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## Ways to Evaluate Teachers' Professional Performance in the Context of Performance Based Payment Policies

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| <b>Article history</b>           | <p>The purpose of this research is to analyze the opinions of secondary and high school teachers and administrators regarding the performance evaluation of teachers in the context of performance-based payment policies. In this research, in order to learn about participant views about the subject, basic qualitative research design which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The study group is made up of a total of 38 participants, 16 of which were school administrators and 22 teachers from different branches working in secondary and high schools in Gaziantep, Turkey in the academic year of 2018-2019. Maximum variation sampling method as one of the purposive sampling methods was adopted. The data was collected through focus group interviews and individual interviews by using semi-structured interview forms and data were analyzed with content analysis. Based on the research findings, it is understood that most of the teachers and administrators have positive perspectives on performance evaluation process provided that teacher performance evaluation policies are applied democratically. On the other hand, some of the participants showed negative attitude toward the subject. They think that teachers will have difficulty accepting performance system and resist to it. In addition to these findings, participants stated that authorities who will implement this system should be experts in their fields to be able to prevent teachers from experiencing any difficulties. The participants were also asked about the criteria and qualifications to be used in the evaluation of teacher performance, and they offered a variety of ideas that could be applied in teacher performance evaluation system.</p> |
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### Introduction

Though improving teacher performance is a policy that is discussed all over the world, this issue has much more importance for developing countries (Kobakhidze, 2010). One of the ways, which is used lately to improve teacher performance is performance-based

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economic incentive policies, or in another words, performance-based payment policies. However, the implementation of these policies depends on the right and effective evaluation of teacher performance. Various methods can be used to evaluate teacher performance (Milanowski & Heneman, 2001). The most frequently used method in recent years is the evaluation of student test results, but it is also possible to mention other methods used in the past. These are the methods based on student achievement output, such as literacy rate, high school graduation rates or university entrance rates. Nowadays, the basis of these methods, measuring the performance in different ways, is based on the student's success (Lazear, 2001; Springer, 2009). The main issue that should be considered in the evaluation process is how a school or education system affects the student's subsequent gains or professional acquisition. Yet, the problem about this issue is that it is difficult to make a measurement in this direction and it requires a very long time, even if it can be done (Lazear, 2001). At this point, it is important to decide which performance indicators should be accepted as criteria and how the performance evaluation process should work within the scope of the teacher performance evaluation system to be implemented in connection with performance-based payment policies.

### ***Related Literature***

Performance concept is used more in the industrial market, and it does not seem to be used with teachers in terms of the quality of their work. However, performance concept has been used in the education sector around the world in the last two decades and is used especially in western countries (Chamberlin, Wragg, Haynes, & Wragg, 2002; Podgursky & Springer, 2007). Performance evaluation is needed depending on the needs of teachers to decide on their performance and to reward, enforce, or design a development process. Performance evaluation is the process of communicating, evaluating, and improving the worker's job about how and how much a job is done (Aguinis, 2009; Dagar, 2014; Gotcheva, 2009). Mathis and Jackson (2011) express that performance evaluation is the pursuit of how well an employee does his/her job according to pre-determined standards.

The performance evaluation system, which is widely used in other sectors, has also started to be used widely in the education sector. In the education sector, performance evaluation is used to obtain the training which is needed by the teacher who needs to improve his or her skills and it is used for getting information in regard to the teacher's performance. In addition to these, performance evaluation is used to measure teacher's efficiency, to reward according to the job he/she performs, or to ensure his/her development if it is needed necessary. Teacher performance evaluation is a whole system that is used to celebrate, recognize, and reward teachers' work. At the same time, it is a process including the evaluation of the effectiveness, strengths and areas of development of education, which is followed by opportunities such as feedback, coaching, support and professional development opportunities (OECD, 2009a).

Newmann (1997) remarked that the evaluation of teacher performance is the evaluation of education services in line with the determined goals and the implementation of the reward or penalty process according to the results of evaluation of teacher performance in the education sector. He believes that it will increase the quality and efficiency of education and will contribute positively to education for both teachers and students. According to Guthrie and Reed (1991), documenting the teacher's observed performance, effective teaching skill, knowledge and attitude towards teaching also enables an effective evaluation of the teacher's performance. The use of payment policies based on teacher performance evaluation continues to be implemented by shaping them according to the national standards of the countries day

by day (Chamberlin et al., 2002; Kirunda, 2004; Murphy, Hallinger & Heck, 2013; Zuber & Altrichter, 2018). Researchers, who try to develop the performance-based payment policy and the states that want to include this policy in their system, want to reach a better education output in their countries. One of the most significant strategies to achieve this expectation is to develop a payment policy rewarding the teacher individually or as a group (Ballou, 2001; Jensen, Yamashiro & Tibbetts, 2010).

According to Adnett (2003), the aim of teacher performance evaluation related to economic incentive is to increase student success and improve basic skills. On the other hand, according to Farrell and Morris (2009) the aim of performance-based payment is that teachers focus on specific subjects and stay in the profession, increase their motivation, and strengthen the school in general. Boyacı (2003) states that teacher performance evaluation enables the structuring of a more qualified education environment, and also it enables the determination of the professional and individual development areas related to teachers and allows the award and promotion system to operate with more objective criteria.

