

Research Article

The reasons that prevent teachers' professional competencies from turning into performance

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the reasons that prevent teachers' professional competencies from turning into performance, according to teachers' views. The research was designed in the phenomenology pattern, which is one of the qualitative research designs. The study group of the research consists of 14 teachers working in public schools in Odunpazarı district of Eskişehir province. A semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool in the research. Research data were obtained from interviews with teachers. Content analysis technique, which is one of the qualitative data analysis techniques, was used in the analysis of the data. In the research, 7 sub-themes emerged under the theme of obstacles in the transformation of teachers' professional competence into performance. These sub-themes are working conditions, managerial attitudes, legal regulations, personal reasons, student-related reasons, parents-related reasons, and economic reasons. In the research, 7 sub-themes emerged from the opinions of the teachers under the theme of what needs to be done to turn professional competence into performance. These sub-themes are; improving working conditions, things to be done by school administrators, things to be done about lessons, applicable policies and legal regulations, things to be done for students, things to be done by parents, and improving personal and economic rights. When the findings obtained as a result of the research were evaluated, it was seen that multiple factors prevented teachers' professional competencies from turning into performance. In particular, the fact that non-teaching reasons are more than teacher-related reasons shows that non-teaching factors play an important role in teacher performance.

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Introduction

The importance of the education system in reaching the level of development and welfare of countries is better understood day by day. Because the success of the education system is directly proportional to the development. In this direction, countries aiming to increase their development levels make significant investments in their education systems. Today, important steps are taken by country administrations to increase the quality of education, such as increasing the shares allocated from the budgets and making investments in physical infrastructure. However, although many things have been done for education, it is seen that the desired success has not been achieved.

The success of the education system depends on the achievement of the goals of the school. Teachers have an important role in achieving the goals of the school (Boudersa, 2016). One of the factors that affect teachers' fulfillment of this role is their professional competencies (Schwarzer & Hallum 2008).

The concept of competence, first introduced by Bandura (1977), continues throughout life. It is the judgment of a teacher that he/she can achieve the desired results in his/her students (Yüksel, 2012). Professional competence is the

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ability of teachers to fulfill their professional duties and regulate their relations with their students during the education and training process, and the ability to fulfill institutional duties and be a part of the social and political processes of the institution (Friedman & Kass 2002). Based on social-cognitive theory, teacher professional competence is conceptualized as the personal beliefs of the teacher about the ability to perform, organize and plan activities necessary to achieve the given educational goals (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Teachers with a high belief in professional competence improve people's success and personal peace, experience less negative emotions such as anxiety, fear and depression while trying to reduce the problematic behaviors of students, set high goals for themselves and assume high responsibility to reach these goals (Schwarzer & Hallum 2008).

Organizations use performance-related issues as a strategic element in order to achieve their goals, motivate employees, increase productivity and increase the level of success (Çukurçayır and Eroğlu, 2005: 132). Therefore, it is important to determine what factors are directly or indirectly related to its performance.

The performance of employees significantly affects the success of organizations (Kale, 2015: 104). In educational organizations, the performance of teachers has a significant impact on the quality of the education system (Boudersa, 2016).

As a general concept, employee performance is the effective fulfillment of the employee's task and achieving a final result (Özpehlivan, 2015: 137). However, in increasing the employee performance of organizations; It would be appropriate to use techniques such as improving the physical conditions of the workplace and reorganizing the environment, restructuring the management systems, enriching the work environment and work, establishing a performance-based wage and incentive system, ensuring the participation of employees in the activities of the organization, disseminating the use of technology and redistribution of resources (Bozkurt Bostancı, 2004).

The ability of the school to fulfill its functions, in other words its mission, depends on the performance expected of the teachers who play a key role among the education employees. Professional competence and employee performance are interrelated concepts. It is stated that performance increases with competence (Scarborough, 1998; Le Deist & Winterton, 2005: 29). However, it is known that teachers, who are at a good level in terms of professional competence, cannot reflect these competences in their performances.

