

## Research on professional Turkish teacher law based on teachers' rights and freedoms

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### Abstract:

The "Teaching Profession Law" came into force in February 2022 to regulate the professional rights of teachers. The scope and purpose of this law are to regulate the professional development and career steps of teachers. This research aimed to determine the opinions of teachers about the new law of the profession. It is a descriptive study in survey design. Teachers (379 female, 285 male) from all school types, teaching levels, geographical regions, and seniority participated voluntarily in this study. Teachers think that the new professional law will not improve their rights and increase the prestige of the profession. Teachers think that the new law of professional development is not adequately discussed or discussed based on scientific data. According to teachers, the new professional law does not encourage professional development. Teachers stated that though they generally support the need for such a profession law, the new law should be discussed more opportunities that are promising should be offered to teachers.

### Keywords:

Professional development, teacher opinions, teaching profession, teaching profession law, teacher surveys.

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## INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of education systems is to train the staff of their countries. Every education system aims to achieve economic development and prosperity, to be a partner in competition in the global economy, and most importantly, it wants to develop its cultural assets and transfer them to future generations (Hirsch, 2008). To achieve this goal, they need to train staff with up-to-date knowledge and skills, adopt the cultural values of their society, and be respectful of different cultures. The main focus of educational institutions, which are the cornerstone of the community, is teachers. In general terms, from the point of view of current education, the teacher is a guide. The teacher is an advisor, rater, provides discipline, and is responsible for constructing social morality. In this respect, it is the teacher who builds up the next generation. As Atatürk (the founding father of the Republic of Turkey) stated, *“Teachers, the new generation will be your masterwork.”* The only way to achieve this is through a quality education process. As Andreas, the director of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), organized by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), stated, *“an education system can only be as good as its teachers”* (Altuntas, 2017).

It has been noted in various studies that the teacher factor is the most influential in educational outcomes (Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, & Goe, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2000). While the teaching profession is so important in building the future and society, it has faced various difficulties and contradictory policies in Turkey. For various reasons, due diligence in the teaching profession is postponed. It is frequently argued that it is still not at the expected and deserved level in the eyes of society and instructors today (Neyişçi, Turabik, Gün & Kısa, 2020). With the developments in science and technology and the changes in the social field, new roles have been defined for education in the international arena at the social, cultural, and economic levels. These new roles have strengthened the importance of education and made it the focus of different societal problems. In this respect, the search for better ways to quality education has gained more emphasis.

Although the understanding of quality in education is multidimensional, it is a subject that needs to be discussed over the different elements that make the education system holistic. Some research around the world measures the outputs of the education system, and according to the data obtained, different expectations and pressures occur in public (Gürbüz & Altun, 2019). As a reference, PISA evaluates and ranks education systems holistically. Finally, more than 600,000 students participated in PISA 2018, representing 32 million students aged 15 in 79 countries and economies (OECD, 2019). Turkey has been participating in the PISA survey since 2003. Although Turkey is the country that improved the average score in mathematics in PISA 2018 compared to PISA 2015 (MoNE, 2019), it is seen that no success has been achieved in the ranking. In summary, although there has been an improvement in the Turkish education system over the years, it is still not at the OECD average.

In the "Teaching and Learning International Survey" (TALIS) conducted by the OECD in 2018 with teachers in 48 countries, it was found that 50% of the participating teachers in all countries had a bachelor's degree, the highest level of education. In Turkey, on the other hand, it was found out that 75% of this rate is undergraduate degree as the highest education level. While the rate of teachers with postgraduate education among the teachers included in the research in OECD countries is 45.5%, it is 7.1% in Turkey. Similarly, in the annual report of the (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2019), the rate of personnel with postgraduate education was found as 9.07%. It has been stated that teacher education at the undergraduate level may be insufficient to provide quality education to students whose interests, needs, and expectations are constantly changing, as well as the increasing public expectation. Teaching activities have turned into a complex situation (İlğan, 2021). The teacher's education level is the third explanatory factor in predicting the mathematics achievement of Turkish students participating in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), TIMSS 2015 (Özkan, 2019). In Singapore, which has achieved very successful results in PISA and TIMSS research, it has been revealed that the students of teachers with postgraduate education are more successful than those of teachers with undergraduate education (Özkan, 2019). It has been stated that teachers with postgraduate education, who offer strong expertise and quality content, start the profession more prepared than those with undergraduate level (İlğan, 2021).

These concerns are now even more significant and are a topic of current debate. The reason for this is undoubtedly the "Teaching Professional Law," which came into force after being published in the Resmi Gazete dated February 14, 2022, and was enacted to regulate the professional rights of teachers. The scope and purpose of this law are declared to regulate teachers' professional development and career steps (Resmi Gazete, 2022). Although all circles accept the necessity of change, it is not easy for individuals in the organization to adapt to change management practices at the desired level.