How teacher performance should be evaluated in accordance with performance-based payment policies is influenced by the structural and social characteristics of countries' education systems. Because of this, both the teacher performance evaluation system and performance-based payment policies should be structured in accordance with the characteristics of the education systems. In this study, first of all, the possible effects and preferability of these policies have been tried to be understood by evaluating the possible effects of a possible performance-based payment policy on the Turkish education system. After that, the first and important step of the implementation of performance-based payment policies which is how teacher performance should be evaluated was examined. The research is hoped to raise awareness in the improvement of teacher' professional performance in terms of coordinated implementation of performance evaluation and performance-based payment policies. For this purpose, this research aims to examine the opinions of secondary school and high school teachers and administrators regarding the performance evaluation of teachers in the context of performance-based payment policies. Taking this into consideration, the key research question which motives this study is "How should teachers' professional performance be evaluated in the context of performance-based payment policies?". Depending on this main purpose, this research attempts to answer the following two research questions:

- (1) What do secondary and high school teachers and administrators think about the effects of performance-based payment policies on improving teachers' performance?
- (2) What criteria do secondary and high school teachers and administrators think should be used to evaluate teacher performance in the context of performance-based payment policies?

## **Method**

### ***Research Design***

The research was conducted using the basic qualitative research design which is one of the qualitative research designs. Merriam (2013) states that the purpose of the basic qualitative research design is particularly well suited to obtain an in-depth understanding of effective educational processes (as cited in Worthington, 2013). This study was based on defining and explaining how the participants made sense of teacher performance evaluation.



The opinions of the administrators and teachers about the evaluation of teacher performance in the context of performance-based payment policies were obtained through focus group interview and individual interviews through semi-structured interview forms.

### **Study Group**

The study group of the research includes 38 teachers and school administrators working in secondary and high schools in Gaziantep, Turkey. The participants of the study were determined by maximum variation sampling method. In maximum variation sampling method, how the studied subject is evaluated by the groups, which are different in terms of various factors, can be examined in terms of similarities and differences, and a broader view can be obtained about the subject studied in this way (Erford, Hays, Crockett & Miller, 2015). It has been provided that the participants show diversity in terms of their branches and the type of high school teachers working in high schools. At the same time, diversity has been achieved in terms of job position by ensuring that school administrators and teachers are included in the study group. Thanks to the maximum variation sampling method, richer data were obtained by paying attention to the fact that the participants were working in different types of schools, socio-economic regions, and positions, the duration of their service. In this way, the validity and reliability of the research has been increased. Information on the characteristics of the participants is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the participants

| Profile                       | Description                     | Number of Participants |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                 | Male                            | 27                     |
|                               | Female                          | 11                     |
| <b>Age</b>                    | 20-30 years old                 | 13                     |
|                               | 30-40                           | 15                     |
|                               | 40-55                           | 10                     |
| <b>Professional Seniority</b> | 1-10 years                      | 19                     |
|                               | 10-20                           | 16                     |
|                               | 20-30                           | 3                      |
| <b>School Type</b>            | High School                     | 18                     |
|                               | Secondary School                | 20                     |
| <b>Mission</b>                | School Principal/Vice Principal | 16                     |
|                               | Teacher                         | 22                     |

16 of the participants are school administrators and 22 are teachers. 18 of the participants work in high school (Anatolian High School, Imam Hatip High School (schools with high religious education), Tourism Hotel Management High School, Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School) and 20 of them work in secondary school. 27 of them are men and 11 of them are women. 2 of them are teachers of Information and Communication Technologies, 6 Turkish Language and Literature, 4 Mathematics, 6 Turkish, 3 Physical Education, 2 Social Studies, 4 Science, 2 Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, 2 in English, 1 in Geography, 1 in Technology and Design, 2 in History, 1 in Food and Beverage Services, 1 in Biology and 1 in Music.

### **Data Collection Tools and Data Collection Procedure**

The data of the research were collected using a semi-structured interview form. According to Rabionet (2011) semi-structured forms help participants to explore their feelings and experiences during the interview. In order to prepare semi structured form, the policy

practices of countries applying performance-based payment policies in developing teacher performance are examined. At this stage, the data were collected through document analysis and a conceptual framework was created for the implementation of these policies. Then, a draft questionnaire was prepared for semi-structured forms to ask in the interview. First of all, the questions that will be used in interviews, were presented to 2 faculty members, one in the field of educational administration and assessment and evaluation and the other in the field of educational administration, supervision, planning and economics. After the experts analyzed the interview form consisting of two main questions and auxiliary questions, necessary changes which they wanted were made in the interview form and pilot interviews were conducted. The pilot study was carried out with the participation of 6 teachers who were not in the study group. After the pilot implementation, the interview questions were reviewed with two of the experts who are professors in the field of educational sciences, and some changes were made in order to increase the linguistic comprehension of the questions. Finally, the questions with similar answers were combined. After the semi-structured interview form was finalized, interviews were conducted. In order to obtain richer data from the participants, nine detailed questions, which are related to two main research questions, were used in the interview form. The semi-structured interview questions used in the research are below:

Detailed questions related to first main research question are:

- (1) What do you think about performance-based payment policies that can be used to improve teacher performance?
- (2) What kind of benefits do you think teachers will have in terms of improving teacher performance?
- (3) What kind of benefits do you think the school will have in terms of improving its academic and social performance?
- (4) What kind of benefits do you think there will be in terms of increasing the academic success of students?
- (5) What kind of benefits do you think there will be in terms of improving the image of the teaching profession?