In a more detailed definition made by Lucia and Lebsinger (1999), competence is defined as a group of knowledge, skills and characteristics that affect a significant part of the role and responsibilities of the person at work, are related to his/her job performance, can be measured with accepted standards, and can be improved through training and development.

Various studies examining the professional competencies and performances of teachers have taken their place in the literature. Hoy & Woolfolk (1993) draws attention to the fact that teachers' professional competencies are an important variable in creating an efficient school environment. Asthon and Webb (1986) found that teacher competence is an important factor in student success. Brouwers, Evers & Tomic (2001) concluded in their research that teachers with low professional efficacy beliefs leave their jobs in a shorter time. In the study conducted by Teel (2003), it was concluded that the support of the administrator and the organization is effective in teacher performance. Bowling (2007) stated that there is a negligible relationship between an individual's job satisfaction and performance. Bağcı & Mohan Bursalı (2015) concluded in their research that an environment in which all kinds of efforts of the employee are observed and appreciated contributes to employee performance.

Problem of Research

When both the professional competence of teachers and the studies on teacher performance are evaluated, it can be said that investigating the obstacles to the transformation of teachers' professional competencies into performance will contribute to the quality of education. There may be many obstacles in front of teachers' professional competencies turning into performance. Determining what these obstacles are and offering solutions can facilitate the transformation of professional competencies into performance or increase teacher performance. This, in turn, can increase the effectiveness of teachers and positively affect student learning. It is expected that this research will contribute to the improvement of teacher performance by identifying the obstacles to the transformation of teachers'

professional competencies into performance. In this direction, the aim of the research is to examine the reasons that prevent teachers' professional competencies from turning into performance, according to teachers' views. In order to achieve this aim, answers to the following questions will be sought:

- According to teachers' opinions, what are the barriers in transforming teachers' professional competencies into performance?
- According to teachers' opinions, what should be done to reflect professional competency on performance?

Method

Research Model

This research, which aims to reveal the reasons that prevent teachers' professional competencies from turning into performance according to teachers' opinions, was carried out with a qualitative research method. The research was carried out according to the phenomenology pattern of the qualitative research method. In the phenomenology design, it is aimed to reveal the experiences and the meanings attributed to these experiences by determining the in-depth experiences and thoughts of the participants about a subject (Smith & Fowler, 2009). In this context, the phenomenon of the study is the obstacles in the transformation of teachers' professional competencies into performance. Considering that the participants of the study had experiences and observations about the phenomenon of the study, the study was carried out according to the phenomenology pattern.

Participants

Since the phenomenological research design was used in this study, attention was paid to select the research participants among those who could explain the experience of the phenomenon in order to analyze the data in detail (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The research was carried out with 14 teachers working in public schools in Eskişehir. While determining the participants, the maximum diversity sampling technique, which is a purposive sampling method, was used. Maximum diversity sampling; It is defined as the determination of similar and different situations in relation to the problem examined in the universe and conducting the study on these situations (Büyüköztürk, 2014). In the use of this technique, it is aimed to reach richer and more detailed data by providing the diversity of the participants. Personal variables such as seniority, gender and age were taken into account while determining the teacher in the study. In addition, care was taken to ensure that the schools where the teachers work are at different levels (primary school, secondary school, high school), in different neighborhoods and in different socio-economic environments (lower-middle-upper). In this way, it is aimed to achieve diversity in terms of schools and therefore the problems experienced. Information about the study group is shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

Code	Gender	Type of school work	Branch	Seniority
T 1	Female	Secondary School	Science and Technology	22
T 2	Male	High School	History	14
T 3	Female	Secondary School	Science and Technology	17
T 4	Male	Primary School	English	12
T 5	Female	Secondary School	Elementary Mathematics	21
T 6	Female	Primary School	Classroom Teacher	26
T 7	Female	High School	Biology	17
T 8	Male	Primary School	English	12
T 9	Female	Secondary School	Elementary Mathematics	21
T 10	Female	Primary School	Classroom Teacher	26
T 11	Male	High School	Music	18
T 12	Female	Secondary School	Turkish	20
T 13	Male	High School	Philosophy	14
T 14	Female	Primary School	Classroom Teacher	15

