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Research Article

Professional Learning of Teachers: A Qualitative Research

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Öğretmenlerin Mesleki Öğrenimi: Nitel Bir Araştırma

ÖZET

The purpose of this research is to examine the factors affecting teachers' professional learning. A total of 15 teachers participated in this study, which was conducted with qualitative research method and case study design. Convenient sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the participants of the study. A semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher in accordance with the relevant literature and the aims of the research was used to collect the research data. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the data. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre; öğretmen mesleki öğrenmesinin; öğretmen mesleği ile ilgili olarak kendini geliştirip yenilikleri takip etmesi olduğu, öğretmenlerin mesleki öğrenme süreçlerindeki en önemli faktörün yönetim ve öğrencilerle olan ilişkileri olduğu, öğretmenlerin mesleki öğrenme süreçlerini olumsuz etkileyen en büyük etkenin iyi yönetim kabiliyetine sahip olmayan idareciler ve sağlıklı olmayan ortamlar olduğu, öğretmenlerin mesleki öğrenme süreçlerini olumlu etkileyen en büyük faktörün görev aldıkları okuldaki idare ve meslektaşlarıyla aralarında işbirliği ve bunun sonucunda meydana gelen motivasyon olduğu, öğretmenlerin tamamının mesleki öğrenmeye açık olduğu, mesleki öğrenmelerinin önündeki engellerin, İş bilmez idareciler ve iletişimsiz zümreler olduğu ve mesleki gelişimin öğretmen kadar öğrencileri de olumlu olarak etkilediği görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen, okul yönetimi, öğrenme, mesleki öğrenme, durum çalışması

Teachers' Professional Learning: A Qualitative Study

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to examine the factors affecting teachers' professional learning. A total of 15 teachers working in primary and secondary schools participated in this study conducted in qualitative research method and case study design. Easily accessible sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the participants of the study. In the collection of research data, a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher in accordance with the relevant literature and the aims of the research was used. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the data. According to the results of the research; teacher professional learning; The most important factor in teachers' professional learning processes is their relationship with the management and students, the biggest factor that negatively affects the professional learning processes of teachers is the administrators who do not have good management skills and unhealthy environments, teachers' professional learning The biggest factor that positively affects their processes is the cooperation with the administration and colleagues at the school where they work, and the motivation that occurs as a result, that all teachers are open to professional learning, the obstacles to their professional learning are unskilled administrators and non-communicative groups, and professional development is positive It seems to affect.

Keywords: Teacher, school administration, learning, professional learning, case study

INTRODUCTION

Problem Status

Teachers have an active role in protecting and sustaining the values in the social structure and teaching new values to humanity (Tanel, Şengören and Tanel, 2007). Teacher qualifications are also important for the future of the country. As a matter of fact, a well-equipped teacher raises well-equipped students. Equipped-qualified students will be able to fulfill their duties rationally for the professional group they belong to. It is the basic obligation of states to raise good family members, good citizens and professional personnel. Therefore, the state fulfills these obligations through teachers. In short, the success and efficiency of the education system is directly related to the qualifications of the teachers who will run the system (Çetin, 2006).

The professional learning process can be defined as the process of developing the abilities and skills that teachers need in order to provide effective educational results from students (Kent, 2004). Conceptually, teachers' self-improvement and learning processes; It is explained in various terms such as personnel development, in-service training, professional development and continuing professional development. Some well-edited global journals have recognized professional development as a field of study and focus on continuous development and learning as a specific level of education or field of study (CDEST, 18).

Failure to ensure full compatibility between the teaching profession chosen by people and their individual qualifications indicates that certain roles are adopted in the practice of the profession. Thus, when teachers cannot fully adapt, students are also negatively affected by the process (Tezcan, 2001). Teachers' ability to learn knowledge and develop their skills is as important as their behavior in teaching (Çam and Üstün, 2016). As a matter of fact, today, sustainable change continues to rapidly change people's lives, and the information individuals learn at an early age is not sufficient for the rest of their lives (Akbaş and Özdemir, 2002).

Professional learning consists of processes and activities prepared to advance teachers' professional interests, abilities and behaviors in order to develop their students (Guskey, 2000). Therefore, in the social structure, teachers should be lifelong learning leaders who will represent an example to the public. Teachers should be role models for their students in every aspect and nurture their desire to learn. As a matter of fact, the generation that desires to learn will represent the leaders of the contemporary world (Çam and Üstün, 2016).

