

Araştırma Makalesi

INVESTIGATIONS IN THE TURKISH EDUCATION SYSTEM: STRUCTURE, PROCESS, AND ITS REFLECTIONS (TÜRK EĞİTİM SİSTEMİNDE SORUŞTIRMALAR: YAPISI, SÜRECİ VE SORUŞTURULANLARDA BIRAKTIĞI ETKİ)

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to seek answers to the questions of ‘what are the opinions of educators who have been investigated about the structure and functioning of the investigation system and the its effects on them?’ The study consists of 15 educators (including teachers, school principals and vice principals, academicians) who have been investigated or inspected. The findings of the research are limited to the opinions of 15 educators and the qualitative data collection tool. Data were collected by carrying out interviews through semi-structured interview form. Criterion sampling method was used in this study and maximum diversity was taken into account. The data were analyzed by adopting an inductive way via content analysis. The research findings showed that the reasons for the investigations were generally due to negligence in the examination procedures, collective actions within the scope of union activities or violence against the students. In the investigation processes in the Turkish Education System (TES), the processes are executed without complying with the legal regulations, and thus a fair inquiry process cannot occur. It is also found that senior management attempts to influence the decision of the investigator prior to the investigation process. Those who are investigated often find the sentences given to them unfair and apply to the court. It has also been revealed that the investigations are directed in line with the initiatives of the investigators and managers. It has been found that the investigators were under the influence of senior management and their own characteristics and could not make objective evaluations in a healthy way, yet there are also cases where investigations are carried out professionally without being influenced by this result. Investigations also affect the professional, family and social relations of those who are under investigation. It is seen that their motivation decreases notably in their professional lives; however, they gain experience from this process and output. After the investigation, they continue their lives in a more control-oriented manner. Psychological problems, especially depression, are encountered, and investigations cause negative reflections on their health.

Keywords: Investigation, inspection, Turkish education system

JEL Classification: I20, I24, I29.

ÖZ

Bu araştırmanın amacı, ‘soruşturma geçirmiş eğitimcilerin soruşturma sisteminin yapısına ve işleyişine yönelik düşüncelerinin ve soruşturmanın kendilerinde bıraktığı etkilerin neler olduğu?’ sorularına yanıt aramaktır. İnceleme ve soruşturma geçirmiş 15 eğitimci (öğretmen, okul müdürü ve yardımcısı, akademisyen) araştırmanın katılımcı grubunu oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın bulguları, 15 eğitimcinin görüşü ve nitel veri toplama aracı ile sınırlıdır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu ile veriler görüşme

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yapılarak katılımcılardan toplanmıştır. Katılımcıların seçiminde ölçüt örneklem yönteminden faydalanılmış ve maksimum çeşitlilik göstermesine dikkat edilmiştir. İçerik analizi ile tümevarımsal bir yol izlenerek veriler analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmanın sonucuna göre soruşturma geçirenlerin soruşturma geçirme nedenleri genellikle sınav işlemlerindeki ihmallerden, sendikal faaliyetler kapsamındaki toplu eylemlerden ya da öğrenciye şiddet uygulamaktan kaynaklanmaktadır. Türk eğitim sisteminde (TES) soruşturma süreçlerinde bazı zamanlar yasal düzenlemelere uygun davranılmadan süreçler yürütülmektedir ve bu nedenle adil bir sorgulama süreci oluşmamaktadır. Üst yönetimlerin soruşturma süreci başlamadan soruşturmayı yürütenin kararını etkilemeye çalıştığı da görülmektedir. Soruşturma geçirenler çoğunlukla kendilerine verilen cezaları adil bulmamaktadırlar ve mahkemeye başvurumaktadırlar. Soruşturmacıların ve yöneticilerin inisiyatifleri doğrultusunda soruşturmaların yön aldığı da ortaya çıkan sonuçlardandır. Soruşturmayı yürütenlerin üst yönetimlerin ya da kendi karakteristik özelliklerinin etkisi altında kaldığı ve nesnel değerlendirmeleri sağlıklı yapamadıkları ortaya çıkmaktadır ancak bu sonucun aksine bir etki altında kalmadan profesyonel bir şekilde soruşturmaların yürütüldüğü durumlar da kısmen mevcuttur. Soruşturmalar, soruşturma geçirenlerin mesleki, ailevi ve sosyal ilişkilerini de etkilemektedir. Özellikle mesleki yaşantılarında motivasyonlarının düştüğü ancak bu süreçten bir tecrübe edinerek çıktıkları görülmektedir. Soruşturma sonrası yaşantılarına daha kontrol odaklı devam etmektedirler. Depresyona girme başta olmak üzere psikolojik sorunlarla karşılaşmaktadırlar ve soruşturmalar sağlıklarına da olumsuz yansımaları neden olmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk Eğitim Sistemi, Soruşturma, İnceleme

JEL Kodları: I20, I24, I29.

1. INTRODUCTION

The study aims to seek answers to the questions of ‘what are the opinions of educators who have been investigated about the structure and functioning of the investigation system and its effects on them?’ To this end, educators who have undergone investigation were contacted and asked questions regarding what they experienced and felt in this process. In this study, which was designed in the phenomenological design, maximum diversity was considered in the selection of participants who underwent investigation and inspections, and the purposeful criterion sampling method was used. The findings of the research are limited to the opinions of 15 educators and the qualitative data collection tool.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Rules are at the heart of social and institutional functioning. All formal organizations have a proper running as long as the rules are followed. Demirkasımoğlu (2015) emphasizes that rules play a key role in maintaining the balance of power in the relations of an individual with other individuals and the society in social life, and that different societies have rationales for obeying the rules depending on the dynamic nature of the rules.

