

# Investigation of Complaints and Inspections against Educational Institutions

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## ABSTRACT

The document analysis method was used in the current study conducted to investigate the complaints against educational institutions and their stakeholders. To this end, the data obtained within the framework of the research questions were coded and categorized by using the descriptive analysis technique in the study, in which a total of two hundred documents and records of complaint made through various platforms were examined. When the findings obtained in the current study were examined, it was found that primary and middle schools are the types of schools that were subjected to the greatest number of complaints. At the same time, when the subjects of the complaints were examined, the subjects of hygiene-cleaning and physical conditions were found to be the most prominent subjects of complaints directed to the school itself and the subjects of physical, psychological and verbal violence against students, low grades given to students and indifference towards students were found to be the most prominent subjects of complaints directed to teachers. On the other hand, it was found that from among the subjects of complaints directed to the school administration, demands for donation, subscription fee and supplementary materials came to the fore and that from among the subjects of complaints directed to school principals, mobbing came to the fore. In addition to these, it was also found that the behaviours and attitudes of school service personnel, canteen food safety and high canteen prices, and violence and bullying among students are also the subjects of complaints.

Keywords: Complaints, school complaints, school inspections, school administration, educational institutions

## INTRODUCTION

Citizens of the Republic of Turkey and foreign nationals residing in Turkey have the right to apply in writing, through petitions, etc., to public institutions, especially the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, regarding their complaints and wishes about any public institution (Law on the Use of the Right to Petition, 1984). In addition, individuals can apply to public institutions in order to obtain information in line with the principles of equality and openness, as well as the necessity of a transparent and democratic management approach (Right to Information Law, 2003). Again, natural or legal persons can submit their petitions and complaints to public institutions through the Presidency Communication Centre (Presidential Communication Center Regulation, 2022) and in the Ministry of National Education, citizens can make requests, require information and make complaints regarding the affairs and functioning of the ministry through the communication centre MEBİM (MEB, 2020). In line with the complaints submitted within the framework of these laws, practices and regulations, the civil servants in public institutions can be inspected and a penalty can be proposed (Civil Servants Disciplinary Regulation, 2021).

Although these practices make positive contributions in terms of providing two-way communication between citizens and the state and producing solutions to administrative problems (Karkın, 2017), they can reach a level that wears out public institutions and employees over time. As a matter of fact, in September and October 2021, the number of

complaints made about the Ministry of National Education only through Cimer reached 87 thousand (Ceylan, 2022). In terms of responding to these complaints and carrying out the necessary actions, this situation creates a heavy burden on the central and provincial organizations of the ministry. In this context, in the study conducted by Kayıkçı and Tatar (2021), it was revealed that structural arrangements should be made in the specified complaint platforms in order to make schools more efficient, that parents should increase communication with the school and that the awareness of parents about the use of these platforms should be raised. Again, in the study conducted by Eski et al. (2019), it was found that the intensity of this type of complaints creates a pressure on schools and school administrations, leading to negative reflections on school administrators, reducing their motivation, and that such complaints can be an issue of abuse, can increase

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workload, discredit teachers and decrease their performance and negatively affect administrative processes.

In this regard, the subjects and parties of complaints are also important. Yet, there are very few studies conducted in this framework to include educational institutions affiliated to the Ministry of National Education and only the studies conducted by Eski et al. (2019) and Yüksel (2019) have been found in the relevant literature. In the study by Eski et al. (2019), it was stated that the complaints made to the Ministry of National Education are mostly about the problems experienced between the school principals and teachers, teachers and parents and teachers and students, about lack of communication and school practices. Moreover, in the study, it was seen that the complaints and pressure groups are mostly parents and students, and the complaints are mostly directed to the institutions of basic education. On the other hand, while Yüksel (2019) argues that complaints are usually caused by reasons such as school cleaning, fundraising, and lack of effective communication with stakeholders, in the study conducted by Tunç and Gökçe (2018), it was concluded that the easy accessibility to complaint platforms, school administrators' not paying the required attention to the problems communicated, and the perception of the high possibility of finding a solution to the problem when communicated through these complaint platforms are the factors increasing the number of complaints made. When the subjects of complaints made in other countries about educational institutions are examined, it is seen that subjects such as behavioural problems and discipline, bullying, school administration, curriculum, exclusion, school uniforms, disability, etc. come to the fore as the subjects of complaints in England (McKenna & Day, 2010), in Australia, tensions and problems among students, children's educational and other developments, functioning of the school and implementation of general education policies are among the leading concerns and complaints (Victoria Department of Education and Early Childhood Development-VDEECD, 2009). However, in Asian examples such as Hong Kong, subjects such as school accounting transactions, school activity fees, school reward and punishment system, school bus and catering services, school hygiene and school environment, course selection and class registration, homework, student assessments, teacher behaviours and attitudes, school uniforms, communication problems, extracurricular practices, student performance and academic results and student discipline problems are the generally the subjects of complaints (Education Bureau, 2018).