The most common attitude within the organization against change practices has been observed as resistance (Pideritt, 2000). Although most organizational people complain about their situation, they are worried or even afraid of the change phenomenon (Hussey, 1997). The most common attitude within the organization against change practices has been observed as resistance (Pideritt, 2000). Although most organizational people complain about their situation, they are afraid or even afraid of the phenomenon of change (Hussey, 1997). Approaches to resistance have stated that resistance should not be a situation that should be prevented; on the contrary, it should be accepted as a helpful mechanism within the institution (Furst & Cable, 2008). Suppose the underlying causes of the resistance tendency are questioned. In that case, it may be possible to elucidate the factors that will lead to the failure of the change management process and re-determine and develop the goals as mutually acceptable (Lüscher and Lewis; 2008; Ford & Ford, 2009). Based on these concerns, this study will evaluate teachers' views on the newly enacted "teaching profession law in Turkey." It is seen that these new regulations on the teaching profession, which is an

essential issue in Turkey, are to encourage career planning and professional development for the teaching profession. The views of those who still practice the teaching profession and their views on change are determined. These views and relationships are explained with various descriptive statistics.

Turkish Education Association Coordinator Sunar stated that the law is far from integrity, the law is regulated without considering all the profession's processes, and there is no article regarding the problems experienced by teachers (ERG, 2022). Teacher unions, on the other hand, state that the bill's content in its current form is insufficient. Similarly, there are criticisms that the new professional law, enacted to solve teachers' problems, was prepared without asking teachers' opinions. In this respect, getting teachers' opinions affected by the new law in this study is valuable. The enactment of the teaching profession law is undoubtedly an excellent development besides its absence. However, it is thought that the data obtained from this study will be important in developing it in the current process and revealing teachers' views in the business's kitchen during this development phase.

### Teaching Profession in Turkey

The formal teacher training process in Turkey started in 1848 with the first teacher training school. With the changes made in the laws in the following years, teacher training was organized in 1924 and 1935, respectively. First, educational institutions were established in 1974 with the National Education Basic Law No. 1739 to train teachers at all levels at the higher education level. In 1982, these institutions were included in universities. In 1989, the duration of education was determined as four years. Education faculties took over the process in 1992. There were times when teacher training was insufficient. As a result, solutions such as reserve officer teaching, substitute teacher teaching, teacher pedagogy certificate courses, teacher training by letter, teacher training with the accelerated program, and appointing teachers from faculty graduates outside the education faculty have been produced in order to reach the required number of teachers (Akyüz, 2001). In the process, it was decided to restructure the universities that carry out the task of teacher training since the problems in teacher training, both in terms of quality and quantity, did not decrease. With the cooperation of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE), the World Bank, and the Ministry of National Education, the National Education Development Project and the Teacher Training Project initiated a change in the teacher training system. Education faculties have been restructured since 1998. This regulation is still in effect.

Preparation for the teaching profession can be based on general culture, teaching content knowledge, and teaching professional knowledge (Demirel, 1999). In order to gain these qualifications during the preparation process, it was deemed necessary for prospective teachers to have higher education in all branches and education levels.

In teacher training programs, it is aimed that the teacher candidate has expertise in a particular field. The classroom teacher and math teachers are examples of this. Therefore,

some of the courses in the program have been determined to provide this. For the professional success of the teacher, first of all, he must know his field of expertise well. There is a dominant belief that to teach, you must first know. Formal education institutions try to gain knowledge and skills of culture, primarily scientific products.

Although the teacher's knowledge of a field or subject is a prerequisite for teaching, it is not sufficient for successful teaching. The teacher should also know how to teach what he knows. In addition to having expertise in a field, a teacher also needs knowledge and skills related to the teaching profession. No matter how well the teacher knows the subject area, if he cannot transfer his knowledge to his students, he cannot succeed in his profession. Therefore, the teacher must have teaching skills. In this context, pedagogical content knowledge, expressed by Shulman (1986), which can be described as a synthesis of content knowledge and teaching profession knowledge, involves an aspect of teachers' professional expertise (Park & Oliver, 2008). The pedagogical content knowledge that puts the teacher at its center is the knowledge of how the related branch can be transferred to the students more easily (Uşak, 2005). Regarding this, the three titles mentioned above cannot be ignored in the development process of a teacher. In teacher performance and learning outcomes, the essential components of pre-service education, content knowledge, Teaching Profession Knowledge, and general cultural knowledge are important; it is possible to state that these alone are far from adequate indicators for performance (İlğan, 2014). Barber and Mourshed (2007) stated that the teacher's professional development is the main difference between the academic performance of students from high and low-performing countries in mathematics and science literacy. Again, professional development plays an increasingly crucial role in reform efforts and the renewal of national education systems in the global context of pressures to increase educational outcomes (Hardy, 2012). In addition, there is vast information production in today's technology world. In a world where there is such a rapid production of knowledge, it is essential that the professional development activities of teachers, who are professional employees, continue throughout their lives. Thus, it is essential to determine policies that encourage teachers in professional development.

### Professional Development

All these studies to support the professional skills of teachers in and outside the school, and seek for better teaching and learning methods can be called professional development (PD). PD includes formal and informal learning, trial, development, and progress activities that the teacher has done to make the in-service teaching process more qualified. It is all the activities that teachers participate in during their career (Hardy, 2012) activities designed to further their professional work (Day & Sachs, 2004). PD activities are the shortest way to qualified education worldwide (Hardy, 2012). Jensen and Farmer (2013) emphasized that the success of the Shanghai region of China, which has consistently achieved good results in Mathematics and Science in the PISA research, is directly related to PD, emphasizing professional collaboration as a secret.