Institutions also have certain practices in accordance with their own rules. The employees shall comply with these rules as well in order for the accordant management of those institutions. Ekinci and Sabancı (2020) report that what kind of sanction will be imposed is stated in case of any violation of these rules. The enforcement of the rules is, however, assured by inspection. The main objective of inspection in education is to identify the institution’s aims and to take due precautions to accomplish more robust results (Altınok, 2013). Investigations or inspections may also occur as a result of audits or based on complaints. Inspections and investigations are not routine acts and may result in a judicial or administrative sanction since the subject matter constitutes or is likely to include a crime. According to Cole (2002), discipline guarantees for employees that rules are executed in a proper, equal and fair way. Arıca (2000) accentuates that disciplinary offenses refer to crimes arising from an employee’s failure to fulfill all the duties and responsibilities in the realization of public services and maintenance of continuity for the public interest in addition to improper and unpunctual realization of those tasks, thereby violating the legal responsibilities in this regard.

All public services are subject to auditing, and this enables them to work more functionally and efficiently. Educational supervision can be considered as an important part of the overall administrative audit in the public sector. Though school principals are in the first place, teachers are also responsible for the execution and obeying of the rules in schools. While executing the rules, school principals prioritize safety and physical health of the child (Smith & Hains, 2012). Indeed, principals are committed to preventing teacher abuse in their own schools, yet they also strive to meet the challenges arising from various situations in this context (Betweli, 2020). It can be alleged that there are certain rules in schools and that discipline is a phenomenon that should be applied for both teachers and students. The fact that these rules are violated can, however, leads to punishments for educators.

2.1 Inspection

The aim of inspection is to check the institution’s compliance to ascertain to its objectives and the rules of law and to provide guidance with the intention of improvement and sustainability (Sağlam, 1977). Inspection is defined as

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collecting information and making evaluations based on the input, processes and output of the system, and in this respect, reviewing and fostering the goals of the institution (Çakıcı, 1985). The process is similar for educational institutions. Özmen and Güngör (2008) postulate that inspection plays a pivotal role in order for the educational goals to be achieved and the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) is the responsible institution that carries out educational services related to education and training on behalf of the Republic of Türkiye. Inspection, which has an important place in the education system, is expected to find solutions to the structural problems and minimize these problems (Kayıkçı, 2005). The main focus in supporting and supervising teachers is to promote the quality of teaching by ensuring that all students learn (Aslanargun & Göksoy, 2013). Nowadays, there is a contemporary approach of inspection that prioritizes individual development and is based on collaboration and questioning and focuses on improving educational areas (Sağlam & Aydoğmuş, 2016). Accordingly, guidance is kept at the forefront in today's understanding of inspection, and it is aimed to promote education based on learning lessons from mistakes (Gelmez, 2011).

The effectiveness of inspection depends largely on determining how often and by whom the inspection will be carried out and what sort of guidance will be administered during the process (Altun, 2014). In schools, inspection is conducted by monitoring the teacher in the classroom and carrying out face-to-face negotiations so as to ensure improvement (Tracy, 1995). In addition, lesson inspection, also named as supervision here, encompasses enhancing the current situation and eliminating the deficiencies (Erdem & Eroğul, 2012). Besides, it can be stated that inspection is divided into two main structures as lesson supervision and inspection of administrative running.

Even though inspection is routinely executed to maintain schools, it can also lead to investigations. A teacher or school administrator may also be investigated by inspectors in case a complaint is made about any practices or acts of him/her. The investigation may arise following a routine inspection or as a result of a complaint on a specific issue. In the Turkish education system, indeed, investigations are carried out based upon a specific complaint. Education inspectors are often the ones who conduct investigations, yet school principals may occasionally perform investigations by being entrusted with the task of being an inspector.

The investigation process is characterized by various challenges. For instance, during the conduct of the investigation, the fact that the plaintiffs disguise themselves and provide the wrong address, name, and phone number and that the allegations are based on general hearsay information and are not justified by information and documents reduces the quality of the work. The fact that the legislation contradicts in itself and that there have been certain disagreements between inspectors and that there is a lack of unity in practice was considered as an important problem encountered (Çelebi, et. al. 2017). Moreover, as the main challenges of the process, inspectors articulated that the inspection and investigation approvals were not clear and unambiguous, that there were ambiguous statements, and also added that the issues which were not based on concrete information- documents were subject to inspection- investigation and that the requested information- documents were not submitted on time (Kazak & Öztürk, 2023).

Investigations can be deemed as tough tasks. In Turkish Education System (TES), investigations can be carried out by administrators, notably both education inspectors and school principals. It has been asserted that school principals have such roles as inspection and investigation. The ones who undertake this task to perform the duty of inspection may be school principals selected by the Ministry (Aydın, 2013); on the contrary, it has been determined that principals have the perception of inferiority regarding the conduct of these investigations and that they experience psychological pressure due to the likelihood of unjust treatment related to the investigation (Ekinçi & Sabancı, 2020). All those facts above-mentioned may hinder the objective running of the investigation.

