THE GREAT BARRIER TO TEACHING PROFESSION: TECHNICISM, RETHINKING THE MEANING OF PROFESSIONALISM THROUGH TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE

Research Article

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Abstract

Teaching as a profession requires professional training, knowledge, hands-on practice, certain competences to raise individuals who will shape the future of the society. Therefore, teachers should adopt key roles for societal transformation. In this study, we aimed to explore the meaning of teaching profession based on teachers' professional experiences. We adopted a phenomenological research design focusing on the experiences of the participants and the phenomena that result from their experiences. The participants are 50 teachers working at primary, secondary and high schools in Turkey. We collected the data using a semi-structured interview form and we used inductive content analysis. At the end of the analysis, two themes emerged "teacher as a professional" and "teacher as a technician". The results of the study will be of importance to raise awareness about these two major concepts in teaching profession and help us rethink the current roles of teachers for the society.

Keywords: Professionalism, technicism, teaching profession, teacher as a professional, teacher as a technician

1. Introduction

"Professionalism" is one of the chaotic terms which can be interpreted and conceived differently by individuals, and therefore hard to be defined clearly. For instance, Sockett (1996) described the term as the quality of practice and the public status of a job. Darling-Hammond (1990) stated professionalism is a continuum representing the extent to which members of an occupation share a common body of knowledge and use shared standards of practice in exercising that knowledge on behalf of students. Hargreaves (1998) describes professionalism as an approach which has social, emotional, technical, and intellectual components to establish emotional bonds with and among learners, to lay down the building blocks of empathy, tolerance, and commitment to the society. Evetts (2008) suggests we should understand professionalism in three ways: (1) as an occupational value, (2) as an ideology, and (3) as a discourse of occupational change and managerial control. To interpret "professionalism" better within the context of teaching, understanding the profession-related terms such as "job, vocation, work, career, and occupation" may be helpful (Hansen, 1995 cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2008, 6):

A job is an activity that provides sustenance or survival. It comprises highly repetitive tasks that are not defined and developed by those who perform them. Vocation goes well beyond sustenance and survival; it guarantees personal autonomy and personal significance. Work may ensure personal autonomy and can therefore yield genuine personal meaning but, unlike vocation, it does not imply being of service to others. A career describes a long-term involvement in a particular activity but differs from vocation in similar ways that job and

work do, that is, it doesn't have to provide personal fulfilment, a sense of identity, nor a public service. An occupation is an endeavor harbored within a society's economic, social, and political system, but individuals can have occupations that do not entail a sense of calling in the same way vocations do. A profession broadens the idea of an occupation by emphasizing the expertise and the social contribution that persons in an occupation render to society.

However, within the scope of these interpretations described above, except for the Hansen's description of profession, something is fundamentally missing as the rest reflects rather normative notions and are quite traditional to describe the term "professionalism" in the twenty first century. Otherwise, the term will be quite close to the concept of "technicism", and it will restrict teachers' role to matters of classroom competence only and lessen the impact of broader moral and social issues that teachers play as mediators of knowledge and values within the community and society (Sachs, 2015). Similarly, Mackey and Evans (2011) stated that professionalism is about the service provided by professionals to society and thinking about how this service may be improved. Therefore, in this study, our interpretation of the term profession is close to what Hansen (1995) and Hargreaves (1998) suggests.

As the literature suggests different interpretations about the term "profession", it is no wonder that various perspectives have been raised and discussed by within different categorizations regarding what the professionalism stands for. For example, Sachs (2015) categorized professionalism as (1) occupational or managerial professionalism and (2) democratic professionalism (collaborative professionalism by teachers and other stakeholders). Another categorization of professionalism is the one defined by Hargreaves (2000): (1) pre-professionalism (teaching as simple and technical act), (2) autonomous professionalism (teacher autonomy in terms of pedagogical choice), (3) collegial professionalism (emphasis on collective action and collaborative culture); and (4) postmodern professional (teachers' actions and collective efforts to improve the quality of teaching and bring about change in the entire profession) (cited in Ro, 2020). In line with these categorizations, the understanding we adopted in our study regarding the professionalism is a combination of Sachs's (2015) democratic professionalism and Hargreaves's (2000) collegial professionalism and postmodern professionalism.