When international procedures of making complaints about educational institutions are examined, it is seen that they are partially different from the procedures followed in Turkey. For example, in the Netherlands, when there is a complaint against a school, it is requested to apply to the school complaint committee first. If the school does not have

its own complaint committee, it is possible to apply to regional or national complaint committees, and inspectors do not deal with individual problems (teacher, parent, student, etc.). In addition, there is a complaint line where complaints can be made and the complaints are forwarded to the school's inspection team. Only very serious complaints are subject to a special inspection (Dutch Inspectorate of Education, 2022). In England, there are complaint submission forms on the websites of schools regarding school complaints and the subjects of complaints that schools are concerned with are indicated in these websites. At the same time, it is recommended to contact the school administration first for complaints about schools, and only in cases where children at risk, unregistered students are considered or where the school does not comply with the complaint procedure and the complaint is not handled properly, an application can be made to the Ministry of Education (Department for Education-DfE) (United Kingdom Public Sector Information Site, 2022). In New Zealand, complaints can be submitted to the ministry of education by e-mail, face-to-face, calling or in writing if it is an issue that concerns the ministry; however, if there is a complaint about education providers, as in other countries, it is requested to talk to the school principal first, then to the school board if it is not resolved, and to contact the local support offices if no solution is found (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2022). In the US state of New Jersey, it is obligatory to first contact the school administration (school or school district) in case of any complaint and if no solution is found then state education offices or program offices called NJDOE (New Jersey Department of Education) can be applied. In addition, behaviours violating the education law called ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) can be reported in writing to the administrative district inspectors (New Jersey Department of Education, 2022).

As seen in international examples, complaints against educational institutions are tried to be resolved primarily with the school administration in most countries, and only serious issues and issues that cannot be resolved are transferred to central or local education departments. From this point of view, it can be said that the complaint procedure followed for complaints against educational institutions in Turkey is the opposite. When the web page of the Ministry of National Education Communication Centre is reviewed, it is seen that 3,453,547 people were served in 2021 (Mebim Portal, 2022), that 6 million applications were made to the Presidential Communication Centre (Cumhuriyet Online, 2021), and that the majority of them are related to the Ministry of National Education. When petitions and other applications are added to these numbers, the number gradually increases and creates a compelling pressure factor for educational institutions.

Thus, educational institutions still continue to be the public service that is under the pressure of complaints

the most among public institutions. In this context, it is important to classify the dimensions of the complaints against educational institutions and to reveal the subject framework. In this connection, it is aimed to examine the complaints made through various platforms (Cimer, Mebim), complaint petitions, inspection files for state educational institutions. To this end, answers to the following questions were sought;

- On which platforms do complaints against state-owned educational institutions are mostly made?
- What are the types of schools that are the subject of the complaint and how is their distribution?
- Who are complainants and complainees?
- What are the situations and problems that are the subject of complaint or inspection?

## METHOD

The following sub-headings should be used in this section.

### Research Design/Model

In the current study, the document analysis method, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used in order to examine the complaints and inspections against educational institutions. In this method, documents and records related to the research subject are examined and documents and records are interpreted and evaluated systematically in line with the purpose (Bowen, 2009; Karasar, 2005; Yıldırım&Şimşek, 2013). It can also be seen as the collection and analysis of documents and records written by primary or secondary sources (Seyidoğlu, 2016). In this respect, it is an important method for understanding organizational processes, revealing their dimensions and learning the background (Güler et al., 2015). Detailed results about the research phenomenon can be obtained through document analysis, which is an important data source especially for qualitative research. It can also be used as a research method on its own or as an additional source of information in qualitative research (Bowen, 2009; Hoepfl, 1997; Saldana, 2011; Travers, 2001; Yıldırım&Şimşek, 2013).

### Population and Sample

The sample of the study consists of the complaints made about state educational institutions through various platforms (Cimer, Mebim, petition, report, inspection files, etc.) in a district in the city of İstanbul between the years 2020 and 2022. In order to ensure the data security of the person, institution and district in the documents constituting the sample of the study, descriptive information was kept confidential (Forster, 1994). In this context, 200 records and documents of complaints were accessed by the researcher in line with the purpose of the study.

## Data Collection Tools and Analysis

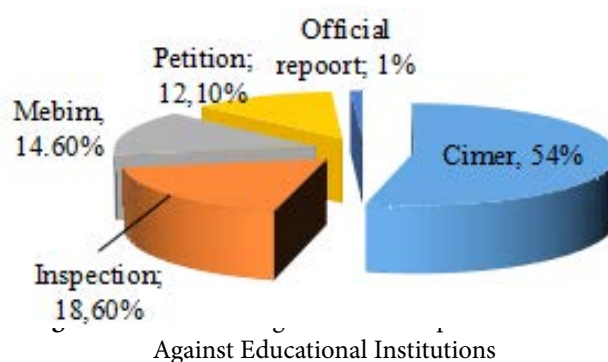
There are certain stages of document analysis that can be stretched depending on the research purpose. The stages agreed upon by various authors are as follows (Altheide& Schneider, 2017; Forster, 1994; Merriam, 2009; O’Leary, 2017); (1) collecting or having access to documents, (2) checking, examining the reliability or originality of records or documents, (3) establishing a systematic approach to coding and categorization, (4) checking, examining the reliability or originality of records or documents.

In this context, in the current study, first, support was received from the relevant school directorates in order to reach the complaint documents of the state educational institutions in the district that constituted the sample of the study, and the documents were accessed without specifying the name of the person and institution. In order to reach complaint records from the platforms such as Cimer, Mebim and petitions, past records were interrogated and obtained through the “Document Management System” used by schools for official correspondence. In addition, without specifying the name of the person or the institution, the inspection files written by the school administration or an inspector were used in the study. In addition, since the records and documents have an official nature and are shared through official correspondence, the relevant documents have an original quality and the documents were reached in a reliable framework. In order to code and categorize the data obtained in the study, firstly, the subjects of complaints were coded and then classified and categorized. In this framework, the descriptive analysis technique was used. In this technique, data are sorted and coded within the framework of research questions, similar relationships and categories are determined, and established as a theory or construct through generalizations (Braun & Clark, 2006; Newell & Burnard, 2011).