As school principals perform their task of inspection, they are not contented with such undesirable cases as the lack of in-service training on this subject, being under pressure during investigation processes and the efforts of others to influence the course of the investigation (Ekinçi & Sabancı, 2020). They also encounter certain hardships as the complaints that are not properly reflected in investigation approvals, the plaintiffs'/ witnesses' unwilling to testify, inability to contact the plaintiff, negative attitudes of the ones under investigation towards the investigator, the unclear and unambiguous nature of the regulations, the long-lasting characteristics of the investigations, principals' incompetency in using legal jargon while writing reports and the difficulty of carrying out investigations on their own colleagues (Şirin & Dal, 2019). Added to this, school principals themselves can also endure the investigation tasks. In this regard, a study by Yıldırım (2015) reveals that school principals are given disciplinary punishments cited in discipline-related regulation, yet they are given warnings to the greatest extent.

In TES, another group assigned with the task of executing investigations is education inspectors. A previous study carried out by Deniz (2022) indicates that inspectors have a multifaceted function and are required to be of a variety of technical, managerial and communicative skills to be able to undertaking these roles. Yet, education inspectors who are responsible for conducting investigations face a number of hardships. For example, Çelik (2010) reported that the most common mistake made by education inspectors was related to their inability to write a report. Among the cases that are conceived as problems by inspectors are socio-economic disadvantages (%24.68) in the first place, the affiliation of the inspectors

of primary education to the Provincial Education Directorate (%23.37) in the second place followed by the duty of the conduct of investigations assigned to them and its intensity (%12.98) (Dağlı, 2006). In TES, it can be alleged that investigations are executed by both education inspectors and administrators. It has been acknowledged that one should be master in investigation processes and the professional conduct of an investigation is a must. Otherwise, educators may face unfair penalties.

2.2. Inspection and Investigation

The disciplinary system is of two main benefits in institutions as living structures. First, it is supposed to ensure that the employees of the institution act in accordance with the rules in order for the affairs to work systematically within the organization. Second, it is to impose sanctions on employees who do not carry out the requirements of the job. What may be of greatest importance, however, is to distinguish between those who work and do not work in the organization with the purpose of attaining predetermined goals (Gezer, 2015). Discipline aids the sanctions to be imposed against the employees who act contrary to the aims set forth by the institutions, prevent those aims to be achieved as an institution or slow down the achievement of them (Taş & Kıröğlü, 2019).

It has been seen that the auxiliary personnel, teachers and administrators in the public sector violate the rules intentionally or unintentionally. In such cases leading to violations, it is ensured that these officials act in line with the laws, and if necessary, sanctions such as penalties are applied. In order for the public services to be delivered properly, it is necessary to execute the procedures required by the regulation on the responsible officials by running inspections and investigations (MoNE Education Inspectorate, 2006). Disciplinary procedures in schools, deemed as one of the important institutions of social structure, are similar to other public institutions. Investigation, initial investigation, and final investigation are carried out by the appointed investigator and the authorized board concerning the crimes of misconduct committed by the civil servants due to their duties or while performing their duties who are subject to Law No.657 on Civil Servants (Gürgen, 2018). However, the majority of the teachers were found to have knowledge regarding disciplinary offences and punishments during the investigation (Taş & Kıröğlü, 2018). The investigation is conducted as a result of inappropriate actions of the employee (Özmen & Şahin 2010) and it is a comprehensive process that requires special work and should be carried out studiously by those with sufficient knowledge in the field (Çelebi, et. al. 2017). Investigations should be executed rigorously, consciously, and competently since they have the potential to have a profound impact upon the professional and family life of educators. As noted earlier, a question of interest within this setting, which is the subject of this study, is 'what are the opinions of educators who have undergone investigation regarding the structure and running of the investigation system and what are the impacts that investigations have left on them?' In this respect, answers to the following sub-questions regarding the educators who have experienced investigations have been sought:

- 1- What are their opinions on the structure and running of the investigation system?
- 2- What are the impacts and opinions that investigations have left on them?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The present research was conducted with phenomenology design. The concept of phenomenology is an approach which is based on lived experiences of individuals and focuses on the phenomenon and investigates it in depth (Creswell, 2014). Since it was aimed to analyze and interpret the participants' own experiences in depth, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), one of the types of phenomenology, was used in this research. The rationale of the study is to gain a deep understanding about the opinions of educators on the structure and running of the investigation system and the impacts of the process on them. The scope of the study is comprised of the educators who have undergone an investigation.

3.2. Study Group

The current study includes educators who have undergone an investigation and experienced this process. The information regarding the participants is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Information on Participants