The emphasis on collaboration, collectivism, democracy, and postmodernism within these categorizations about professionalism also remind us the teacher roles suggested in several studies (Condrat, 2018; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Morgan, 2009; Saygılı, 2013; Schön, 1987): (1) teachers as passive technicians, (2) teachers as reflective practitioners, and (3) teachers as transformative intellectuals. As a passive technician, the teacher is responsible for the transfer of knowledge produced by experts to students without questioning its validity and considering learners' needs (Cakcak, 2016); that is to say, they are passive transmitters of received knowledge (Freire, 1970; Tierney, 2020). This type of teacher role is just the opposite of what we mean "professionalism" in this study. Teachers as reflective practitioners refers to individuals who produce the knowledge themselves, question the information they encounter through a critical filter and are open to criticism by their students (Boyd, 1998; Larrivee, 2008; Nadiahan & Cabauatan, 2021; Schön 1987; Voinea & Pălăşan). As a transformative intellectual, the teacher is responsible for keeping track of current affairs, supporting students in inquiry, critical thinking and problem solving, and aiming to achieve societal transformation (Kumaravadivelu, 2008). However, this categorization does not suggest the idea that the teachers as passive technicians are unprofessional. In these teacher roles, all the teachers have professional knowledge.

Technicism, on the other hand, refers to an approach which is reinforced by competition and funding mechanisms where inputs and outputs are counted and rewarded (or penalized), and a system which treats teachers as technicians to be controlled. This approach assumes that people can be managed as if they behaved like machines. Similarly, education and training are considered systemic production processes, using the metaphor of the assembly line, with its inputs, processes, and outputs. Quality and efficiency are dominant concepts. It aims to achieve a greater control over society (Hodkinson, 2011). Similarly, Halliday (1998) defines technicism as the notion that good teaching is equivalent to efficient performance which achieves ends that teachers are prescribed with. Technicism starts at the faculty, during undergraduate teacher training. Kinuthia (2021) states that the technicist approach is a purposeful act of government to harness workforce energies according to the needs of the state, and this may result in the technicist society that works for the government only. If teachers are passive technicians, they feel responsible only for teaching a mandated curriculum, they can never get inside moral and intellectual life (Sockett, 1996), which results in the loss of reality in teaching. What is more, as these teachers do not question the formal curriculum and do not have curriculum literacy, they unwittingly serve the government, not the society.

In line with the above-mentioned concepts, our interpretation of "professionalism", "technicism", description of the roles of "teacher as a professional" and "teacher as a technician" is given in Figure 1. We would like to remind you that this figure does not intend to make a comparison of teacher as a professional or technician, but to indicate some characteristics these teachers have.

Professionalism	**Technicism**
An approach which has social, emotional, technical and intellectual components to establish emotional bonds with and among learners, to lay down the building blocks of empathy, tolerance and commitment to the society (Hargreaves, 1998)	An approach which treats teachers as technicians to be controlled (Hodkinson, 2011) and which aims to harness workforce energies according to the needs of the government (Kinuthia, 2021)
• is a reflective practitioner and transformative intellectual • is an active member of a collaborative culture, takes collective action • is a change agent who aims societal transformation • is interested in personal and professional development • thinks critically • questions the validity of information and resources • supports progressive and humanistic education, and the democratization of knowledge production	• is a good practitioner of the formal curriculum • does not need to work collaboratively or collectively as he/she thinks he/she has all the professional knowledge to teach • is a knowledge worker who aims to teach what needs to be teach • is not aware of the need for personal and professional development • trusts the information provided for him/her. Therefore, he/she does not need to question it • thinks that he/she is the only source of knowledge, an expert of knowledge

Figure 1. Characteristics of a teacher as a professional and teacher as a technician

This study aims to explore teachers' interpretations of their profession based on their professional experiences. The results of the study will be of great importance to raise awareness about two major concepts in teaching profession, help us rethink the current roles of the teachers for the society, and will be a useful source for the procedures that teacher educators use in academia.