In the TALIS 2018 survey, the level of professional development was found to be needed for each subject area (content knowledge, pedagogical competencies in the taught area, curriculum information, analysis of student assessment, and teacher-parent cooperation). In a study, compared to other OECD member countries' teachers, less numbers of Turkish teachers in all subject areas asked for their need in Professional development. While approximately 4% of teachers in Turkey reported their need of professional development in terms of pedagogical competencies in the field taught, this rate is approximately 10% in OECD member countries (Ceylan et al., 2020). Teachers in Turkey are more distant towards professional development than the teachers of OECD countries. Regarding the professional development activities, they participated in the last year, 8.44% of the teachers stated that the main reason why they participated in professional development activities in Turkey was the increase in their salaries due to their attendance in such activities.

Similarly, those who stated that various supports were provided if they participated in a professional development activity comprised of 27.9% of the participants (OECD, 2019). These rates are better than developed and OECD member countries (Ceylan et al., 2020). In addition, 28.1% of teachers in Turkey think that professional development activities do not have a positive effect on their teaching practice (Ceylan et al., 2020). This rate on the other hand, was found to be lower in OECD member countries (OECD, 2019).

In the context of PD, there is no consensus on determining the core teaching practices for specialized teachers. This situation is seen as a challenge for PD activities (DeMonte, 2013). Many PDs are conducted without teacher practice and linkage to the school improvement plan (Cohen & Hill, 2000). In OECD member countries, it has been determined that PD activities that teachers have participated in in the last year are not sufficiently compatible with the needs of teachers (OECD, 2019). According to the opinions of teachers in the OECD (2019) report, the three most important factors limiting participation in PD activities in Turkey are lack of adequate incentives (68.7%), conflict with working hours (55.9%), and insufficient support by the employer (55.2%) (OECD, 2019). In PD activities, providing the needed time and encouraging teachers (Jensen & Farmer, 2013); the necessary support and encouragement to enable them to apply the ideas and strategies they have learned within their classrooms are important issues (Desimone & Garet, 2015). The support of school leadership is needed in planning the teacher's weekly lesson schedule to facilitate participation in PD activities (OECD, 2019). The main factors that determine the status of the teaching profession are its social and economic situation, it is stated in various studies that insufficient wages negatively affect the reputation of the teaching profession and that less talented personnel come to the teaching profession. (Çelikten, 2005; İlğan, 2014; OECD, 2019).

### Purpose of the research

When the situations in the literature and the teacher training system in Turkey are examined, it is vital to understand the new teaching profession law of teachers to find solutions to the problems mentioned in professional development and teacher training. This research aims to determine teachers' opinions about the new teaching profession law. The main problem statement of this study is; "What are the teachers' views on the new teaching profession law?" In line with this purpose, the following questions were investigated:

#### *Sub-problems*

- 1: What are the teachers' views on the four sub-dimensions of the new teaching profession law?
- 2: What are the teachers' opinions about the new teaching profession law?
- 3: Is there a significant difference between teachers' views about the new teaching profession law and the variables of gender, seniority, education level, and geographical region?

### METHOD

This research is a descriptive study in the survey model to determine teachers' views about the new teaching profession law (personal rights, scientificity of the law, professional development, and teachers' ideas) after the teaching profession law came into force. A descriptive study aims to describe a past or present situation as it is (Karasar, 2012). The data needed in the survey model is gathered from the majority of the participants through data collection tools such as interview forms or questionnaires (Creswell, 2002). This method was chosen because the opinions of the teachers about the new law were tried to be reflected by using a questionnaire.

#### *Participants*

Teachers (pre-school, primary, secondary, and high school teachers) from all types of schools and all types of teaching voluntarily participated in this study. The Survey remained in the announcement for two months from the date of the new occupational law. The participants of the research consist of 664 teachers who are still in their profession. Accordingly, stratified purposive sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used in the collection of the data. Of the participants, 379 (42.9%) were female, and 285 (57.1%) were male. Participation was made from all geographical regions of Turkey. As stated in the report (Education Information Network in the European Community [EURYDICE], 2009) regarding the Turkish education system, geographical regions in Turkey are divided into seven regions according to their development, geographical characteristics, and population-cultural structure. Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean, Middle Anatolia, Black Sea, East Anatolia, and Southeast Anatolia regions were taken as

geographical regions. All occupational groups in schools in Turkey participated in the research. Teachers have different professional experiences. According to this, 45 (7%) people with 0-5 years of seniority, 133 (20%) people with 6-10 years, 114 (17%) people with 11-15 years, 123 (18%) people with 16-20 years, 128 (19%) people who are 21-25 years old, 121 (18%) people who are 26+ years. Among the participants, the rate of those who did not know about the new profession law was 12.8%, while the rest of the teachers stated that they knew the new profession law, 87.2%.

### *Data Collection Tools*

The researchers designed a special Likert scale type questionnaire to determine the views and expectations of teachers regarding the newly enacted law regulating teachers' professional rights in Turkey. For this data collection tool, arrangements were made on the data collection tools with the help of a field expert, a language expert, and an assessment and evaluation expert in terms of content. In addition, in order to ensure the content validity of the data collection tool, a preliminary application was made by applying it to 90 teachers from outside the sample. Necessary corrections were made in the data collection tool to some statements which teachers had difficulty to understand. As a result of the reliability analysis, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was found to be .89.

The questionnaire comprises 15 items ranging from 1. Strongly disagree to 5. Strongly agree, indicating the degree of teachers' agreement. In order to know the views of teachers on the new professional law specifically, the items were grouped into four categories: (1) teachers' rights (3 items); (2) consideration of professional, scientific studies on the law (4 items); (3) teachers' ideas about the law (4 items); (4) teachers' professional development (3 items). The last item of the questionnaire was the teachers' opinions individually about the subject, and it was designed as open-ended.

