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In support of our mission, we provide assistance with writing and formatting in English to international writers who seek our assistance with preparing their manuscripts. There are no fees to submit or publish manuscripts so that cost will never be a barrier. Typeset and graphics are intentionally simple in order that the journal can be more easily accessed on a variety of devices worldwide to fulfill the mission of the journal.

I hope that the practices discussed in this journal will be helpful to you, our readers.

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Teacher Turnover at the Primary Level: A Qualitative Inquiry

Kübra Özdemir, Bünyamin Bavlı, and Mehmet Gürol

Abstract

Although the teacher turnover is a known and frequently experienced phenomenon, it is clear literature does not include enough in-depth studies conducted with qualitative designs, especially focusing on instructional dimension. The current study focuses on how teacher turnover was experienced by elementary school teachers, parents and school administrators in Turkey. Qualitative Case Study method was employed in the study. In-depth, one-to-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 participants by phone due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Content analysis method was adopted to analyze the data obtained in the study. The analysis revealed three themes with rich qualitative comments in the areas of: Academic and professional dimension; communication, cooperation and support; and psychological factors.

***Keywords*:** Teacher turnover, Primary School

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Teachers are the main human source of schools in terms of education,and have the greatest impact on students' academic and classroom performance (Ingersoll, 2003). However, teacher turnover due to factors such as appointment to another school, maternal leave, and a leave of absence from work may cause students to be adversely affected in many ways. The turnover of teachers not only impacts the students, who are the main beneficiaries of education, but also impacts communication and collaboration among colleagues, parental communication, cooperation and support.

Teacher turnover can be defined in various ways. Teacher turnover can be defined as teachers leaving a school or a region where the school is located (Colorado Department of Education, 2015). Sorenson and Ladd (2018), on the other hand, express teacher turnover as the "exchange of teachers from one year to another in a certain school environment" (p. 1). However, the turnover of teachers includes teachers who move to a different school and teachers who want to retire or leave their profession before retirement (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Even when the turnover of teachers takes place with the free will of the teacher, it is evident that various reasons contribute to teacher turnover. When the literature is reviewed, it is noticeable that teacher turnover is affected by factors such as lack of administrative support, poor working conditions, low student success rates, demographic reasons and socioeconomic differences between teachers and students (Gershenson, Holt, & Papageorge, 2016). The Teachers Policy Institute, on the other hand, underlines the main reasons for the turnover of teachers as "salaries and other compensations, preparation and admission costs, recruitment and personnel management, support and appointment for new teachers, business conditions caused by the management leadership in the school" (Podolsky et al., 2016, p.2).

Students experiencing teacher turnover are often more likely to be exposed to less competent and less experienced teachers (Carver- Thomas & Darling- Hammond, 2017). In Turkey, there is an insufficient number of teachers qualified as teachers and paid within the framework of 657 Civil Servants Law (CSL) as the type called "permanent", so contracted and temporary (hourly paid, master trainers, experts) teachers are employed as teachers (MoNE, 1965). This form of employment is actualized because there is no possibility of central appointment of teachers as well as other reasons such as pregnancy, retirement, leaving the teaching profession, in-house teacher needs, or death. This situation occurs in different periods of education and causes the turnover of teachers. Exposure to a large number of inexperienced teachers has an adverse impact on students' academic achievement, especially in areas such as mathematics and science, which are the core courses. Studies have revealed that hourly paid teachers have great problems with students such as disruptive student behavior and communication due to the teacher's lack of pedagogical knowledge and practice (Polat, 2013). Due to challenges experienced, it is observed that parents, students and permanent teachers are not satisfied with the practice of paid teaching, and parents perceive hourly paid teachers as temporary teachers and they request permanent teachers from school administrations. Paid teachers, who are not considered by some as 'real teachers', are unable to contribute to healthy school environment due to the lack of communication and collaboration with permanent teachers (Demirdağ, 2017). School principals also expressed their discomfort due to the high frequency of paid teacher turnover, and teachers stated their dissatisfaction of paid teachers' contributions to the school environment and of their strategies and methods employed during teaching (Yalçın, 2017). The greatest reason for this is the difference in the employee personal rights of hourly paid teachers working under the same conditions as teachers working in the permanent status,

which leads to injustice and inequality. In addition, teachers who work in a paid status do not have job security; therefore, they feel abused because of their fear of losing their jobs. In addition, higher social status of permanent teachers makes hourly paid teachers feel excluded (Demir, Karadeniz, 2010).