Most of the professional learning and development activities carried out in our country consist of a wide range of seminars or workshops that are far from efficiency and practice. On the other hand, continuing teacher activities in a serious and planned manner during the professional learning and development process; It also contributes to increasing the interaction of teachers, their continuity in the profession and increasing job satisfaction (İlğan, 2013). In this study, it is aimed to examine the factors affecting the professional learning process of teachers and to evaluate the situations that will activate the education and experience process and increase the productivity of teachers in the profession.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to examine the factors affecting teachers' professional learning.

METHOD

Research Method

This research was designed with qualitative research method and phenomenology pattern. In the phenomenology design, participants' opinions regarding the phenomenon under research are attempted to be revealed based on their experiences. These experiences, which are seen as ordinary, are of great importance for research (Ulaşkın, 2019). In this context, the current study tried to determine the factors affecting the professional learning of teachers working in educational institutions in the Karabağlar district of Izmir in 2021.

Participants

The participants of this study consist of a total of 15 teachers selected using criterion and maximum diversity sampling, which are among the purposeful sampling methods. The teachers participating in this study were selected from the participant group with as many different characteristics as possible in terms of demographic variables such as age, gender, and professional seniority. In this figure, maximum diversity sampling was used.

Table 1 The characteristics of the participants are given in the table below.

| | Age | Gender | Seniority | Educational Status | Marital Status | Number of Different Schools Worked at |
|----|-----|--------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | 29 | Male | 8. Year | Licence | Single | 3 |
| 2 | 39 | Male | 6/4 | Licence | Single | 11 |
| 3 | 28 | Female | Teacher | Licence | Single | 3 |
| 4 | 46 | Female | Teacher | Licence | Single | 5 |
| 5 | 32 | Female | Teacher | Licence | Single | 3 |
| 6 | 45 | Male | 21 | Licence | Single | 4 |
| 7 | 37 | Male | 4/1 | Degree | Married | 10 |
| 8 | 37 | Female | Assistant director | Licence | Married | 5 |
| 9 | 48 | Female | 1/4 | Licence | Married | 2 |
| 10 | 40 | Female | 15 | Degree | Single | 4 |
| 11 | 27 | Female | 6 | Licence | Married | 3 |
| 12 | 38 | Female | 5/2 | Licence | Married | 5 |
| 13 | 34 | Female | Teacher | Licence | Married | 2 |
| 14 | 49 | Female | 25 | Licence | Married | 3 |
| 15 | 49 | Male | 23 | Licence | Married | 4 |

Data Collection Tools

In this research, a semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool. This form was created based on the literature and expert opinions. The form contains 7 questions regarding the factors affecting teachers' professional learning. To ensure the validity of the form, the literature was scanned and previous studies were examined. In this context, semi-structured interview questions were prepared. To ensure reliability, participants were made to feel comfortable. Some sample questions from the form are as follows:

Analysis of Data

Descriptive analysis method was used in this research. The validity of the research was increased by direct quotations from the experiences of the participants and by explaining the results (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). For this reason, in order to increase the clarity of the purpose of the research, the forms collected by the researcher were examined, analyzed, and as a result, direct reference was made to the experiences of the participants. The data obtained as a result of the analysis was compared with the results of similar studies and tried to be classified.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

1. What is teacher professional learning? How would you define teacher professional learning?

Table 2. Opinions based on the question

| Themes | |
|--|---|
| It is the teacher's ability to improve himself and follow innovations in his profession. | 3 |
| It is experience | |

In Table 2, what is teacher professional learning? How do you define teacher professional learning? Participant opinions regarding the question were discussed. Accordingly, the majority of the participants (f = 13) answered, "It is the teacher's ability to improve himself and follow the innovations in his profession." Participants asked "What is teacher professional learning? How do you define teacher professional learning?" A few of his own statements regarding the question are given below:

"It is experience and experiences. Efficient and effective learning are necessary experiences for the teaching process. I define it as necessary and essential for a teacher, whether it is gained in the field or supported by seminars. "I define it with experience and maid training" (f=2)

2. What are the factors that affect your professional learning process?

Table 3. Opinions based on the question

| Themes | f |
|--|---|
| My relationship with the administration and students | 5 |
| Physical environments, people and way of life | 3 |
| Changing and developing world | 2 |
| Personal fulfillment | 2 |

Table 3 What are the factors affecting your professional learning process? Participant opinions regarding the question were discussed. Accordingly, the majority of the participants (f = 5) expressed it as "My relationship with the administration and students". A few of the participants' own statements on the subject are given below:

“My relationships with the administration and my students. Administrative and systemic flaws are factors that negatively affect it. Administration and students. “Administration, students, society and my colleagues.” (f=5)

“Along with the physical environments, the environment in which you socialize is the people and your way of life. “ (f=3)

“A changing and developing world.” (f=2)

“Personal and professional satisfaction. “Every new information changes and transforms people, the feeling of personal pleasure”

Other answers given are;

“Marital status ”

“Family problems,”

“Experience, observation and various academic seminars and courses.”