2. Method

In this study, teachers' interpretations of their profession were investigated based on their professional experiences. The research adopts phenomenological research design, as it focuses on the experiences of the participants and the meanings or phenomena that result from their experiences. Phenomenology is a qualitative research methodology that focuses on describing and interpreting the means and meaning making of a phenomenon (Donalek, 2004). Phenomenological research focuses on the perception and meaning of people who have had close experiences and efforts to find commonalities. These commonalities are called the core of experiences (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

2.1. Participants

Elementary teacher education is the most common branch in Turkey, and Turkish, English, mathematics, science, social sciences, religious culture and moral knowledge, informatics, music, painting, physical education are the branches that are common in middle schools. Similarly, at high school level, Turkish Language and Literature, English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, history, geography, philosophy, religious culture and moral knowledge, informatics, music, painting, physical education are the most common ones. Of course, there are also teachers who provide guidance and psychological counselling services to the students at primary, secondary and high school levels. However, guidance and psychological counselling teachers do not teach in the class but provide services to students in the fields of academic development, psychological counselling, and career counselling. Therefore, the researchers decided to carry out the research with the teachers who are responsible for teaching in the classes, including the most common branches at primary, secondary and high school levels (the branches listed above). The interviews were conducted with 50 teachers in total (One branch in primary school, ten branches in middle school and fourteen branches in high school was determined) and interviews were made with one teacher from each branch working in private sector schools and one teacher working in public schools. On the other hand, gender was not taken into consideration in the selection of the participants. As teaching is a profession that is highly preferred by women in Turkey, most of the participants is female (37 female, 13 male).

The participants were asked to give their consent for the recording of the interviews. Thus, the convenience sampling method was used in the study. Other criteria in the sampling are that the participants are from certain branches and work in primary, secondary and high schools, private and public schools. Due to this criterion, the sample can also be considered within the scope of criterion sampling (Maxwell, 1996; Patton, 2002).

2.2. Data Collection

The data were collected using a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers. Following the preparation of the interview form, five faculty members working at the education faculty (in the field of teacher education), two who are experts in qualitative research methodology and one academician who has expertise in assessment, measurement and evaluation were consulted. The data collection tool was revised in line with the feedback received from experts. After this revision, panel was held with three academicians who are experts in the field of teacher education and the final form of the data collection tool was finalized.

2.3. The Role of Researchers

Unlike quantitative research, the researchers are people who interprets the life as an object and therefore they may not see the world objectively. In other words, the researchers are the

ones who interprets the life on their own. Similarly, Creswell (2012) stated that the researchers' approaches and characteristics are of great importance in qualitative research.

This research was conducted by two researchers. One of the researchers pursued his research in educational sciences after receiving a bachelor's degree in educational sciences from the faculty of education, and a Ph.D. This researcher's interests in education are broad and he conducts research in different fields. At the same time, he has studies on teacher education, effective teacher characteristics, and reasons for teachers to choose teaching as a profession. The other researcher in the study has a Ph.D. in educational sciences after receiving a bachelor's degree in teaching English as a foreign language at the faculty of education. This researcher's interests in education are broad and he conducts research in different fields. He has also conducted research in the field of effective teacher characteristics.

The interviews were conducted by the researchers after having an appointment with the participants, and these interviews were recorded. Therefore, there was an interaction between the researchers and the participants during the data collection process. During the interviews, researchers were aware of their feelings and thoughts and knew that they had to avoid their prejudices (epoché) (Creswell, 2012). The data analysis was also carried out by the researchers by avoiding the prejudices.

2.4. Ensuring Validity and Reliability

The concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability used within the context of qualitative research design correspond to the concepts of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity in quantitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Voluntary participation is very important in terms of data reliability (Shenton, 2004). Therefore, a detailed explanation was given to the participants about the research and their consents were obtained. To conduct a reliable data analysis, it is essential that each researcher submit their codings to the other researchers (Creswell, 2012), and this is called "investigator triangulation" (Merriam & Tisdell 2016). After the data analysis was completed by the researchers, the analysis was submitted to three experts who were not involved in the study (external evaluation). These experts were from the field of educational sciences and had experience in conducting qualitative research. In this way, external evaluation (Christensen et al., 2014; Creswell, 2014; Creswell, 2007) was provided. The member checking strategy, also known as participant or respondent validation, was used to ensure the credibility (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The themes, categories and codes that emerged as the data were analysed were presented to five of the 50 teachers participating in the study, and their approval was obtained as to whether they reflect their experiences or not. Finally, direct quotations (participants' verbatim quotations) were used (Christensen et al., 2014).