### *Procedure and Data Analysis*

Survey invitations were sent to teachers from all levels, branches, and regions. The survey application, implemented through Google Forms, and teachers' opinions facilitated both the filling out of the Survey and the analysis process. The Survey was sent to teachers from various social media groups and communication networks that teachers use effectively, concerning teachers in schools where academic and scientific activities were carried out in the past. In addition, the Questionnaire was announced to the schools through the District Directorates of National Education in each Province. In the invitation content, the research objectives were explained, and the anonymity of the participants was guaranteed. After the teachers filled out the Survey, they clicked on it to *send a survey*, and the Survey was telematically filed into a database. In this process, although the participants had the freedom to change their answers to the Survey, only 0.5% changed their answers.

Descriptive analysis techniques such as frequency and percentage calculation were used to analyze the survey and interview questions (Creswell, 2014). SPSS 25 statistical



program was used for data analysis. Frequency and percentage calculations were made while evaluating the teachers' characteristics. Arithmetic averages were calculated regarding the teachers' opinions about the items in the data collection tool. Among the two main methods of assessing normality, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used for  $n \geq 50$ , which is extremely sensitive to large sample sizes, since  $p < .05$ , the data appear not to be normally distributed (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). To compare teachers' opinions about the new professional law in terms of their characteristics, the U-test identified whether there is a significant difference between the two averages due to the non-normal distribution of the data. The Kruskal Wallis H test analysis tests whether there is a significant difference between more than two averages. Significance was sought at the  $p < 0.05$  level in statistical analysis. In addition, the Kruskal Wallis analysis result was checked with Bonferroni correction. Bonferroni correction is a correction at the significance limit to avoid Type I error in post-hoc tests (Pallant, 2017). In order to control the internal validity of the Survey, sample selection, data collection tool, and subjects' background, the interaction effect was controlled (Büyüköztürk et al., 2015). In addition, the effect of sampling and the effect of expectations were controlled for external validity. The last item of the questionnaire was subjected to content analysis because the teachers wrote their opinions on the subject. Content analysis is organizing and interpreting similar data in a way that the reader can understand by bringing together certain concepts and themes. In this respect, it was thought that presenting the data in codes, categories, and themes would be appropriate. Additionally, the percentage of consistency between the comments of the two researchers in the categorization and interpretation of the data was 88%, and the coding was accepted as reliable (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020).

### *Ethical considerations*

Participants were informed about the study and their consent was obtained. They can participate in any part of data collection. Personal data of the participants were not collected. They have been informed about this issue regarding confidentiality. It has been explained that the participants have the right to withdraw and change their answers after completing the questionnaire electronically. All data is hosted on the first researcher's personal computer and is protected by a password.

In this study, all rules stated to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed. None of the actions stated under the title "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", which is the second part of the directive, were not taken.

Ethical review board name: Istanbul Aydin University Education Sciences Ethics Committee

Date of ethics review decision: 24.06.2022

Ethics assessment document issue number: Number: E-45379966-020-55230.

## RESULTS

The findings of the research are grouped and presented in four categories. It consists of teachers' rights, taking into professional accountability, scientific studies about the law, teachers' ideas about the law, and teachers' opinions about their professional development. There is also an overall assessment. The findings of the comparison tests of teachers' opinions regarding various variables are presented. In the last part, the open-ended opinions of the teachers were evaluated.

Only 12.8% of the teachers reported no idea about the new professional law. This rate showed that the majority of the teachers had an idea about the new law and they were interested. If a general evaluation is made about the teachers' views on the new professional law, and when the answers given by the participants to the survey items are scored,  $\bar{X} = 35.66$  was found. This shows that teachers have an average view of the new professional law and do not express an extreme view.

### *Opinions of Teachers on Personal Rights*

Teachers' views on personal rights, a sub-dimension of the new professional law, are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

*Responses of teachers to items related to personal rights*

Item No	Item	I don't agree at all	I disagree	I am undecided	I agree	I totally agree	$\bar{X}$
1	The new teaching law will lead to improvements in the personal rights of teachers.	23.3%	28.5%	23.2%	22%	2.9%	2.52
5	The changes in the new law are based on concrete needs.	23.8%	28.3%	20%	23.9%	3.3%	2.54
12	I think that with the new teaching law, the prestige of the teaching profession will increase.	35.8%	32.8%	16.9%	12.2%	1.8%	2.11
<b>Overall Average</b>							2.39

Table 1 shows the percentages and averages of the answers reflecting the teachers' opinions about personal rights. The average of the answers of the teachers regarding the

survey items was found to be 2.39. This result shows that teachers' opinions on personal rights are generally gathered on the option "I do not agree at all". It leads to the conclusion that teachers disagree with the contribution of the new professional law to their rights. It is seen that most teachers believe that the new professional law will not cause a positive development in their rights. Significantly, 68.6% of the teachers stated that the new professional law would not increase the prestige of the teaching profession. Most teachers reported that the new professional law could not improve their rights and would not increase the profession's prestige.