Although teacher turnover and issues related to paid teacher employment are significant, there are less disadvantages and even developments in favor of learners in schools where low teacher turnover is experienced. In this context, the success of students in schools with low teacher turnover is generally higher than that of students exposed to high teacher turnover (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). As a matter of fact, high teacher turnover has adverse impacts on students' school performance (Ingersoll & Perda, 2010; as cited in Norris, 2019). Adverse consequences resulting from high teacher turnover may affect other teachers and their students negatively (Donley, Detrich, Keyworth & States, 2019). When teachers leave a school, they take their expertise in teaching strategies, collaboration with colleagues, professional development, and knowledge about the students at the school. The absence of these factors damage students' learning, school activities, and the environment of the school (Simon & Johnson, 2015). In addition, those who are exposed to teacher turnover experience some disadvantages not only in the current time but also in the following years.

Students who continue with the same teacher for five years can functionally transfer what they have learned in the future, and this has a positive effect on their academic career. However, teachers who cannot continue for more than three years can have serious damaging effects on students' academic achievement (Taylor & Tyler, 2012).

The effects created by teacher turnover also differ depending on the level of the school. In primary schools, teachers spend either all their day or a majority of their day with their

students in their classrooms. In secondary and high schools, students have the opportunity to communicate with multiple teachers every day. For this reason, adverse impacts caused by teacher turnover are higher in primary schools compared to secondary schools or high schools. (Norris, 2019). In order for a person to be able to communicate and work well with another person, a basic element of trust must be experienced with that person. It is very difficult to create an element of trust in a school that constantly hires new teachers because teachers, students and parents are constantly in contact with 'strangers', whom they do not know and have no experience of trust (Guin, 2004).

Another important effect of teacher turnover is the attitude and influence of the school administration. A poor attitude in schools with higher teacher turnover may cause morale deterioration in employees or increase the tension in relations (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). School administrators should care about the staff and consider their concerns. The quality of the relationship should be of the utmost importance. Positive energy can only be constructed with this type of leadership style (Ghamrawi & Jammal, 2013). Principals are responsible for shaping the vision of the school, performing instructional leadership, developing teachers' leadership skills, managing people and processes, and providing a moderate and safe school environment (Edition, 2013).

The concept of trust in schools includes a positive relationship between students and teachers, teachers and other teachers, and parents and teachers and their school principals. These established relationship roles are damaged by teacher turnover and cause a social change at school (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Trust between student and teacher is a preliminary indicator of student success (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). The positive relationship between teachers and students has a very important impact on learners' academic performance. A well-built teacher-student

relationship provides motivation for learners to learn actively in class and helps to create clear questions on issues they have difficulty understanding. A strong student-teacher relationship also encourages learners to be academically and socially productive (Gallagher, n.d.). It is clear that trust between students and teachers is a predictor of student achievement (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Teacher turnover eliminates this relationship,and affects students negatively in the process. When students realize that their educational life is not sufficiently cherished by their teachers, their performance and trust begin to be damaged. It takes a significant amount of time for the learner to build a relationship with the new teacher. Therefore, the loss of a reliable teacher-student relationship is just one of the negative effects of teacher turnover (Norris, 2019).

Schools in which teacher turnover is experienced have challenges in planning a coherent curriculum and creating positive work relationships between teachers. In fact, high teacher turnover weakens the relationship and trust among the school staff, and this situation hinders colleague collaboration and teamwork (Guin, 2004). While teacher turnover occurs for various reasons in Turkey, almost no studies on this subject have been detected in the literature. Hence, this study aims to identify challenges experienced by school administrators, teachers, and parents created by teacher turnover in a public primary school in Turkey where teacher turnover is very common.