## FINDINGS

The findings obtained within the framework of the research questions are presented below.

### Complaint Platforms



As can be seen in Figure 1, 108 (54%) of the complaints were made over Presidency Communication Centre (Cimer), 37 (18.6%) of them made through the district governor’s inspections, 29 (14.6%) of them were made over the Ministry of Education Communication Centre (Mebim), 24 (12.1%) of them were made through petitions and 1% of them were made through official reports. As can be seen, the Cimer platform is mostly used for complaints against educational institutions

**Distribution of the Complaints across the School Types**

As can be seen in Figure 2, 84 (42%) of the complaints made were against primary schools, 72 (36.2%) against middle schools, 21 (10.6%) against Anatolian high schools, 14 (7%) against İmam Hatip middle schools, 3 (1.5%) against vocational and technical high schools, 2 (1%) against İmam Hatip high schools, 2 (1%) against multi-program Anatolian high schools, 1 (0.5%) against public education centres and 1 (0.5%) against pre-school institutions. As can be seen, the majority of the complaints (approximately 78%) are against primary and middle schools and their stakeholders.

**Person(s) Complaining**

As can be seen in Figure 3, 148 (74%) of the people complaining about educational institutions are parents, 14 (7%) are school

principals, 11 (5.5%) are residents, 9 (5.5%) are teachers, 7 (3.5%) are students, 5 (2.5%) are vice principals, 2 (1%) are others, 1 (0.5%) is province-district Mem, 1 (0.5%) is an official institution, 1 (0.5%) is the ministry, and 1 (0.5%) is an alumni. As can be seen, complaints against educational institutions or their stakeholders are mostly from parents.

**Person(s) Complained About**

As can be seen in Figure 4, 107 (53.50%) of the people or stakeholders complained about in educational institutions are teachers, 47 (23.60%) are school administrators, 19 (9.50%) are school principals, 7 (3.5%) are vice principals, 6 (3%) are others, 5 (2.5%) are students, 5 (2.5%) are school bus service, 3 (1.5%) are school canteen and 1 (0.5%) is school security. When these results are examined, it is seen that the person or people complained about in educational institutions are mostly (about 87%) teachers and school administrators.

**Distribution of the Teachers Complained About across the Branches**

As can be seen in Figure 4, in educational institutions, the majority (53.50%) of the people complained about are teachers. In this context, the findings about the branches of the teachers complained about are presented in Figure 5.