Data Collection Tools

In the research, a semi-structured interview form was used to identify the reasons that prevent teachers' professional competencies from turning into performance. The data collection tool was developed in four stages. In the first stage, the relevant literature was scanned, previous studies were examined, and open-ended questions were prepared in the light of the information obtained. In order to ensure the internal validity of the questions prepared at the next stage, the opinions of two academicians who are experts in educational sciences were taken. In line with expert opinions, some changes and arrangements were made on the questions. In the third stage, the comprehensibility of the questions was checked by taking the opinions of the expert in the field of Turkish teaching. In the last stage, a preliminary application was made to three teachers from outside the research group. In the pre-application, it was determined that the questions were understood by the participants. The interview form consists of two parts, and the first part is the demographic characteristics of the teachers participating in the research; The second part consists of 2 questions asked to identify the obstacles in the transformation of teachers' professional competencies into performance. The data in the study were obtained through face-to-face interviews with teachers. The interviews were carried out by the researcher between 03 December 2021-19 February 2022. The interviews were held in their own schools at the designated times in order to enable them to express their feelings in a clear and comfortable way, in line with the appointments received from the teachers.

Data Analysis, Validity and Reliability

Content analysis technique, which is one of the qualitative data analysis techniques, was used to analyze the opinions of teachers regarding the reasons that prevent teachers' professional competencies from turning into performance. The purpose of content analysis is to reach relationships and concepts that can explain the collected data. Unnoticeable concepts and themes are discovered and brought together as a result of content analysis, and presented in an organized manner in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Audio recordings were transcribed before starting the analysis. In order to check the accuracy of the transcription process, the data obtained from the voice recordings and the data obtained from the interview form were compared. 65 pages of data were obtained from the interviews. In the process of analyzing the data obtained, first of all, the interview records were deciphered and analyzed. Various codes were created by considering the common points in the answers given for each question. The reliability of the research was determined by comparing the placements made by the independent educational scientist and the placements made by the researcher. As a result of the comparison, it was understood that there was a consensus of 89%. This ratio was calculated using the reliability formula of Miles and Huberman (1994) (Reliability Formula: Consensus/Consensus + Disagreement). In addition, direct quotations have been included to reflect original views and thoughts. These can be considered as applications that will increase the validity and reliability of research data. In order to ensure confidentiality, the participants were identified with the abbreviation Teacher 1 (T1), Teacher 2 (T2), .. Teacher 14 (T14) and each participant was given a number.

In order to ensure internal validity, participant confirmation was used in the study. Accordingly, after the interview with each participant was recorded on paper, it was shared with the relevant participant and the participant was asked to review their views and to fill in the deficiencies, if any. The same procedure was repeated for each interviewer. Some participants were sent the interview text via e-mail, while others were delivered by hand. A detailed description strategy was used to ensure the transferability of the research. Accordingly, each stage of the research was presented to the reader in all details and all processes were mentioned as clearly as possible. In order to ensure the consistency of the research, the consensus strategy between the coders was used.

Cresswell (2007) points out that coherence between coders is one of the important processes that ensure reliability in qualitative research. In this context, the raw data of the research were shared with a faculty member who is not in the research group, who is an expert in qualitative research and has studies on postgraduate education, and he was asked to produce themes and codes based on these raw data. Then, these themes, categories and codes were compared with the final themes and codes that the researchers came to a decision on with a common attitude. In the comparison, a high

level of agreement was found between the theme and the codes. In the research, a model was created in order to visualize the themes created as a result of participant opinions. The created model is presented in Figure 1.

