio-economically based). This is significant in terms of emphasizing which aspects the law should include. However, this study will contribute to the literature in terms of bringing the issues related to the teaching profession to the agenda based on more detailed and up-to-date data.

The career steps examination has a limited contribution to the teaching profession. The main reasons for the limited contribution are the way the education is delivered, the criteria determined, and the timing of the evaluation. On the other hand, the content of the training and the arrangements made according to the previous exam are positive developments. Although merit and justice were taken as criteria in the first exam, there were problems in practice, and the desired efficiency could not be achieved (Demir, 2011). Özer (2022) advocates that the law has contributed to teacher professional development and aimed to make the development sustainable by paving the way for postgraduate education. However, although teachers consider themselves competent both professionally and individually, they see the professionalization level of teaching as insufficient (Bayhan, 2011; Spires, 2020). Personal, institutional, and socio-economic aspects must be considered together to be successful and overcome problems. In order for teachers to do their profession better, they should act freely (Nolan & Molla, 2019), good planning must be done, and an infrastructure (human and material resources) must be developed based on the plan (Vaillant, 2007). The implementation of the specified solution proposals will pave the way for teachers to do professional work (Nolan & Molla, 2019). The findings are in parallel with the literature. However, since there is no study in the literature about the use of exams in evaluating the teaching profession, we could not make a comparison between the research findings. The present study is considered important as it shows that the exam and exam preparation process is not a desired approach in the teaching profession.

The teaching profession requires the interaction of various elements such as training that can contribute to development and innovation before and after starting the profession, legal measures for the development of professional rights at the desired level, practices that will bring the dignity of teaching to the agenda, and evaluation of teachers' work as a whole (training, examination, activities).

This situation indicates that the teaching profession needs revision (Özer, 2022). Teachers should make efforts to continuously improve themselves to increase their qualifications (Erarslan, 2022). They should also attend conferences on professional topics. Such activities enable teachers to increase their knowledge and professional sensitivity, and support the culture of being a strong community (Rimmer & Floyd, 2020). Besides, some issues are crucial for the development of the teaching profession, such as having a research-based policy (Erdem & Kingir, 2021; Leuverink & Aarts, 2021); providing political support, providing adequate and effective education, environmental perspective and, support for (formal-informal) education (Talbert, 2002); an environment based on learning from their own work experience (Rinkinen, 2018). Despite all these expectations, the problems experienced by teachers regarding their personnel and living standards negatively affect the prestige of the profession (Atak, 2019). Teachers want their efforts to be reflected in their social status (Erarslan, 2022) and expect ethical values to be implemented both individually and professionally (Şahin & Yüksel, 2021). The research specifically highlights the social prestige and educational needs of teachers. Although the literature reports similar findings, the current research will contribute to the literature as it has delved into the education dimension in more detail and emphasized the importance of professional dignity.

Based on the findings, the following suggestions can be recommended for practitioners: (i) The teaching profession law can be revised through the opinions of the stakeholders. (ii) Issues related to the profession, especially the prestige of the teaching profession, can be included in the law. (iii) Training can be conducted face to face. Seniority and experience can be given more importance for career steps. (iv) The content of the training for teachers can be enriched. (v) The teaching profession law can be revised to reflect a school culture based on teachers' educational needs, personal rights, status and evaluations. The following suggestions can be recommended for researchers: (i) Further research can be conducted using different methods. (ii) Further research can be conducted by taking into account those who are in different status and affected by the law. (iii) Replication studies can be conducted by considering based on the examination held within the scope of the law and the rights to be obtained. (iv) Thus, the process can be considered from a broader perspective.

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