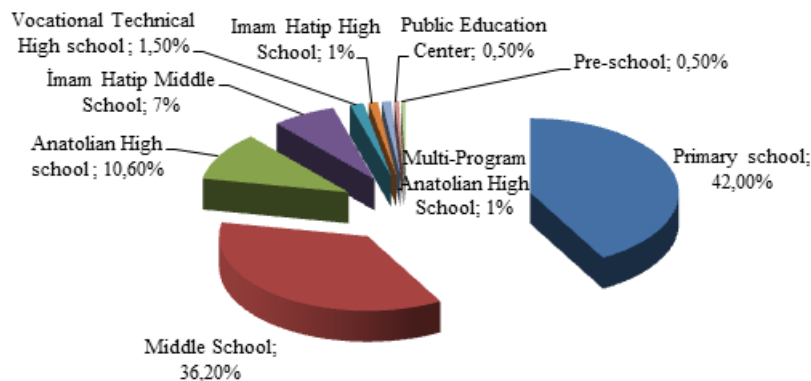


Fig. 2: Distribution of the Complaints across the School Types

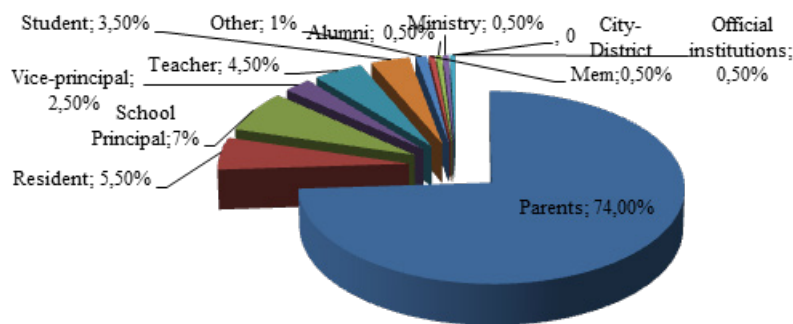


Fig. 3: Person(s) Complaining about Educational Institutions

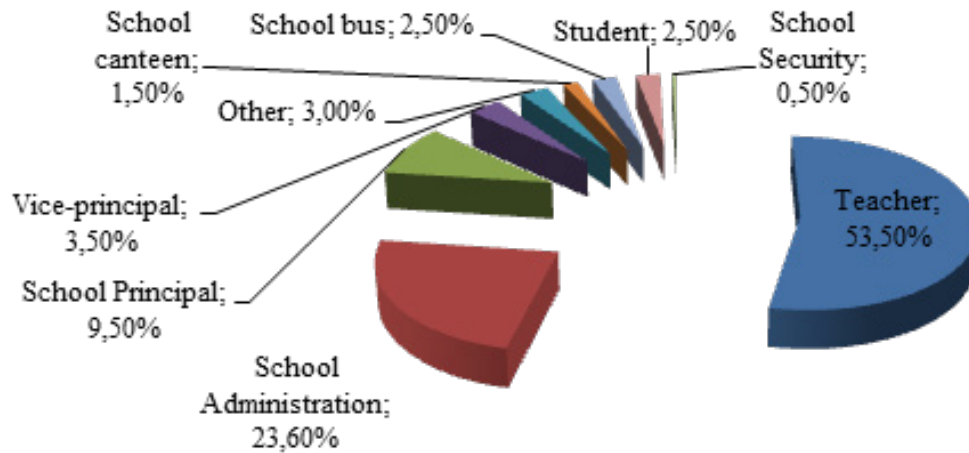


Fig. 4: Person(s) Complained about in Educational Institutions

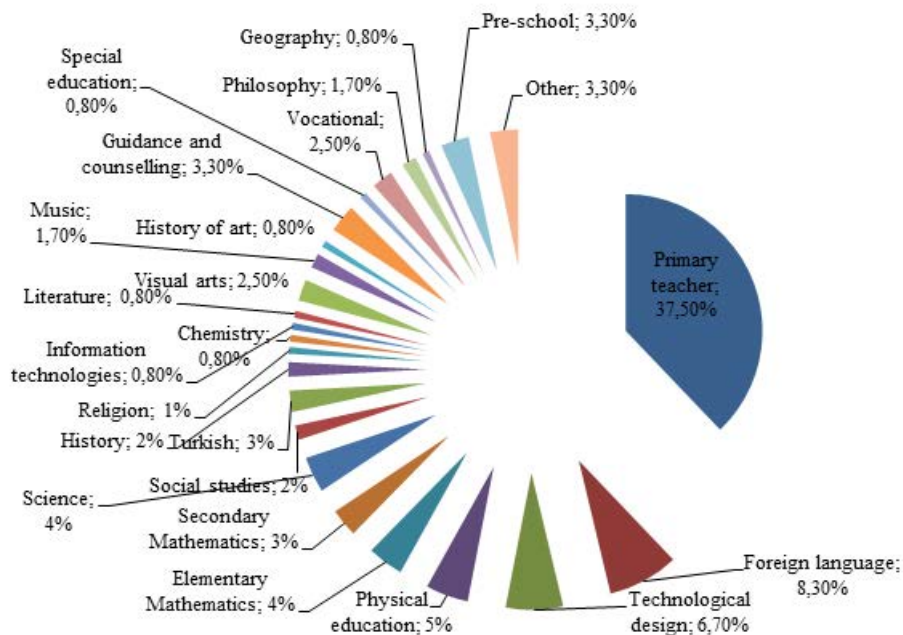


Fig. 5: Distribution of the Teachers Complained about in Educational Institutions across the Branches

As can be seen in Figure 5, most of the complained teachers are from elementary education (primary and middle school) branches. Among these branches, it is seen that primary school teachers are the most complained (37.50%) teachers, followed by foreign language teachers (8.30%), technological design (6.70%), physical education (5%), elementary mathematics (4%), guidance and counselling (3.30%), Turkish (3%), secondary mathematics (3%), vocational (2.5%), visual arts (2.5%), history (2%) and social studies (2%). Especially the high number of elementary education branches can be explained by the high number of these schools in the education system. Yet, the high rate of complaints at elementary school level is a remarkable result.

### Situations Which Become the Subject of Complaint or Inspection

Situations subject to complaints or inspections are addressed in 10 categories: situations arising from school, teacher, school administration, school principal, vice principal, student, guidance service, school bus or canteen, and school-parent union.

#### *Situations Arising from School*

Situations arising from school and subject to complaint are addressed within the sub-categories of physical conditions, structure of education and instruction and security and presented below in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Complaints about Situations Arising from School

Category	Sub-Category	Code	f
Situations Arising from School	Physical Conditions	School ringtone	8
		Hygiene-cleaning problem of student washrooms or school	7
		Physical conditions and deficiencies of the school	4
		Heating system not working	3
		School uncared for and neglected	3
		Faulty classroom doors	1
	Structure of Education and Instruction	Long class hours	1
		Double-shift education	1
	Security	Weakness in security	2

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that the hygiene and cleaning issues of the school, the deficiencies in the physical conditions of the school and the school ringtone come to the fore in the “physical conditions” sub-category. In addition, situations such as the heating problem and neglect in the school are also the subject of complaints in terms of physical conditions. In the “structure of education and instruction” sub-category, subjects such as long class hours and double-shift education come to the fore, while in the “security” sub-category, situations such as security weaknesses in schools can be the subject of complaints. In general, situations such as cleaning and hygiene and the tone of the school ring draw attention as the subjects most complained about.

#### *Situation Arising from Teacher*

Situations arising from teacher and subject to complaint are addressed within the sub-categories of neglect of duty, physical, psychological and verbal violence, communication, educational processes and assessment, resources and equipment, discriminatory attitude, material expectation and benefit, indifference to demands, political-ideological expectation, conflict creation and behavioural inappropriateness and are presented in Table 2.

As can be seen in Table 2, in the “neglect of duty” sub-category, the subjects most complained about include student grievance as a result of offs (medical reports etc.) received by the teacher, not coming to office without an excuse and demanding money, donations, dues from parents. In addition, it is seen that the neglect of duty such as displaying disruptive behaviours in school, coming to work late, not attending meetings without excuse and leaving school earlier are the other subjects of complaint.

