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Image of Teaching Profession According to Teachers Evaluations

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Abstract

This study, which was carried out using a mixed method research model, aims to explain how teachers' thoughts and observations about the image of the teaching profession and their suggestions for solutions to the problems related to the image of the teaching profession are seen by those who perform the profession. The research was conducted in Konya. Quantitative data were obtained from 439 teachers by stratified random sampling method and qualitative data were obtained from 16 teachers by maximum diversity sampling method. According to the quantitative findings of the study, it was concluded that the image of the teaching profession was at a medium level, the sub-dimensions of professional and personal characteristics, professional attractiveness and status were at a high level, and the dimensions of social perception and media were at a low level. According to the qualitative findings of the study, most of the teachers who participated in the research see the image of the teaching profession at a very low level or negatively. In order for the image of the teaching profession to reach a better level, the statements that teachers should continuously improve themselves and exhibit positive behaviours, and the suggestions that the Ministry of National Education and political actors should take care of teachers and better explain the activities and practices of teachers to the society came to the fore.

Key Words

Image • Image of the teaching profession • Teachers' evaluations

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The word "image", which originates from the Latin root "imago" (picture or image), has passed into Turkish from French and is defined as "imagery" in TDK. The word imagery is defined as something conceived in the mind and longed to be realised, imagination, dream; and general appearance, impression, image. When TDK's definition is examined, it is seen that the first definition emphasises the future and the future, while the second definition is a description of the current situation. In the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary image is defined as the impression that a person, organisation or product etc. gives to the public. When the literature is examined, it is seen that many scientists express the concept of image in different ways. [Linkemer \(1997\)](#) states that there are as many definitions as the number of people trying to define image. [Aydmhoğlu \(2014\)](#) states that image is used as a concept that concerns many fields and whose definition differs from person to person. Image is generally related to how we perceive an object, person, institution, brand, country, etc. Since each person's perception will be different from the other, it is natural for an object, person, institution, brand or country to have more than one different image ([Ilıcak Aydınalp, 2014](#)).

Image is the meaning of a phenomenon according to the mental world and perception of individuals. In other words, it is the impression left by a person or an organisation in the minds of other people and organisations. Image is realised in the mind of the individual depending on the process under the influence of certain factors ([Dincer, 1998](#)). Image is the individual's evaluation and interpretation of the information obtained through various channels. These channels include advertisements, natural relations, cultural environment and prejudices ([Bakan, 2005](#)). In another definition, image is the thoughts of people about an object, organisation or another person formed at the end of a series of information processes ([Öneren, 2013](#)). When the literature is analysed, we see that the definitions are generally concentrated around the concepts in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

Some Expressions in the Definitions of the Concept of Image

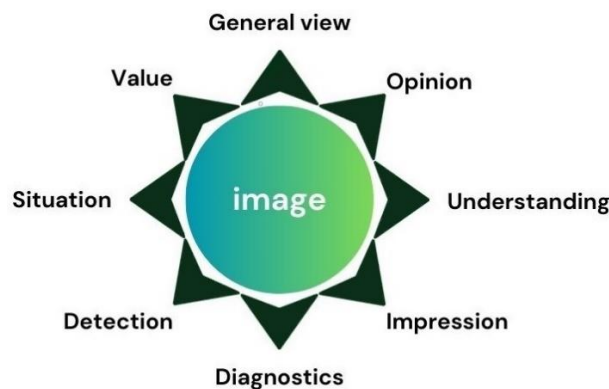


Image Types

In the studies conducted on the images of professions, it can be mentioned that there are various factors affecting their images since each profession has its own characteristics. However, when these factors are divided into certain

groups, they can be classified as the characteristics of professionals, social perception, characteristics of the profession, and media (Doğan, 2018). Polat and Arslan (2015) categorised image as in Table 1.

Table 1

Image Types and Classifications

According to the time of image perception	Present (current) image
	Desired (ideal) image
According to the perceiver	Internal image (self-perceived image of the organisation)
	External (mirror, foreign) image
According to the nature of the message that creates the image	Tangible image
	Abstract image
According to the quality of perceived image	Positive image
	Negative image
According to the levels of image perception	Personal image
	Group image
	Department image
	Organisational image
	Corporate image
	System image
According to the dominant factor in the formation of image perception	Product image
	Brand image
	Transfer image
	Umbrella image

When Table 1 is analysed, image perception is classified according to time, perceiver, the nature of the message that creates the image, the levels of image perception and the dominant factor in the formation of image perception. Bulduklu (2015) classified image types as personal image, corporate image, positive image, negative image, current image, brand image, product image, professional image, country image, perceived image, desired image, umbrella image and transfer image.