### *Opinions of Teachers on Scientific Studies on Law*

Teachers' views on professional, scientific studies about the new law are shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2**

*Responses of the teachers to items about the scientificity of the new law*

Item No	Item	I don't agree at all	I disagree	I am undecided	I agree	I totally agree	$\bar{x}$
2	I think the new law has been discussed before it goes into effect.	45.9%	30.9%	12.8%	7.8%	2.4%	1.90
4	The changes in the new law are based on scientific data.	30.3%	30.7%	26.5%	10.1%	1.8%	2.22
6	I think the necessary preliminary research on the new law has not been done.	7.8%	14.2%	13.3%	35.1%	29.1%	3.64
8	I think the teachers were consulted enough when the law was being made.	48.3%	27.1%	9.5%	7.8%	7.1%	1.98
<b>Overall Average</b>							<b>2.43</b>

Table 2 shows the percentages and averages of teachers' answers reflecting their views on professional, scientific studies about the new law. The average of the teachers' answers regarding the questionnaire items was 2.43. This result shows that the teachers thought the new law was developed without being based on scientific studies before and after its enactment. Table 2 shows the percentages and averages of teachers' answers reflecting their views on professional, scientific studies about the new law. The average of the teachers' answers regarding the questionnaire items was 2.43. This result shows that the teachers

thought the new law was developed without being based on scientific studies before and after its enactment. 76.8% of the teachers stated that the new professional law was not discussed sufficiently, 61% stated that it was prepared without relying on scientific data, and 75.4% of them stated that the teachers' opinions were not taken. Teachers generally think that the law was prepared and entered into force without being based on scientific data and without taking teachers' opinions.

### *Teachers' Opinions on Law Regarding Their Professional Development*

Table 3 shows teachers' views on the new law's impact on their professional development.

**Table 3**

*Responses of teachers to the items of the new law on Professional Development*

Item No	Item	I don't agree at all	I disagree	I am undecided	I agree	I totally agree	$\bar{X}$
7	I think the new law has eliminated many of the drawbacks.	26.7%	33.6%	22.9%	13.6%	3.2%	2.33
10	I believe that the new law will make the teaching profession more attractive.	36.4%	30.3%	16.3%	14.5%	2.1%	2.15
14	I am thinking of doing a master's or doctorate when the law comes into force.	26.4%	28.5%	24.8%	14.9%	5.1%	2.44
<b>Overall Average</b>							2.30

Table 3 shows the percentages and averages of teachers' answers reflecting their views on the contribution of the new law to their professional development. The average of the answers of the teachers regarding the questionnaire items was found to be 2.30. This result shows that teachers' views on the contribution of the new law to their professional development are generally focused on the option "I do not agree." In general, it has been shown that they believe that the new professional law cannot provide a sufficient contribution to the professional development of teachers. Moreover, it is far from encouraging in this regard. When the new professional law came into force, only 20% of the teachers said they planned to do postgraduate education. This shows that the new professional law does not encourage professional development at the desired rate.

### Teachers' Views on the Law

The general views of teachers about the new professional law are shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4**

*General opinions of teachers about the new law*

Item No	Item	I don't agree at all	I disagree	I am undecided	I agree	I totally agree	$\bar{x}$
3	I find such an application carried out without a pilot application wrong.	5.6%	16.9%	19.6%	29.7%	28%	3.58
9	The new teaching law will lead to unethical practices.	3.2%	12.5%	24.2%	30.3%	29.7%	3.71
11	Those who prepared this law made arrangements according to their political preferences.	7.7%	20.3%	29.8%	22.1%	19.8%	3.26
13	I support the new law.	28%	23.8%	26.2%	18.4%	3.3%	2.45
<b>Overall Average</b>							3.25

Table 4 shows the percentages and averages of teachers' opinions about the new professional law. The average teacher's answer about the new professional law was 3.25. This result shows that teachers' opinions about the new professional law generally focus on the "I am undecided" option. This situation shows that teachers' opinions on whether the new professional law helps meet the needs, implementation, and regulation are moderate. While 60% of the teachers stated that the new law would lead to unethical practices, 41.9% thought the regulation was based on political preferences. Only 21.7% reported that they supported the new professional law. Teachers generally do not support the new professional law, but they think it will lead to unethical practices.

### Evaluation of Teachers' Opinions

The attractiveness of the teaching profession and the improvement of the teaching profession's rights are determined by gender, seniority, education level, and geographic location of the teacher's region variables.

**Table 5**



*U test results of teachers' views on the new professional law in terms of gender variable*