Detailed questions related to second main research question are:

- (1) How do you think teacher performance should be evaluated within the scope of performance-based payment policies?
- (2) Which indicators should be used to evaluate teacher performance at work?
- (3) Who should be involved in the performance evaluation process? Why?
- (4) Which methods should be used in performance evaluation?

The data of the research were obtained through individual and focus group interviews using semi-structured interview forms. Interviews were implemented with 22 of the participants (13 school administrators, 9 teachers) and 2 focus group interviews (8X2) were implemented with 16 of the participants. Focus group interviews, which are a qualitative data collection method, can be used to obtain in-depth and detailed information (Cokluk, Yilmaz, and Oguz, 2011). According to Morgan (1997: 5), in planning process of the focus group, the first decision to be made is who will be the members of the discussion group. While choosing the members of the focus group, the participants for the purpose of the research should be preferred. In this study, while determining the group participants, it was considered that there were administrators and teachers who had similar level of experience in the field of education. In



this way, it was thought that the richness of the data obtained in the research would contribute more to the research. During the interviews, a quiet environment was provided for the participants to be able to express themselves more comfortably and clearly and not to be affected by environmental factors. In this way, access to more qualified data content is facilitated. According to Kitzinger (1995) at the beginning of the interview the moderator should introduce herself/himself to the participants and then explain the purpose of the focus group discussion. Before starting to ask the interview questions, the participants were given a general knowledge about the evaluation of teacher performance in the context of performance-based payment policies, and the participants were provided with more detailed information on this issue. In order to ensure validity during the interview, notes were taken regarding the responses of the participants and to prevent data loss, interviews were recorded by a voice recorder with the permission of the participants and therefore, holistic data collection process was carried out. According to Morgan and Krueger (1998) the ideal time for focus group discussions is 1-2 hours. Both of the focus group interviews took about 1 hour 30 minutes. Individual interviews with semi-structured forms took about 45 minutes. By keeping the interview times long, the participant was given the opportunity to express their ideas without hurrying. In this way, a wealth of data related to the research has been obtained. Teachers were adhered to the data collection tools to answer their questions in order to ensure the research validity and reliability. Interview questions prepared in line with the conceptual framework and the findings were observed to be in parallel and it was understood to be consistent.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data from semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were analyzed by content analysis. According to Holdford (2008), qualitative content analysis aims to make sense of readers' findings in a meaningful and useful way. For this reason, in this research, content analysis method was used to analyze the data obtained from the participants in depth and it was aimed to reveal previously unclear themes and codes. In order to perform the content analysis, the raw data obtained with the notes / records kept by the sound recorder and the researcher were transferred to the writing on the computer. Content analysis was implemented at two levels: theme, and codes. In the first stage of content analysis, the data were read as a whole and then meaningful themes were created. In the second stage, the themes created based on the interview questions were examined in terms of meaningful integrity and then codes were formed. The data obtained are understandable and clearly expressed.

### ***Validity and Reliability***

Patton (2002) states that a qualitative researcher should consider validity and reliability in order to design a study, analyze the results, and evaluate the quality of the study. In this research, in order to ensure validity and reliability, in all processes of the research, 2 experts were consulted who are faculty members in the fields of assessment and evaluation, educational administration. The findings that emerged as a result of literature review, preparation of the interview questions and finalization of the questions, analysis of the findings, and finally the analysis of the data findings were carried out under the leadership of 2 experts who are faculty members in the field of educational sciences, and the internal validity of the research was ensured. In order to ensure the external validity of the research, the information about the environment in which the research was conducted, the duration of the interview and the participants were defined in detail. In addition to this, the conceptual framework, data collection and analysis methods that were used in the analysis of the

obtained data were explained in detail. Also, to ensure content validity, the participants' opinions were presented as direct quotes in findings section and as stated before, all the process of this research was done under the control of experts who are professionals in their fields.

## Findings

In this section, the findings obtained in the study are presented under two main headings as participant views on the improvement of teacher performance through performance-based policies and their views on teacher performance evaluation criteria.

### *Findings about the views of performance-based payment policies on improving teacher performance*

Under this heading, the views of school administrators and teachers about the performance-based payment policies on improving teacher performance, the benefits of the system on the whole education and also disadvantages in terms of teachers are presented.

**Table 2.** Participant views about performance-based payment policies on improving teacher performance

| Themes   | Codes   |
|--|---|
| <b>General Benefits for Education System</b>         | Making the education system more target oriented<br>Revealing the need for change<br>Regaining trust towards the quality of education<br>System reconstruction<br>Increasing the quality of education<br>Increasing the efficiency of the education system<br>Its long-term positive effects on education |
| <b>Disadvantages in terms of teacher performance</b> | Resisting changes in the payment system<br>System change affects motivation negatively<br>Difficulty of low performance teacher   |