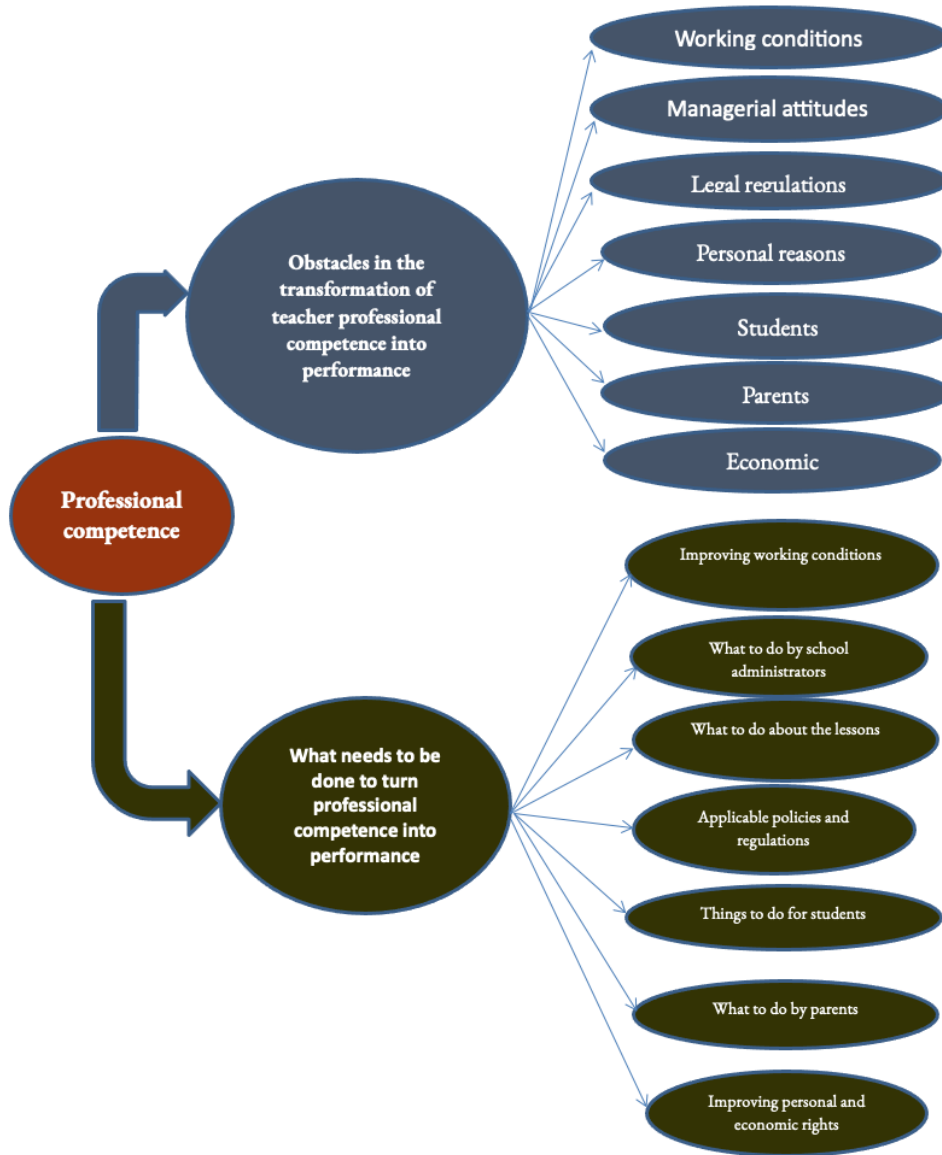


Figure 1. Opinions of participant teachers model created as a result of the analysis

Findings

In this section, teachers' views on the reasons that prevent teachers' professional competencies from turning into performance and what needs to be done to turn teachers' professional competencies into performance are given.