Participant	Age/ Gender	Duty	Professional	How many times	Penalties Received	Number
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			Senio rity	has s/he been investi gated?		of Enc odi ng
P1	55/Fe male	Teach er	33 years	1	Continued	14
P2	42/ Fema le	Teach er	20 years	1	Stopping the Progress of the Tier	11
P3	55/M ale	Teach er	27 years	2	Stopping the Progress of the Tier	17
P4	43/ Male	Teach er	18 years	1	None	8
P5	45/ Male	Teach er	22 years	2	Condemnatio n/Warning	14
P6	43/ Male	Vice Princi pal	10 years	1	Continued	10
P7	46/ Male	Princi pal	21 years	1	Monthly Cut	13
P8	42/ Male	Teach er	19 years	1	Warning	10
P9	28/ Fema le	Teach er	7 years	1	None	9
P10	37/ Male	Princi pal	17 years	6	Monthly Cut/Condemn ation	13
P11	40/ Fema le	Teach er	18 years	2	Monthly Cut	8
P12	40/ Fema le	Acade micia n	17 years	1	Suspension	19
P13	36/ Male	Teach er	13 years	2	Suspension	18
P14	55/M ale	Teach er	15 years	2	Stopping the Progress of the Tier/Monthly Cut	15
P15	34/M ale	Teach er	11 years	1	Suspension	10
<i>Total Number of Encoding:</i>						<i>189</i>

15 educators participated in the study. Of all participants, 10 were male and 5 were female. As for their duties, 1 is an academican, 2 are school principals, 1 is a vice principal and the rest are teachers. The investigation process of 2 participants is still ongoing and that of 13 participants has been completed. The majority of the participants were investigated once and only one participant was investigated 6 times. The penalties received by the participants were as follows: stopping the progress of the tier, condemnation, warning, verbal warning, monthly cut and dismissal. Their years of service ranges between 7-33 years. Their ages vary between 28-55 years. The participants were selected through purposive sampling method. Polit and Beck (2017) hold that purposive sampling is a sampling method in which participants meet predefined criteria. To this end, the following criteria were taken into consideration in the selection of participants. The criteria are as follows:

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- The participants are required to be an educator (teacher, school principal and academician) and have undergone at least one investigation,
- They are required to vary in terms of age and professional seniority,
- They are to be selected based on both genders,
- They are to either be under an ongoing investigation or complete the investigation process.

Thus, it is intended to ensure maximum diversity and to present a holistic perspective instead of gathering thoughts and opinions on a single aspect.

3.3. Data Collection Tool

The data collection tool used in this study is the semi-structured interview form designed by the researchers based on the body of literature related to the investigations carried out in the field of education. The form was presented to the opinions of 2 education policymakers, 2 inspectors, 1 school principal, 1 internal inspector and 1 language expert. In line with the opinions and suggestions from the experts, the interview form has been revised. Taken together, 10 questions requesting preliminary information from the participants, 5 questions aimed at examining the structure, running and the impact of the investigation process and 7 probing questions designed to gain an in-depth information were included in the form.

3.4. Data Collection

The data collection was planned prior to initiating the process. In this regard, each researcher was given the participants to be interviewed. The researchers conducted a brief pre-interview with the participants to give information about the content and made an appointment for the day and time of the interview. There were no participants who were not voluntary to take part, yet 3 participants refused to give consent for audio recording. The citations of these participants were noted by the researchers during the interview. The research data were obtained by the researchers via face-to-face interviews and video conferencing application 'zoom'.

The interviews lasted for a total of 128 minutes. The audio recordings following the interviews were transcribed into a written form by the researchers and a total of 11.610 words and 45-page interview text were generated.

3.5. Data Analysis

In the study, the steps of 'verification for establishing validity of the data' by Creswell and Creswell (2017) were followed in data analysis process. Accordingly, obtaining the raw data (audio file) is the preparation and planning of the data for analysis. It is then the examination of all data and its coding via computer. Finally, it is the discovery, association, and arrangement of codes.

The analyses of the interviews were conducted through the MAXQDA program. The text files were added to the program and the encoding process was commenced. In coding, the unit of analysis was preferred as a sentence. First the codes and then the themes were explored. The opinions of 15 participants were analyzed in the present study. A participant's file was encoded 8 times at least and 19 times at most. A total of 189 encoding operations were performed. As a result, a total of 10 themes were identified depending on the sub-questions. Based on these themes, 65 codes were generated.

3.6. Role of the Researcher and Ethics

Mertens (2012) hold that researchers carrying out qualitative research should fully inform their participants. Accordingly, participants were informed before the process and the interviews were carried out by their consent in the study. In addition, the audio recordings and texts were shared with the participants and their consent was taken for the use of these data. The researchers were particularly avoided influencing participants during the data collection process. They only asked the questions and avoided any comments, gestures, expressions so on. The ethical principles of Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and American Psychological Association (APA) were adhered in all processes of the research. Furthermore, the current research was approved by Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Nevşehir Hacıbektas Veli University (dated 26/05/2023 and no. 2023/05.188).

4. FINDINGS

In this section, the findings on the first sub-question of the research and then the findings on the second sub-question of the research were addressed under the following headings.

4.1 The Opinions of the Investigated Educators (IEs) on the Structure and Running of the Investigation System

Six themes were emerged concerning the opinions of the IEs on the structure and running of the investigation system. Based on the frequency density, the themes are as follows respectively: The opinions of the investigated ($f=26$), the penalty imposed ($f=24$), the investigator's attitudes ($f=22$), the reason for the investigation ($f=20$), the type of investigation ($f=17$) and the attitudes and behaviours of the administration ($f=13$). The codes linked to the themes are also presented in Table 2 according to the frequency density.