2.5. Data Analysis

In this study, the analysis of the interviews was based on the content and the meanings emerging from the participants' experiences. Content analysis includes processing of qualitative data obtained during the research, coding of data, finding themes, organizing codes and themes, definition, and interpretation of findings. Mayring (2000) states that there are two ways of categorization: Inductive and deductive analysis. Inductive content analysis was used in this study. In inductive data analysis, data is coded, categories, top categories and themes are generated from the codes. In the study, the data were coded by the researchers. These codings were submitted to the control of three experts from the field of educational sciences and have experience in qualitative research. Experts stated whether the codings were appropriate or not and offered suggestions. The consistency between the evaluations made by

the external evaluators was calculated using the Krippendorff Alpha coefficient. This value was found to be .89, which shows the codings have a high interrater consistency (Krippendorff, 2004). After the coding phase, the category and themes were generated. The findings related to the categories and themes obtained through the codes were rechecked by an external evaluator who was not included in the study. In the findings section, direct quotations were also presented.

3. Findings

To explore teachers' interpretations of their profession based on their professional experiences, firstly, the teachers' interpretations obtained from the interviews were coded. Then categories were created, and finally, the researchers generated the themes. At the end of the process, two themes emerged: (1) teacher as a professional and (2) teacher as a technician.

3.1. Theme 1: Teacher as a Professional

According to the first theme "teacher as a professional", teachers are effective and productive professionals. In addition, there is a teacher typology that the professional teacher interprets (teaching profession according to a professional teacher). The categories and codes that emerged under this theme were shown in Figure 2.
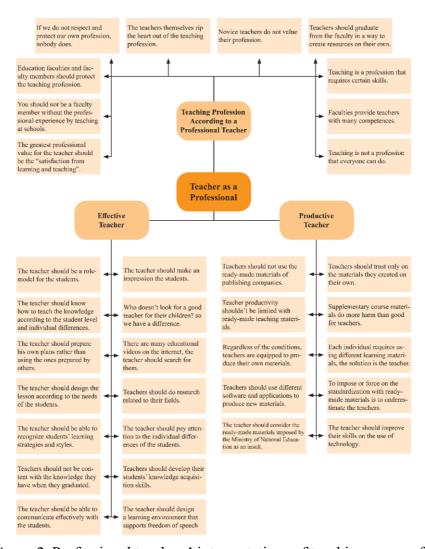
Figure 2. Professional teachers' interpretations of teaching as a profession

3.1.1. Category 1: Teaching profession according to a professional teacher

Findings according to this category reveal that the greatest value of teaching profession is the satisfaction from teaching and learning. Professional teachers think that the teachers should value this profession first and then they should expect respect from others. In addition, professional teachers think that the teaching is not a profession that everybody can do as it requires having certain knowledge, skills, and competencies; therefore, the education faculties should provide these during the teacher education. Also, faculty members at education faculties should value the teaching profession and they should have a hands-on experience by teaching at K-12 school to provide teacher candidates with the reality of teaching profession.

3.1.2. Category 2: Effective Teacher

The findings in line with the category "effective teacher", teachers think that the teachers should be a role model for their students, make an impression on them, should be able to adapt the teaching strategies, methods, and techniques according to students' needs and individual differences. In addition, these teachers should care about their professional development through doing research in their fields, and they should not never be content with the knowledge or skills they have. Furthermore, they should be able to communicate effectively with their students and should design a learning environment that supports freedom of speech.

3.1.3. Category 3: Productive Teacher

The codes under this category reflect that the teachers should not use readily available materials. In other words, they should prepare their own plans and materials according to the students' needs and individual differences using different software or applications. Because they think that to force teachers to standardize with the readily available materials is to underestimate the teachers' creativity and productivity. Similarly, they regard the materials imposed by Ministry of National Education as an insult to teachers. The following is a direct quote from a teacher visited by a parent who thinks subject-matter knowledge is the most important factor in teaching:

> T8: *One of the parents visited me in our school. She is a parent who gets her child to take private courses from another teacher for the exams. She is ambitious and has higher expectations... I can understand the way she feels. However, she calls me to account by saying "Sir, what is your purpose of being here? My son has only 10 correct answers out of 50 questions in his last math test. Isn't your job to teach our children math well?" I get miffed by this kind of attitude... I don't see myself just as a teacher who teaches mathematics. Besides, this is not a merit. In today's world, you can reach information wherever you want to... Open YouTube, you will find a much better math story than mine. However, I am also an educator. They should not miss this point... I care about children; I plan my classes according to their levels... I try to take care of my students' needs… not only if they learn mathematics well... Isn't it among our duties to strive for the child to express himself well and become a good citizen of society?*

A teacher expressed the need for self-development and continuous improvement in the teaching profession as follows:

> T42: *I always tell my students they shouldn't memorize information as memorizing is meaningless, and the amount of information you remember, understand, the period of remembering or keeping this information in mind becomes shorter". In other words, it is necessary to develop certain skills related to keeping up with the change of*

information, knowing how and where to learn when there is a need for information. But what are we doing to teach our students in line with this aim? We foolishly think that we can survive throughout our career with the knowledge and skills we learned while we're studying at the faculty. A professional doesn't say "I know enough, I don't have to learn more". Instead, they care about self-improvement and do some research about the current development of their profession.