The Reasons That Prevent Teachers' Professional Competencies From Turning Into Performance

Teachers' views on the obstacles in transforming teachers' professional competence into performance are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Findings on the obstacles for teachers to transform their professional competencies into performance

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes
Obstacles to professional competence	Working conditions	high course load, crowded classrooms, negative school climate, inadequacy of physical infrastructure, location and environment of the school, inadequacy of colleague cooperation
	Managerial attitudes	autocratic management, distrust, lack of effort, communication style, not supporting the teacher, not acting fairly
	Legal regulations	Law no. 657, prohibition of using auxiliary resources, lack of performance system, not encouraging performance
	Personal reasons	professional burnout, low motivation, boredom, fatigue, stress
	Student-related reasons	readiness level, student level, generation gap, motivation, compulsory education, negative perception towards the course
	Parents-related reasons	unconsciousness, non-cooperation, low level of education, negative attitudes, insecurity, involvement in the teacher's work.
	Economic reasons	low wages, insufficient additional tuition, lack of economic incentives

In the research, 7 sub-themes emerged under the theme of obstacles in the transformation of teachers' professional competence into performance. These sub-themes are working conditions, managerial attitudes, legal regulations, personal reasons, student-related reasons, parents-related reasons, and economic reasons. Under the sub-theme of working conditions, high course load, crowded classrooms, negative school climate, inadequacy of physical infrastructure, location and environment of the school, and insufficient cooperation with colleagues were expressed as obstacles to the transformation of teachers' professional competence into performance. Under the sub-theme of managerial attitudes, autocratic management, insecurity, lack of effort, communication style, not supporting the teacher and not acting fairly were expressed as the obstacles in transforming the professional competence of teachers into performance. Under the sub-theme of legal regulations, Civil Servants Law No. 657, the prohibition of using auxiliary resources, the absence of a performance system and the failure to encourage performance are expressed as obstacles in the transformation of teachers' professional competence into performance. Under the sub-theme of personal reasons, professional burnout, low motivation, boredom, fatigue and stress were expressed as obstacles in transforming teachers' professional competence into performance. Under the sub-theme of reasons related to the student, indifference, readiness level, student level, generation gap, motivation, compulsory education and negative perception towards the course were expressed as obstacles in the transformation of teachers' professional competence into performance. Under the sub-theme of reasons related to parents, indifference, unconsciousness, non-cooperation, low level of education, negative attitudes, insecurity and interference with the teacher's work are expressed as obstacles to the transformation of teachers' professional competence into performance. Under the sub-theme of economic reasons, low salaries, insufficient additional lessons and lack of economic incentives were expressed as obstacles to the transformation of teachers' professional competence into performance. Some of the teachers' views on these sub-themes are as follows:

I have to attend classes for about 30 hours a week. Taking so many classes causes me to experience fatigue and stress. As a result, I can say that my performance has decreased. I can say that I can be more productive if my lessons are reduced (T3).

Since I work in the city center, the number of students in the classes I attend is very high. I have a hard time maintaining control in the classroom. Almost all of the course is spent on maintaining discipline. I cannot fully demonstrate my professional skills (T6).

I try to do my best while doing my teaching job. Most of the time I go home very tired. This does not upset me. However, not seeing our work and not being thanked by our school principal reduces both my motivation and performance (T8).

The poor communication of school administrators with teachers reduces the performance of teachers. Management cannot increase performance by putting pressure on teachers. Instead, school administrators should help teachers (T13).