3. What are the factors that negatively affect your professional learning process?

Table 4. Opinions based on the question

| Themes | f |
|---|---|
| Administrators and environment that do not manage well | 5 |
| Social and cultural opportunities environmental factors | 4 |
| Time | 2 |

In Table 4, What are the factors that negatively affect your professional learning process?" Participant opinions were discussed regarding the question. Accordingly, most of the participants (f = 5) expressed it as *"Managers and environment that do not manage well"*. Here are a few of the respondents' own statements about their thoughts on this topic:

“ People who have nothing to do with my professional field manage the processes as administrators, not being able to receive feedback throughout the teaching process, and the general inadequacy of the education system. Management attitude. “Administrative and systemic flaws are factors that negatively affect it.” (f=5)

“Don't waste your time. “The routine tasks of daily life take too much time, the need for constant effort for personal development, and not being appreciated.” (f=2)

Other answers given are;

“Mobbing”

“Theoretical knowledge is too far from the field”

4. What are the factors that positively affect your professional learning process?

Table 5. Opinions based on the question

| Themes |
|---|
| Motivation through collaboration with colleagues and administration |
| Student's interest and success in the course |
| Desire to improve oneself, to be more efficient in education and training |

Table 5 What are the factors that positively affect your professional learning process? Participant opinions regarding the question were discussed. Accordingly, the majority of the participants (f = 6) expressed it as *"Motivation through cooperation with my colleagues and the administration"*. Here are some of the participants' own statements regarding their thoughts on this topic:

"My students' interest and participation in the lesson, the fair attitude of the school administration, and my interest in the lesson. Student success, interest and happiness motivate me. Personal satisfaction proportional to the success of the student and the pleasure of having taught something."

"(f=4) *"Desire to improve oneself, to be more efficient in education. Willingness and enthusiasm. The belief that knowledge makes people better equipped, the comfort of having information to share in academic environments, the opportunity to shape behaviors and ideas more accurately as they learn."* (f=3)

Other answers given are;

"Technology"

"We have a very good opportunity to practice"

5. Do you think you are open to professional learning? Explain?

Table 6. Opinions based on the question

| Themes | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Open to professional learning | 5 |

In Table 6, Do you think you are open to professional learning? Participant opinions regarding the question were discussed. Accordingly, all of the participants (f = 15) stated that "I am open to professional learning". Here are some of the participants' own statements regarding their thoughts on this topic:

"Yes. Because keeping up with change requires this. I think I am open to it because professional learning makes the teacher more equipped. Yes, I'm open. because I think there are things I can learn from students. I think this is the most important feature of our profession. Therefore, teachers should be open to professional learning. I know that we will learn a lot from our students, just as we teach many things to our students, so I think every teacher, administrators, teachers and parents who always think they know everything. In this way, teachers can raise generations that can provide personal motivation. should be open to professional learning.." (f=15)

6. In the research, "What are the obstacles to teachers' professional learning?Opinions on the question are expressed as follows.

6. What are the barriers to teachers' professional learning?

Table 7. Opinions based on the question

| Themes | f |
|--|---|
| Incompetent administrators, uncommunicative groups | 6 |
| Failure of the student. | 2 |
| Environmental Factors | 2 |
| Parent factor | 3 |

In Table 6, What are the obstacles to teachers' professional learning? Participant opinions regarding the question were discussed. Accordingly, the majority of the participants (f = 6) expressed it as "incompetent administrators, uncommunicative groups". Here are some of the participants' own statements regarding their thoughts on this topic:

“Environmental Factors. location of the school, parents, students, the environment of the school. School culture (whether there are teachers who are open to change or not.” (f=2)

“The guardian factor (officious types who always try to be involved).” (f=2)

Other answers given;

“Constant comparison between classes.”

“Student who does not study. “Failure of the student.”

“Economic factors.”