In the sub-category of “Physical, psychological or verbal violence”, the subjects most complained about include insulting and offending students, physical violence and assault on students and harsh and negative attitudes towards students. In addition, teacher attitudes that alienate students from school

such as maltreatment to students, shouting and swearing at students and bullying are among the subjects of complaint.

In the sub-category of “Communication”, it was determined that indifference towards the student and communication problems with parents mostly came to the fore. In addition, negative attitudes towards other teachers, indifference to parents and communication problems with students were found to be the subjects of complaint.

In the sub-category of “Educational processes and assessment”, subjects such as low grades or the parents’ disapproval of the grade and assessment, giving too much homework and the teacher’s instructional inadequacy came to the fore as the subjects of complaint. In addition to these, subjects such as the difficult exams, the teacher’s poor classroom management, the way the lesson is taught and the deficiencies in the teaching of the subjects in the curriculum were also found to be complained about.

In the subcategory of “Resources and equipment”, the subject most complained about was found to be the teacher’s requiring supplementary materials. Other subjects complained about in this sub-category include creating a needs list and requesting materials from parents.

In the sub-category of “Discriminatory attitude”, the subject most complained about was found to be the teacher’s not wanting some students in their classes or in school. Other subjects complained about in this category include not selecting a specific student as the class president, grouping students in such a way as to create discrimination among them, excluding some students while giving privileges to some others. In the sub-category of “Material expectation and benefit”, the subject of complaint was found to be the teacher’s borrowing from other stakeholders.

In the sub-category of “Indifference to demands”, the subject most complained about was found to be ignoring student and parent requests while in the sub-category of “Political-ideological expectation” the subjects complained about were found to include the content of the activities

**Table 2:** Complaints About Situations Arising from Teacher

<i>Category</i>	<i>Sub-category</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>f</i>
Situations Arising from Teacher	Neglect of Duty	Student grievance as a result of offs (medical reports etc.) received by the teacher	4
		Not coming to office without an excuse	3
		Demanding money, donations, dues from parents	2
		Disrupting the order at school	1
		Not attending meetings	1
		Leaving school earlier	1
		Misconduct	1
		Suggesting parents not to send their children for face-to-face education during the pandemic	1
	Physical, Psychological and Verbal Violence	Insulting, scolding or offending the student	13
		Physical violence and assault on the student	13
		Harsh and negative attitude towards the student	7
		Psychological or verbal violence against the student	4
		Student maltreatment	4
		Bullying	1
		Swearing at students	1
		Shouting at students	1
		The child's not coming to school because of the teacher	1
		Communication	Indifference to the student
	Communication problems with parents		3
	Negative attitude towards school administration and other teachers		1
	Indifference to parents		1
	Student-teacher communication problems		1
	Not answering parents' phone calls		1
	Educational Processes and Assessment	Low grade	7
		Giving too much homework	3
		Incompetence in teaching	2
		Difficulty of written exams	2
		Poor classroom management	1
		Not teaching in a way required by the curriculum	1
		Lack of competence in teaching subjects to students	1
		Teacher's grading system	1
		Teaching style and inadequacy	1
	Resource and Equipment	Recommendation or request for supplementary materials	4
		Creating a needs list	1
		Requesting materials from parents	1
	Discriminatory Attitude	Not wanting the student in class or school	2
		Not selecting a specific student as the class president	1
		Grouping students	1
		Student favouritism	1
	Material Expectation and Benefit	Borrowing	1
Indifference to Demands	No allowing the student to sit in a desk desired by the student	1	
	Seating the student together with a student with special education needs	1	
	No adornment on the transcript	1	

Category	Sub-category	Code	f
Situations Arising from Teacher	Political-Ideological Expectation	The song or poem recited on the official holiday	2
		Not allowing to talk about religious issues	1
		Anti-party propaganda	1
		New Year's event at school	1
		Joining the union press release	1
	Creating Conflicts	Provoking students and parents against the administration	1
	Behavioural Inappropriateness	Smoking	1
		Student harassment	1
		Not taking the injured student to the health facility	1

carried out by the teachers in official ceremonies, expectations of parents from teachers on religious or various rituals, and various political and union activities of teachers.

In the sub-category of "Creating conflict", the subject most complained about was found to be the teacher's activities to provoke students and parents against the administration while in the sub-category of "Behavioural inappropriateness", the subjects complained about were found to include smoking in public, student harassment and not paying enough attention to students' health.

#### *Situations Arising from the School Administration*

Situations arising from the school administration and subject to complaint are addressed within the sub-categories of material expectations, functioning of the school, negligence, educational process, disciplinary practices, discretionary practices, savings and discriminatory attitude and are presented in Table 3.

As can be seen in Table 3, in the sub-category of "Material expectations", the subject most complained about was found to be demanding registration fees, donations or dues, followed by request for money for the purchase of cleaning supplies, request for donations in return for placing the student in a special class, forced fundraising for events or needs and high kindergarten dues.

In the sub-category of "Functioning of the school", student-related situations such as not being able to obtain the right to enrol or changing classes or schools come to the fore. In addition, it was determined that situations such as not taking the necessary actions on time or performing erroneous actions on issues that concern various stakeholders, and parents' requests for class change also the subjects of complaint in this sub-category.

In the sub-category of "Negligence", the occurrence of teacher victimization due to various badly regulated situations such as norm regulation and the negligence in referral of students to health institutions in case of student health problems are the subjects of complaint, while in the sub-category of "Educational process", the subjects of complaint

include forcing students to buy supplementary materials, grade repetition of the student, elective courses and arranging student arrival times.

