

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERSAyşegül ATALAY¹Yasemin KARAMAN KEPENEKÇİ²

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ABSTRACT

It is almost accepted that teachers have a heavy workload. Still, the perception that teachers have long school holidays and ample free time during the school day has become a stereotype. From this perspective, teaching has been a profession that is sometimes envied and sometimes criticized. When considered from this point of view, teachers' holidays were found to be worth researching. This study aims to reveal teachers' opinions about the holidays they have. Maximum diversity sampling was used to review teachers' views and a total of 12 volunteer participants, four teachers from each school level (primary, secondary and high school), were interviewed. According to the findings, the meaning that teachers attributed to holiday was mostly described with the expressions of "discharge", "clearing the mind", "making time for oneself and family", "getting out of routine" and "unplanned". In general, it has been observed that some teachers found the holiday periods ideal, while others found them inadequate. In addition, all of the teachers stated that they have a mentally and physically demanding job and emphasized that there should be plenty of holidays for this profession. However, they also stated that there is a dominant opinion in the society that teachers take many and long vacations and have free time. However, it was revealed that contrary to popular belief, they could not spend the holidays (especially summer vacation) offered to them efficiently.

Keywords: Teacher; holiday; school.

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ÖĞRETMENLERİN GÖZÜNDEN OKUL TATİLİ

ÖZET

Öğretmenlerin ağır iş yüklerinin olduğu neredeyse genel kabul gören bir gerçektir. Buna rağmen toplumda öğretmenlerin uzun okul tatillerine ve gün içinde de geniş boş zamana sahip olduğu algısı kalıplaşmış bir yargı haline gelmiştir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında öğretmenlik, kimi zaman imrenilen kimi zaman da eleştirilen bir meslek olagelmiştir. Buradan hareketle çalışmada öğretmenlerin sahip oldukları tatiller hakkındaki görüşlerini ortaya koymak amaçlanmıştır. Öğretmen görüşlerini incelemek üzere maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme belirlenmiş ve her okul kademesinden (ilkokul, ortaokul ve lise) dörder öğretmen olmak üzere toplam 12 gönüllü katılımcının görüşlerine başvurulmuştur. Ulaşılan bulgulara göre öğretmenlerin tatile yükledikleri anlam daha çok “deşarj olma”, “zihin boşaltma”, “kendisine-aileye vakit ayırma”, “rutinin dışına çıkma” ve “plansızlık” ifadeleriyle betimlenmiştir. Genel olarak bazı öğretmenlerin tatil sürelerini ideal, bazı öğretmenlerin ise yetersiz bulunduğu anlaşılmıştır. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin tamamı zihinsel ve fiziksel olarak zorlayıcı bir iş yaptıklarını belirtmiş ve bu meslekte tatillerin bolca olması gerektiğini vurgulamıştır. Bununla birlikte toplumda genel olarak öğretmenlerin çok ve uzun tatil yaptığı ve boş zamanlarının olduğu yönünde baskın bir kanının olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Bununla birlikte kendilerine sunulan tatil imkânlarını (özellikle yaz tatili) sanıldığı kadar aksine verimli bir şekilde geçiremedikleri ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen; tatil; okul.

1. INTRODUCTION

In general, holiday, which is defined as "the period specified by law as a break from work and the period spent without working in order to have fun and rest" (TDK), is identified with school holiday in the teaching profession. In short, school holiday, which means a break in educational activities for certain periods of time (Atalay & Karaman-Kepenekci, 2022), has created the perception that teachers also benefit from the holiday periods offered to students in the teaching profession. Article 50 of the 1982 Constitution mentions the right of employees to rest. According to this article, "Rest is the right of employees. Holidays, annual leave rights and conditions shall be regulated by law." Therefore, it can be understood from this article that rest is guaranteed as a constitutional right and holiday is an indispensable issue. According to Law No. 657 on Civil Servants (DMK), "The weekly working time of civil servants is generally 40 hours. This period is regulated with Saturdays and Sundays as holidays. However, different working hours may be determined by this law, special laws, presidential decrees or regulations to be issued based on these laws, taking into account the characteristics of institutions and services (Art. 99). Furthermore, "Teachers are considered to be on leave during summer and rest holidays. They are not granted annual leave, except for sick leave and other excuse leaves" (Article 103). According to this provision, it is understood that teachers can benefit from summer and other holidays just like students.

In terms of holidays during the academic year, Turkey has a "summer holiday", two one-week "interim holiday" (in November and April), a "semester break" (winter holiday) between two semesters, and "official holidays" (religious holidays, New Year's holidays, etc.), the day and duration of which

are determined according to the calendar of that year. Teachers, on the other hand, start the academic year one week before students start school (early September). The end of the academic year for teachers also starts one week after students go on summer vacation (early July) (Eurydice, 2021). This process is similar to many other countries on the world and it seems that the holiday time offered to teachers is organized according to the academic year.

Tezcan (1983) considers holiday as one of the important problems of teachers and argues that the problems related to the holidays of teachers who constitute a significant part of the public employees in the country, are not sufficiently emphasized and discussed. In this context, the author states that teaching is seen as a profession with plenty of holidays; however, this is not the case in reality. However, according to the results of some studies (Kantas & Vassilaki, 1997; Kyriacou et al., 1999; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2004; Boz, & Boz, 2008; Lam & Yan, 2011; Akar, 2012; Bakar et al., 2014), teaching is seen as an attractive profession because it offers reasonable working hours and long holidays. For example, in Boz and Boz's (2008) study on prospective chemistry and mathematics teachers, participants stated that having a lot of free time and long holidays were among the reasons for becoming a teacher. Similarly, in a study conducted by Kyriacou et al. (1999), it was found that some teacher candidates (51.9%) chose this profession because of long holidays and having more social hours.