7. What are the consequences of teachers' professional learning?

Table 8. Opinions based on the question.

| Themes | f |
|---|---|
| Professional development positively affects students as well as teachers. | 7 |
| "It educates teachers who are better equipped, more knowledgeable and able to keep up with the times. | 5 |
| The more the teacher trains himself in this regard, the more the school culture develops. | 3 |

In Table 8, "What results does the professional learning of teachers produce?" Participant opinions regarding the question were discussed. Accordingly, the majority of the participants (f=6) stated that "Professional development positively affects students as well as teachers." Here are some of the participants' own statements regarding their thoughts on this topic:

“It educates teachers who are better equipped, more knowledgeable and able to keep up with the times. Individuals who know themselves and can always expand their boundaries are formed. Teachers keep up with dynamism. There are always up-to-date teachers who are not behind the times. “Well-equipped teacher, Well-equipped student, successful school.” (f=5)

“I think that school culture is created by the professional learning of teachers themselves. The more the teacher educates himself on this subject, the more the school culture develops. If the teacher improves, the school improves. “It provides a locomotive effect and moves the school forward in every aspect.” (f=3)

“Professional development positively affects students as well as teachers. It also positively affects academic self-confidence. It brings innovations to 100% education. I think that the impact of new modern approaches in schools will increase and become widespread and will contribute positively to the coloring of the learning environment. Research students, informed by the knowledge of qualified teachers who improve themselves according to the characteristics of the age, will be successful generations who attach importance to the national and moral values of the society and do this by faith and will, not by necessity. In this way, teachers can raise generations that can provide personal motivation. “In an environment of professional learning, personal conflicts are replaced by developmental activities in favor of the organization, allowing ideas to be born for continuous development and change.” (f=7)

Conclusion And Recommendations

Result

The findings obtained according to the answers given by the participants of the research are as follows;

In the research, *"What is teacher professional learning?" How do you define teacher professional learning? When asked the question, it is seen that there is a concentration in the answers: "It is the teacher's ability to improve himself and follow the innovations in his profession."* Accordingly, teacher professional learning; It is the teacher's ability to improve himself and follow the innovations regarding his profession.

In the research, *"What are the factors that affect your professional learning process?"* When asked the question, it is seen that there is a concentration in the answers *"My relationship with the administration and students"*. Accordingly, the most important factor in teachers' professional learning processes is their relationships with management and students.

In the research, *"What are the factors that negatively affect your professional learning process?"* When asked the question, it is seen that the majority of answers are *"Administrators and environment that do not manage well"*. Accordingly, the biggest factors that negatively affect teachers' professional learning processes are administrators who do not have good management skills and unhealthy environments.

In the research, *"What are the factors that positively affect your professional learning process?"* When asked the question, it is seen that there is a concentration in the answers *"Motivation through cooperation with my colleagues and the administration"*. Accordingly, the biggest factor that positively affects teachers' professional learning processes is the cooperation between them and their colleagues and the administration at the school where they work, and the resulting motivation.

In the research, *"What is the contribution of teachers' professional learning to school culture?"* When asked the question, it can be seen that all participants responded: *"It contributes positively to the development of school culture, increases communication between colleagues."*

Accordingly, as a result of their professional learning, teachers contribute to the school in every sense and increase success.

In the research, "*Do you think you are open to professional learning?*" Explain. When asked the question, "All teachers are open to professional learning." It seems that there is a concentration in the answers. Accordingly, all teachers are open to professional learning.

In the research, "*What are the obstacles to teachers' professional learning?*" When asked the question, it is seen that there is a concentration in the answers: "Incompetent administrators, uncommunicative groups". Accordingly, the obstacles to their professional learning are incompetent administrators and uncommunicative groups.

In the research, "*What results do teachers' professional learning produce?*" When asked the question, it is seen that there is a concentration in the answers "*Professional development positively affects the students as well as the teacher*". Accordingly, professional development positively affects students as well as teachers.

Suggestions

In order for teachers, the greatest asset of a country, to raise good generations, teachers must undertake professional training properly.

Management needs to support teachers in their professional learning processes and make this process efficient.

Since the biggest negative factors in teachers' professional learning processes are managers who do not have good management skills, in order to prevent this, it is necessary to take into account whether managers have certain characteristics when selecting them.

Administrators need to exhibit positive attitudes in order for teachers to work more efficiently and willingly and to experience their professional learning processes better and healthier.

In order to increase the success rates of schools, it is necessary to prepare the necessary environment for teachers' professional learning to be carried out in a healthy way.

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