The codes obtained as a result of the analysis of the theme named "Benefits for the Education System" are; making the education system more target-oriented, the need for change, to regain trust in the quality of education, to restructure the system, to increase the quality of education, to increase the efficiency of the education system and its long-term positive effects. The majority of the participants showed a positive and exciting attitude about the reflection of possible incentive policies to the education system, and they agreed that the change will increase the success of the education system in every sense. On the other hand, some of the participants showed negative attitude about the subject. They think that teachers will have difficulty accepting performance system and they will resist against this big change in their workplace. Some of the views of the participants about the benefits of the implementation of possible performance based-payment policies in the education system are presented below in direct quote:

*“(...) implementation of performance-based payment policies will certainly be very useful. This is a situation we all know in order of OECD countries or how far behind we are in international competitions. Why does the average of mathematics not exceed 2-3 even at university? There is definitely a problem. All right, not only the teacher or education problem, but also the problems caused by the student, but although everyone has a share, the first element of education is education system and teacher” (P9). “Our society desperately needs teachers who do their job well in order to survive. For this reason, since the effort of the teacher working in the incentive system will be seen and the*

*efficiency will increase''(P19). The teacher who gets a lack of performance points will probably feel uncomfortable with this situation and will improve himself and become more productive.''(P6). ''The Turkish education system needs a brand-new program, new people, and a new understanding of teachers. I believe that possible incentive policies based on teacher performance will bring a new breath to education system and contribute to education'' (P10).*

The codes obtained as a result of the analysis of the theme named “disadvantages in terms of teacher performance” are resistance to the changes in the payment system, the negative effect of the system change on motivation, and the difficulty of low-performing teachers. The most mentioned issue among these disadvantages was that teachers might feel distrust about whether possible incentive policies would be a fair practice, and therefore they would resist all kinds of system changes.

Some of the views of the participants about the disadvantages in terms of teacher performance are presented below in direct quote: “(...) there is also something called resistance, if you change the traditional system fundamentally, you will lose a lot. From motivation to success’’(P2) “Can it really be done with fairness, or will certain question marks always remain? I think that this situation definitely affects teacher performance negatively. In other words, there is an overconfidence problem’’ (P11).’’I think that in this system, since teachers will think that they are constantly being controlled, they will be uncomfortable with this situation and will not want it’’(P18).

**Table 3.** Benefits of performance-based payment system in terms of teacher, school, and student

| <i>Themes</i>   | <i>Codes</i>   |
|---|--|
| <b><i>Benefits in terms of teacher performance</i></b>          | Ensuring academic development<br>Ensuring personal development<br>Increased motivation<br>Increasing self-regulation<br>Self-discipline development<br>Strengthening self-efficacy<br>Increasing professional performance<br>Strengthening pedagogical competence<br>Raising the socio-economic standard of living<br>Increasing sense of belonging to school<br>More communication with students<br>Strengthening professional commitment<br>Increasing professional competence<br>Contributing to the formation of a more positive individual<br>Individual labor appreciation<br>The value of the teacher who does his/her job well |
| <b><i>Benefits for School's Performance</i></b>                 | Improvement of the school's image in the eyes of the community<br>Increased academic success of the school<br>Increased social success of the school   |
| <b><i>Benefits for Student's Success</i></b>                    | Increasing student's academic success<br>Ensuring the social development of the student<br>Increasing student performance due to an increase in teacher performance<br>Positive reflection of the sense of belonging of the teacher on the sense of belonging of the student   |
| <b><i>Benefits for the image of the teaching profession</i></b> | Community regaining respect for the teacher<br>Teacher appreciation in society<br>Valuing teacher increases job motivation<br>The profession creates a positive impression in society<br>Achieving the benefits of the incentive system in the long term<br>Improving the image of the profession in the long term   |



The codes obtained as a result of the analysis of the theme named “benefits in terms of teacher performance” are; ensuring academic development, personal development, increasing motivation, increasing self-control, improving self-discipline, strengthening self-efficacy, increasing professional performance, strengthening pedagogical competence, increasing socio-economic living standards, increasing the sense of belonging to school, establishing more communication with students, enhancing professional commitment, increasing professional competence, contributing to a more positive individual formation, appreciation of individual labour, and appreciation of the teacher who does his job well. Many administrators and teachers displayed a positive attitude to the benefits of the potential incentive policies to the teacher's performance and their images in the society. Participants presented different perspectives.

Some of the views of the participants about the benefits in terms of teacher performance and their images are presented below in direct quote:

*“We shouldn't look at it just academically. Success comes if teachers work in every respect. When teachers are given what they deserve, they will be as much giving as they deserve. We see its reflection in school and education in terms of both academic and values. In order for our society to survive, we need teachers, or rather teachers who do their job well. For this reason, since the efforts of the teachers working in the incentive system will be seen, the efficiency will increase” (P19).*

As stated by the school principal, the fact that the teachers who build the future of the society have a system in which the services they provide in the education system will be seen and appreciated will not only increase the efficiency and performance of the teacher but will also make them individuals that improve themselves in every sense.