The perception that teachers have plenty of time and holiday is one of the frequently discussed issues in society. One of the starting points of this perception is that teachers take advantage of all holiday opportunities for students and therefore have long holidays. The other is the idea that teachers have free time outside of class hours. However, in practice, the holidays available to teachers should not be interpreted in such a simple way (Atalay & Karaman-Kepenekci, 2022). For example, Kinnunen and Leskinen (1989) found that teachers are exposed to intense stress during the academic year and that there is a decrease in stress levels only during weekend and semester breaks. In another study (2003), Ritvanen et al. (2004), who found that teachers' stress levels are balanced and reduced only during long holidays, reached more detailed findings that reveal how important holidays are for teachers. Accordingly, it was found that the psycho-physiological stress level of full-time teachers was high, and during summer vacations, teachers' blood pressure, static muscle tension, general stress level, psychosomatic symptoms and adrenaline levels were greatly reduced.

Lawrie (2011) emphasizes that it is necessary to understand how challenging the work teachers do in the classroom is, and for this reason, long holidays are an important issue for this professional group. As a matter of fact, summer holidays are not only a time when teachers recharge their depleted energies, but also a time when they continue their professional development. In China, which generally provides teachers very short holidays throughout the year, it is understood that teachers in the country have high levels of burnout and stress. For example, Liu and Onwuegbuzie (2012) found that inadequate holidays were among the factors affecting Chinese teachers' turnover intentions.

The perception that teaching offers plenty of holiday time and ample time has also led to a sexist approach to this profession. For example, Drudy (2008) mentions that women can fulfill many of their responsibilities during the day thanks to this leisure time, and therefore there is a judgment in society that teaching is suited to women precisely for this reason. When teacher statistics are analyzed across the world, including Turkey, the high number of female teachers can be attributed to this perception. Among the member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the proportion of female teachers at all levels is 69.7% (OECD, 2022). This rate is 96.2% in preschool, 82.6% in primary (basic education) and 63.4% in secondary education. According to the National Education Statistics, 43% of the 993,669 teachers working in public schools in Turkey for the 2020-2021 academic year are male (423,354) and 57% are female (570,315) (MoNE, 2021). At the basic education level, this rate is 63.6%, again showing an increase in favor of women. The proportion of female teachers in Turkey is 54.6% at the secondary education level (OECD, 2022).

A report on gender discrimination by the European Institute for Gender Equality shows that in all EU countries certain professional fields, such as engineering and technology, are dominated by men. In contrast, some jobs are still widely considered to be 'women-only'. These include in particular pre-school education, nursing, midwifery, secretarial, domestic and personal care services. The report draws attention to a particularly sharp and growing gender gap in the teaching profession. Indeed, data from OECD member countries show that, on average, women make up more than two-thirds of teachers in institutions from pre-school to higher education (Katsarova, 2020). According to Drudy (2008), this worldwide result coincides with the idea that women should not interfere with their domestic responsibilities while pursuing their careers; it is interpreted as the manifestation of a culturally supported understanding. Therefore, the sexist roles and responsibilities assigned to women, such as motherhood and fulfillment of household chores, have led to women's preference for professions such as teaching, where there are more vacations and free time during working hours.

For human nature, holiday can generally be considered a necessity. This need appears as an opportunity that every segment of society wants to benefit from in certain periods. However, the duration of the opportunities offered to benefit from holiday is not the same for every professional group. In this context, teachers' holiday periods have long been discussed and criticized in various ways. The fact that this issue is mostly speculative in the society leads to the need to question the reality of this claim. In this respect, the issue of teachers' holidays was deemed worthy of research due to the perception that they have more holiday opportunities and less working hours compared to other professions. The study aims to reveal the views of teachers about the holidays they have-benefit from.

In order to achieve the stated general purpose, the following questions were sought to be answered in the study:

1. What does holiday mean according to the teachers?

2. What are teachers' a) individual views and b) social perceptions about school holidays?
3. What are the teachers' views on the of a) summer holidays, b) semester holidays, c) mid-term holidays, and d) free time outside of class hours during the week in terms of;
 - The necessity,
 - The duration,
 - How it is spent and
 - How it should be spent?

2. METHOD

Under this heading the research design, study group, data collection and analysis subheadings are given.

2.1. Research Model

This study, which aims to reveal teachers' views on the holidays they have, is based on the basic qualitative research. In basic qualitative research the researcher tries to understand the meaning of a phenomenon according to those who participate in the phenomena. Meaning is made but not discovered. Therefore, researchers conducting basic qualitative research are interested in (1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their world, and (3) what meaning they bring to their experiences (Merriam, 2013, 22). In this study, in-depth interviews were conducted in accordance with the purpose of the research design since it was decided that revealing teachers' perceptions, reactions, descriptions and experiences about school holiday would be best revealed with this approach.

2.2. Participants

The study was based on maximum variation sampling and 12 teachers working in primary, secondary and high schools in Van province who volunteered to participate in the study constituted the study group. Merriam (2013) states that when to terminate data collection depends on the theoretical and practical nature of the research. Accordingly, it is suggested that a very small increase in knowledge compared to the effort made to collect information can be taken as a criterion for saturation (Merriam, 2013). Charmaz (2006) states that if the researcher finds the data sufficient, it would not be correct to talk about a certain sample size in the collection of qualitative data. As a result of the teacher's opinions, it was decided that the research questions were answered in detail and adequately. Personal information about the teachers who participated in the study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants in the study group

<i>Participant Code</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Branch</i>	<i>Educational Background</i>
T1	Primary school	Female	Primary teaching	master's degree
T2	Primary school	Female	Primary teaching	undergraduate
T3	Primary school	Male	Primary teaching	undergraduate
T4	Primary school	Male	Primary teaching	undergraduate
T5	Middle School	Female	English	undergraduate
T6	Middle School	Female	Turkish teaching	undergraduate
T7	Middle School	Male	Math	master's degree
T8	Middle School	Female	Religious culture	undergraduate
T9	High School	Female	English	master's degree
T10	High School	Female	Geography	undergraduate
T11	High School	Male	History	undergraduate
T12	High School	Male	Turkish literature	master's degree

Four teachers from each level participated in the study. Seven of the participants were female and five were male. There were only four teachers with postgraduate education (master's degree).