In addition, in the sub-category of "Disciplinary practices", subjects of complaint were found to include asking for students who fight to be expelled from school students and strict disciplinary decisions regarding the student, while in the sub-category of "Discretionary practices", subjects of complaint were found to include not allowing parents to enter school, non-compliance with the rules of the pandemic, the indifference of the school administration and not accepting students from some regions.

In the sub-category of "Savings", the subject most complained about was found to be leaving the school lights on while in the sub-category of "Discriminatory attitude", injustice in choosing teachers for various activities and events and the allocation of inappropriate spaces to individuals were found to be the subjects of complaint.

#### *Situations Arising from the School Principal and Vice Principal*

Situations arising from the school principal and vice principal and subject to complaint are addressed within the sub-categories of negative attitude, discrimination, discretionary practices, neglect of duty and are presented in Table 4.

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the behaviours and attitudes of school principals such as mobbing towards their stakeholders are the most important subject of complaint in the sub-category of "Negative attitude". Other subjects complained about in this sub-category include disputes with the vice principal, deliberately increasing the workload of the vice principal, negative behaviours towards stakeholders. Again, in the sub-category of "Discrimination", the school principal's favouritism towards his/her spouse working in the same school is the subject of complaint, while in the sub-category of "Discretionary practices", the school principal's neglect of duty, indifference to parents and smoking in his/her room are the subjects of complaint. Subjects of complaint about the practices of the vice principal include his/her not



**Table 3:** Complaints about the Situations Arising from the School Administration

<i>Category</i>	<i>Sub-category</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>f</i>
Situations Arising from the School Administration	Material Expectations	Demanding registration fees, donations or dues	5
		Request for money for the purchase of cleaning supplies	3
		Request for donations in return for placing the student in a special class	2
		Forced fundraising for events or needs	2
		High kindergarten dues	1
		The student's not being able to enrol in kindergarten	2
	Functioning of the School	Class or school change of the student	2
		Not taking necessary action on time	1
		Not providing a certificate of the given education	1
		Performing an erroneous transaction	1
		Late entry of invoices into the system	1
	Negligence	Parent's request for class change	1
		The teacher's remaining outside the permanent staff	1
		Not taking the injured student to the hospital on time	1
	Educational Process	Requesting supplementary materials	4
		Grade repetition	1
		Arranging student arrival times	1
	Disciplinary Practices	Elective courses	1
		Asking for students who fight to be expelled from school	1
	Discretionary Practices	Strict disciplinary decisions regarding the student	1
		Not allowing parents to enter school	1
	Savings	Non-compliance with the rules of the pandemic	1
		The indifference of the school administration	1
Not accepting students from some regions		1	
Discriminatory Attitude	Leaving school lights on	1	
	Injustice in choosing teachers	1	
		Allocating an unsuitable room to the service personnel	1

**Table 4.** Complaints about the Situations Arising from the School Principal and Vice Principal

<i>Category</i>	<i>Sub-category</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>f</i>
Situations Arising from the School Principal	Negative Attitude	Mobbing	4
		Disputes with the vice principal	1
		Deliberately increasing the workload of the vice principal	1
		Negative behaviours towards stakeholders	1
	Discrimination	Nepotism	1
		Discretionary Practices	Neglect of duty
Indifference to parents	1		
Smoking in his/her room	1		
Situations Arising from the Vice Principal	Neglect of Duty	Not answering the school principal's phone calls	1
		Delaying work	1

**Table 5:** Complaints about Situations Arising from Student, Counselling Service, School Canteen, School Bus Services and Parent-Teacher Association

Category	Sub-category	Code	f
Situations Arising from Student	Violence and Bullying	Exposing to violence by peers	1
		Fight	1
		Peer bullying	1
Situations Arising from Counselling Services	Neglect of Duty	Not attending to the student who wants to get counselling	2
		Counselling teacher arriving late to school	1
Situations Arising from School Canteen	Prices	High prices	3
Situations Arising from School Bus Services	Violating Rules	Putting students at risk in traffic	1
		Transporting more students than allowed by its capacity	1
		Absence of hostess in busses	1
	Attitude and Behaviour	Negative behaviour of service personnel towards students	3
		Insulting the student	1
Situations Arising from Parent-Teacher Association	Misconduct	Activities contrary to laws and regulations	1
		Request for donation, dues or money from parents	1

answering the school principals' phone calls and delaying his/her work.

### *Situations Arising from Student, Counselling Service, School Canteen, School Bus Services and Parent-Teacher Association*

Situations arising from student, counselling service, school canteen, school bus services and the parent-teacher association and that are the subjects of the complaint are addressed in the sub-categories of negative attitude, discrimination, discretionary practices and neglect of duty and presented in Table 5.

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that physical violence by peers, fighting and peer bullying are the subjects of complaint in the sub-category of "Violence and bullying". In the sub-category of "Neglect of duty", the subjects complained about were found to include indifference of counselling teachers to students who want to receive counselling and their coming to school late. At the same time, in the sub-category of "Prices", it was determined that the high food prices in the school canteens caused these canteens to be complained about.

As can be seen in Table 5, in the sub-category of "Violating rules", the subjects of complaint include putting students at risk in traffic, transporting more students than allowed by the capacity of a bus and absence of hostess in busses. In the sub-category of "Attitude and behaviour", negative behaviours such as school bus drivers and hostesses mistreating and insulting students were found to be the subjects of complaint. In the sub-category of "Neglect of duty", the subjects complained about were found to include parent-teacher associations' activities contrary to laws and regulations and their request for donation, dues or money from parents.