Method

Research Design

A qualitative research approach was adopted in this study. The purpose of the qualitative research approach is to help to understand and explain social phenomena. Qualitative researchers are concerned with the meaning constructed by people and how they make sense of their own world and their experiences in this world (Merriam, 2009). In this context, qualitative researchers are very interested in what sort of order individuals establish in themselves and their

environment and how the people living in this environment have a relationship with social structure and roles, symbols and rituals. Researchers employing a qualitative approach examine how individuals acquire knowledge about themselves or others and how they imply meaning. How deeply knowledgeable one is about a particular group is directly proportional to how well one understands the uniqueness of that group (Berg & Lune, 2016).

Qualitative case study design was adopted in the current study. Case studies from one individual to a school can be addressed to provide rich and detailed data to researchers and uncover case specific results (Lichtman, 2012). Case study design is a qualitative inquiry that includes the discovery of one or more cases within a limited system (Creswell, 2007). According to Gerring (2007), case study is an in-depth study of a single case in order to explain more cases. Case study design allowed the researcher in this study to obtain in-depth data focusing on how teacher turnover is experienced by school administrators, teachers, and parents as well as the reasons for and consequences.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were recruited by a snowball sampling method. The snowball sampling method involves interviewing or collecting data by identifying several people with relevant features. It then involves other participants with similar characteristics identified through existing participants (Berg and Lune, 2016). Using this sampling method, the participants were selected from a public primary school where teacher turnover is frequently experienced, in the Marmara Region of Turkey. The study group involves five classroom teachers, 10 parents (two parents from each class) and one school administrator. Three of the classroom teachers are female and two of them are male. All of the parents are female. The school administrator is a male. Three of the classroom teachers have a master's degree. As a

result of the high teacher turnover, one of the teachers is the 6th teacher of the current class, the other is the 4th teacher, another is the 7th teacher and the other is the 5th teacher in their classes. Three of the classroom teachers have been teaching for 13 years, and two of the classroom teachers have been teaching for 10 years. Three of the classroom teachers experienced teacher turnover when they first started their profession. The average class sizes in the school where the study was conducted vary between 30 and 35 students. Four of the classroom teachers started teaching in the fall term and one in the spring term. The school administrator has been teaching for 17 years and working as an administrator for 12 years. Two of the parents taking part in the study have been living in the school district for eight years, and another two for 17 years. Other parents have been living in the school district for six, seven, 17, 18, and 23 years, respectively. One of the participating parents has twins, one of whom is disabled. The same parent made a class change for her child at the end of the first academic year. The teacher turnover was experienced in the 1st grade in three classes, the 2nd and the 3rd grade in one class. According to the information obtained from the parents, students in each grade have been exposed to at least four and at maximum seven teacher turnovers on average until now.

Data Collection

Interview technique was adopted to obtain data in the study. Interviews are effective data collection tools when the aim is to discover participants' ideas about the subject and how they make sense of it (Berg & Lune, 2016). A semi-structured interview protocol was developed to obtain data from the participants. The prompts used in semi-structured interviews limit the topics that are mentioned in the interviews in advance and help make the interviews with a large number of different people wide-ranging, systematic and deep (Patton, 2014). The semi-structured interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions. Regarding the interview protocol, expert reviews were obtained from an academic staff and an administrator with 12