2.3. Data Collection and Validity/Reliability Studies

A semi-structured interview form was developed by the researchers in line with the sub-problems of the study in order to reveal teachers' views. With this form, detailed information and a rich description were prepared by asking probing questions after the open-ended questions asked to the participants. As suggested by Creswell (2015), the answers given to each question in the interview form were analyzed separately by two researchers for the reliability of the research; codes were created and completed (Creswell, 2015). In addition to this, the findings of the research were verified by an independent reader in line with the auditing technique suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985 cited in Meriam, 2013); thus, it was aimed to create internal validity and consistency. For the validity of the data analysis, it was checked whether the codes and themes created were related to the purposes. Direct quotations were frequently used in the study to support the categories created with the opinions obtained. In addition, in order to increase the credibility of the research, tactics that support participant honesty were used. For this purpose, the research was conducted only with people who were ready to contribute of their own free will; each of the participants was given the opportunity to refuse participation, ensuring that the data were obtained from sincerely and honestly expressed opinions (Shenton, 2004 cited in Arastaman et al., 2018). In addition, consent was requested from the participants involved in the research regarding the interview transcripts. In this way, it was aimed to ensure that the formalized analysis and themes created as a result of the opinions obtained were accurately represented.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed through content analysis. In this direction, frequency distributions of the participants' views were given. Direct quotations were frequently used in the study,

so that the categories created were supported by the opinions obtained from the participants. The teachers in the study were coded as T1, T2, T3.

3. FINDINGS

The meanings attributed to holiday according to the views of the teachers participating in the study are shown in Figure 1.

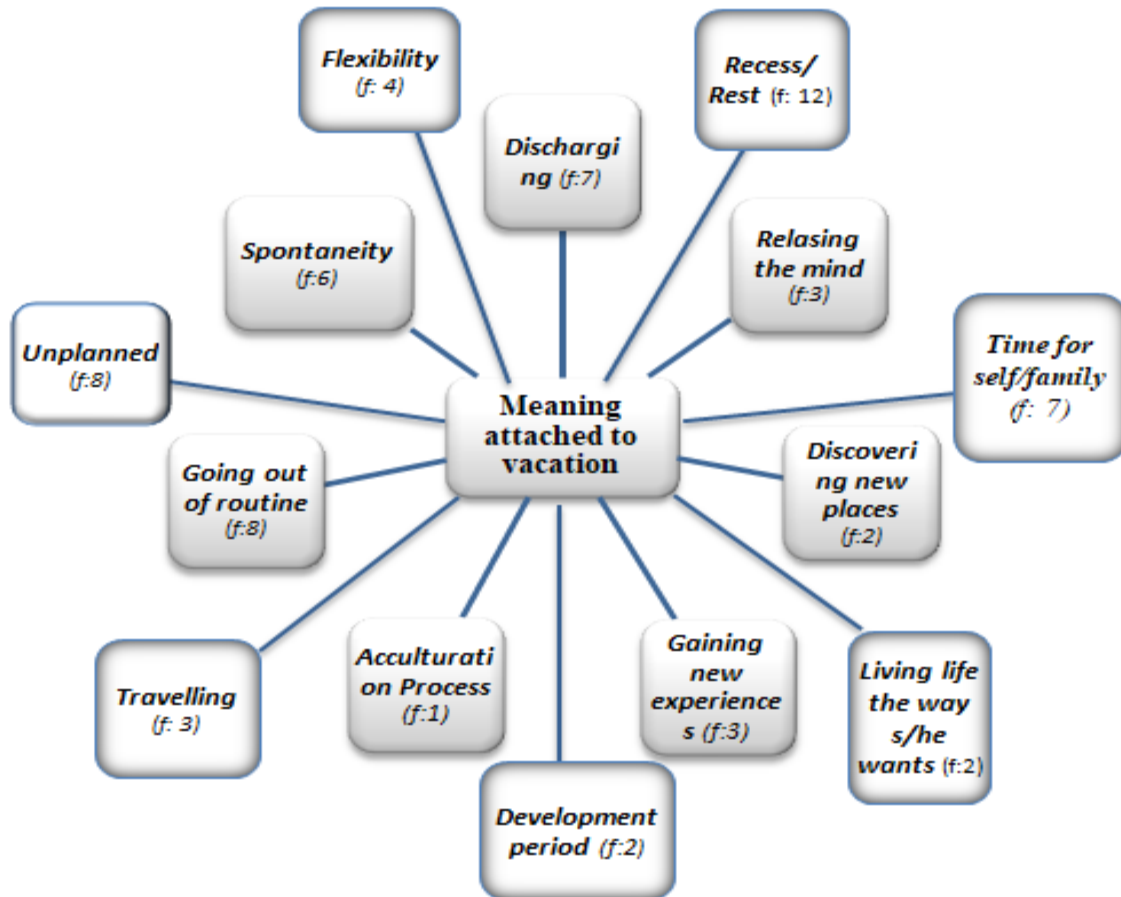


Figure 1. Concepts related to the meaning that teachers attribute to (utilized) holiday

It is understood that teachers generally see holidays as a time of rest and break (f: 12). In addition, the concepts of rest (f: 12) unplanned (f: 8), going out of routine (f: 8), and time for self/family (f: 7) stand out among the meanings attributed to vacation. However, it is understood that some teachers expressed holiday as discovering new places (f: 2) and gaining new experiences (f: 3), and the low number of participants who made statements in this direction draws attention. Similarly, the number of participants who defined holiday as a period of development (f: 2), traveling (f: 3) and acculturation process (f: 1) is also low. As a result, it is noteworthy that there are no expressions such as having fun or having a pleasant time. Teachers' views regarding reflections both individual and social perceptions about holidays are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Teachers' views regarding reflections both individual and social perceptions

Category	Code	n
Individual Reflections	<input type="checkbox"/> Ideal-as it should be	8
	<input type="checkbox"/> There should be plenty of vacation for this profession	8
	<input type="checkbox"/> An essential need	6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Restrictive and problematic (very difficult to get permission during the academic year)	4
	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate	4
Reflections of Social Perception	<input type="checkbox"/> There are too many holidays.	12
	<input type="checkbox"/> There are 3 months of full summer holiday	8
	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time job (the idea that teachers work half a day)	9
	<input type="checkbox"/> Lots of free time outside the classroom	10
	<input type="checkbox"/> Suitable and essential for women (especially mothers)	8

According to Table 2, the majority of the participants (f: 8) think that there should be plenty of holidays and free time in the teaching profession and that the current holiday periods are ideal. However, there are also teachers (f: 4) who think that holiday arrangements during the academic year are restrictive and problematic. In this context, T2's views are as follows:

Sometimes it feels like we will never be able to take any action during the year that goes beyond the set schedule. Even when we get sick, the issue of the child falling behind becomes more important, however we teachers have enough to worry about. But it makes me sad to feel that we are so insignificant once again. It's not just the illness, sometimes it's also problematic for me that we don't have the right not to come to work like everyone else or to take a small vacation whenever we want. We are in a very robotic structure. Both children and us... I don't know how else to find a way out, but I don't think anyone is happy.