Table 2. The Structure and Running of the Investigation System According to the IES

Opinions of the investigated ($f=26$)	The penalty imposed ($f=24$)	The investigator's attitudes ($f=22$)	The reason for the investigation ($f=20$)	The type of investigation ($f=17$)	The attitudes and behaviours of the administration ($f=13$)
No legal process was followed ($f=7$)	Monthly cut ($f=6$)	S/he was unfair ($f=7$)	Making mistakes in examinations ($f=5$)	Administrative investigation ($f=14$)	There was mobbing ($f=5$)
The penalty was unfair ($f=6$)	Condemnation ($f=4$)	S/he was professional ($f=4$)	Participating in union acts ($f=4$)	Judicial and administrative investigation ($f=3$)	An inferior penalty was imposed ($f=4$)
It was a slander ($f=6$)	It was abolished by court decision ($f=2$)	S/he was biased ($f=3$)	Committing violence against students ($f=4$)	-	There was a support by the administration ($f=3$)
It was executed under the administrator's initiative ($f=3$)	Suspension ($f=2$)	S/he took a high level of initiative ($f=3$)	Working in a side job ($f=2$)	-	No guidance was provided ($f=1$)
New investigations emerged ($f=1$)	Stopping the progress of the tier ($f=2$)	S/he treated compassionately ($f=2$)	Drinking alcohol ($f=1$)	-	-
Penalty without evidence was imposed ($f=1$)	None ($f=2$)	S/he managed the process fairly ($f=2$)	Objecting to the physician's report ($f=1$)	-	-
Senior administration exercised	Displacement ($f=2$)	S/he protected the offender ($f=1$)	Signing the Academics for	-	-

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influence (f=1)			Peace (f=1)		
The penalty was fair (f=1)	Compens ation was paid by the state (f=1)	-	Theft of ideas (f=1)	-	-
-	Warning (f=1)	-	Teaching extracurri cular subjects (f=1)	-	-
-	Verbal warning (f=1)	-	-	-	-
-	It was expunged after 5 years (f=1)	-	-	-	-

As shown in Table 2, 122 coding were performed based on the opinions of the IEs on the structure and running of the investigation system. The said codes are elaborated upon below through the relevant participant opinions.

Opinions of the Investigated

The IEs emphasized that no statement was taken from them, or criminal actions were taken without the appointment of an investigator during the investigation processes and that no legal procedure was followed in this context. They also stated that the penalty imposed to them was not fair and claimed that they were slandered. Additionally, they reported that investigations were shaped based on the administrators' initiative, that new investigations emerged, that penalties were imposed without evidence and that the senior administration exercised influence. Participants' opinions are as follows:

“Had the disciplinary regulations been relatively compelling and the inspector been malevolent, s/he would probably have proposed to stop the progress of the tier, but s/he did not. Unfortunately, that is also happening in Türkiye, in fact we have taken the advantage of this. When you put the union or the officials in the union into effect, things can be easier. However, let me say this: if you have a personal problem with your administrator or someone in National Education, a severe penalty may be imposed (P5, line in- 37)”.

“They suspended me directly. They initiated an investigation to ask me again what they already knew. Their intention was different because my spouse is in university. The university did not commence an investigation, but a colleague of him/ her reported it to the prosecutor because of something completely different. My spouse was also badly slandered. In other words, we were tried for two separate terrorist incidents in one house. It is like a joke, isn't it? (P12; line in- 24)”.

The Penalty Imposed

The majority of the IEs was often fined a monthly cut, which was specified as 3rd level penalty according to Law No. 657 in the Turkish education system. Then, it is followed by the IEs who were imposed low-level penalties such as condemnation or warning. Nevertheless, there is also an educator where a higher level of penalty, stopping the progress of the tier, was given. Added to this, there is also an educator who was fined by displacement which is an administrative practice. There are also cases where some penalties were abolished by the court decision or if no punishment is received within 5 years, the existing penalty is also expunged by the administrative institution. The participants expressed this situation as follows:

“I was fined by two penalties as monthly cut and condemnation. I tried for the penalty of monthly cut. The condemnation was fair, but monthly cut was not. That was due to the works of the old and new district directors of national education of my branch directorate period, in short, we fell victim, but condemnation was fair (P10; line in- 24)”.

The Investigator's Attitudes

According to the IEs, the inspectors did not behave fairly as well as having a biased attitude. Contrary to this view, it has also been highlighted that there are inspectors who endure the task of investigation in a professional manner. The opinions of the participants are cited below:

"I do not find the inspector fair because when I said to the inspector that a person I meet in my social life carries my problems to the school environment, s/he said that "Your social life is none of our business". In fact, the major source of my problem was the problems in my social life. I mean it was the biggest reason (P2; line in- 35)".

The Reason for the Investigation

The reasons for the investigation of the educators who have undergone this process have been attributed to a number of cases, such as making mistakes in exam procedures, participating in unions in a collective manner or committing violence against students. Besides, it can be observed that the respondents have undergone investigations due to their actions contrary to Law no. 657 such as working in a side job, drinking alcohol or their attitudes and behaviours during the courses. The participants summarized this issue as follows:

"Yes, I had it once. Parent complaint. It was supposed to be my 3rd or 4th year. I was teaching the child of a military personnel. There was a conflict between two families. They were both my neighbors and my spouse's superior. The argument between them led my mistake that I made two months ago to be detected. So the reason I was being investigated is the two families were arguing. But let me tell you the point where I am guilty: I hit the children's hands with a stick (P2; line in- 20)".