Items	Gender	N	Mean Rank	z	U	p																																																								
<b>Do you know enough about the new law of profession?</b>	Female	379	351.48	-3.23	46813	.001																																																								
	Male	285	307.20				<b>I am thinking of doing a master's or doctorate when the law comes into force.</b>	Female	379	324.61	-1.107	51016	.260	Male	283	340.73	<b>Those who prepared this law made arrangements according to their political preferences.</b>	Female	378	329.57	-.15	52945	.881	Male	282	331.75	<b>The changes in the new law are based on scientific data.</b>	Female	379	313.90	-2.82	46689	.005	Male	281	353.85	<b>I believe that the new law will make the teaching profession more attractive.</b>	Female	379	324.66	-1.03	51089	.302	Male	284	339.47	<b>The new teaching law will lead to improvements in the personal rights of teachers.</b>	Female	379	325.50	-1.32	51376	.300	Male	284	340.60	<b>I support the new law.</b>	Female	378	324.75	-1.08	51126
<b>I am thinking of doing a master's or doctorate when the law comes into force.</b>	Female	379	324.61	-1.107	51016	.260																																																								
	Male	283	340.73				<b>Those who prepared this law made arrangements according to their political preferences.</b>	Female	378	329.57	-.15	52945	.881	Male	282	331.75	<b>The changes in the new law are based on scientific data.</b>	Female	379	313.90	-2.82	46689	.005	Male	281	353.85	<b>I believe that the new law will make the teaching profession more attractive.</b>	Female	379	324.66	-1.03	51089	.302	Male	284	339.47	<b>The new teaching law will lead to improvements in the personal rights of teachers.</b>	Female	379	325.50	-1.32	51376	.300	Male	284	340.60	<b>I support the new law.</b>	Female	378	324.75	-1.08	51126	.280	Male	284	340.48						
<b>Those who prepared this law made arrangements according to their political preferences.</b>	Female	378	329.57	-.15	52945	.881																																																								
	Male	282	331.75				<b>The changes in the new law are based on scientific data.</b>	Female	379	313.90	-2.82	46689	.005	Male	281	353.85	<b>I believe that the new law will make the teaching profession more attractive.</b>	Female	379	324.66	-1.03	51089	.302	Male	284	339.47	<b>The new teaching law will lead to improvements in the personal rights of teachers.</b>	Female	379	325.50	-1.32	51376	.300	Male	284	340.60	<b>I support the new law.</b>	Female	378	324.75	-1.08	51126	.280	Male	284	340.48																
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When teachers' views on the new professional law were compared with the U test regarding gender, no statistically significant difference was observed in many variables ( $p > .05$ ). However, do you know enough about the new law? [ $U=46813.5$ ,  $z= -3.23$ ,  $p < .05$ ] and the changes in the new law are based on scientific data [ $U=46689.5$ ,  $z= -2.82$ ,  $p < .05$ ] opinions created a statistically significant difference in favor of women in terms of gender. It has been observed that female teachers have more information about the new professional law than their male colleagues. In addition, the opinion that the new professional law is prepared based on scientific data is more dominant among female teachers than their male colleagues.

The Kruskal Wallis H test was applied to determine whether there was a significant difference between the teachers' views on the new professional law regarding their professional seniority. The results are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*The results of the examination of teachers' professional seniority and their views on the new professional law*

Item	Seniority	N	Mean Rank	sd	X <sup>2</sup>	p	Sig.				
<b>Do you know enough about the new law of profession?</b>	1-5	44	365.45	5	2.226	.811					
	6-10	133	368.08								
	11-15	114	346.17								
	15-20	123	343.24								
<b>I am thinking of doing a master's or doctorate when the law comes into force.</b>	20-25	128	303.73	5	19.236	.002	2-5				
	26+	120	282.17								
	<b>Those who prepared this law made arrangements according to their political preferences.</b>							5	6.486	.269	
	<b>The changes in the new law are based on scientific data.</b>							5	12.054	.038	
<b>I believe that the new law will make the teaching profession more attractive.</b>			5	12.435	.029						
<b>The new teaching law will lead to improvements in the personal rights of teachers.</b>			5	3.301	.650						
<b>I support the new law.</b>	1-5	44	365.32	5	13.605	.001	2-5				
	6-10	132	354.35								

11-15	114	336.50
15-20	123	281.08
20-25	128	325.77
26+	121	346.89

As seen in Table 6, it is seen that there is a significant difference between the seniority of the teachers and the postgraduate education and support of the new professional law according to the opinions of the teachers about the new professional law. [ $X^2(5) = 19.236$ ; 13,605,  $p < .0033$ ]. Mann Whitney U test was performed on the groups' paired combinations to determine which groups favored the difference observed. As a result of these tests, it was seen that there was a significant difference between teachers with 6-10 years of seniority and teachers with 20-25 years of seniority and in favor of those with less seniority. This situation shows that teachers with less seniority will do postgraduate education with the new professional law.

The Kruskal Wallis H test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the teachers' views about the new professional law in terms of the variables of the level of education they work for. The results are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Views of the teachers about the new professional law in terms of the variables of the level of education they work*

Item*	Level of Educational	N	Mean Rank	sd	$X^2$	p
	Pre	143	125.59			
	Primary	34	99.76			
	Secondary	36	87.92	3	14.009	.003
	High	16	113.59			
	Pre	143	116.45			
	Primary	34	127.70	3	7.806	.050

Secondary	36	90
High	16	131.31

*\*Only statistically significant items are given in the table. No statistical significance was found in the comparison test for other items.*

As can be seen in Table 7, it was found that there was a significant difference between knowing the law and the steps that the teachers worked on according to the opinions of the teachers about the new professional law [ $X^2(3) = 14.009$ ,  $p < .008$ ]. Mann Whitney U test was performed on the groups' paired combinations to determine which groups favored the difference observed. As a result of these tests, it was seen that there was a significant difference between primary school teachers and secondary school teachers in favor of secondary school teachers in terms of knowing the new professional law [ $U=21025$ ,  $z=-2.635$ ,  $p < .008$ ]. This shows that secondary school teachers have more information about the new professional law than primary school teachers.

No statistically significant difference was found in the Kruskal Wallis H test result, which was conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference between the teachers' views on the new occupational law in terms of the geographical region they live in.

### *Evaluation of Teachers' Opinions*

The answers given by the teachers to the open-ended last item of the questionnaire were analyzed and presented by the researchers. The most frequently expressed theme by the teachers was that the teachers' opinions were not taken while the new professional law was being prepared. In this regard, it was seen that the teachers who expressed various opinions also mentioned this issue.