When the views of the participants on social perception are examined, it is understood that teachers generally have too many holidays (f: 12) and that they spend three full months of summer holiday (f: 8). In addition, according to the participants, the idea that teachers have free time (f: 10) in the society is also dominant. It is stated that teaching is considered as a half day work (f: 9). Finally, there are also participants who stated that there are perceptions (f: 8) that the teaching profession is associated with women, especially as a motherhood concept, in the society. The views of T7, one of the female participants, on this issue are as follows:

I don't know why, there was always the idea of "if women were to be employed in a profession, at least they should be teacher so that they would be comfortable" was dominant in the society. I think this thought was more intense in the past and now we are seeing the results of this. This has trivialized both the profession and women. They trampled on the value of the profession as if it was a very simple job, and by attributing it only to women, they once again gave women roles which determined from the outside. The teachers' room has started to be full of women. It is very cruel. Especially when you become a mother, it becomes a very pleasant profession for

a woman, isn't it? There is a lot of free time, you can take care of the child, and you can do housework and cooking (!) These are all very wrong judgments.

Teachers' views on "summer vacation" are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Teachers' views on summer vacation

Category	Code	n
Necessity	<input type="checkbox"/> Definitely	12
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate-ideal	6
Duration	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient-little	2
	<input type="checkbox"/> Too long	4
	<input type="checkbox"/> doing anything productive in real life	7
The way it is currently spent	<input type="checkbox"/> Staying in the cities of residence (an average of one week of vacation outside the city, depending on financial means; the rest of the time spent at home)	8
	<input type="checkbox"/> Doing activities with groups of friends with the desire to increase social interaction	10
How it should be spent	<input type="checkbox"/> Education-oriented visits internationally	5
	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional meetings (sharing experiences and stories with teachers from all over the country)	7
	<input type="checkbox"/> Participation in training sessions	6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Practical (useful and interesting) seminars	10
	<input type="checkbox"/> Longer rest and entitlement to discounts on vacation deals for it	2

All teachers (f: 12) think that summer vacation is an absolutely necessary period of time for this profession. Besides, some teachers (f: 6) stated that the duration was ideal, some (f: 2) stated that it was too little and some (f: 4) stated that it was too long. It was observed that most of the teachers (f: 10) spent the summer holiday by staying in social interaction with groups of friends, and a significant number of them (f: 8) stayed in their cities. Some teachers (f: 7) stated that they spent their summer holidays without actually doing anything productive. In terms of how summer holidays should be spent, the teachers suggested practical (useful, interesting) seminars (f: 10), professional meetings to share experiences and stories (f: 7), attending branch-specific training opportunities (f: 6), making education-oriented visits (f: 5), and being offered discounts on vacation opportunities (f: 2) in order to have a longer resting holiday. Some direct quotations obtained from teachers' views on summer holiday are as follows:

I think summer holidays should definitely continue in this way. I don't know if this perception is related to the holiday time we have been accustomed to since we were children, but how they are spent is the most painful thing for me. Most teachers are not able to travel, see and be cultured even in their own country and spend an international vacation. They cannot spend a week in a hotel. We call the time when the school is closed as a holiday, but we are only not working, we are not on a vacation. (T1)

Summer holiday is necessary, of course. It makes it more possible for us to do some activities. In terms of duration, it is long only for summer, it can be spread over the whole year. In my opinion, holidays should be balanced. While resting on the one hand, on the other hand, we can be involved in certain activities that will provide satisfaction according to our professional interests (e.g. professional meetings, camps, education-oriented visits.) I believe that a teacher should be an individual who does not get tired of lifelong learning, but rather enjoys it. Holiday is a good opportunity to learn new things, to overcome our deficiencies. This is all about the teacher's professional responsibility and its perspective on his/her profession. (T2)

Summer holidays are generally the periods when students cannot spend time at school because of the hot summer weather. From this point of view, this holiday is of course necessary. I think summer holidays are not used efficiently by teachers; however they can be used as a very productive period by teachers who always have to improve themselves. I believe that summer holiday is more than necessary. At this point, I believe that holiday periods can be reduced so that teachers can come to their schools when students are not at school and prepare for training and activities. (T3)

Teachers' views on "semester" are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Teachers' views on semester holiday

Category	Code	n
Necessity	<input type="checkbox"/> Definitely	12
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate-ideal	9
Duration	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient-little	2
	<input type="checkbox"/> Too long	1
	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest (mentally and physically)	10
The way it is currently spent	<input type="checkbox"/> Cinema, theater, reading books, etc.	6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Making and reviewing work plans	5
	<input type="checkbox"/> For tourism	4
	<input type="checkbox"/> Participating in and being encouraged to participate in cultural activities	7
How it should be spent	<input type="checkbox"/> Making arrangements to overcome deficiencies (personal and professional development)	5
	<input type="checkbox"/> Increasing mental and physical relaxation	4

All of the teachers participating in the study (f: 12) think that the semester break is necessary and the majority of them (f: 9) state that its duration is ideal. It is understood that semester breaks are generally spent for resting (f: 10). There are teachers (f: 6) who spend this holiday with activities such as cinema, theater, and reading books, but there are also teachers (f: 6) who spend it making and reviewing study plans. Teachers believe that this period should be spent by participating in cultural activities (f: 7), making arrangements to overcome deficiencies (f: 5), and resting physically and mentally (f: 4). Some direct quotations obtained from teachers' views on the semester are as follows:

I think semester holidays are necessary and sufficient both in terms of time and duration. Generally, for teachers working in the east, far away from their families and relatives, it is usually spent for visiting time and for other teachers for rest and tourism. Frankly speaking, I do the same (T6).