As a result, when the findings related to all the above-mentioned complaints are evaluated, it is seen that school cleaning, maintenance and the loudness of the school bell are the prominent subjects of complaint arising from school, that physical-verbal violence to students, indifference to students and giving low grades to students are the prominent subjects of complaint arising from teacher. In the complaints caused by the school administration, registration fees, donation and dues and the request for supplementary materials are the subjects of more complaints, while the school principal's mobbing practice comes to the fore in the complaints caused by the principal.

## DISCUSSION

Educational institutions in Turkey are among the service sectors that are subjected to intense complaints (Ceylan, 2022). Thus, in the current study, it is aimed to examine the complaints against educational institutions in Turkey. When the results within the framework of this purpose are examined, it is seen that the complaints against educational institutions and their stakeholders mostly come over the Cimer platform. As stated by Ceylan (2022), citizens use the Cimer platform more in matters related to the Ministry of National Education. It is thought that the reason why the Cimer platform is preferred more is the belief of citizens that complaints are conveyed directly to the President and thus faster results can be obtained. It is also thought to be effective because it is an easily accessible and more widely used complaint platform (Tunç&Gökçe, 2018).

Moreover, it was determined that the complaints and inspections are mostly directed to primary and middle

schools. This finding is supported by the studies of Eski et al. (2019) and Yüksel (2019). In these studies, it has been revealed that complaints and demands are mostly made at the basic education level. The emergence of this result can be explained by the ratio of the school at the basic education level (primary school, middle school) to the total number of schools. When the statistics issued by the Ministry of Education (2021) are examined, it is seen that of all the schools, 36% are primary schools and 28% are middle schools. Nearly 64% of all the schools are the schools at the elementary education level; thus, this finding of the current study is not surprising. At the same time, when the findings obtained in the study are examined, it is seen that the majority of the teachers who were complained about were primary school teachers and that the majority of the branches of the teachers complained about are at the elementary level.

The findings of the study revealed that the person or persons who made the complaints against educational institutions were mostly parents (74%), followed by the school principal (7%) and the residents (5.50%). In this context, in the research conducted by Eski et al. (2019) in the province of Antalya, it was determined that the main pressure group that made the complaints consisted of parents (66%). While students were found to be in the second place in the study, with the complaints and inspection requests against teachers and other personnel, the school principals occupied the second place in the current study.

The findings of the current study have also revealed that the person or persons who are complained the most about in educational institutions are teachers (53.50%), followed by the school administration (23.60%). Similar results have also been reported in other studies in Turkey. In the studies conducted by Eski et al. (2019) and Yüksel (2019), it was found that the most complained groups are teachers and administrators. This situation in Turkey differs from other countries. When the complaints made in different countries are examined (McKenna & Day, 2010; VDEECD, 2009; Education Bureau, 2018), it is seen that the complaints against teachers and administrators are ranked lower. For example, complaints against teachers and other staff in Singapore were only 4% of all the complaints against educational institutions in 2018 (Singapore Government Agency, 2022). The main reason for this difference is thought to be related to the complaint procedures. While in different countries (such as the Netherlands, England, New Zealand, and the USA), a strict procedure is applied to resolve the problems with the school or its stakeholders first by applying to the school administration (Dutch Inspectorate of Education, 2022; United Kingdom Public Sector Information Site, 2022; New Zealand). Ministry of Education, 2022; New Jersey Department of Education, 2022), complaint platforms can be used easily and quickly in Turkey. In the above-mentioned countries, problems and complaints

are handled in a school-centred manner, easing the burden of ministry or school districts and problems caused by teacher-administrator interactions are less reflected in statistics. In this respect, the complaint system in Turkey should be revised to decrease the workload of more centralized bodies.

When the subjects of complaints about educational institutions and their stakeholders are examined, it is seen that especially school cleaning, maintenance, physical conditions and deficiencies, school bell ringing and security issues come to the fore in the context of school-related situations. On the other hand, when the complaints levelled against teachers are examined, it is seen that the subjects such as teachers' getting medical reports, their requesting money or donation from parents, their coming to school late, their neglect of duty, their imposing physical, psychological and verbal violence on students, their treating students badly, indifference to students and parents, communication problems, problems related their grades and assessment, giving too much homework, incompetence in teaching, forcing students to get supplementary materials, requesting materials and equipments from parents, discrimination against students, and their various political-ideological attitudes are the subjects of complaints against teachers. These situations, which cause schools and teachers to be complained about, were also reflected in previous research. In the study of Yüksel (2019), it was concluded that subjects such as school cleanliness, communication with stakeholders and collecting donation-money are the subjects causing a large number of complaints and these findings are parallel to the findings of the current study. However, from an international perspective, although there are very few complaints against teachers in European countries, results similar to the ones in the current study can be seen in Asian regions such as Hong Kong. In educational practices in Hong Kong, complaints levelled against school and teacher generally focus on demand for fees, school hygiene and school environment, homework assignment, grades, communication problems and teacher behaviours (Education Bureau, 2018). In this context, it can be seen that complaints generally have common characteristics in countries such as Turkey (as in Asian countries) where the centralized education approach is dominant. The pressure to complain can have negative consequences on the teachers and school climate, which are the most important elements of education, leading to abuse, discrediting, and poor performance (Eski et al., 2019; Kayıkçı & Tatar, 2021).