The Type of Investigation

It is seen that the investigations are at administrative levels to a great extent instead of judicial ones, however, it can also be noted that certain investigations are executed together with a judicial process. The participants' opinions are as follows:

"I am under investigation by both the security directorate and the ministry of National Education (P1; line in- 20)".

"Yes, twice. Violence against the student. For example, when I was taking a student to classroom who did not attend class, s/he slipped from my hand and fell to the ground. But unfortunately, parents saw and complained about me that the student was being subjected to violence. The other case was also similar. Parent of a child made a complaint about me (P3; line in- 20)".

The Attitudes and Behaviours of the Administration

The IEs state that their own school administration mostly used mobbing against them during and after the investigation. On the contrary, school principals have the authority to impose a lower- level penalty than the one proposed by the investigator, and it is also seen that they recommend a lower penalty. Moreover, the respondents reported that school principals support them as well. The participants expressed this situation as follows:

"I was subjected to mobbing by school administration. The principal called me to his/her room and said, "You do not make concessions, what if you made some concessions? They called me until twelve at night and put pressure on me. If you had apologized to the man, yes, this would not have been a big deal." And I said "I am a person who does not even compromise on my spouse. I will not make confession on anyone about something that I am right about" (P1; line in- 29)".

"There was already only a statement in what we call an investigation. Then, the inspector proposed a penalty, it was condemnation. The administrator of the institution converted it into a warning, which is a lower-level penalty (P8; line in- 44)".

4.2 The Impacts and Opinions That Investigations Have Left on the IEs

Four themes were generated regarding the impacts and opinions that investigation processes have left on the investigated educators. Based on the frequency density, the themes are as follows respectively: The impact on the profession (f=29), the impact on the health (f=21), thoughts and actions in the course of the investigation (f=10), the impact on the relationship (f=7). Table 3 lists the codes that are linked to the emerging themes based on the frequency density.

Table 3. The Impacts and Opinions That Investigations Have Left On the IES

The impact on the profession (f=29)	The impact on the health (f=21)	Thoughts and actions in the course of the investigation (f=10)	The impact on the relationship (f=7)
It destroyed his/her motivation (f=8)	It destroyed his/her psychology (f=9)	S/he thinks s/he will not be punished (f=3)	The unrest is redounded on his/her family (f=3)
It allowed him/her to gain experience (f=5)	It caused depression (f=9)	S/he continues his/her profession unmovedly (f=2)	His/ Her immediate surrounding grew away from him/her (f=2)
It allowed him/her to act more cautiously (f=5)	Anger (f=1)	His/Her goodwill was abused (f=1)	S/he experienced insecurity (f=1)
S/he carried out his job professionally (f=5)	Headache (f=1)	S/he left the school (f=1)	It continued as it was before (f=1)
It disrupted his/her trust in the institution (f=3)	No change in his/her feeling (f=1)	S/he decided not to work in a side job (f=1)	-
S/he took a break in the profession (f=1)	-	His/her performance in the class decreased (f=1)	-
It restricted his/her freedom of expression (f=1)	-	S/he will be retired (f=1)	-
S/he undertook less initiative (f=1)	-	-	-

As noted in Table 3, according to the educators who underwent an investigation, 67 codes were created regarding the impacts and opinions that occurred in them after the investigation processes. Below are these codes elaborated within the framework of the themes to which they are related by involving the opinions of the respondents.

The Impact on the Profession

It was observed that the investigations had a number of impacts on the professional lives of the IEs. Although some participants reported that the investigations decreased their motivation, others stated that the process allowed them to gain experience, that they continued their profession by adopting a more cautious approach and that they carried out their job professionally. Besides, it was noted that their trust in their institutions decreased, that their freedom of expression was restricted and that they took a break in their profession. The opinions of the participants are as follows:

“Since I was complained, I paid attention to the sentences I used in the lessons, the behaviours towards my students while explaining the acquisitions of the course and the sentences I preferred while I was teaching (P4; line in- 27)”.

The Impact on the Health

It is seen that the investigations have negative reflections on the health of the IEs. It was found that their psychology particularly deteriorated, and they became depressed. The respondents also reported that they experienced symptoms such as anger and headache. They summarized this situation as follows:

“It leads to a huge, severe stress. You are experiencing a lot of stress until it comes to an end. In other words, it becomes a problem in your daily life. You cannot focus as much as you used to, you have a headache all the time, you cannot take care of your family, and even your performance as a teacher in the classroom reduces considerably (P3; line in- 27)”.

“Of course, at first, people are relatively worried because one does not know the penalty to be imposed. The investigator’s attitude is so important in this regard and the attitude of your immediate administrator is also highly crucial. We cannot foresee the decision to be made. I was very relieved to be given only the warning at the end of the process (P5; line in- 27)”.

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“I still cannot forget, and I cannot concentrate. I was treated for depression. I had a severe depression treatment. I still do not believe in academic studies, but I used to have a faith before. I used to say that if I conducted this study, I would address a gap in the field. I do not do anything anymore that I say let’s do it, there is such kind of a gap. I only prepare the documents that are required for the appointment or the associate professorship. I do not carry out scientific studies, and I am like a civil servant. I am like an academic official. I am just doing the things that I am supposed to be doing (P12; line in- 33)”.