Semester holidays are also necessary and their duration is sufficient in my opinion. Neither students nor teachers are disconnected from school unlike summer holiday. I am in favor of doing cultural activities (cinema, theater, reading books, etc.) that we could not find the opportunity to do due to the intensity I think all teachers should focus on cultural activities as well as resting during this period. (T7)

Semesters are very necessary, as they help students to relieve the fatigue they experience during the 4-5 months of training for two weeks. Of course, teachers also suffer from this fatigue and it is obvious that they also need such a holiday. Unfortunately, these holidays are perceived as only a rest for teachers, whereas these are very important periods that should be used for both resting and reviewing the mistakes made during the semester and planning the work for the coming period, I think that the two-week period is sufficient for both resting and not being away from school. (T12)

Teachers' views on "midterm holiday" are presented in Table 5.

Category	Code	n
Necessity	<input type="checkbox"/> Definitely	12
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate-ideal	8
Duration	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient-little	4
	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest (mentally and physically)	6
The way it is currently spent	<input type="checkbox"/> Seminar activities	12
	<input type="checkbox"/> Process evaluation	10
How it should be spent	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant, interesting, useful professional trainings (seminars)	12

According to the views of the participants, interim holidays, which have been implemented in recent years, are absolutely necessary (f:12) and their duration is ideal (f:8). However, there are also participants (f:4) who argue that this period is insufficient. It is understood that the mid-term breaks are mostly spent with seminar studies (f:12). In addition to this, there are also teachers who spend this period as process evaluation (f:10) and rest (f:6). Finally, all of the teachers (f:12) think that useful, interesting and useful trainings (seminars) should be given during this time. Some direct quotations obtained from the teachers' views on the midterm vacation are as follows:

In my opinion, mid-term holidays are one of the recent innovations in the education system. After a two-month period of education, it has been a very useful practice for students and teachers to stop and think, evaluate the process and rest a little. I think the duration is quite reasonable. (T1)

It is very restrictive to compress holidays into just summer and semester. That's why I believe that these interim vacations are necessary; they're just a little bit shorter. It is usually spent for rest. If the duration is a little longer, it can be used efficiently for both rest and professional development. (T3)

Mid-term holidays are very good for students. We are able to analyze the situation both with our teachers and through seminars. Although I cannot call it a holiday, it is necessary. (T9)

Here, I think it is useful in terms of student rest for a week and teachers' professional studies. A one-week period is quite ideal. However, there is a need for more useful and striking seminars. (T10)

Teachers' views on the time outside of weekday class hours are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Teachers' views on time outside of class hours

Category	Code	n
Necessity	<input type="checkbox"/> Definitely	12
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate-ideal	2
Duration	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient-little	9
	<input type="checkbox"/> Too long	1
The way it is currently spent	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest (mentally and physically)	10
	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning-review-preparation	12
	<input type="checkbox"/> Return to private life	8
How it should be spent	<input type="checkbox"/> Preparation-planning activities	9
	<input type="checkbox"/> Rest (mentally and physically)	12

All of the participants (f: 12) think that the remaining time outside of class is absolutely necessary for them. There are also teachers (f: 9) who claim that the remaining time is too little. It is understood that all of the teachers (f: 12) focus on planning, reviewing and preparation during these time. Although there were also teachers who spent this time resting (f: 10), there were also teachers who stated that they sometimes returned to their personal lives (f: 8). Similarly, teachers believe that the time outside of class on weekdays should be spent in preparation-planning (f: 9) and resting (f: 12). Some direct quotations obtained from teachers' views on the time outside of class hours during the weekdays are as follows:

Free time outside of class hours is not a practice designed to allow teachers to rest and have free time. They are gaps created due to the programs created according to the course hours that students are pedagogically required to take. From this point of view, it can even be considered that its duration is not excessive, but rather insufficient. Although these processes are not spent efficiently by most of the teachers, when they are used properly, they can be used both for the evaluation of the practices done that day and for the planning of the practices to be done in the following days. (T1)

Teachers are human beings too. They should be able to rest when they are tired. In my opinion, free time during the week should be rest time. (T4)

I believe that the duration of these times is insufficient because these times are already spent planning and dealing with children and related problems or issues. I think there should be more time to rest, to breathe a little bit. (T6)

I think activities outside of class hours are very important. These free times should be spent efficiently in order to keep the teacher's motivation high. (T11)

4. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of the study show that teachers regard holidays as a time of rest. This meaning that teachers attribute to holidays seems to be valid for all holidays types of the year and the way they spend their holidays mostly serves this purpose. From this perspective, it seems that teachers are both physically and mentally exhausted during the year and need to rest. As a matter of fact, this need is understandable considering how strenuous job teachers do. The studies conducted by Ritvanen et al.

(2003, 2004) also support this conclusion. The researchers found that teachers have high levels of psycho-physiological stress during the teaching and learning periods and that they are largely relieved from this situation during holiday periods. Therefore, rest and having enough time for personal life are very important for teachers. Otherwise, some studies (Meng, 2004; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012; Liu, 2012) suggest that teachers who have very little holiday have high turnover intentions.

Considering the meanings that teachers attribute to holiday, it was observed that they do not make a plan for holiday and a spontaneous process prevails during these times. However, it is understood that some teachers define holiday as seeing new places, traveling, acculturating and gaining new experiences. It is noteworthy that the number of teachers who attribute this meaning to holiday is few; and there are no expressions such as having fun or having a pleasant time. This situation can be evaluated in the sense that although they think that they have an ideal holiday amount; teachers cannot spend this period qualitatively. As a matter of fact, direct quotations obtained from teachers support this situation. According to the research findings, it is understood that teachers are deprived of long trips and vacations (such as cultural, sea and foreign trips) due to financial difficulties. It has long been discussed that teachers' salaries are lower than many other professional groups. Various studies (Erdem, 2010; Tösten & Özgan, 2017; Ünsal, 2018; Bozbayındır, 2019; Cantürk, 2021; Gürbey et al). This situation constitutes a serious obstacle for teachers to spend quality holidays. Considering that this problem also significantly affects the status of the profession and the value attributed to it in society (Richardson & Watt 2006), it is noteworthy that teachers do a job that is not preferred by most people; therefore, the holidays offered to them should not be considered too much (Christie, 2019). Finally, it is noteworthy that the participants did not include positive expressions such as "having fun, having a pleasant time" in terms of the concept of holiday and the meaning they attribute to it.

