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*Research Article*

**EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS' OPINIONS ABOUT THEIR PROFESSIONS AND CAREERS**

**Arzu KUŞ**

[Arzuu.glc@gmail.com](mailto:Arzuu.glc@gmail.com)

Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı/Türkiye

**Şakir KUŞ**

[Sakirkus@gmail.com](mailto:Sakirkus@gmail.com)

Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı/Türkiye

**Mehdi TOĞRUL**

[mehditugrul@gmail.com](mailto:mehditugrul@gmail.com)

Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı/Türkiye

**Handan ÇAKMAK**

[handacakmak64@gmail.com](mailto:handacakmak64@gmail.com)

Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı/Türkiye

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# ÖĞRETMENLERİN MESLEK VE KARIYERLERİNE YÖNELİK GÖRÜŞLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ

## ÖZET

Bu çalışma nitel araştırma modeli ve desenlerine göre yürütülmüştür. Nitel araştırma, bir alanda derinlemesine veri toplanmasını içeren bir araştırma biçimidir. Araştırmanın katılımcılarını belirlemek için amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden ölçüt örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Bu araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 22 öğretmen oluşturmaktadır. Veri toplama aracı olarak, alanyazın taranarak ve araştırmacının tecrübelerinden faydalanılarak; araştırmanın amaçları doğrultusunda hazırlanan nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden görüşme tekniğiyle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Bu araştırmanın verileri veri toplama formunun son halinin hazırlanmasından sonra 2024-2025 Eğitim-Öğretim yılının güz döneminde toplanmıştır. Araştırmada içerik analizi yapılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonucuna göre öğretmenler kariyer basamaklarındaki yükselme çalışmalarının sıkıntılı olduğu, ayrımcılığa neden olduğu uygulamaların yanlış ve kriterlerin yetersiz olduğunu belirtmektedirler.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Öğretmen, meslek kanunu, kariyer basamakları.

## ABSTRACT

This study was conducted according to the qualitative research model and patterns. Qualitative research is a form of research that involves in-depth data collection in a field. Criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the participants of the study. The study group of this study consists of 22 teachers. As a data collection tool, a semi-structured interview form with the interview technique, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in line with the objectives of the study by scanning the literature and benefiting from the experiences of the researcher. The data of this study was collected in the fall semester of the 2024-2025 Academic Year after the final version of the data collection form was prepared. Content analysis was conducted in the study. According to the results of the study, teachers state that career advancement efforts are problematic, practices that cause discrimination are wrong, and criteria are inadequate.

**Key Words:** Teacher, professional law, career steps.

## Giriş

Teaching is among the oldest professions. It is estimated that this profession began with the history of humanity. Educational activities have existed in every environment where knowledge and culture are transferred to people through the act of teaching and educating (Ersoy, 2018). The knowledge, skills, technological competence, attitudes and values that teachers have based on the education they receive primarily affect the students they interact with and then the society they are stakeholders in (Altan and Özmusul, 2022). When the reforms related to education in the international arena from the past to the present are considered, it is seen that the most critical factor is teachers and that teachers have a key role in the education process. In this respect, it can be said that the success of education systems in the world depends on teacher training systems. In terms of responding quickly to change, teacher qualifications, working conditions and motivation come to the fore. Reform initiatives that are not internalized and adopted by teachers will not be successful, therefore will not be reflected in the classroom environment and will not have a positive effect on student development.

The teaching profession, which plays a mediating role in the transfer of universal and local cultural heritage and in the realization of the potential of individuals and strives for these situations, has a different and special place than other professions in the past and today. Today, the teaching profession is a profession that has social, cultural, economic, scientific and technological dimensions related to the education sector, and has a professional status that requires academic study and professional formation based on special expert knowledge and skills in the field (Hacıoğlu and Alkan, 1997). A qualified teacher is someone who has mastered the subject matter knowledge, has pedagogical formation, knows his/her intellectually developed students and is aware of their individual needs, can communicate effectively, can empathize and has management competencies (Çakıroğlu, 2005). In addition, the teacher is expected to diversify his/her pedagogical strategies, be sensitive to development, be able to make self-assessments, have a high level of motivation, be able to cope with change, be able to share with colleagues and collaborate with experts and do teamwork (Canpolat, 2011).