Thoughts and Actions in the Course of the Investigation

The majority of the IEs whose investigation process is still ongoing think that they will not be punished. Some participants noted that they continued their job unmovedly that their goodwill was abused and that their performance in the classroom decreased. In addition, there are also some educators who left their job or are on the verge of retiring. The opinions of the respondents are as follows:

“Unfortunately, that was a bad experience at the end of my career, I was already thinking of retiring this year. I would like to keep at this situation and do not ask for my retirement. But I am quitting my job in my prime because I do not want to deal with people and parents anymore (P1; line in- 37)”.

The Impact on the Relationship

It has been found that investigations have had an influence on the respondents’ relationships with their family, immediate environment, and students. They stated that they experienced unrest as a whole family, and that their immediate surrounding grew away from them, and that they experienced a sense of insecurity. Nonetheless, there are also those who reported that they continued their life as it was before. They summarized this situation as follows:

“You cannot take care of your family, and your performance in the classroom decreases considerably (P3; line in- 27)”.

“Yes, it affected adversely, I mean partially because they are the children of the same region. After all, my perspective is to be able to make them enter a school. I am very happy; it has been so many years. There was a student who called me and said that s/he was preparing for professorship. So, I have had students reach this point. It was because they felt that I gave them things heartfelt. It may not affect much in the professional sense, yet it had a negative impact on my immediate environment and social relations (P4; line in- 33)”.

5. DISCUSSION

In Turkish Education System, the investigation processes may sometimes be carried out without complying with the legal regulations and thus a fair investigation continuum may be unlikely to be established. Besides, it has been asserted that senior management attempts to influence the investigator’s decision prior to the investigation process. The educators who have undergone an investigation do not find the penalties imposed on them fair. Among the results of the research there exists a salient fact that investigations are executed in line with the initiatives of the investigators and administrators. Karakütük and Özbal (2019) hold that legal regulations and structural problems pose the major challenges in TES. The complaints that are not document or evidence-based waste school principals’ time and lead to a tedious bureaucracy (Kayıkçı & Tatar, 2021). It can also be stated that structural problems have an adverse impact upon the running of investigations.

The educators who have been investigated have tried for the penalties imposed on them, and it is understood that their penalties are often abolished by the court. It has been found that the investigators who endure this task are under the influence of the senior administration or their own characteristics and are not able to carry out the process objectively. Yet, there are also cases where investigations are executed professionally without being under any influence. Investigators who conduct investigations fall short of reporting (Çelik, 2010) and teachers do not consider inspectors competent so as to conduct investigations (Aküzüm & Özmen, 2013). The lack of adequate testification of the investigations with information and documents, the dearth of unity of practice and the plaintiffs’ ‘disguise themselves thwart the investigation process to be executed in a qualified manner (Çelebi, et. al., 2017; Kazak & Öztürk, 2023). There is also a negative attitude towards the investigator (Şirin & Dal, 2019). In addition to education inspectors’ high levels of workload, the assignment of investigative duties is also conceived as challenges of inspectors (Dağlı, 2006). The technical and managerial skills of school principals and education inspectors and in-service trainings are also deemed as insufficient (Deniz, 2022; Ekinçi & Sabancı, 2020). Education inspectors are not contended with the task of investigation assigned to them (Memduhoğlu & Mazlum, 2014) and it has been shown that the inspectors have encountered several problems that

may have a detrimental effect on the nature of the investigation in the process (Özmen & Şahin, 2010). The result of a study by Tetik (2011) demonstrated that education inspectors were able to manage their individual stress although they felt stressed in terms of their psychological state. It can be stated that the subject of the investigation, the investigator's own characteristic or the professional and political connections of the investigated educator affect the investigation process.

The sources reasons of the investigations may be attributable to negligence in examination procedures, collective actions within the scope of the unions or committing violence against students. Investigations remain administrative to a great extent. Yüksel (2019) has revealed that the complaints made to Başbakanlık İletişim Merkezi (BIMER), Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Merkezi (CIMER) and the Contact Center 'ALO 147' of the Ministry of National Education are vastly made by the parents and the main focus of those complaints are school cleaning and donation. The major sources underpinning such complaints are due to the inability of administrators and teachers to establish healthy communication with parents.

There are also certain cases where the IEs experience mobbing from their school administration during or after the investigation process. On the contrary, some school administrators who sustain educators in this process and propose a lower level of punishment that is recommended by inspectors. These differences may be influenced by the subject of the investigation and the IE's relationships with the school administration and their professional competence. Investigations have an impact on the educators' professional, family, and social relationships. It has been observed that their motivation decreases especially in the professional lives, yet they overcome this process by acquiring experience. The IE continue their lives in more control-oriented manner after the investigation processes and put their efforts in order to continue their jobs professionally. Moreover, investigations also have adverse effects on their health. A number of psychological problems, particularly depression, are encountered.