Another teacher complained about the use of readily available materials provided by Ministry of National Education:

T21: *Ministry of National Education (MoNE) started making radical changes in 2002. They kept telling us that our education system before this date was structured according to behaviorist approach. And they implied we're on the wrong track. Then, they imposed constructivism on us as a new system. I do not want to say anything else about this... I think MoNE was afraid that the newly introduced system would not be accepted by teachers and could not control the process and sent us a "Teacher's Guidebook", "Student Textbook" and "Student Workbooks" for each lesson after 2004. In fact, in my opinion, these books were for us to understand the innovation and everything in these books was exemplary. However, incompetent, and ignorant inspectors did not understand the objective of these materials the same way as I perceive them and expected the teachers to apply everything in these books as a motto. I consider this as an insult to myself. I am a professional. You cannot force me to be standardized in this way. I can produce even more original products than those materials. You will both teach us the importance of learners' individual differences during our study at education faculties and turn us into a uniform soldier with the request of applying these materials as a motto... Sorry? I cannot accept such a system!*

Another teacher shared his dissatisfaction about the faculty members and education provided at education faculties as follows:

T14: *I remember the days when I was a student at the faculty of education…We had many faculty members who didn't have any teaching experience at a K-12 school. But they are supposed to teach us how to teach effectively at schools… Can you see the contradiction here? They didn't work at a school before, they didn't have any hands-on experience, but they were trying to teach us how to teach well at those schools. This is a problem… We learned the theoretical knowledge really well, but the practice is not the same. You can't understand how complicated to put this theory into practice. Every city, every school is very different from each other. So, I believe, if they had had enough experience at those schools, we could have graduated from university as a better teacher prepared for real life. Still, I feel luck as I realized this situation quite early upon graduation, since then, every single day, I am trying to improve myself, trying to discover new things. I think the faculty members should have practical experience of teaching at different schools before they are recruited at universities, and teacher candidates should visit schools to see the reality and challenges of this profession, and then they should decide whether they have enough competences to work there. The findings in line with the category "effective teacher", teachers think that the teachers should be a role model for their students, make an impression on them, should be able to adapt the teaching strategies, methods, and techniques according to students' needs and individual differences. In addition, these teachers should care about their professional development through doing research in their fields, and they should not never be content with the knowledge or skills they have. Furthermore, they should be*

able to communicate effectively with their students and should design a learning environment that supports freedom of speech.

3.2. Theme 2: Teacher as a Technician

According to theme "the teacher as a technician", the teacher should be professional; however, the information, documents and materials provided for teachers are very attractive (teacher who experiences conflict). On the other hand, it is possible to reach a wide variety of sources everywhere, so why should teachers feel themselves obliged to produce new ones? In addition, according to these teachers, the teacher is the source of knowledge and authority. At the same time, there is a teacher typology that the teacher as a technician interprets. The categories and codes that emerged under this theme were shown in Figure 3.
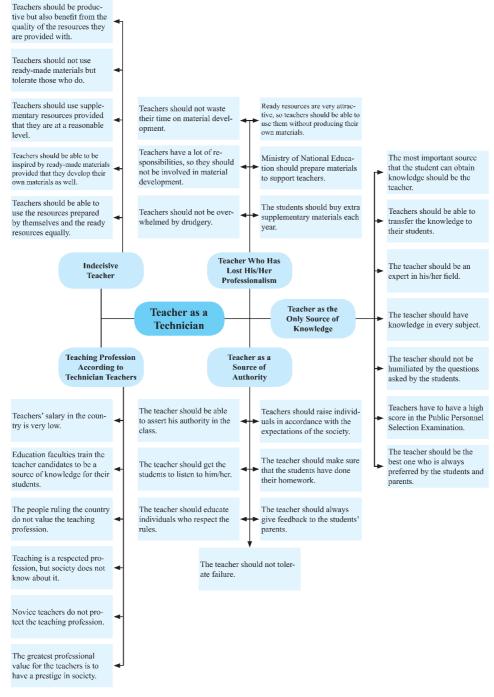
Figure 3. Technician teachers' interpretations of teaching as a profession

3.2.1. Category 1: Indecisive Teacher

The codes related to the category of indecisive teacher reveal that these teachers should be productive but also benefit from the quality of the resources they are provided with. Even if they do not use the readily available materials, they should tolerate those who use those materials. In addition, the teachers can use the materials prepared by others if they combine it with the materials they prepare on their own, or there should be balance in the use of readily available materials and the ones they prepared.