Image of Teaching Profession

The teaching profession is a profession that requires specialised knowledge and skills (Şişman, 2006) as well as more qualifications and competences beyond transferring and giving information (Çalışkan, 2005). Yavuz (2020) consider that if he cannot be a teacher of himself, he cannot be a teacher of anyone else. Teachers should not only look at their work as a profession, but should also accompany the learning journey in terms of their own development. In recent years, the skills that teachers should possess have been increasing. In addition to transferring knowledge in the traditional sense, teachers today have to fulfil many extra tasks such as using technology effectively, working as a team, and contributing to school management (Göker & Gündüz, 2017).

Professional image is the thoughts, knowledge and emotional reactions of professional employees and the society to which the profession provides service (Bağçeci et al., 2013). Based on this definition, we can define the image of the teaching profession as the thoughts, knowledge and emotional reactions about the teaching profession. The professional image of teachers consists of a combination of many characteristics that teachers leave on the public.

Factors affecting the image of teaching profession have been investigated by different researchers. Research on this subject and researchers are shown in the table below.

Table 2

Factors Affecting the Image of Teaching Profession According to Researchers

Researchers	Factors
Bağçeci, Çetin ve Ünsal (2013)	Contact General View Social Dimension
Ünsal (2015)	Status of the Profession Personal Image Attitude towards the Profession and Characteristics of the Profession School Image Teacher Qualification
Ölçüm ve Polat (2016)	Visual Image Professional Image Behavioural Image
Doğan ve Bayrak (2019)	Professional and Personal Characteristics Social Perception Occupational Attraction Status Media

Purpose of the Study

With the spread of social media, the visibility of the teaching profession in the media has increased. In addition, the widespread use of distance education due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the transfer of schools and lessons to homes have enabled parents to see the teacher and the education process more closely.

It is important to investigate how the image of the teaching profession is affected in this environment where the visibility of teachers has increased so much and schools have become more transparent. In this process, the positive or negative evaluations of parents and society may have affected the image of the teacher. This situation may affect the participation of parents in the learning process. In addition, the emerging new image may also affect the profile of candidates who will prefer the teaching profession.

In this study, it is aimed to explain how teachers' thoughts, observations and suggestions for solutions to the problems related to the image of the teaching profession are seen by those who do the profession and to give ideas to the Ministry of National Education and political actors etc. about the correction/improvement of the current situation.

Method

In this study, convergent parallel design approach, one of the mixed method designs, was used. In this design, quantitative and qualitative data are analysed separately and the results are summarised and interpreted separately. To what extent and in which ways the results of the two analyses are combined, separated and related to each other are discussed and interpreted. When making general interpretation, the results are combined (Creswell et al., 2020).

Participants

The research was conducted with teachers working in official public schools in Selçuklu, Meram and Karatay, which are the central districts of Konya province in the 2020-2021 academic year. The quantitative data of the research were obtained from 439 teachers by stratified random sampling method and qualitative data were obtained from 16 teachers by maximum diversity sampling method.

Participants of Quantitative Data

The distribution of the participants who constitute the quantitative data of the study according to demographic characteristics is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Distribution of Participants According to Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Features	n	%
Gender	Woman	279	63,6
	Male	160	36,4
Education Status	Licence	376	85,6
	Master's Degree/PhD	63	14,4
Your age	20-30	40	9,1
	31-40	181	41,2
	41-50	170	38,7
	51 and above	48	10,9
Marital Status	Single	53	12,1
	Married	386	87,9
Type of School	Pre-School	60	13,7
	Primary School	197	44,9
	Middle School	91	20,7
	High School	91	20,7
Branch	Verbal	204	46,5
	Numerical	93	21,2
	General Aptitude	142	32,3
Seniority	1-5 years	25	5,7
	6-10 years	77	17,5
	11-15 years	105	23,9
	16 years and over	232	52,8

When Table 3 is analysed, it is seen that 279 (63,6%) of the teachers participating in the study were female and 160 (34,6%) were male. It is understood that 376 (85,6%) of the teachers participating in the study have bachelor's degree and 63 (14,6%) have master's degree or doctorate degree. As for the marital status variables of the teachers, 53 (12,1%) were single and 386 (87,9%) were married. According to the number of children variable, the number of teachers without children is 44 (10,0%), the number of teachers with one child is 76 (17,3%), the number of teachers with two children is 82 (18,7%) and the number of teachers with four children is 16 (3,6%).