In 2015, the Turkish Qualifications Framework prepared within the framework of European Qualifications entered into force. Although teaching as a career profession took its place in the upper policy documents years ago, the application of teaching career ladder, excluding administrative positions, was first implemented in 2005. Until this date, in the single-degree teaching career system, teachers were subjected to an exam as administrative positions and were able to hold the title of “assistant principal, assistant principal, principal and branch manager”. The Ministry of National Education published the Regulation on Advancement in Teaching Career Ranks in the Official Gazette dated 30.08.2005 and numbered 25905 in order to “increase the status of the teaching profession, contribute to the professional development of teachers and train more qualified teachers”. In the regulation, the teaching profession is divided into three separate career ladders: teacher, expert teacher and head teacher. The career steps of teachers are defined as progressing by gaining the necessary competencies "from teacher to expert teacher, from expert teacher to head teacher" (ÖKBYY, 2005).

In the 2023 Teacher Career Steps Exam, 58,965 candidates from the Ministry staff, private educational institutions and outside the Ministry of National Education applied for the title of specialist teacher and 3,921 candidates applied for the title of head teacher. 58,614 specialist teacher candidates and 3,883 head teacher candidates participated in the online exam. The participation rate among those who applied was 99.40 percent for specialist teacher and 99.03 percent for head teacher. Title changes and salary increases were made with the exams held in writing in 2022 and online in 2023 (MEB, 2023).

The scope of the research is "What are the views of teachers on career steps in the professional law?"

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine teachers' views on career steps in the professional law.

### **Sub-Objectives of the Research**

Within the scope of the research, questions regarding the following sub-objectives will also be answered:

1. What are the general views on the current system regarding career ladders?
2. What are the thoughts on the criteria for promotion in career ladders?
3. What is the meaning of the exam process in career ladders?

4. If any stage has been reached in career ladders, what are the difficulties encountered in this process?
5. Do career ladders contribute to the development of the teaching profession?
6. What are the views on the fairness and appropriateness of the criteria used in determining career ladders?
7. What are the views on the education and exam processes regarding career ladders?
8. What are the views on the support and opportunities provided to teachers for each stage in career ladders?
9. What are the views on the inequality between teachers in the career ladder promotion process?
10. What are the views on whether career ladders affect parents' teacher selection?
11. What are the views on the discriminatory effect of career ladders on teachers?
12. What are the suggestions to improve the career ladder system or make it more effective?

### **Importance of the Research**

The Teaching Profession Law and the Regulation on Candidate Teachers and Teaching Career Steps are of great interest to all teachers and the education community. The teaching career steps, which were first implemented in 2005, were disrupted for many years and were put into practice again in 2022 with the Teaching Profession Law No. 7554, and promotion exams were held in the teaching career steps for two consecutive years. The first studies on teaching career steps are related to two years of experience and the scope of the relevant regulation.

The studies conducted between 2010-2021 are pro and con studies regarding the discussions on re-establishing teaching career ladders. The studies conducted since 2022 are mostly studies evaluating the Law on the Profession of Teachers No. 7554 and addressing career ladders in this context. Career ladder regulation is widely discussed in terms of criteria, implementation and results. Therefore, there is a need for research that directly focuses on the subject academically. In terms of education policy, it is important to increase teacher competencies in general and the qualifications of teachers working in the education system and to improve their performance. It is thought that this has a strong connection with career development studies. Bringing career ladders to teaching is the product of this approach. However, it is widely discussed whether career ladders will create the expected effect and

whether the application will be effective in its current form, and strong hesitations are expressed on this issue. This research, based on the opinions of teachers and school administrators, aims to make a modest contribution to the policy field.