3.2.2. Category 2: Teacher who has lost his/her professionalism

The codes under this category revealed that teachers should not waste their time on material development, because they have many other responsibilities. Therefore, they should not be overwhelmed by drudgery. In addition, they think that available sources and readily available materials are very attractive; therefore, it is quite logical to use them as they are rather than producing their own materials. Similarly, they think that these materials should be provided from Ministry of National Education, and the students should buy extra supplementary materials at the beginning of each academic term.

3.2.3. Category 3: Teacher as a source of knowledge

According to this category, the teacher is the most important and reliable source of information and knowledge. Therefore, they should be able to transfer the knowledge to their students. In addition to having knowledge at expert level in their field, they should have knowledge in every subject related to their field. Moreover, these teachers think that the teacher should not be humiliated by the questions asked by students. Furthermore, the teacher should be the one who have had a high score from the Public Personnel Selection Examination. And they think that the best teacher is the one who is always preferred by the students and their parents.

3.2.4. Category 4: Teacher as a source of authority

The codes under this category revealed that the teachers should be able to assert his authority in the classroom. In other words, he or she should be good at classroom management and discipline. Therefore, the teacher should get the students to listen to him/her. In addition, the teachers should educate the children who respect the rules, in accordance with the expectations of the society. Furthermore, teachers should make sure that their students always do their homework, and the teachers should always give feedback to students' parents. Moreover, these teachers think that teachers should not tolerate the failure or unsuccessful students.

3.2.5. Category 5: Teaching profession according to technician teachers

According to the codes under this category, teachers think that the salary they earn is too low. In addition, they support the idea that education faculties should train the teacher candidates to be the source of knowledge for their students. Another finding is that, although the teaching profession should be one of the most valuable and prestigious one, the society does not know about it because the people in Turkey do not value this profession anymore. Similarly, they think that the novice teachers do not protect the prestige of this profession.

A teacher, who is satisfied with the resources and materials provided by the Ministry of National Education, states his/her thoughts:

T38: *After 2004, Ministry of National Education (MoNE) started to provide teachers with "Teacher's Guidebook", "Student Textbook" and "Student Workbook". This practice has changed somewhat in recent years. Now the teacher's handbooks are*

running low, the student textbook is being sent, and the student workbook is not being sent except for some subjects such as English. However, I was very satisfied with the previous application. Everything was written and clearly explained in these books, it was clear what we would apply day by day. There was no need for us to plan for the whole year and no need to do daily plan for each single day.

Another teacher complained about the administrative duties that teachers have apart from their instructional roles as follows:

T11: *Do you know how many "chores" a teacher has at school? You are in the civil defense commission; you are in the fixture commission, and many others... Each teacher is a member of at least 10 different commissions and does a lot of unnecessary work and attends unnecessary meetings, parents' meeting, etc. What is the salary paid in return! The education I give to students in this drudgery is even a lot!*

The following quote is from a teacher who considers the teachers as the only source of knowledge:

T41: *I am both a teacher and a parent. My children study at other schools. I looked for a good teacher for my children rather than determining a school for them to start for the first time, and I put a lot of effort to send my children to that teacher's classroom. All parents have this strategy. The teachers vary a lot... Some teachers graduate from the faculty with zero knowledge. They make the students achieve their goals. They are too disciplined. Interestingly, some parents also prefer such teachers. So, all teachers should be able to reach this level. Standardization can only be achieved in this way. We are the source of knowledge and wisdom.*

Another teacher who considers the teacher as the source of authority stated the following:

T33: *I am an experienced teacher. I am very good at classroom management, and I can easily maintain discipline in the class. Because of this, I have always been a respected teacher by the parents and school principals. My students always obey the rules. However, new generation doesn't care about the rules. I think these results from novice teachers. They are not disciplined; they don't seek for discipline in their classes. This is a problem for my classes. If they do not obey the rules all the time, how can I teach my lesson? Sometimes they don't listen to me. If they don't listen, how will they learn? This is not a good thing for the future of our society.*