What Should Be Done to Transform Teachers' Professional Competence into Performance

Teachers' views on what needs to be done to turn teachers' professional competence into performance are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Findings on what needs to be done for teachers to transform their professional competencies into performance

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes
What needs to be done to turn professional competence into performance	Working conditions	reducing class sizes, establishing a positive school climate, reducing extracurricular tasks, increasing colleague cooperation, teamwork, improving physical infrastructure
	School administrators	empowering the teacher, motivating, acting fairly, effective supervision, being understanding, participating in decisions, supporting, helping, cooperation, taking initiative
	Lessons	reduce the course load, to increase the weekly course hours, to update the curriculum.
	Policy and legal regulations	establishment of a performance system, objective rewarding, rotation, improvement of professional law
	Students	regulation of the class passing system, prevention of negative behaviors, effective discipline practices, ensuring that they take responsibility
	Parents	trusting the teacher, showing respect, cooperation, fulfilling responsibilities
	Personal and economic rights	Ensuring career development, paying according to performance, giving service points

In the research, 7 sub-themes emerged from the opinions of the teachers under the theme of what needs to be done to turn professional competence into performance. These sub-themes are; working conditions, school administrators, lessons, policy and legal regulations, students, parents and personal and economic rights. Teachers stated that improving working conditions, reducing the number of subclasses, establishing a positive school climate, reducing extracurricular duties, increasing colleague cooperation, working in teams, and improving the physical infrastructure. In the sub-theme of things to be done by school administrators, teachers expressed empowering, motivating, acting fairly, effective supervision, being understanding, participating in decisions, supporting, helping, cooperation and taking initiative. In the sub-theme of what needs to be done about the lessons, it was stated by the teachers to reduce the course load, increase the weekly course hours and update the curriculum. In the sub-theme of applicable policies and legal regulations, the establishment of a performance system, objective rewarding, rotation, and improvement of professional law were expressed by the teachers. In the sub-theme of what should be done for students, it was stated by the teachers that the regulation of the grade passing system, prevention of negative behaviors, effective discipline practices, and ensuring that they take responsibility. In the sub-theme of what should be done by parents, teachers expressed trust, respect, cooperation and fulfilling their responsibilities. In the sub-theme of improving personal and economic rights, the teachers stated that ensuring career development, paying according to performance, giving service points. Some of the teachers' views on these sub-themes are as follows:

In order for teachers to do their job in the best way, school principals need to support teachers. Parents should cooperate with teachers and fulfill their responsibilities. In addition, student discipline regulations should be made again (T5).

Laws should be made to reward teachers who do their job well. Because most of the time, the teacher who works hard and the teacher who does not work are evaluated the same. If a teacher who works hard is not rewarded for his work, his performance will decrease after a while (T2).

No matter how good your professional competence is, if the working environment in your school is not good, this will affect you negatively. First of all, the school climate needs to be improved and teachers need to cooperate (T8).

If the materials that a teacher will use in his class are missing, the teacher will not be able to teach the lesson effectively. First of all, the course materials must be completed. Then, the number of lessons taught by the teacher should be reduced (T2).

A class must have less than 25 students. The readiness of the students should be good. The class passing system should be rearranged (T11).

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the reasons that prevent teachers' professional competence from turning into performance and what needs to be done to transform teachers' professional competence into performance were examined. In the research, firstly, the reasons that prevent the professional competencies of teachers from turning into performance were determined according to the opinions of the teachers. In this context, it has been understood that working conditions, managerial attitudes, legal regulations, personal reasons, student-related reasons, parents-related reasons and economic reasons prevent teachers' professional competencies from turning into performance. According to these findings, it was seen that there are multiple factors that prevent teachers' professional competencies from turning into performance. In addition, the many reasons other than teachers show that non-teacher factors play an important role in teacher performance. According to Knobloch & Whittington (2002), the most effective factors affecting professional competence are the support and encouragement of the teacher from the administrators, family, students and social environment, and the teacher's professional and pedagogical knowledge and education.

In the research, under the sub-theme of working conditions, high course load, crowded classrooms, negative school climate, inadequacy of physical infrastructure, location and environment of the school, and insufficient cooperation with colleagues were expressed as obstacles to the transformation of teachers' professional competence into performance. Bozkurt Bostancı (2004) works in increasing the performance of the employees of the organizations; It states that the physical conditions of the workplace should be improved and the working environment should be reorganized.