### **Method**

This study was conducted according to the qualitative research model and patterns. Qualitative research is a form of research that involves in-depth data collection in a field. Data is collected in natural environments over a long period of time, regarding different variables (Merriam, 2013). Since the opinions of teachers about the teaching career steps and the criteria, problems and suggestions regarding the teaching career steps based on these opinions were tried to be examined from an interpretive perspective, the basic qualitative research design was used in the study. It was tried to reveal how classroom teachers perceive career steps through the basic qualitative research design. This model was chosen so that teachers could express their opinions about the career steps application sincerely and in-depth.

### **Study Group**

The study group of the study consists of teachers working in the Çankaya district of Ankara. Criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the participants of the study. Criterion sampling is the selection of situations that meet a series of predetermined criteria in accordance with the purpose of the study (Patton, 2005). When determining the participants of this study, it was accepted as a criterion that teachers are in different career stages and have at least five years of professional experience. The study group of this study consists of 22 teachers. The demographic distribution of the teachers who make up the study group of this study is given in the table below.

**Table 1.** Distribution of the study group

<b>Katılımcılar</b>	<b>Cinsiyet</b>	<b>Medeni durumu</b>	<b>Branş</b>	<b>Kıdem yılı</b>
Ö1	Woman	Single	Turkish	6-10 Yıl
Ö2	Male	Single	Maths	6-10 Yıl
Ö3	Woman	Single	Social studies	6-10 Yıl
Ö4	Woman	Married	Turkish	16-20 Yıl
Ö5	Woman	Single	Science	6-10 Yıl
Ö6	Male	Married	Science	16-20 Yıl
Ö7	Male	Married	Social studies	16-20 Yıl
Ö8	Woman	Married	Turkish	16-20 Yıl
Ö9	Woman	Single	Turkish	6-10 Yıl
Ö10	Woman	Married	Science	11-15 Yıl
Ö11	Male	Married	Maths	11-15 Yıl
Ö12	Male	Single	Physical education	6-10 Yıl
Ö13	Woman	Married	Physical education	11-15 Yıl
Ö14	Woman	Single	Music	6-10 Yıl
Ö15	Male	Single	Science	6-10 Yıl
Ö16	Woman	Married	Maths	11-15 Yıl
Ö17	Male	Single	Turkish	11-15 Yıl
Ö18	Woman	Married	Physical education	16-20 Yıl
Ö19	Male	Married	Picture	21-25 Yıl
Ö20	Male	Married	Music	16-20 Yıl
Ö21	Male	Married	Turkish	21-25 Yıl
Ö22	Male	Married	Social studies	11-15 Yıl

When the seniority distribution is examined, it is seen that 8 people have 6-10 years, 6 people have 11-15 years, 6 people have 16-20 years, and 2 people have 21-25 years of seniority. There are 11 male teachers and 11 female teachers in total, and there are also 2 single and 13 married teachers. 6 of the teachers are Turkish, 3 are mathematics, 3 are social studies, 4 are science, 3 are physical education, 2 are music, and 1 is a painting graduate.

### **Data Collection**

As a data collection tool, a semi-structured interview form was used with the interview technique, one of the qualitative research methods prepared in line with the purposes of the research, by scanning the literature and benefiting from the experiences of the researcher. The data of this research was collected in the fall semester of the 2024-2025 Academic Year after the final version of the data collection form was prepared. In the study, an "open-ended written opinion form" was prepared, which included questions addressing the career ladder application of teachers from different aspects. In order to prepare the relevant form, the

literature was examined in detail, similar studies conducted on this subject were examined, discussions on written and social media were followed, and a question pool was prepared. Verilerin Analizi

In the study, the data obtained by asking the teachers questions in the open-ended written opinion form prepared for the purpose of the study were analyzed with the descriptive analysis method. The data consisted of main themes and subthemes in order to capture a certain integrity of meaning. The aim of this type of analysis is to present the obtained findings to the reader in an organized and interpreted form. In this direction, the data obtained as a result of the interviews were analyzed and the findings were interpreted systematically. In the descriptive analysis, the study is supported by including direct quotes in order to reflect the opinions of the participants in a cause-effect relationship (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018).