Another teacher noted that teachers should be the most respected person in the society as follows:

T49: *If I had another chance, I wouldn't choose this job again. It was a prestigious job in the past, everybody used to respect us. But now, neither the parents nor our students show respect. This is very dangerous for our society. If the government doesn't take any precautions, we will lose our prestige in the society. Even new teachers do not know how valuable our job is...I will get retired in a few years; I hope this job gains its prestige again...*

4. Discussion

This study was conducted to explore the meaning of teaching profession based on teachers' professional experiences. The findings were presented under two themes emerged from the inductive content analysis of the interviews conducted with 50 teachers: (1) Teacher as a professional and (2) teacher as a technician. Accordingly, the discussion part will be

given under two headings: (1) "Discussion about the "teacher as a professional" and (2) "Discussion about the "teacher as a technician".

4.1. Discussion about "Theme 1: Teacher as a Professional"

The findings under the theme "teacher as a professional" revealed that professional teachers should have certain effective teacher characteristics such as being a role model for their students, making a good impression on their students, being able to adapt the teaching strategies, methods, and techniques according to students' needs and individual differences. These findings correlate with the several studies in the literature (Fernandez, Peyton & Schaetzel, 2017; Petrie & McGee, 2012). These studies also support the idea that professional teachers should be accounted for in both designing the curriculum and learning environment, and these are some of the effective teacher characteristics. In addition, they should care about their professional development, and they be able to communicate effectively with their students and design a learning environment that supports freedom of speech. This finding is closely related to the teachers' creation of critical and emancipatory learning environment. In this kind of design, the autonomy given to the learner and information exchange between the learners is of great importance (Galloway, 2012; Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Mayo, 1995). Similarly, Freire (1970) states that only in this kind of learning environments students have freedom and teachers can have a true dialogue with the students.

And as a productive teacher, they should not use readily available materials but prepare their own according to the students' needs and individual differences as they think that readily available plans and materials kill the teachers' creativity and productivity. Bouckaert (2018) stated in his study that teachers themselves should be able to create and adapt materials rather than existing publications available to them. Similarly, Davis (2006) argues that teachers should do material development rather than using curriculum materials developed by others. This will not only increase their productivity but also help teachers' professional development. In Masuhara's (2006) study, it is stated that if teachers develop their own plans and materials, they will be more aware of the demands of their learners, themselves, and their teaching contexts, and that they apply and develop learning theories and teaching methods more critically.

Another finding under this theme is that the greatest value of teaching profession is the satisfaction from teaching and learning; therefore, they should value this profession first and then they should expect respect from others. According to these teachers, teaching is not a profession that everybody can do as it requires having certain knowledge, skills, and competencies; therefore, the education faculties should provide these during the teacher education. Because raising individuals as the change agents for the future society depends on educating qualified teachers. Similarly, the quality of teacher education requires bridging the gap between theory and practice (Baumert et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2006), and this should start at university years. Therefore, faculty members should have had a hands-on experience by teaching at K-12 schools before being accepted to work at education faculties and provide teacher candidates with the reality of teaching profession. This finding is in line with the findings of several studies in the literature (Bull, Spector & Persichitte, 2017; Ricci & Fingon, 2018; Sánchez, 2021; Selland, 2021; Zeichner, 2010).

4.2. Discussion about "Theme 2: Teacher as a Technician"

The findings under the theme "teacher as a technician" revealed that the teachers feel a sense of being stuck. That is, they still consider themselves a professional and is aware of the fact that he has to do what is required professionally. On the other hand, they are attracted by the guidance about the readily available sources, information, documents, and materials

provided for them. Therefore, they can benefit from the quality of the resources they are provided with, and the time spent on material development is a waste of time as they have many other responsibilities. They also think that these materials should be provided from Ministry of National Education, and the students should buy extra supplementary materials at the beginning of each academic term. These findings correlate with several studies (Burkhauser & Lesaux, 2015; Tokgöz, 2013; Yirmibeş, 2017) in that the teachers are satisfied with the state-wide standardized sources and materials provided by the central authority. This reveals that the teachers are not aware of the fact that they've lost autonomy and they are quite satisfied with using those materials. However, using readily available materials during teaching process may result in "deskilling" as Apple and Teitelbaum (1986) suggest. Similarly, if the teachers are satisfied with the standardized curriculum and materials provided by the MoNE, they this will result in a more centralized governance and increased administrative control of education (Erss & Kalmus, 2018). Also, it will be easier for the central authority to control and shape teachers' behaviors (Cakcak, 2016; Hardy, 2017). Another finding in this theme is that the teacher is the most important and reliable source of information and knowledge. Therefore, they should be able to transfer the knowledge to their students in the best way. This finding is in line with several research in the literature (Luan & Bakar, 2008; Otero & Nathan, 2008; Sachs, 2015) in that the teachers perceive themselves as the authority of knowledge.