*“(...) The teacher who has a missing performance score will say what is happening and will check herself/himself and become more efficient. He or she will probably feel uncomfortable about this in his or her work environment and will feel the need to work more both to earn money and increase his or her self-efficacy” (P9). “Think of it this way, if you work, you will earn more, it is not the same. Of course, human beings are ambitious and choose to work harder. This situation is directly reflected in the system” (P12). “In this system if the teacher works, everyone wins, but mostly herself/himself. Because performance system rewards this hard work”(P4). “The image of teaching is always perceived as the most comfortable profession in our country. They think teachers do not literally work but earn money. I don't think it will be easy to change this perception in the short term. Thanks to the performance evaluation, this bad image will disappear in time, as teachers who do their job really well and those who do not will leave” (P15).*

The codes obtained as a result of the analysis of the theme named “benefits in terms of school performance” are the image of the school improving in the eyes of the society, increased academic success of the school, school's having a say in the society, school's being owned by the society, and the increased social success of the school. Increasing the academic success and social success and mobility of the school were two of the most prominent topics in this sub-theme.

Some of the views of the participants about the benefits in terms of teacher performance are presented below in direct quote:



*“I think a working teacher equals a hard-working school. Therefore, the success of the school will also improve, plus if criteria such as social activities are also to be considered, then success will be achieved in every sense thanks to the incentives” (P10). “School success means that the student succeeds individually. Considerable effort is required in this. If we make this effort together, success will be inevitable at school” (P13). “The increase in the performance of teachers is directly reflected in the academic success of schools. The more teachers try to teach, the greater the academic achievement”(P2). “If this system is implemented, we will witness an increase in academic success in schools in a very short time”(P7).*

As it can be understood from the above statements, the academic and social success of the school will inevitably increase, as the productivity of the teacher who does his job well will reflect on the environment and people, that is, the students first. A participant who expressed his views on this issue expressed his opinions as follows: “School success means that the student succeeds individually. Considerable effort is required in this. If we make this effort together, success will be inevitable at school” (K13). Looking at these statements, the result will be an absolute success when teachers, students, school administrators, that is, all the elements that make up the school, strive for the same goal.

The codes obtained as a result of the analysis of the theme named “benefits in terms of student performance” are increasing student’s academic success, ensuring the social development of the student, increasing student performance due to an increase in teacher performance, positive reflection of the sense of belonging of the student. The majority of the interviewees stated that the increase in the academic and social success of the student is possible with the increase in the performance of the teacher and the teacher’s sense of belonging to the school. On the other hand, there are also opinions expressing that student success is not only indexed to the performance of the teacher, but that the student should also make effort, and that they are all a whole.

Some of the views of the participants about the benefits in terms of teacher performance are presented below in direct quote:

*“If the teacher’s performance is high, you will feel it directly in the student, which brings natural success. Even if it is low, student success decreases, and besides inefficiency, there are unhappy students. As administrators, we observe this directly. For this reason, every state of the teacher reflects on the student positively or negatively” (P15). “After a while, when the student sees the teacher working, the resistance to not working breaks down and he starts to make effort. I’m not saying for all, but this is how it is for all. I think this brings absolute success” (P14). “In the presence of a successful teacher, the student seriously does his homework and attends the classes. In this way, the success of the student naturally increases” (P4).*

### ***Findings regarding the criteria and qualifications to be used in the evaluation of teacher performance***

Under this heading, the views of school administrators and teachers about the criteria to be used in evaluating possible teacher performance, qualifications of the possible performance system, persons who will take part for evaluating and methods to be used for evaluating possible teacher performance are presented.

**Table 4.** Qualifications to be used in creating teacher performance evaluation system

| Themes   | Codes  |
|--|--|
| <b>Qualifications that a potential performance evaluation system should have</b> | Sustainability   |
|  | Applicability  |
|  | Conducted with a decentralized approach                                |
|  | Considering regional differences                                       |
|  | Union memberships are not reflected in the performance evaluation      |
|  | Diversification of performance awards                                  |
|  | Performance awards contain moral values                                |
|  | Political views not being reflected in performance evaluation          |
|  | Having a democratic evaluation process                                 |
|  | Taking the opinions of teachers in determining the evaluation criteria |
|  | Receiving expert opinions regarding the evaluation criteria            |
| Having a supervisory mechanism   |  |

The codes obtained as a result of the analysis of the theme named “Qualifications that a possible performance evaluation system should have” are; sustainability, applicability, conducted with a decentralized approach, considering regional differences, union memberships are not reflected in the performance evaluation, diversification of performance awards, performance awards contain moral values, political views not being reflected in performance evaluation, having a democratic evaluation process, taking the opinions of teachers in determining the evaluation criteria, receiving expert opinions regarding evaluation criteria, having a supervisory mechanism.

One of the most emphasized issues by teachers and administrators about the qualities that the system should have in the evaluation of teacher performance was the process to be democratic. Also, participants think that regional differences should not be ignored while planning the system. Some of the views of the participants about the qualifications of performance evaluation system are presented below in direct quote:

*“People's beliefs about the system to be established are important. I'm talking about the belief that objective evaluation will be made and that the process will run democratically. It is necessary to restructure the system in a democratic way” (P26). “First of all, it is important to create a top-down and bottom-up atmosphere of trust. It should be stated that this system is new, and its benefits are so and so. The educators should also be convinced that they will run a democratic process that will reveal the difference between hard working teachers and others” (P26). “I think wherever people are, emotionality is involved in all cases and there will be favoritism, but at least if the process works democratically, this will be minimized” (P29). While evaluating the performance, the advantages and disadvantages of the regions where the teachers work should be taken into consideration” (P8).*