Participants of Qualitative Data

The distribution of the participants who constitute the qualitative data of the study according to demographic characteristics is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Demographic Variables of the Participants from whom Qualitative Data were Collected

Code	Gender	Education Status	Age	Marital Status	School Type	Branch	Seniority
P1	Female	Licence	41-50	Single	Pre-School	General Aptitude	16 years and above
P2	Female	Licence	20-30	Married	Pre-School	General Aptitude	6-10 years
P3	Female	Licence	31-40	Married	Pre-School	General Aptitude	11-15 years
P4	Female	Licence	41-50	Married	Pre-School	General Aptitude	16 years and above
P5	Female	Postgraduate	51 and above	Single	Primary School	General Aptitude	16 years and above
P6	Female	Licence	41-50	Married	Primary School	General Aptitude	16 years and above
P7	Female	Licence	31-40	Married	Primary School	General Aptitude	11-15 years
P8	Male	Licence	31-40	Single	Primary School	General Aptitude	11-15 years
P9	Male	Licence	31-40	Married	Middle School	Numerical	11-15 years
P10	Female	Licence	31-40	Married	Middle School	Numerical	11-15 years
P11	Female	Licence	31-40	Married	Middle School	General Aptitude	11-15 years
P12	Female	Licence	41-50	Single	Middle School	Verbal	16 years and above
P13	Male	Licence	51 and above	Married	High School	Numerical	16 years and above
P14	Female	Licence	31-40	Married	High School	Numerical	11-15 years
P15	Male	Licence	41-50	Married	High School	Verbal	6-10 years
P16	Male	Postgraduate	41-50	Single	High School	Verbal	16 years and above

As seen in Table 4, 16 participant teachers took part in the study. While determining these teachers, equal numbers of teachers from each level of education were taken into consideration. In accordance with maximum diversity sampling, it was taken into consideration that the participants' gender, age, marital status, branch and seniority characteristics were different. Participation in the study was voluntary.

Measurement Tools

The quantitative data of the study were collected using the Teaching Profession Image Scale developed by Doğan and Bayrak (2019), and the qualitative data were collected using a semi-structured interview form.

A data collection tool consisting of two (2) sections was used to collect the quantitative data of the study. The first part of the data collection tool includes personal information questions. These questions are included in the Personal Information Form, in which demographic characteristics of the teachers participating in the study such as gender, education level, age, marital status, type of school, branch and seniority are asked. In the second part, the "Teaching Profession Image Scale" developed by Doğan and Bayrak (2019) was used. The scale consists of 28 (twenty-eight) items and 5 (five) sub-dimensions.

In the study, 10 questions prepared to collect qualitative data were used. These questions were related to the sub-dimensions of the scale applied to collect the quantitative data of the research and it was paid attention that they were related to all of the sub-dimensions. While preparing the questions, the literature in the related field and expert opinions were taken into consideration.

Data Collection Tools and Techniques

In this mixed method research, quantitative and qualitative data were collected. In this context, a scale form was used for quantitative data and semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data. The qualitative data of the study were obtained through semi-structured interviews. All of the semi-structured interviews with prepared questions were conducted face-to-face, with audio recording with prior information and in the teachers' own schools. Teachers were informed verbally and in writing before the interview; interviews were conducted with teachers who approved and signed the voluntary participation form.

Analysing the Data

In this study, convergent parallel design approach, one of the mixed method designs, was used. In this design, quantitative and qualitative data are analysed separately and the results are summarised and interpreted separately. To what extent and in which ways the results of the two analyses are combined, separated and related to each other are discussed and interpreted. When making general interpretation, the results are combined (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2020). In this context, the quantitative data and qualitative data of the research were analysed separately.