When the situations arising from the school administration are examined, it is seen that similar to the complaints against teachers, the complaints against the school administration are related to issues such as request for money, registration fees, donations and dues, supplementary materials and resources. In this context, in the research conducted by Author (2022) on the financial sustainability of schools, it was stated that

teachers and school administration had to request donations and fees from parents, and it was recommended to take measures to bring schools to a financially sustainable position. When evaluated within this framework, the weakening of the support of the central government in terms of the functioning of the school, which requires high expenditures especially due to the employment of service personnel, obliges teachers and school administrators to demand donations and fees. In this respect, the financial sustainability of schools still continues as a problem and this situation can be reflected to stakeholders as a complaint. When the complaints originating from the school administration are examined, it is seen that not only financial issues, but also student registration, class change, administrative work and functioning, student health problems, school regulations, disciplinary practices, communication with parents and students, discrimination are the subject of complaints. In particular, it is important for the school administration to listen to the demands of the parents and to make them feel that they are taken into consideration (Mathews, 2013). Again, discrimination felt in various schools and student processes can be reflected in complaint mechanisms in many countries (Corvallis School District, 2022). However, discipline, school enrolment and class selection, school functioning and administration's attitudes and communication process are reflected in parent complaints in many countries (McKenna & Day, 2010; VDEECD, 2009; Education Bureau, 2018; Yüksel, 2019). It is thought that the main factor in the formation of these complaints is the expectations of parents. Most parent profiles expect their children to be educated in a good classroom and school, to be successful, not to be exposed to discrimination and bullying and to have a positive communication language (Bakioğlu&Bahçeci, 2010; Erdoğan, 2015; Karp, 1995; Kermit, 2021; Meador, 2020; Şahan, 2011; Whitaker, 2017). Administrative behaviours that are contrary to these expectations activate the complaint procedures of education systems.

At the same time, mobbing or intentional negative behaviours and attitudes performed by the school principal towards his/her subordinates can also be complained about by teachers or other personnel, as seen in the current study. Again, discrimination, favouritism or discretionary practices directed at his/her subordinates by the school principal may also be the subject of complaints from time to time. In this context, mobbing can occur in most organizational formations, and since there are intense relations in educational institutions, complaints about mobbing, especially perceived by teachers, are increasing, which can often result in a decrease in the performance of teachers or other personnel (Çetin&Danacı, 2021; TokerGökçe, 2012).

In addition, as seen in the results of the current study, situations such as fights, bullying and violence, which are

caused by students and usually directed against other students, are also complained by the parents of students. One of the most important expectations of parents for their children is to ensure the physical, mental or psychological safety of their children in the school environment, and especially the situations that occur at the level of violence or bullying can cause significant damage to the personal, educational and social lives of students (Ahmed et al., 2022). This situation is reflected in parents' concerns and dissatisfaction (Ateş&Ünal, 2020) and they may return to educational institutions as complaints. Again, other stakeholders of education, such as school bus service, canteen and parent-teacher association, may be subjected to these parents' complaints from time to time. As it was revealed in the current study, students or their parents may complain about situations putting students at risk by school bus services, negative behaviours of service personnel, food sold in canteens. In fact, this situation can be the subject of complaints not only in Turkey but also in other countries. For example, in Canada, the negative attitudes of bus drivers towards students, endangering student safety, school transportation problems such as cleanliness, maintenance and comfort may cause complaints (Frassinelli, 2022). In Saudi Arabia, poor quality and unhealthy food in school canteens or cafeterias (Al-Hamid, 2015) result in student and parent complaints. From this point of view, it can be thought that complaints about school busses, canteens, cafeterias, which are the subject of parental concerns, are widespread internationally.

## CONCLUSION

When the results obtained in the current study, which was carried out to examine the complaints against educational institutions and their stakeholders, are evaluated together, it is seen that complaint platforms and methods are used intensively in terms of the education sector, and online processes such as Cimer, with their easy and effective accessibility, put pressures on educational institutions and their stakeholders. In this context, it is felt that the level of pressure is higher on elementary schools and especially on primary school teachers and administrators. Financial problems experienced by primary schools and inflexible education and training processes in these schools have a great impact on the amount of complaints directed to them. In fact, even the conduct of innocent activities that can be carried out in schools in line with the interests of the school can be a cause for complaint. However, it has become a natural cycle for educational institutions to be subject to complaints and inspections, since the public institutions that the parents of students, who make up a significant part of the society, feel closest to, are public schools, they are easily accessible and they are the element with which they communicate the most.

On the other hand, these complaints and inspections can sometimes be based on untrue statements of parents, and the fact that the complainants who make untrue statements are not subject to any penal sanctions increases the number and rate of these complaints. This situation may result in weakening of organizational commitment (Akar, 2014; Babaoğlu, 2021) and poor performance (Karayılan&Mert, 2022) on the part of school administrators and teachers. At the same time, although it is considered as a process that increases citizen-state communication and interaction (Karkın, 2017), as reflected in the statistics, it can leave public institutions and employees under the heavy burden of complaints.

## SUGGESTION

In this context; (1) revision of complaint platforms and addressing them in a framework that supports educational institutions and their staff, (2) increasing and regulating legal sanctions to be imposed on the complainants who make false statements intentionally to harm someone and (3) as in international examples, making the complainants obliged to meet with the school administration first to resolve the problems (except for serious issues and unresolved issues) are thought to make the Turkish education system more efficient.

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