There is an accumulating body of literature concurring with these results. According to Demir and Almalı (2020), it has been understood that the complaints have not been subjected to a preliminary examination. On the other hand, in addition to the complaints reflecting the actual situation, it has been determined that some are based on intention, revenge and untruth. Among the examples are the fact that the teacher committed suicide in an investigation and that s/he was found innocent as a result of that process. Tunç and Gökçe (2018) reported that the complaints made to the contact line ALO 147 had certain purposes as whistleblowing, personal hostility and political reasons. The complaints yield such consequences as pressure, demotivation, desensitization, burnout and loss of reputation. Teachers also remain under pressure due to those complaints and this adversely affects administrators and reduces the motivation within the institution. In fact, several complaints are due to personal whims and negative attitudes (Özben & Günbayı, 2019). The problems arising from the investigation process of the complaints made to BIMER, CIMER and ALO147 are said to have discredited the teaching profession (Demir & Almalı, 2020). Similarly, in light of the findings of the current research, one may conclude that the educators who underwent an investigation tend to prefer quitting the profession, leaving school or retiring. The processes have a negative impact on the educators' family environment. In addition, the educators' relationship with their immediate surrounding weakens and they experience a sense of untrust. The investigated educators also think that their goodwill has been abused and, therefore, they have a sense of regret and resentment. Likewise, school principals are committed to preventing teacher abuse in their own schools, yet they have to handle the challenges resulting from various situations (Betweli, 2020). It can be stated that both teachers and school administrators are vulnerable to abuse. In other words, school principals, vice principals and teachers face ethical dilemmas on a large scale in behavioral, structural, political, and systemic aspects (Erdoğan & Sezgin, 2020).

6. CONCLUSION

In the investigation processes in Turkish Education System (TES), the processes are executed without complying with the legal regulations, and thus a fair inquiry process is unlikely to be carried out. It is also revealed that senior management tries to influence the decision of the investigator before the investigation process begins. The educators who have been investigated often find sentences imposed on them unfair. It is also one of the results that the investigations are directed in accordance with the initiatives of the investigators and managers. It can be stated that structural problems also negatively affect the functioning of the investigations. The educators who have undergone investigations take sentences to the court that they find them unfair, and it is understood that their sentences are often overturned by the court. It was found that the investigators were under the influence of senior management and their own characteristics and cannot make objective evaluations in a healthy way, yet there are also cases where investigations are carried out professionally without being influenced by this result. When the research findings in the literature are examined, according to Özdem, Albay and Çelik (2012), they are disturbed by the negative behavior of inspectors in investigations. Inspectors do not introduce themselves before the investigation, do not provide information about the subject of the investigation, do not comply with the appointment given for the investigation, and attempt to give advice, suggestions, guidance, warning or conciliation regarding the subject. It is also understood that the inspectors conducting the investigation also experienced some

problems. According to Çelebi, et. al. (2017), provincial education inspectors experience difficulties due to the issues not being clearly stated in the assignment orders and the lack of information and documents. During the conduct of the investigation, the fact that the complainants hide themselves and give the wrong address, name and phone number, that the allegations are generally based on hearsay, and that they are not supported by information and documents, reduces the quality of the work. Conflicting legislation on many issues, differences of opinion among inspectors, and lack of unity in practice are seen as important problems encountered. Conducting investigations by school principals similarly brings out different problems. According to Yeşil-Yıldırım and Levent (2021), carrying out school administration as an additional duty in teaching negatively affects the decision-making process in disciplinary investigations. Although it is stated that problems occur in administrator-teacher relations as a result of the disciplinary punishments given to teachers, it seems that this punishment should be done by experts other than themselves.

The reasons for the investigations of the educators were generally due to negligence in the examination procedures, collective actions within the scope of union activities or violence against the students. Investigations mostly remain at administrative level. There are also cases where school administrations apply mobbing to the educators undergoing an investigation during or after the investigation process, on the contrary, there are school administrators who support IEs and give a lower punishment than the recommended punishment as a disciplinary supervisor. These differences may be influenced by the subject of the investigation and the educator's relationship with the school administration and its professional competence. The investigations also affect the educator's professional, family, and social relationships. It is seen that the educators' motivation decreases particularly in terms of their professional lives, yet they gain experience from this process and output. After the investigation, they continue their lives in a more control-oriented manner. They strive to continue their profession in a professional manner. It also has negative reflections on their health. Psychological problems, especially depression, are encountered. It has been found that teachers are mostly punished for union activities, and administrator attitudes, economic conditions, and family reasons have an impact on teacher behavior (Ökdem, 2021). It shows that inspectors experience many problems during their investigation duty that may negatively affect the quality of the investigation (Özmen & Şahin, 2010). As a result, it can be stated that the number of studies conducted on this subject is not sufficient and the study subjects are far from psychological dimensions. Research mostly deals with investigation processes or technical aspects of investigations.

However, this research aims to make a significant contribution to the literature in the context of addressing the psychological states of educators who are under investigation.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results obtained within the scope of the study, the following suggestions can be proposed:

- ✓ Protection of the inspectors conducting investigations with stronger laws,
- ✓ Deterrent penalties should be applied against the complainants in case of unrealistic or slanderous complaints.
- ✓ Investigations should be executed on the basis of certain standards.
- ✓ Complaints can first be subjected to a preliminary examination,
- ✓ The investigation tasks should be endured by experts,
- ✓ The investigations can be classified based on complaints and disgraceful offenses are handled by education inspectors who are affiliated to the ministry,
- ✓ Those who manipulate the investigation process are imposed penalties.
- ✓ It may also be recommended to conduct studies that address the psychological structures of both those conducting the investigation and those being investigated.

8. LIMITATIONS

The research has a limitation. It is limited to the qualitative data collection method and also to merely the participant opinions who took part in the study and who had undergone an investigation beforehand.

9. ETHICS STATEMENTS

The research was approved by Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Nevşehir Hacıbektas Veli University (dated 26/05/2023 and no. 2023/05.188).

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