The qualitative data of the research were analysed by descriptive analysis method. The aim of descriptive analysis is to present the findings to the reader in an organised and interpreted form. The data obtained for this purpose are first described systematically and clearly. Then, these descriptions are explained and interpreted, cause-effect relationships are analysed and some conclusions are reached (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018).

Results

Results Related to Quantitative Data

The table below shows the findings related to the mean scores of the sub-dimensions of the answers given by the teachers to the Image of Teaching Profession scale.

Table 5

Distribution of Teaching Profession Image According to Sub-Dimensions

Sub Dimensions	N	Minimum	Maximum	\bar{x}	Ss
Professional and personal characteristics of teachers	439	1,00	5,00	3,77	,705
Social perception	439	1,00	5,00	1,84	,754
Occupational attraction	439	1,00	5,00	3,62	,949
Status	439	1,00	5,00	3,70	,787
Media	439	1,00	5,00	1,81	,773
Full scale	439	1,00	5,00	2,95	,459

Rating: 4,21 – 5,00 Very High; 3,41 – 4,20 High; 2,61 – 3,40 Middle; 1,81 – 2,60 Low; 1,00 – 1,80 Very low

When Table 5 is analysed, according to the gender variable, the mean scores of the teachers' responses to the professional and personal characteristics dimension of the scale are \bar{x} =3,82 for female teachers and \bar{x} =3,70 for male teachers. The mean scores of female teachers' responses to the social perception dimension of the scale were \bar{x} =1,86 and \bar{x} =1,85 for male teachers. The averages of the responses to the professional attraction sub-dimension of the scale are \bar{x} =3,69 for female teachers and \bar{x} =3,51 for male teachers. In the status sub-dimension, the averages were found to be \bar{x} =3,71 for female teachers and \bar{x} =3,69 for male teachers. In the media sub-dimension, the mean scores were \bar{x} =1,86 for female teachers and \bar{x} =1,71 for male teachers. In the whole scale, the mean scores of female teachers \bar{x} =2,99 and male teachers \bar{x} =2,83.

Results Related to Qualitative Data

Teachers' evaluations about the image of the teaching profession were divided into sub-themes as good, medium and poor level. Most of the teachers perceive the image of the teaching profession at a very low level or negatively. Despite the variables such as age, gender, educational status, school type, seniority, most of the teachers made negative evaluations about the image of the teaching profession. Some of the opinions of teachers who made negative evaluations are as follows:

I think the image of the teaching profession is in a bad place right now. We have no respect, individuals living in society have no respect for us. They do not attach importance to us, they do not see us as valuable and nowadays every parent is a teacher. Therefore, I do not believe that the teaching profession has an image. Both we finished it and society finished it (P2).

The teaching profession is actually one of the professions that should be respected and held in high esteem among all professions. Maybe it was like this in the past. But nowadays, there is not much reputation left for teaching. In terms of both parents' and students' view of teachers, it has become a thing now. If you can't be anything, at least be a teacher. I mean, I don't think it has a very good image today. The teacher's word has no validity. I think the image of the teaching profession is bad (P13).

Some of the teachers participating in the research evaluated that the image of the teaching profession was seriously affected especially during the pandemic period. The direction of the effect was negative.

It is not that we did not have an image problem with the pandemic. We have become a mass that sits, works from home, and earns money on top of that. I observe a situation like we have been targeted a little bit. But we know what kind of problems we have within ourselves. We know what we are dealing with, what kind of problems we are dealing with. But I think it looks different from the other side. I hope that these will be resolved in time. I can say that our general image is average. But I think it is also close to bad (P11).

If you had asked me until this year ago, my general judgements were more positive about the image of the teaching profession. But I don't think it has been very positive in the last year because of the pandemic. I don't think we are in a very good place in the eyes of the public (P5).

According to another finding of the study, there are many teachers who think that the image of the teaching profession has started to decline in recent years while it was in a much better position in the previous years. Teachers consider that the prestige and reputation of teaching has declined along with the professional image.

Humans are a being governed by perception. People's perception of the teaching profession is directly related to the education of both students and parents in this field. In this sense, as a teacher with 20 years of experience, I can say very clearly that the image of the teaching profession and the perspective on teaching have undergone a serious deterioration in the last 10 years. Since my field is counselling, I know very well the perspectives of students and parents at this point. In this sense, the teacher is seen as someone who only provides teaching and tries to provide it in a compressed and narrow area. I think it has become a concept, so to speak, whose hands are tied, trying to give it to a student community that does not want to receive it, to a parent community that does not want to receive it (P15).