*"It was prepared as desk research, unaware of the requirements, conditions, and the field of the teaching profession."*

One of the most frequent criticisms of the new professional law of teachers was that the titles of the chartered and head teacher were given by considering other issues instead of seniority.

*"I am no different from a teacher who has just started my profession these days when I am working on the 20th year of my teaching profession; our conditions are the same, I do not find a different coefficient in salary appropriate. Those who have completed ten years should be given the title of "chartered," and those who have completed 20 years should be given the title of "headteacher". Otherwise, it would be an injustice."*

Another theme that teachers frequently mention is the test anxiety that comes with the new professional law. Teachers reported that they had serious concerns about taking this

exam. It is also seen that teachers with high seniority declare that they are at a disadvantage compared to younger teachers. On the other hand, some teachers stated that they thought this exam was appropriate and that they would separate knowledgeable working teachers from others.

*"The teaching profession law was necessary, but a career planning tested would bring many negativities."*

*"Teachers are tired of exams."*

One of the issues that the senior teachers emphasized the most was the chartered, and head teacher exams held only once in the past years. Teachers have expressed that this situation leads to injustice regarding their salaries. In addition, it was stated that the current chartered and head teachers have no distinctiveness.

*"In 2006, a career advancement exam was held, and the teachers who took the exam became chartered. A great injustice has been caused by not repeating the exam. In 2022, the teaching profession law is enacted, and the problem has not been resolved, and the path to head teachers is opened for these friends who have been chartered for 16 years by chance."*

Another point teachers focus on is that the expected time between chartered and head teacher progress payments is long. The fact that especially senior teachers deserve their retirement during these waiting periods and that some will retire due to the age limit creates confusion.

*"When will I become a headteacher, my teacher of 22 years, in the 32nd year? I do not want a headteacher position after I retire."*

One of the most common views among teachers' answers to the open-ended item was that the scope of the new professional law was narrow. It has been emphasized that there is a law that cannot end the discrimination of paid, contracted, and permanent teachers and that only monetary compensation is given to improve personal rights. The professional reputation of teachers is not improved. In the law articles, ignoring teachers working in private schools was also met with regret. In addition, some teachers said they find the wage increase to be given with chartered and head teacher positions less.

*"Sanctions imposed for the violence against teachers, teachers working in disadvantaged areas, tuition fees, additional lessons, duty on duty, postgraduate studies only, projects in their field, teachers working in national studies, and non-objective assignments were not mentioned at all. There are only career ladders in it."*

*"What we wanted from personal rights was not an improvement in the salary, but the protection of the teacher from parent violence and administrative pressure. It was about increasing the reputation."*



Teachers stated that postgraduate education is far from being encouraged with the new professional law. In addition, many teachers stated that seniority should be considered instead of graduate education. Teachers with postgraduate education, on the other hand, reported that they could not get the full reward for their efforts. Many teachers stated they could not find the strength to do postgraduate education.

*"My teacher of 20 years, I did my doctorate, but if there is no correction in the regulations, I will only be able to become a specialist teacher. In this sense, my difference from a 10-year-old teacher who has not completed a master's degree is that I do not take the exam, which does not provide any advantage for me."*

*"I think there will be serious distinctions between teachers in schools. Why is it a criterion to have a master's degree out of the field?"*

In addition, some teachers stated that the contributions made to the project, competitions, promotion, and development of the school should also find a response in the new professional law, and they drew attention to a shortcoming.

*"I think it has some shortcomings. Especially regarding the service points given to teachers who had a master's degree and carried out an e-twinning project in the previous period. Again, I believe that these issues should be reflected in the service score."*

On the other hand, some teachers complained that sufficient information was not provided about the new professional law. On the other hand, some teachers stated that the new professional law is necessary and a good step as a start, although they do not think it is entirely sufficient. Some teachers have declared that they support the new professional law.

*"It is nice to have a law despite its shortcomings. It will be updated in the future, and its deficiencies will be corrected."*

*"It is not a teaching profession law, it is a professional development law for teachers, but it is good. Maybe some of our colleagues who do nothing but complain can get out of their comfort zone. I think teachers should be tested."*

On the other hand, some teachers emphasized that it would be appropriate to take the opinions of the teachers with different instruments similar to this study, and they approved the necessity of this study.

*"I think that good results would be obtained with surveys in such e-learning environments. I think this study is a good example."*

## CONCLUSION

According to the research findings, the teachers' opinions about the new law of profession were generally gathered on the "I am undecided" option. This indicates that they

are generally hesitant about the new occupational law. 87.2% of the teachers said they had an idea about the new professional law. This indicates that teachers are interested in the new law and follow the process.