In the research, under the sub-theme of managerial attitudes, autocratic management, distrust, lack of effort, communication style, not supporting the teacher and not acting fairly were expressed as the obstacles in the transformation of teachers' professional competence into performance. According to Barutçugil (2002), one of the most important factors affecting employee performance is the manager. In the study conducted by Teel (2003), it was concluded that the support of the administrator and the organization is effective in teacher performance. Niederriter (2003) also found in his research that school administrators are effective in low or high performance of teachers, administrators are the first responsible for teacher development, school administrators can provide professional development of teachers, and insufficient administrative support is not provided to low-performing teachers. The result in Youngusband's (2006) study that the support received from the administrators is an important determinant in demonstrating the professional competencies of teachers supports the research findings.

In the study, under the sub-theme of personal reasons, professional burnout, low motivation, boredom, fatigue and stress were expressed as obstacles in transforming teachers' professional competence into performance. In the study

conducted by Betoret (2009), it was determined that stress and burnout were effective on teachers' professional competencies. Sariçam and Sakız (2014) also showed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' professional competencies and professional burnout in their study with teachers. They determined that the high level of burnout negatively affected the professional competence of teachers. Friedman (2003) investigated the relationship between perceived professional competence and professional burnout among Israeli teachers. At the end of the study, it was determined that there is an inverse relationship between perceived professional competence and professional burnout.

Under the sub-theme of reasons related to parents, indifference, unconsciousness, non-cooperation, low level of education, negative attitudes, insecurity and interference with the teacher's work are expressed as obstacles to the transformation of teachers' professional competence into performance. Sevinç (2003) states in his study that a healthy parent-teacher relationship affects teachers' performance in teaching processes positively. Şişman and Turan (2004) state that parents' developing positive relationships with teachers will strengthen the teacher in their learning process and cause the teacher to gain an ally. Ergen and İnce (2017) argue that teachers need support from administrators, colleagues, and parents regarding their school work, and if they cannot receive this support, they experience negative feelings and cynicism.

In the context of the second category of the research, what needs to be done to transform professional competence into performance has been examined. Accordingly, the teachers participating in the research expressed their views on improving working conditions, what should be done by school administrators, what should be done about lessons, applicable policies, legal regulations, what should be done for students, what should be done by parents, and improvement of personal and economic rights. As with all employees, various individual and organizational factors are effective in the performance of teachers. The performance of teachers reflects positively or negatively on the performance of students and therefore on the quality of education (Hatipoğlu & Kavas, 2016). The ability of teachers to perform at the highest level is to provide feedback on their performance in the schools where they work, to identify their educational needs and potential, to provide support, to guide them, etc. It is possible with the existence of applications (Bozkurt Bostancı & Kayaalp, 2011).

As a result, in this study, which aims to examine the reasons that prevent teachers' professional competencies from turning into performance, it has been seen that multiple factors prevent teachers' professional competencies from turning into performance. In particular, the fact that non-teaching reasons are more than teacher-related reasons shows that non-teaching factors play an important role in teacher performance. It can be said that working conditions, managerial attitudes, legal regulations, personal reasons, student-related reasons, parents-related reasons and economic reasons prevent teachers' professional competencies from turning into performance. These results obtained in the research can be an important data source in improving teacher performance.

Recommendations

In line with the findings obtained in this study, the following recommendations can be made for practitioners and researchers.

Action plans can be prepared to eliminate obstacles so that teachers can demonstrate their professional competencies at a high level. Material and technology support should be provided to teachers, and cooperation should be made with institutions and organizations whose infrastructure and conditions are appropriate. A performance-enhancing incentive system such as an academic incentive can be created. The teaching profession law can be revised to meet the needs and expectations with the participation and support of all segments. Awareness and awareness trainings can be organized for school administrators to increase the professional competencies of teachers. The number of students and the course load can be reduced.

Limitations of Study

This research was carried out with a limited number of teachers working in Eskişehir. The findings are limited to the opinions of the participating teachers.

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