**Table 5.** Evaluation criteria for teacher performance

| Themes | Codes  |
|--------|--|
|        | Academic success of students                             |
|        | Predetermined professional achievements for teachers     |
|        | The nature of the relationship with the group            |
|        | The quality of communication between teacher and student |
|        | Students' academic development process                   |



| Themes   | Codes   |
|--|---|
| <b>Teacher Performance Evaluation Criteria</b> | Activity level in social activities   |
|  | Personal and professional development studies performed at individual level |
|  | Innovative character  |
|  | Competence to follow developments in the field of education                 |
|  | Pedagogical competence  |
|  | Participation in postgraduate education                                     |
|  | The quality of teacher-parent communication                                 |
|  | Students' attendance at school  |
|  | Features of the school where they are working                               |

The codes obtained as a result of the analysis of the theme named “teacher performance evaluation criteria in interviews with school administrators and teachers are; academic success of the student, predetermined professional achievements for teachers, the quality of the relationship with the teachers' group, the quality of the relationship between the teacher and the student, the academic development process of the students, the level of activity in social activities, the personal and professional development studies carried out at the individual level, the feature of being innovative, competence in following up with the developments in the field of education, pedagogical competence, participation in postgraduate education, the quality of teacher-parent communication, the students' attendance at school, the characteristics of the school where they work.

The most important issue under the theme of teacher performance evaluation criteria that is emphasized by both school administrators and teachers during the interviews was the academic success of the student. Some of the views of the participants about the qualifications of performance evaluation system are presented below in direct quote:

*“We all strive for the student to learn something first. We look at his academic success so we can see how much he learned. Student success can be the development exams conducted by National Education Ministry during the year. Because now, if the school management wants, they made an agreement with a publishing house and do these exams, but not every school has the same opportunity. Therefore, these exams can be conducted regularly throughout the country and measures can be taken by looking at the output” (P10). “...I met with the student, persuaded him and ensured the student's attendance to the school. Of course, there are such things in our country regionally. We shouldn't ignore it. In rural areas, communication with parents is much more important than it is in the cities. Let me give another example, a student of mine was always at the internet cafe, and his mother begged us again. I said to the child not to run away from school and to study better without running from the school until the end of the year, and I will buy him a laptop at the end of the year. This somehow encouraged him” (P2).*

A participant who thinks that when determining the criteria for teacher performance evaluation, attention should be paid to the professional development of the teacher on an individual basis, expressed their views on this issue as follows:

*“It is important for the teacher to improve himself. For example, I attend 10 trainings a year, but on the other hand, it is very annoying that I get the same salary with a teacher who does not improve themselves at all” (P6).*

Another teacher thinks that it is necessary to pay attention to whether the teacher has benefited from postgraduate education within the framework of individual development and

expressed this as follows:

*“Contracts should be made with teachers, and there should be a master's degree requirement teachers. There are teachers who do not even know how to speak. We act emotionally and spare them, but we sacrifice our generations to them. Here, a performance system should definitely be brought to the teacher. And the teacher should be trained at certain times” (P7).*

**Table 6.** People taking part in the performance evaluation process

| Themes   | Codes  |
|--|--|
| <b>Persons who can take part in the performance evaluation process</b> | Branch specialists   |
|  | Parents  |
|  | Specialists trained in the field of teacher performance evaluation |
|  | School administrators  |
|  | Academics working in education faculties                           |
|  | Colleagues   |
|  | Students   |

The codes obtained as a result of the analysis of the theme named “Persons who can take part in the performance evaluation process” in interviews with school administrators and teachers are; branch specialists, parents, experts trained in teacher performance evaluation, school administrators, academics working in education faculties, colleagues, students. Most of the participants stated that the evaluation should be done by the experts of the subject. They stated that these experts could be professors at the university and that they should be worked in cooperation with them. They argued that the shares of other people who will take the role should be less.

Some of the views of the participants about the qualifications of performance evaluation system are presented below in direct quote:

*“Only if there are people who are experts in evaluating teacher performance, this system will continue”(P1). “This system will not work if there is no cooperation with the teachers in the faculties of education. The school principal can also be an evaluator, but her/his authority should be very limited in this regard”(P7). “If parents and students are to be included in the system, their authority must be very limited, otherwise unfair results may occur”(P19). “(...) This system will not work without experts in the field of performance evaluation”(P21).*

**Table 7.** Methods to be used in the performance evaluation process

| Themes  | Codes   |
|---|---|
| <b>Methods that can be used in the performance evaluation process</b> | 360 degree / multi evaluation system                        |
|   | Checking the teacher's entrance and exit times to class     |
|   | Regular class observation                                   |
|   | Making class observations on a branch basis                 |
|   | Readiness test and year-end test for students               |
|   | Application of periodic assessment tests for students       |
|   | Implementation of a standardized central examination system |
|   | Separate evaluation of the development level of each class  |



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Examination of teacher portfolio files  
Evaluation of teacher's individual education projects  
Observing the teacher's competence in using technology  
Evaluation of teacher's competence in using material in teaching processes  
Examination of a possible internet platform where the teacher shares his academic work

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The codes obtained as a result of the analysis of the theme named “methods that can be used in the performance evaluation process” in interviews with school administrators and teachers are; 360 degree / multiple evaluation system, checking the teacher's entrance and exit hours to the class, making classroom observations at regular intervals, conducting class observation on the basis of branches, applying readiness and end-of-year tests for students, applying periodic assessment tests for students, applying a standardized central examination system, separate evaluation of the development of each class, examining the teacher portfolio files, evaluating the teacher's individual education projects, observing the teacher's technology use competence, evaluating the teacher's competence in using materials in teaching processes, examining a possible internet platform where the teacher shared his academic studies.