Teachers think that the new law will not contribute to their rights. In addition, teachers stated that the new professional law would not increase the prestige of the teaching profession (68.6%). Teachers think that the new professional law will not improve their rights and will not increase the profession's prestige. While teachers in Germany, France, and Turkey are civil servants; teachers are public employees in Finland and England, they are not civil servants (MoNE, 2006). In all the countries mentioned, except Turkey, teaching is seen as a profession with high status and above the middle-income level (Varkey Foundation, 2018). However, in our study, it was stated that the teaching profession in Turkey is not at a reasonable level in terms of both status and income, according to teachers' views. Countries with good PISA scores find their education systems more successful (Varkey Foundation, 2018). Compared to the countries participating in the PISA research, it is seen that teachers and the teaching profession still have a very decent place in Turkey, contrary to popular belief (Varkey Foundation, 2018) and it has a serious place in people's future plans and dreams (Göker & Gündüz, 2017). However, the teachers who participated in the research did not express positive opinions about the prestige of their profession. In terms of OECD member countries, it is seen that the status and personal rights of teachers are not in a more privileged position than other professional groups that can be considered peers (EURYDICE, 2018). Teachers in Turkey are not far behind other countries in terms of status and personal rights but are seen ahead in some subjects. Can (2015) states that the lack of career plans for administrators and teachers and the inadequacy of the supervision system are the qualitative barriers to the Turkish Education System. In line with the opinions of the teachers, it was determined that they did not consider the professional law to regulate their status and personal rights positively.

They think teachers were developed without being based on scientific studies before and after the new law came into force. Teachers think that the new professional law is not discussed enough (76.8%), it was prepared without relying on scientific data (61%), and it was put into effect without asking the opinions of their colleagues in the kitchen (75.4%). According to teachers, the new professional law does not encourage professional development. When the new professional law was enacted, most teachers said they did not plan to do postgraduate education (80%). This indicates that the new professional law does not encourage professional development at the desired rate. More than half of the teachers (60%) think that the new law will lead to unethical practices, state that it is regulated according to political preferences, and do not support the new professional law. It is seen that the rate of those who support the new occupational law is relatively low (21.7%). Teachers generally do not support the new professional law but believe it will lead to unethical practices. As expressed in the theoretical framework, the low number of

supporters of the new occupational law suggests resistance to change at first glance. However, the statistical result may indicate a situation beyond resistance to change.

Regarding gender variables, it has been determined that female teachers have more information about the new professional law than their male colleagues. They believe that the new professional law is prepared based on scientific data. It has been observed that the rate of support for new professional law is higher for teachers with less seniority than those with more seniority. Similarly, it has been revealed that teachers with less seniority are more willing to do postgraduate education. In other words, as seniority and age increase, the idea of taking graduate education decreases. It has been observed that secondary school teachers have more information about the new professional law than primary school teachers. Finally, there was no significant difference between teachers' opinions about the new professional law regarding the geographical region variable they live in.

The new professional law did not receive the necessary support from teachers. The main reasons for this may be that they thought it would not contribute to their rights and that this law was organized without consulting the teachers. In addition, according to teachers' opinions, exam anxiety is one of the most important reasons for reacting to the new law. Another standard view is that the title should be given by considering only seniority. Although there is a resistance to change with the new occupational law, statistical data shows a situation beyond this. Considering this prepared law as the first legal step toward the teaching profession, organizing a professional law is seen as actual progress. In the light of this and similar studies, it is clear that the law should be developed by considering the opinions of all education stakeholders, especially teachers. While the evaluation results of teachers do not have much effect on teachers' wages and career advancement in Turkey, Austria, Belgium, France, and Switzerland, they have serious effects in Denmark, the Netherlands, and England (Göker & Gündüz, 2017). When the new professional law is examined, it is seen that this situation is mostly mentioned, but the opinions of the teachers show that they oppose this regulation examination. In the study, it is seen that teachers do not offer a different alternative to the exam. In Germany, France, and Turkey, appointments to the teaching profession are made through central examinations, and in England and Finland, teacher candidates' postgraduate degrees, internship training achievements, and teaching skills are taken into account. Although the professional law in Turkey does not regulate this teacher appointment process, it is understood that it encourages in-service professional development opportunities. However, teachers state that they do not see it as a professional development opportunity, on the contrary, it creates an exam and success indexed situation.

It is seen that this situation is ignored in Turkey, where practice is given importance in the process of teacher training and professional development in Germany, Finland, France and England, which are among the OECD countries (Aykaç, Kabaran & Bilgin, 2014). Although the new professional law encourages the professional development of teachers by

aiming to help regulate this situation, teachers' opinions show that they do not believe in this situation much.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated in the literature, while the rate of postgraduate teachers in Turkey does not exceed 10%, this rate is relatively high in OECD member countries. The new professional code can be an excellent incentive to catch up with OECD member countries. In addition, the literature clearly states that these successes of prosperous countries in international exams are due to teachers who have received postgraduate education. In this respect, a new professional law should be developed to offer more promising opportunities to teachers. Although the lack of support of teachers, who seem to have enough knowledge about the new professional law, is seen as a resistance to change at first glance, statistical results point to a different situation. In this respect, resistance to change may be the subject of a separate study. It can be thought that it would be beneficial to get teachers' opinions through in-depth qualitative research for groups with statistically significant differences in this study. In this respect, it can be used as a guide for in-depth research on which groups and research problems to examine.

As of May 12, 2022, it was seen that the regulation of the new law published by the Ministry of National Education did not eliminate the deficiencies expressed by the teachers in our study. It has been determined that the score to be considered successful in the exam to be held with the regulation is 70/100 and how many times it will be done in a year. An additional positive statement is that private school teachers and those working in other public institutions will be able to apply for the written exam. In addition, it was stated that the weight of the exam subjects, the number of questions to be asked, and the point value would be determined by the central exam commission. In this respect, it is seen that there is a need for various studies based on social media platforms, in which the opinions of teachers can be brought to the fore more after the exam.

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