I think it used to be more respectful in the past. I think this is decreasing day by day. I also noticed it after I was appointed myself. I mean, even in the form of address, if the age of the parent is older than us, there is a lot of sweet, sweet talk. I think the respect for teaching is gradually decreasing. If we make a categorisation, I think the image of the teaching profession is bad (P4).

According to the research findings, there is one teacher who argues that the image of the teaching profession varies from region to region and evaluates that it varies from person to person. Their evaluations are as follows:

It can vary from region to region and even from person to person. For example, I am a teacher in a school. While this situation may be misunderstood by some people, it may be appreciated by others. I think that this image perception is a concept that is shaped according to people's past life experiences and their lives (P8).

I've worked as a paid teacher. I've also worked in the private sector. I've been working in state institutions for ten years. Private is a completely different place. I don't even want to consider it as teaching, you work like a labourer in my opinion. But I was first assigned to Silopi in Şırnak. The perspective of the people there is good. Then I moved to Mardin. Teaching was better in the east (P10).

As another question in the research, teachers were asked what they could do to improve the image of the teaching profession. Half of the teachers who participated in the research stated that teachers should be self-developing. In addition, being an honest and researcher teacher was emphasised by the teachers who participated in the research as a characteristic that teachers should have.

They should be able to renew themselves from the beginning. They should be open to innovation, attend courses. In other words, a teacher who is fixed is unfortunately always doomed to regress. He/she should progress, this should be his/her primary goal. I am completing my 15th year in the profession. The knowledge of the first year and the current knowledge are very different. I cannot save the present with the knowledge of the first year (P5).

The teacher should be very curious and researcher. For example, distance education has started. We met with Web 2.0 tools. We didn't say, "I don't have to do it, I don't have to do it, I can just tell and pass." We all learnt new things in order to be able to teach these lessons with live lessons. For this reason, they should be curious and interested in applying different educational activities, implementing new cultural and artistic activities (P6).

Teachers were asked what the society could do to improve the image of the teaching profession. Teachers' evaluations were divided into the sub-themes of trusting, respectful, conscious and honest society. Examples of teachers' evaluations on this subject are as follows:

They should trust us. Parents and society should trust me. They should believe that I am really behind the student and that I am trying to make the student go forward for the benefit of the student. In other words, they should believe that everything is for them. The teacher should reflect this image to the other side (P2).

Society must first respect the teacher. They should respect our schools. They should respect the whole education community. Because respect comes before love (P8).

The most prominent statement in the teachers' evaluations of what the Ministry of National Education and political actors can do to improve the image of the teaching profession and bring it to a better place was the statement "the Ministry should take ownership of it". Apart from this statement, the suggestions that the Ministry should make advertisements and provide economic welfare came to the fore.

Our ministry needs to respect not only the views of parents but also the views of teachers. Unfortunately, a parent-orientated policy is currently being implemented. Our system is progressing according to the demands of parents and students. Road maps should be drawn according to teachers' thoughts and ideas (P9).

Teachers should not be complained too quickly, should not be touched too quickly, should not be criticised too quickly. I think the teacher should be seen as a competent person as a person who has graduated from a university, who has spent years in child development and student development, and should not be questioned so quickly. I mean, everything should not be ignored, but it should not be a profession that can be complained about even the smallest issues that can be complained about immediately and an investigation can be opened on every issue. When this happens, the teacher's hands are tied (P15).

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

According to the quantitative data of the study, it was found that the image of teaching profession was at a medium level. Among the sub-dimensions of the teaching profession image scale in which quantitative data were collected, teachers' professional and personal characteristics, status and professional attraction sub-dimensions were measured at a high level, while social perception and media sub-dimensions were measured at a low level. According

to the qualitative data of the study, the majority of the teachers evaluated the image of the teaching profession as negative/bad. Again, the majority of the teachers stated that status, professional attraction, social perception and media evaluations were negative. When the data obtained are evaluated together, the responses of the teachers to the scale for social perception and media and the findings obtained from semi-structured interviews support each other. It is seen that there is differentiation in other sub-dimensions. The data of the study were collected during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-2021) period. While the quantitative data were collected at the beginning of the pandemic, qualitative data were collected during the period when schools were closed and distance education activities were intensively carried out. The reason for this difference may be factors such as the exhaustion of teachers during the pandemic process, the fact that the studies carried out are not sufficiently known by the society and the change in social perception.