In addition, the teachers should be able maintain discipline and his authority in the classroom. Moreover, the teachers should educate the children who respect the rules, in accordance with the expectations of the society, they should make sure that their students always do their homework, and they should always give feedback to students' parents. Moreover, these teachers think that teachers should not tolerate the failure or unsuccessful students. These findings correlate with the studies in the literature (Ahmad et al., 2012; Ayebo & Assuah, 2017; Haroun & O'Hanlon, 1997; Nakpodia, 2010; Senjaya et al., 2020) in that the teachers should be the ultimate decider of the classroom environment, and they should teach children how to obey the rules to meet the expectations of the society.

Another important finding was that teachers think that the salary they earn is too low in Turkey. There are several studies which have similar findings to ours (Avgousti, 2017; García & Weiss, 2019; Gobena, 2018). These findings reveal that the teachers are not satisfied with the money they are paid. This may be one of the reasons for choosing the role of "technician" rather than a "professional".

As regard to the value of teaching profession, the teachers noted that, although the teaching profession should be one of the most valuable and prestigious one, the society does not know about it because the people in Turkey do not value this profession anymore. Similarly, they think that the novice teachers do not protect the prestige of this profession This finding is similar to several studies in the literature (Evans & Yuan, 2018; Skinner, Leavey & Rothi, 2021). One of the reasons why the teachers think that teaching as a profession lost its value and prestige in the society can be the fact that the amount of salary that they earn is quite low; therefore, they feel demotivated.

4. Conclusion

Teachers have a significant role in shaping the future of the society. Therefore, in addition to the expectations from teachers, the characteristics they should have, it is also vital to explore the meaning of teaching profession based on teachers' professional experiences. Because the meaning and experiences they have reflect the reality in practice. Moreover, due to the rapid social, political, economic, cultural, and technological changes the societies are experiencing, teaching profession is still in a transformation phase as it always will. Only

through realizing and understanding the meaning of this profession based on the professional experience of the teachers, we can support education-driven societal transformation and social progress.

The results of this study revealed that some teachers are not aware of the fact that they have already adopted the role of a teacher as a passive technician, and they do not feel much discomfort about this. They even support the idea that governments and other authorities can provide them with the standardized of materials and sources, and they can use them without any adaptation to students' interests, needs and their individual differences. Having lost the autonomy doesn't disturb them. On the other hand, they complain about losing their authority in terms of classroom management. They also state that they are the only source of knowledge; therefore, they can transfer the best knowledge to their students. Similarly, they note that the teachers should be the ultimate decider of the classroom environment, and they should teach children how to obey the rules to meet the expectations of the society. These findings show us the fact that these teachers do not feel unhappy about being technically proletarianized (Derber, 1983) because they are not even aware of it, or they don't care about it.

On the other hand, some other teachers who participated in the study knows they should have certain effective teacher characteristics, making a good impression on their students, should be able to adapt the teaching strategies, methods, and techniques according to students' needs and individual differences, should have a true dialogue with their students and design a learning environment that supports freedom of speech. In addition, they know that they should be creative and productive, and should question the use of readily available curriculum materials. They also believe that teacher education provided at education faculties should be based on a hands-on experience. These findings show us that some teachers are still struggling to improve themselves both personally and professionally, they believe that they are not the only source of knowledge, they should be able to design a democratic learning environment for their students and adopt a more humanistic and transformative vision of education.

Limitations of the study

Some limitations exist in the current study. First, although the sample size is quite enough to conduct phenomenological research, the participants are mostly from two central cities in Turkey. This may have affected the experiences of the participants about teaching profession and the meanings or phenomena that result from their experiences. In other words, if they were from other cities or rural areas where the society has a different background in terms of culture and economy, the experiences about their profession could be different.

Another limitation may be the fact that the researchers decided to carry out the research with the teachers who are responsible for teaching in the classes and did not include the psychological counseling and guidance teachers as they do not teach in the class. Despite these limitations, the current study present significant results and some useful knowledge regarding teaching as a profession.

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