## **Findings And Comments**

### **Views on the First Sub-Problem**

The teachers were asked the following question: “What are your general opinions about the current system regarding career ladders?” and their answers were examined. The teachers stated their opinions about the current system regarding career ladders as follows: It is necessary to distinguish between teachers with an academic career and those without, I have always been at the same level in my career and change is needed, the application of career ladders in teaching is not correct, there is no need for classification, compensation should be increased according to degree, it is an inconsistent system, the current system is inadequate, it is not fair, it is not right to have exams in career ladders, career ladder compensation should be reflected in retirement, there should be a career ladder system, it is a system that does not fulfill its function, there should be no distinction between experts among teachers, everyone should be given without exams according to a certain seniority, and career ladders are unfair. Sample interviews on the subject are given below:

*T4: “I think it is a late situation, I think career ladders will keep teachers’ desire for self-development alive and provide motivation” T7: “There should be a career ladder according to a certain number of years of work and certain equipment features. However, this system does not classify under the name of career but classifies according to seniority year” T8: “I do not think career ladders have a real effect on career. Because they only affect the*



*salary increase. It also does not contribute to retirement. In other words, we can say that it is a completely virtual application” T14: “The career ladder system aims to encourage teachers to continuously develop themselves and thus increase the quality of education” T19: “I do not think this system is functional in practice. I do not find it appropriate for teachers who do the same job under the same conditions to be named differently” T22: “There should be career ladders. I think it is necessary for teachers to keep up with development and change”*

### **Opinions on the Second Sub-Problem**

The teachers were asked the question “Can you share your thoughts on the criteria for promotion in career ladders?” and their answers were examined. The teachers explained their opinions on the criteria for promotion in career ladders as; encouraging, such a distinction should be made not by exams but by seniority, career ladders are formed according to healthy criteria, there should be a truly fair order, the situation should not change according to political ideologies, it is an illogical system, promotion criteria should be measured by professional competence and should be a fair gain, it should be based on years and should be given to all teachers in a certain seniority year, the system should be developed a little more, it is the right stage to have no exams, it is a purposeless and meaningless approach at the moment, criteria such as master's degree should be included instead of exams and scientific studies should be added, only seniority is considered, every teacher should be a versatile educator who is open to continuous learning and improves himself/herself, it should be based on experience, the criteria cause injustice among teachers. Sample interviews on the subject are given below:

*T1: “I don’t think it’s right for the promotion criteria to be based on years. Young but successful teachers should also be included in this system.” T2: “I don’t think the criteria in the promotion criteria are healthy. The promotion part after a master’s degree and doctorate may be logical, but it is important to successfully apply this expertise in practice.” T7: “I think that the management should be selected with methods that are not limited to theoretical knowledge and exams, and these selections should be made fairly.” T16: “I think that especially the first ten years of teaching are more productive than the other years. Therefore, I don’t think it’s right to be considered an expert as you get older.” T20: “The only criterion for an individual to advance in their profession and hold certain titles cannot be how many years they have been doing that job. This is a criterion that has no meaning on its own.”*

### **Opinions on the Third Sub-Problem**

Teachers were asked the question, “What does the examination process in career stages mean to you?” and their answers were examined. Teachers explained their opinions on the subject as unnecessary, damaging reputation, completely meaningless, stressful, humiliating, unfair, formality, waste of time. Sample interviews on the subject are given below:

*T9: “I find the exam unnecessary for an educator who has gained a certain professional experience and has served in the field for years.” T17: “I do not find it fair that our competence in our profession, which we have been doing devotedly for years, is subjected to exams at certain intervals.” T18: “There is no point. You cannot measure whether a teacher is an expert with an exam.” T21: “The exam was unnecessary and seemed to mock the teacher’s mind.”*