In [Doğan and Bayrak's \(2019\)](#) study, the general view of professional image was found to be at a moderate level. In the study conducted by [Cansız \(2019\)](#), teachers' general perceptions of professional image were found to be at a medium level. In [Sönmez and Cemaloğlu's \(2017\)](#) study, the general view of the teaching profession was found at a low level. While the findings obtained from this study overlap with the findings of [Doğan and Bayrak \(2019\)](#) and [Cansız \(2019\)](#), there is a difference between the findings of [Sönmez and Cemaloğlu \(2017\)](#).

A great majority of teachers view the image of the teaching profession negatively. It was observed that teachers who made negative evaluations made similar evaluations from each group regardless of demographic variables such as gender, educational status, marital status, school type, branch and seniority. [Özdemir and Orhan \(2019\)](#) concluded in their study that the majority of teachers had negative views about their professional image, while a small number of teachers had positive views. Since it reached similar findings, it overlaps with the findings of this study.

In the study, teachers stated that while the image of the teaching profession was in a better position in the past, it has regressed to a more negative situation today. They think that the reasons for this decline are the speeches and attitudes of senior managers, the media, teacher assignment problems, economic reasons, etc. [Özdemir and Orhan \(2019\)](#) found that the professional image of teachers is worse than in the past. The findings obtained from this study show overlap since they are similar.

Another result of the study is that professional and personal characteristics of teachers have an important role in determining the image of the profession. A good level of professional and personal characteristics of teachers is a sine qua non for a quality education. The best education can only be provided by the best teachers ([Özcan, 2011](#)). According to the opinions of the teachers participating in the study, the characteristics that teachers should have are self-developing, honest, researching, respectful, conforming to the values of the society, open to innovation, well-equipped, with high communication skills, a good observer, and a strong character. According to [Doğan \(2018\)](#), the professional and personal characteristics that teachers should have are the main factors that will increase the success levels of students. It is clear that increasing the professional and personal characteristics of teachers will contribute to education. For this reason, it is possible to say that providing teachers with trainings and opportunities to improve their professional and personal characteristics will improve the quality of education.

A great majority of the teachers participating in the research think that the social perception is negative. There are many teachers who think that the respect for teachers has decreased in the society. In Ünsal's (2015) study, 76% of the teachers who participated in the study think that the teaching profession has no respect. Again, teachers participating in Doğan's (2018) study concluded that the respect shown to teachers and the value given to the teaching profession by the society are not sufficient. In his study, Özpölat (2002) asked teachers the question "How much importance does the society they live in give to teachers?" and 49% of the teachers in the sample of his study answered "very much". In the same study, teachers concluded that the society gives more importance to teachers than parents. Erzen and Epçaçan (2018) determined that according to teachers, the prestige of the teaching profession is at a medium level. The findings obtained as a result of this study overlap with the studies of Ünsal (2015) and Doğan (2018), but not with the studies of Özpölat (2002) and Erzen and Epçaçan (2018).

In order for the image of the teaching profession to be at a better level, teachers suggested that teachers should improve themselves, exhibit positive behaviour, increase unity and solidarity, teachers should resemble each other in their behaviours and be role models. In Özdemiş and Orhan's (2019) study, the expression of self-improvement-renewal came to the fore the most in what teachers who want to contribute to their professional image should do. Since the most prominent expression in this study is that teachers should improve themselves, it overlaps with the research finding of Özdemiş and Orhan (2019).

According to the data obtained, teachers expect support from the Ministry of National Education and political actors. They have indicated how this support should be by using expressions such as the Ministry of National Education taking an attitude in favour of teachers, being protective and providing the necessary support. Another observation of the teachers is that the efforts, sacrifices and good works of teachers are not sufficiently explained to the society. They expect this from the Ministry of National Education and political actors.

Ethic

According to the decision of Necmettin Erbakan University Scientific Research Ethics Committee dated 19/02/2021 and numbered 2021-068, this study received ethical approval.

Author Contributions

This research article is produced from Raşit ERARSLAN's master's thesis. The second author is the thesis advisor.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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