Most of the participants who gave their opinions on the methods that can be used in the performance evaluation system drew attention to the observation of the teacher in the class. The majority of the participants stated that these observations should be made based on the specialty, otherwise, an observer from another branch who is observing will not be able to fully master the process and content of the lesson and may have inaccurate results. Some of the participants who stated that classroom observation should be done, and it should be done on the basis of branch provided below opinions:

*“There should definitely be classroom observation. For example, my mother is also a teacher, and I called my mother when I was appointed for the first time. I told her to come to my class, watch, and listen to me, and tell my mistakes. Then my mother told me a lot of constructive things and I had a lot of positive reflections of that. Therefore, observation should be done frequently, but should be constructive” (P5). “Class observation should be done, but it should be continuous so that they can fully evaluate the teacher” (P4). “How much technology s/he uses in the classroom can be controlled. Does he use smart boards? Does he use the computer actively? Things like this can be looked at” (P11).*

Some of the participants, who thought that the evaluation should be on the basis of branches, expressed their opinions as follows.

*“In addition, someone who is a senior but from one of our own fields should observe. They can be from the school or from outside the school.” (P19) “For example, let's say a math teacher will be evaluated in performance. If the school principal is a mathematician, it may be somewhat fair because he knows the professional criteria of that branch, but it is very difficult to evaluate a teacher from another branch like English” (P13).*

## Discussion

### *Discussion about the performance-based payment policies on improving teacher performance*

In line with the research findings obtained for the first sub-problem of the study, it was found that there were both positive and negative opinions. Some of the participants had concerns about the evaluation system. On the other hand, most of the participants expressed positive opinions about the performance-based payment policies on improving teachers' performance and were willing to implement the performance evaluation system. In addition to the fact that the participants agreed with the idea of an increase in the efficiency of education in case possible incentive policies were implemented in the education system, it has been concluded that performance evaluation practices will be beneficial for the education system to reach international standards and be successful. In the light of examination of the literature on this finding, it was remarked that a survey about teachers' opinions on performance evaluation system was conducted by Jacob and Springer (2008) on teachers who worked in state schools in Florida, USA between 2006-2007. With the analysis of the results, it was deduced that while a number of teachers supported the performance evaluation system, some others had concerns about it. Therefore, it is understood that teachers' perspectives on performance –based payment policies might be shaped in line with their professional performance. Another comprehensive three-year long study covering the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 academic years was conducted by Springer and friends (Springer, Ballou, Hamilton, Le, Lockwood, McCaffrey, & Stecher, 2011) under the direction of the Peabody Institute of Vanderbilt University in partnership with Columbia University and the University of Michigan at Metro-Nashville public school under the name of "An Incentive project for Teachers in Education". In a part of this study, teachers' opinions and attitudes about performance evaluation were included and whether the teachers were willing or not in this regard were both asked and observed. According to the data obtained as a result of the three-year long study, the fact that 70% of the teachers stated that teachers, who are more effective and hard-working, should receive more payment than other teachers or they should receive incentive awards in some way led to the finding that they were enthusiastic about the incentive policies.

Another finding is that the teacher performance evaluation system will negatively affect the performance of teachers. While there is a concern that the system change may have a negative impact on teacher motivation, there are also thoughts that teachers with low performance may have difficulties in this system. It has been found that teachers have concerns that they will tend to resist against such a huge change in their work standards. A comprehensive study of these findings was conducted in England by Mahony, Hextall, and Menter, (2004). In the findings obtained from study, it was found that the feeling of being evaluated causes anxiety in teachers and they do not feel comfortable in their working area. According to another research conducted by Liu, Zhao, and Xie (2016) in 13 schools with different conditions in the northeast of China, they found that 48% of the teachers supported the performance evaluation system, while 52% did not. Another study with similar findings was done by Yuan., McCaffrey, Marsh, Hamilton, Stecher, & Springer (2013). In the findings obtained, it was determined that 24% of the teachers in the State of Tennessee and 17% of the teachers in the State of New York thought that the performance evaluation system increased occupational stress.

According to another finding obtained in the study, it has been concluded that in case of



implementation of performance-based policies in the education system, there will be an improvement in the academic success of students and schools. Lavy (2003) carried out studies with school principals and teachers as participants of the program interviewing them about the performance evaluation process in addition to keeping track of the students' success, and at the end of the 3-year study, he concluded that the performance evaluation system applied to the teachers undoubtedly increased the academic success of the students. In a study conducted by Leigh and Mead (2005), similar findings were obtained and they found that school success increased due to student success.