The majority of teachers believe that there should be plenty of holidays in this profession and think that the current holiday periods are ideal. This situation causes teachers to develop a relatively positive attitude towards the profession. As a matter of fact, studies (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2004; Lam & Yan, 2011), which reveal that the reasons for choosing the teaching profession include the suitability of working hours and holiday opportunities, also support this finding. Considering the fact that teaching is a tiring and exhausting profession, more holiday may somewhat offset these effects of the profession. This is because teachers may have a lot of additional responsibilities such as taking on a parental role, providing social and psychological support, meetings and reports while carrying out their teaching practices (Bouras, 2019). From this point of view, holiday is not a luxury for teachers, but a necessity for them to maintain a stable and more productive career. Beyond all these, holiday arrangements during the year are interpreted by some teachers as restrictive and problematic. Indeed, the Civil Servants Law No. 657 states that "Teachers are considered to be on leave during summer and rest vacations. They are not granted annual leave, except for sick leave and other excuse leaves" (Article 103). According to this article, it is seen that teachers are not given additional annual leave except for

excuse leaves (sickness, marriage, etc.) because they benefit from summer vacation. This situation leads teachers to interpret this regulation as restrictive since they do not have the right to take leave during the year.

According to the participant views, when the views of the society on the perception of holidays were examined, it was concluded that teachers have holidays too much, have a lot of free time, and almost do not work except for half a day. In his study, Buchanan (2010) includes the participant's view that "society has a perception that teachers are always on holiday". Although there are no studies that support this finding and reveal the society's opinion about the perception of the profession in this way, some studies on pre-service teachers (Kyriacou et al., 1999; Boz, & Boz, 2008; Bakar et al., 2014) revealed that having the advantage of having plenty of holiday and ample time was among the reasons for choosing this profession.

There is a social perception that integrates the teaching profession with the female gender. According to the findings of the study, most of the teachers mentioned the perception that this is a suitable profession especially for women who are mothers or who are expected to be mothers in the future due to the perception that there are plenty of holidays. This issue, which is also discussed by Drudy (2008), is associated with the fact that women can easily fulfill many responsibilities during the day (taking care of children, housework, etc.) due to the perception of free time. When the statistics on teacher employment worldwide, including Turkey, are analyzed, the high number of female teachers supports this perception. In fact, the rate of female teachers at all levels in OECD member countries is 69.7% (OECD, 2022). Of the 993,669 teachers working in public schools in Turkey for 2020-2021, 43% are male (423,354) and 57% are female (570,315) (MoNE, 2021). Data from OECD member countries show that, on average, women make up more than two-thirds of teachers from pre-school to higher education (Katsarova, 2020). According to Drudy (2008), this worldwide result coincides with the idea that women should not interfere with their domestic responsibilities while pursuing their careers; it is interpreted as the manifestation of a culturally supported understanding. Therefore, the roles and responsibilities assigned to women in society have led to women's preference for professions such as teaching, which are perceived to offer more holidays and free time during working hours.

It is clear that summer holidays are very important for the teaching profession. This period of time, which all participants found necessary, can be considered as a process in which teachers relieve the physical and mental fatigue of the whole year. Lawrie (2011) similarly emphasizes that teachers do a very difficult job and long holidays are an important issue for them. This finding is supported by the fact that teachers in China, which provides teachers with very short holidays, have high levels of burnout and stress. It is also noteworthy that insufficient holidays are among the factors affecting teachers' turnover intentions (Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). It can be understood how important summer vacations are as a process in which teachers both recharge their depleted energies and continue their professional development.

It was found that most of the teachers spent their summer holiday in social interaction with groups of friends and a significant number of them stayed in their home cities. Some teachers, on the other hand, mentioned that they spent their summer holidays without actually doing anything productive. Teachers suggested interesting and useful seminars, professional meetings, attending training camps, and making visits abroad. From this point of view, it is seen that teachers want to continue their professional development even during the summer holidays and they want to achieve this with useful and interesting practices for themselves.

The semesters are also considered necessary and of sufficient duration by the teachers. Teachers who stated that they spend this holiday mostly for resting believe that this period generally should be spent by resting physically and mentally, participating in various cultural activities and making arrangements to eliminate deficiencies. Argon and Koçak (2019) also found in their study that teachers see semester and summer vacations as a satisfactory situation to relieve professional fatigue.

The midterm holidays, which was put into practice for the first time in the 2019-2020 academic year, is held twice a year for one week. Teachers who participated in the study found this holiday, which is usually held in April and November, necessary. All of the teachers stated that they spent this period with seminar activities. They also stated that there should be useful and interesting seminars in this period and they usually spend the rest of their time by relaxing. According to Doğan's (2020) study on primary teachers, among the positive opinions of teachers about this holiday, the opportunity to rest is the most stated. In Kaya's (2021) study on secondary school teachers, it was found that conducting professional practices in these intervals is more effective, restful, relaxing and motivational.

All of the participants think that the remaining time outside of class is absolutely necessary for them. There are also some teachers who argue that this time is too little. When the way the time outside of class is spent is analyzed, it is understood that all of the teachers focus on planning, reviewing and preparation. Similarly, teachers believe that the time outside of class hours on weekdays should be spent preparing, planning and resting. The OECD report for 2021 states like that; *Outside of the legal working hours for teaching, teachers spend some of their time on tasks such as assessing students and preparing lessons. This also implies that teachers need to fulfill these tasks in their personal time and therefore work more than the legal working hours require.* This view expressed by the OECD, of which Turkey is a member, in the context of all countries proves that the teaching profession continues outside of working hours (Atalay & Karaman-Kepeneci, 2022). Therefore, it is clear that teachers cannot spend their time outside the classroom in an arbitrary way or in a way that they immediately return to their private lives.