### **Views on the Fourth Sub-Problem**

The teachers were asked the following question: “Have you advanced to any level in your career so far? If so, what were the difficulties you encountered during this process?” and their answers were examined. The teachers stated their views on whether they had the opportunity to advance in their careers according to their current situation and the difficulties they encountered; they were entitled to a master's degree without taking the exam, there were not many problems in the process, the exam was taken out of necessity and some people protested the exam, it was a very easy and ridiculous exam with low intelligence levels, those who did not encounter difficulties activated their thesis master's degree in the system, and having to watch very long videos in a short time during the exam preparation process made things difficult. Sample interviews on the subject are given below:

*T4: “My expert teacher, after watching the lessons in the videos for days and constantly solving questions, we took an exam that made fun of my intelligence level” T8: “Although I did not accept it in the first year and resisted, since we were a minority, I had to take the exam in the second year and was given the title of expert, but it was a big waste of time for us...” T12: “Yes. Having to watch very long videos in a short time. If the time was longer, it could have been watched more efficiently” T19: “I became an expert teacher. It*

*was not difficult, I did not take the exam because I am doing my master's degree. I do not think the exam was a measure”*

### **Views on the Fifth Sub-Problem**

The teachers were asked the following question: “How do you think career ladders contribute to the development of the teaching profession?” and their answers were examined. Teachers stated their views on the contributions of career ladders to the development of the teaching profession as follows: It has no contribution, the same responsibility is taken, there is no difference, there is no increase other than the label, it does not contribute to my professional development, it rarely provides professional motivation, it does not provide any benefit other than alienating me from the profession, it does not provide anything other than an additional income to the salary, it provides very little support in terms of better performance and motivation, respect, trust, being an example and benefiting from experiences, and it is not a step that will develop the teaching profession. Sample interviews on the subject are given below:

*T2: “I don’t think it has contributed, these titles only have a material meaning for us. No one mentions their titles in the field, parents don’t bring it up” T9: “Teaching is a profession that involves responsibility, those who don’t know responsibility work with a clear conscience, but this value can’t be gained with seniority or academic skills, it should be difficult to enter teacher vocational schools” T10: “I don’t think it has contributed to professional development, these steps cause teachers to be evaluated incorrectly by parents”*

### **Views on the Sixth Sub-Problem**

The teachers were asked the question “How do you evaluate the criteria used in determining career steps and the way they are implemented?” and their answers were examined. The teachers explained their opinions about the criteria used in determining career steps and the way they are implemented as follows; it is an empty system, the exam is insufficient in terms of measurement and evaluation, it is simple and unnecessary, it is not logical to have an exam, the salary should be increased according to the years of seniority, the criterion should not be the exam, professional experience can be taken as a basis, the fact that there is nothing clear in the application is a major problem, the criteria and style are very wrong, extremely simple and far from the purpose, insufficient and unsuccessful, meaningless

and far from justice, inconsistent and the exam is humiliating, it should not only be based on years, and young but successful people should also be included in the system in some way. Sample interviews on the subject are given below:

*T1: "I don't find the aging and the exams sufficient. Good teaching is not related to anything other than the person's character and love for the profession." T5: "I consider it a great disgrace to teachers. It is extremely shameful for people who have been practicing this profession for many years to gain the title of expert teacher through an exam." T10: "I don't think the exam should be the determinant of this job, I think these titles are not given based on any qualifications." T17: "I don't think the application is carried out in a reliable and healthy manner that complies with real criteria."*

### **Views on the Eighth Sub-Problem**

Teachers were asked the following question: "Can you explain your thoughts on the education and exam processes for career steps?" and their answers were examined. Teachers expressed their opinions on the subject as follows: unnecessary, teacher success or career cannot be measured by exams, unfair, training is not sufficient, unnecessary, its existence is unnecessary, irregular, the exam system is not approved, unqualified, formality, there should be trainings to develop our teachers in their professions and branches, it was an application carried out just for the sake of it. Sample interviews on the subject are given below:

*T11: "Getting professional training is important in terms of our good development and contribution to our students, it is useful to renew it at certain intervals" T15: "I think that what the teacher has done throughout her professional life should be taken into account with process evaluation, not with exams".*

### **Views on the Ninth Sub-Problem**

The teachers were asked the following question: "What are your views on the support and opportunities provided to teachers at each stage of their career?" and their responses were examined. The teachers explained their views on the subject as follows: no support, no opportunities, financial support should be provided to all teachers, not satisfactory, there is no benefit other than financial support, unfair, I do not find it sufficient, there is a lack of resources, too much support and opportunities are provided, there is support other than a

salary increase, most of the videos were unpleasant and far from teaching, I do not think there is support and opportunity, insufficient, a training academy would be good. Sample interviews on the subject are given below:

*T6: "After the first expert head teacher exam, no exams were held for many years and the funds were created, a routine should be established" T14: "Great injustices were done at the beginning. In fact, the exam itself is not a support but a hindrance"*

### **Views on the Tenth Sub-Problem**

The teachers were asked the following question: "What are your views on whether career stages affect parents' teacher selection?" and their answers were examined. The teachers stated their views on the subject as; its effect is limited, what is important is the teacher's teaching style, it may have an effect on primary school, I think parents are not very knowledgeable about this issue yet, conscious parents of course know that there is no difference but not everyone is the same, I have heard that it does, it may have an effect on primary school level, we have not encountered a problem with this issue yet, I have not seen such a problem in general but it causes problems in primary and secondary schools, parents prefer those with the title of head teacher or expert teacher for classroom teachers. Sample interviews on the subject are given below:

*T9: "I do not think that making teachers who have applied for and been accepted to teaching training take the exam again will have a positive effect."*

### **Views on the Eleventh Sub-Problem**

The teachers were asked the following question: "What are your views on career ladders having a divisive effect among teachers? Why?" and their answers were examined. The teachers stated their views on how career ladders would affect the school climate as follows: the situation varies depending on the school, people feel bad because of those who discriminate, friendships decrease, there are people who want to see themselves in someone else's shoes, if these titles are constantly brought up, a very negative atmosphere will be created, while they are a positive development for well-intentioned people, they can also cause conflicts from time to time because they cause injustice, the expert teacher or head teacher may think highly of themselves, there is an imbalance, doing the same job and

receiving different wages negatively affects the school climate, it is a divisive system for teachers, it creates prejudice, it can lead to conflict among teachers, and it can vary from school to school depending on the character and perspective of individuals. Sample interviews on the subject are given below:

*T2: "Having different classifications does not create a negative situation among teachers, we think everyone is equal because we do the same things" T7: "I think it will have a negative effect, in a way no one cares, it is only viewed positively because of its effect on salary increases" T11: "Although it is not in our school, we hear that unpleasant situations occur in many schools. Among teachers who do the same job, those with titles may be given privileges" T22: "If there is a certain and fair order, there will be no problem, but the exam system can cause good and bad distinctions in teacher relationships"*

### **Views on the Twelfth Sub-Problem**

The teachers were asked the following question: "What are your suggestions for improving the career ladder system or making it more effective?" and their answers were examined. The teachers' opinions on improving the career ladder system or making it more effective were as follows: They explain that the path should be opened for teachers who want to do master's and doctorate, those who gain experience in time should mostly be in the provincial or district Ministry of National Education, there can be no such thing as career ladders, seniors should be administrators or inspectors, it is not logical to make two classifications, there is no logic in having exams, teachers should make efforts for their own professional development, certificates can be given with training in certain years, seniority salary increases on an annual basis will be more effective, specialization studies should be carried out in the field, career ladders should be removed and everyone should be given their rights equally, it is not necessary to have such a system, the biggest gain would be to reflect the compensation received on retirement, teachers do not need career ladders, criteria and ladders can be differentiated, our knowledge and skills should increase by providing training at each ladder as our career progresses, more importance should be given to teacher development, and master's degree education should be encouraged and supported. Sample interviews on the subject are given below:

*T3: "It can be increased when the time comes, like the seniority that is received every 3 years or every 2 years in the east. In addition, the career ladder can be developed in*

*accordance with the success of the teacher. The salary can also be shaped accordingly.” T11: “Instead of a system focused only on seniority and exams, different development paths such as the trainings that teachers attend, projects, participation in national/international conferences, articles and research studies can also be taken into consideration for career ladder advancement.” T21: “There should be effective face-to-face trainings to be received in quality education faculties, to have a thesis-based master's degree, to have effective communication knowledge and skills, the trainings to be given should be of a quality that will develop teaching, not question it.”*

### **Conclusion, Discussion And Recommendations**

This study was conducted according to the qualitative research model and patterns. Qualitative research is a form of research that involves in-depth data collection in a field. The study group of the study consists of teachers in the Çankaya district of Ankara. Criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the participants of the study. The study group of this study consists of 22 teachers. As a data collection tool, the semi-structured interview form with the interview technique, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in line with the objectives of the study by scanning the literature and utilizing the experiences of the researcher. The data of this study was collected in the fall semester of the 2024-2025 Academic Year after the final version of the data collection form was prepared. Content analysis was conducted in the study. According to the results of the study, teachers state that career advancement efforts are problematic, practices that cause discrimination are wrong, and criteria are insufficient. The results obtained within this framework are as follows:

Teachers think about the current system regarding career ladders; teachers with an academic career should be distinguished from teachers without, I have always been at the same level in my career and change is needed, the application of career ladders in teaching is not correct, there is no need for classification, compensation should be increased according to degree, it is an inconsistent system. Teachers think about the criteria used in determining career ladders and the way they apply them; it is an empty system, the exam is insufficient in terms of measurement and evaluation, it is simple and unnecessary, it is not logical to have an exam, salaries should be increased according to seniority years, the criterion should not be exams, professional experience can be taken as basis.

Teachers think that the process of career advancement leads to inequalities among teachers; there is discrimination, an unnecessary gap is created, people make fun of each other because of the steps, there is financial inequality, it will negatively affect workplace peace and also damage the reputation of teachers in the eyes of students and parents, status and salary differences make teachers feel bad, and exams cannot measure performance.

Teachers think that in order to improve the career ladder system or make it more effective, there should be opportunities for teachers who want to do a master's degree or doctorate, those who gain experience over time should be included in the provincial or district MEB, there is no such thing as career ladders, and the criteria and ladders can be differentiated.

Baş, Kibar Furtun, Kapusızoğlu and Ulu Aslan (2023) concluded in their study that career separation in the teaching profession is not suitable for the structure of the teaching profession and that this practice is a formality developed for different salary practices. Bakioğlu and Banoğlu (2013) stated in their study that teachers mostly find the career ladder practice unfair, inadequate and unnecessary. Kaplan and Gülcan (2020) stated in their study that career ladder promotion should not be through exams. They stated that careers should be based on professional seniority years in the career ladder practice, but the problem here is the long period between teacher-specialist teacher, specialist teacher-head teacher as professional seniority years. They suggested criteria such as “teacher evaluation results, central exam results, postgraduate education, punishments and awards received, publications made, projects prepared, in-service trainings attended” in career ladder promotion. Pınar and Dönel Akgül (2023) stated that they have some concerns that career ladders will separate teachers, discredit them, and cause inequality among teachers.

Based on the research results, the following recommendations can be developed:

- The working years determined for teacher career steps should be re-evaluated. Positive and negative views have been expressed regarding career steps.
- The majority of participating teachers are against having career ladders in the teaching profession. It is anticipated that the current practice will create problems among teachers, therefore it may be beneficial to address and re-evaluate the teaching career system in a holistic manner.



- It is not right to hold exams to determine the teaching career steps, there is a need to improve the way teachers are evaluated and diversify the evaluation criteria.

### Resources

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