### ***Discussion on the criteria to be used in the evaluation of teacher performance***

The findings obtained on the criteria to be used in the evaluation of teacher performance are categorized as the qualifications that a possible performance evaluation system should have, evaluation criteria, people who can take a role in the evaluation process and methods that can be used. In the findings obtained about the qualities that the performance evaluation system should have, the issue that the majority of the participants repeatedly emphasized was that the performance evaluation system should be carried out in a democratic way in terms of both the evaluators and the evaluation criteria of the system. According to the findings obtained, participants stated that their motivation will increase when they believe that a transparent, reliable and democratic system is applied during the evaluation of teachers' performances. Similar findings were obtained in a study conducted by Lundström (2012) on Swedish teachers. It was found that if mutual trust is not established, this situation discourages teachers and they do not want to support to be in the evaluation system. Waine (2000) mentions that a key feature of the performance evaluation system implemented in the education system is to motivate the individual staff for greater efforts, and that only if this motivation occurs, the staff will believe that the program is working fairly. Evetts (2006), who also refers to a similar subject, mentions in his article on trust and professionalism that the most important criterion for professionalism in a job is the mutual trust of the employer and the person doing the job. For this reason, it is necessary to convince the teachers who are evaluated that a fair process is operating between the evaluator and the person who is subjected to the performance evaluation system.

The findings that teacher performance evaluation criteria can be made in various ways consist of a number of criteria such as the student's academic success and academic development process, the teacher's level of social activity in the school environment, personal and professional studies carried out at an individual level, and predetermined professional achievements for teachers. The most prominent among these criteria and the main criterion that forms the basis of the performance evaluation criteria of western countries is the effect of teacher performance on student achievement. Performance payment programs, which aim to regulate teacher incentives by directly linking them to the academic success of the student, are becoming increasingly common in both developed and developing countries (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2011; OECD, 2009b; Woessmann, 2011). Winters, Greene, Ritter and Marsh (2008) conducted one of the studies on this subject under the name of the Success Competition Pilot Project in Little Rock, Arkansas, in the 2004-2007 academic years. Winters et al. (2008) applied performance evaluation method on an individual basis in their study. According to the findings of this system, which aims to reward the teacher by giving the students bonuses based on their development in the basic skills tests conducted, it has been determined that there are significant increases in students' success in mathematics, reading comprehension and language learning. 16% increase in mathematics, 15% increase in reading comprehension and 22% increase in language learning were observed. These increases were



reflected in teachers' performances as a reward and individual awarding was made. Therefore, concrete data showing the academic success of students are an objective criterion for countries that have implemented or are planning to implement a teacher performance evaluation system.

Another finding obtained from the research was about who can be the people who can take part in the performance evaluation process. According to the findings obtained from the participants, who stated that the people who will manage this process should be democratic and have completed all the necessary training in this field. Participants think that performance evaluation should be done by more than one person and institution. These people are academicians working in education faculties, experts in the field of performance evaluation, colleagues, school administrators and lastly, parents and student evaluations that many participants do not want to include because they think they will make unhealthy evaluations but are partially undecided. When these findings are evaluated, it is understood that the participants are talking about the 360-degree evaluation system. McCombs (2008) states that a 360-degree evaluation and evaluation process leads to data that provides stakeholders with accountability information about the quality of learning experiences and the environment for each student in the system. According to Crick (2012), the use of a 360-degree assessment system in the education system is an important element that enables students and teachers to realize themselves, each other and how they learn best. According to McCombs (2008), in a 360-degree model, all students are included and the perspective of students of all ages is considered. When the teacher is also a learner, his views on the quality of teaching practices are important. Therefore, the 360-degree evaluation model emphasizes that teachers, peer teachers, students, student counsellors, administrators, parents, and community members are the predictors of the most valuable learning outcomes (McCombs, Daniels, & Perry, 2008). The results of 360 evaluation and accountability system implementation were evaluated by educators, researchers, and policy makers, and it was observed that students, teachers and schools performed at high levels, as well as according to the standards and expectations set at local, state or national levels (Burns, Noell, & Gansle, 2009).

## **Conclusion and Suggestions**

When the outcomes of the study are evaluated, it is detected that if the criteria of the teacher performance evaluation system is set democratically and clearly, it will be a useful practice for the education system. It has been concluded that the restructuring of the Turkish education system will increase the efficiency of the education system in order to achieve the development and success in the world-class education sector. At the same time, it is obvious that planning a qualified education system will reflect on the success of the education.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the teacher performance evaluation system, the policy makers of this field should be experts in education field. The finding obtained from the participants that the evaluators involved in the teacher performance evaluation process should be democratic and transparent, reveals the necessity of taking democratic steps at every stage of the system in order for the teacher performance evaluation system to achieve success and to have continuity, and it is important to take the necessary measures in order to establish trust in the system.

The following suggestions can be developed for the teacher performance evaluation system to be successful and sustainable in the education sector:



- Measures should be taken to make sure that the attitudes and behaviours of those who assume the role of evaluator in the performance evaluation system are based on democratic values.
- Performance evaluation criteria should be planned in line with achievable goals and expressed in a clear and understandable manner.
- In the process of determining the performance evaluation criteria for teachers, preliminary data collection processes should be run in order to determine teachers' opinions and needs.
- Teacher performance evaluation criteria should be planned in consideration of regional differences.
- In order to improve teacher's professional performance, economic incentive policies should be implemented based on performance appraisal of teachers.
- When the teacher performance evaluation models used around the world are examined, the combined model type, which can be synchronized to Turkish education system, could be considered as one of the best alternatives to ensure the sustainability of teacher performance evaluation and increase the success of the education system in Turkey.

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