The teaching is a very stressful and exhausting profession. From this point of view, the fact that teachers have free time outside the classroom and they seem to take too much holiday is a necessity due to the nature of this profession. Therefore, as some researchers (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2004; Boz,

& Boz, 2008; Lam & Yan, 2011; Bakar et al., 2014; Kantas & Vassilaki, 1997; Kyriacou et al., 1999; Akar, 2012) found, teaching, which can be preferred only because of these characteristics, has ceased to be attractive as a career profession (Lam & Yan, 2011). Considering that the prestige of teaching has relatively decreased, that there is a declining respect and reputation for the profession in society, and that this profession, which performs the sublime task of educating students, is paid low salaries compared to many other professions, it can be seen that the issue of excessive holiday and free time discussed is quite unwarranted. Beyond all these, it is considered necessary for teachers to benefit from school vacations for the following reasons;

- Keeping teacher motivation high,
- Making education and training processes more efficient,
- Mental and physical readiness,
- Planning-organizing the training activities to be carried out, eliminating the deficiencies,
- Continuing professional development and self-review,
- Making time for social activities and family.

Teachers need financial and moral support to ensure effective participation in artistic and social activities. In this regard, it may be suggested that the ministry allocate a fund for them and implement some practices to encourage participation in designated cultural activities. In addition, there is a need for the seminar activities offered to teachers during holiday to be effective, need-oriented, enjoyable and appropriate. Finally, further research on teachers' holidays with other stakeholders such as students, school managers and parents is recommended. Besides, examining other vocational groups in terms of understanding of teachers' perspectives on vacation might be useful to present a general overview of the subject and will give a more comprehensive idea.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

ÖĞRETMENLERİN GÖZÜNDEN OKUL TATİLİ

GİRİŞ

Genel olarak “*Kanun gereğince çalışmaya ara verileceği belirtilen süre ve eğlenmek, dinlenmek amacıyla çalışmadan geçirilen süre*” (TDK) olarak tanımlanan tatil, öğretmenlik mesleğinde okul tatili ile özdeşleştirilir. Kısaca eğitim-öğretim faaliyetlerine belli sürelerle ara verilmesi anlamına gelen okul tatili ise (Atalay & Karaman-Kepeneci, 2022) öğretmenlik mesleğinde öğrencilere sunulan tatil sürelerinden öğretmenlerin de faydalandığı algısını oluşturmuştur. 1982 Anayasasının 50. maddesi çalışanların dinlenme hakkından bahseder. Bu maddeye göre “*Dinlenmek, çalışanların hakkıdır. Tatiller, yıllık izin hakları ve şartları kanunla düzenlenir.*” Dolayısıyla bu madde ile dinlenmenin anayasal bir hak olarak güvence altına alındığı ve tatilin vazgeçilmez bir unsur olduğu anlaşılabilir.

Öğretmenlerin bol tatile sahip olduğu algısı toplumda sıkça tartışılan konulardan biri olarak gözlenmektedir. Bu algının çıkış noktalarından biri, öğretmenlerin öğrencilerin tüm tatil fırsatlarından yararlandığı ve dolayısıyla uzun tatiller yaptığıdır. Diğerleri ise öğretmenlerin ders saatleri dışındaki zamanlarda serbest olduğu düşüncesidir. Ancak pratikte öğretmenlerin faydalanabildiği tatillerin bu kadar basit şekilde yorumlanmaması gerekmektedir (Atalay&Karaman-Kepeneci, 2022). Örneğin Kinnunen ve Leskinen (1989) öğretmenlerin eğitim-öğretim yılı içinde yoğun strese maruz kaldıklarını ve sadece hafta sonu tatilleri ile dönem sonu tatillerinde bu stres seviyelerinde azalma olduğunu ortaya koymuşlardır. Öğretmenlerin stres düzeylerinin sadece uzun tatillerde dengelendiğini ve azaldığını tespit eden Ritvanen ve diğerleri (2004) yaptıkları diğer bir araştırmada (2003) ise öğretmenler için tatilin ne kadar önemli olduğunu ortaya koyan daha ayrıntılı bulgulara ulaşmışlardır. Buna göre tam zamanlı çalışan öğretmenlerin psiko-fizyolojik stres düzeyinin yüksek olduğu; yaz tatillerinde ise öğretmenlerin kan basıncında, statik kas gerginliğinde, genel stres düzeyinde, psiko-somatik semptomlarında ve adrenalini düzeyinde büyük ölçüde kurtulduğu ortaya çıkmıştır.

Öğretmenlerin tatil süreleri de uzun zamandır çeşitli şekillerde konuşulan ve eleştirilen bir konu olarak gözlenmektedir. Bu konunun daha çok toplumda spakülatif olarak yer alması bu iddianın gerçekliğinin sorgulanması ihtiyacını doğurmaktadır. Bu yönüyle diğer mesleklere göre tatil imkânlarının fazla ve çalışma saatlerinin daha az olduğu algısından dolayı öğretmenlerin tatili konusu araştırmaya değer bulunmuştur. Çalışmada öğretmenlerin sahip oldukları-faydalandıkları tatiller hakkındaki görüşlerini ortaya koymak amaçlanmıştır.

Belirtilen genel amaca ulaşmak için çalışmada aşağıdaki sorulara cevap aranmıştır:

1. Öğretmenlere göre tatil kavramı ne ifade etmektedir?
2. Öğretmenlerin okul tatilleri hakkındaki; a) bireysel görüşleri, b) toplumsal algıya ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?

3. Öğretmenlerin, a) yaz tatillerinin, b) sömestr tatillerinin, c) ara tatillerinin ve d) hafta içi ders saatleri dışındaki boş zamanlarının;
- Gerekliliğine,
 - Süresine,
 - Nasıl geçirildiğine ve
 - Nasıl geçirilmesi gerektiğine ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?

YÖNTEM

Öğretmenlerin faydalandıkları tatiller hakkındaki görüşlerini ortaya koymayı amaçlayan bu çalışmada fenomenoloji yaklaşımı esas alınmıştır. Öğretmenlerin okul tatiline yönelik, algılarını, tepkilerini, betimlemelerini ve deneyimlerini ortaya koymanın en iyi bu yaklaşımla ortaya konulacağına karar verildiğinden bu çalışmada araştırma desenin amacına uygun olarak derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Araştırmada maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme temel alınmış olup Van ilindeki ilkökul, ortaokul ve lise kademesinde görev yapan ve araştırmaya katılmaya gönüllü 12 öğretmen çalışma grubunu oluşturmuştur. Öğretmen görüşlerini ortaya koymak için araştırmanın alt problemleri doğrultusunda araştırmacılar tarafından yarı yapılandırılmış bir görüşme formu geliştirilmiştir. Elde edilen veriler içerik analizi yoluyla çözümlenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda katılımcıların görüşlerinin frekans dağılımları verilmiştir. Çalışmada doğrudan alıntılara sık sık yer verilmiş, bu sayede oluşturulan kategorilerin katılımcılardan elde edilen görüşlerle desteklenmesi sağlanmıştır.

BULGULAR ve TARTIŞMA

Araştırma sonuçları öğretmenlerin tatile daha çok *dinlenme zamanı* gözüyle baktıklarını göstermektedir. Öğretmenlerin yükledikleri bu anlam yıl içindeki tüm tatil düzenlemeleri için geçerli görünmekte ve tatili geçirme durumları da çoğunlukla bu amaca hizmet etmektedir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında öğretmenlerin yıl içinde hem bedensel hem de ruhsal olarak oldukça yoruldukları ve dinlenmeye ihtiyaç duydukları söylenebilir. Nitekim öğretmenlerin ne kadar yıpratıcı bir iş yaptıkları düşünüldüğünde bu ihtiyacın anlaşılabilir olduğu belirtilebilir. Ritvanen ve diğerlerinin (2003, 2004) yaptıkları çalışmalar da bu sonucu desteklemektedir. Araştırmacılar öğretmenlerin eğitim öğretim dönemleri içinde psiko-fizyolojik stres düzeyinin yüksek olduğunu ve tatil dönemlerinde bu durumdan büyük ölçüde kurtulduklarını ortaya koymuştur. Dolayısıyla dinlenme ve kişisel hayata yeterli vakit ayırabilme hali öğretmenler için oldukça önemlidir. Zira aksi durumlarda çok az tatil yapabilen öğretmenlerin işten ayrılma niyetlerinin yüksek olduğunu ileri süren çalışmalar (Meng, 2004; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012; Liu, 2012) da bulunmaktadır.

Araştırma sonuçlarına göre öğretmenlerin büyük çoğunluğu meslekte bol tatil olması gerektiğine inanmakta ve mevcut tatil sürelerinin ideal olduğunu düşünmektedir. Bu durum öğretmenlerin nispeten mesleğe yönelik olumlu bir tutum geliştirmelerine neden olmaktadır. Nitekim öğretmenlik mesleğini seçme nedenleri arasında çalışma saatlerinin uygunluğunu ve tatil fırsatlarının

olduğunu ortaya koyan çalışmalar (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2004; Lam ve Yan, 2011) da bu bulguyu desteklemektedir.

Katılımcı görüşlerine göre toplumun tatil algısına ilişkin görüşleri irdelendiğinde ise öğretmenlerin çok fazla tatil yaptığı, boş zamanlarının çok olduğu, neredeyse yarım gün dışında çalışılmadığı sonucu çıkmıştır. Buchanan (2010) yaptığı çalışmasında “toplumun, öğretmenlerin her zaman tatilde oldukları yönünde bir algıya sahip olduğunu” belirten katılımcı görüşüne yer vermektedir. Genel olarak mesleğin bu şekilde algılanmasına yönelik toplum düşüncesini ortaya koyan ve bu bulguyu destekleyen çalışmalara rastlanmamakla birlikte öğretmen adayları üzerinde yapılan bazı araştırmalar (Kyriacou vd., 1999; Boz, & Boz, 2008; Bakar vd., 2014) bu mesleği seçme nedenleri arasında bol tatil ve geniş zaman avantajına sahip olma ortaya konulmuştur.

SONUÇ

Öğretmenlik mesleği oldukça stresli ve yıpratıcı bir meslek olarak görülebilir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında ders dışında boş zamanlarının olması da tatili fazla yapıyor görünmeleri de bu mesleğin doğası gereği zorunlu bir ihtiyaç olarak belirlemektedir. Dolayısıyla bazı araştırmacıların (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2004; Boz, & Boz, 2008; Lam & Yan, 2011; Bakar vd., 2014; Kantas & Vassilaki, 1997; Kyriacou vd., 1999; Akar, 2012) tespit ettiği gibi sırf bu özelliklerinden dolayı tercih edilebilen öğretmenlik, bir kariyer mesleği olarak cazip olmaktan çıkmıştır (Lam&Yan, 2011). Günümüzde öğretmenliğin prestijinin nispeten düştüğü, mesleğe yönelik toplumda azalan bir saygı ve itibarın söz konusu olduğu ve öğrenci eğitmek gibi ulvi bir görev ifa eden bu mesleğe diğer pek çok meslek grubuna göre düşük maaş verildiği düşünüldüğünde tartışılabilen fazla tatil ve boş zaman konusunun oldukça yersiz olduğu görülebilir. Tüm bunların ötesinde okul tatillerinden öğretmenlerin de faydalanması;

- Öğretmenin motivasyonunu yüksek tutması,
- Eğitim-öğretim süreçlerinin daha verimli hale gelmesi,
- Zihinsel ve bedensel olarak hazır olma,
- Yapılacak eğitim çalışmalarının planlanması-düzenlenmesi, eksikliklerin giderilmesi,
- Mesleki gelişimin sürdürülmesi ve kendini gözden geçirme,
- Sosyal faaliyetlere ve aileye zaman ayırmak adına gerekli görülmektedir.

Bununla birlikte öğretmenler, sanatsal ve sosyal faaliyetlere etkin katılımın sağlanması için maddi ve manevi desteğe ihtiyaç duymaktadır. Bu konuda bakanlıktan kendileri için bir fon ayrılması ve belirlenen kültürel etkinliklere katılımın teşviki için bazı uygulamaların yapılması önerilebilir. Ayrıca genellikle tatillerde öğretmenlere sunulan seminer çalışmalarının etkili, ihtiyaca dönük, zevkli ve yerinde olmasına ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Son olarak öğretmenlerin tatili konusunda farklı araştırma yöntemleriyle ve başka çalışma grupları ile ileri araştırmaların yapılması önerilebilir.