years of school management experience before the interviews were conducted. Following the expert reviews, a pilot interview was conducted by the researchers. Pilot interviews guide correcting data collection plans and establishing relationships between questions (Yin, 2014). Thanks to the pilot interview, interview questions were reviewed by the researchers and some general questions were made more specific. During the interview process, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, video conferences and teleconferences were operated in accordance with recommended health measures. Before each interview, each participant was provided with the necessary information about the date, time and scope of the interview. Determining the convenient date and time for the participants, interviews lasting 40- 60 minutes were held with each participant. The first interviews were conducted with the teachers who experienced teacher turnover and then the process was continued with the parents whose child was exposed to teacher turnover. Finally, administrative staff were included in the interviews. Before the interview, consent forms were sent to each participant electronically and verbal and written permission was obtained. In addition, participant consent was obtained to audio record the interview prior to each interview. Participants' hesitations were overcome by giving detailed answers to each question about the interview process. Furthermore, it was stated by the researchers that the participants could withdraw from the interview at any time without cause or penalty.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, researchers are also a part of the research. During the current study, the researchers took memos during the interviews and supported the data analysis with the memos. In addition, the recordings were transcribed right after the interview by the researchers and the data analysis was conducted by the researchers. In advance of the data analysis, transcriptions were shared with the participants to provide respondent validation and confirmation. Manual coding was utilized for the analysis (Saldaña, 2012). Following the

confirmation of the participants, the data analysis was conducted via content analysis method. During the data analysis process, the codes were obtained first and then the themes were reached (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are an integral part of a scientific research. In qualitative research, credibility criteria for internal validity, transferability for external validity, consistency for internal reliability, and conformability criteria for external reliability should be administered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A number of measures were taken to ensure validity and reliability in the current study. A semi-structured interview form consisting of open-ended questions was employed to obtain in-depth data. After the questions were formed, an audit trail was obtained to review the design of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted only as video conferencing and voice calls. However, by increasing the variety of participants, the reliability of the interviews was ensured. In this context, the data were obtained from administrators, teachers and parents in the research. Before starting the interviews, peer debriefing was obtained regarding to the interview protocol. Furthermore, the consent of the participants which is an integral part of the qualitative inquires, was obtained, and it was reported that any questions would be welcomed before, during and after the interviews. Before starting the interviews, the purpose of the study, its scope, and its limitations were clearly stated to the participants; and how the interview would take place and how long the interview would last were also explained. It was clearly outlined that anonymity of the participants was considered in the study. In line with this purpose, pseudonyms were adopted during the study. In addition, the school name and children's names were kept confidential in the study. After the interview, in order to confirm the accuracy of the data obtained from the writings of the

researcher, a copy of the records was sent to the participants. Data analysis was conducted following the participants' confirmation. Regarding the codes and categories emerged, peer debriefing was obtained to review the analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The Role of the Researcher

One of the researchers involved in the current study worked as a classroom teacher at the school where the study was conducted. The researcher also worked as a 3rd classroom teacher and had the opportunity to observe the positive or negative impacts of the teacher turnover. In addition, she taught individuals who were subjected to teacher turn over at the same school with two of the teachers who took part in the interviews for this study.

Ethical Considerations

The basic ethical principle of social scientific research is not to harm the participant. This terminology basically means avoiding any physical and emotional (psychological) harm (Berg, Lune 2016). The most questionable aspects of a scientific study with human participants are factors such as validity and reliability. In this context, measures were taken to contribute to the validity and reliability of the research and to protect the participant. Each participant was presented with the interview protocols prepared in advance and examined by a specialist, and information was provided on the purpose, scope and duration of the research. At the same time, the researcher clarified the purpose and reasons of the study. In addition to that, to provide voluntary participation, consent forms were executed in the study. Furthermore, it was explained clearly to participants that they could leave the research without any excuses if they wished to do so. It was also stated that it was voluntary to answer or skip any questions. During the study, the participants were informed about the voice recording before the interview and all of the participants accepted voice recording. While the audio recordings of the interviews were

transcribed and reported, the demographic information of the participants was kept confidential. In advance of the study, researchers informed participants about the use of pseudonyms.

Results

As a result of data analysis, three different themes were identified: Academic and Professional Dimension; Communication, Cooperation and Support; and Psychological Factors. Three different sub-themes were identified under the Academic and Professional Dimension: Teacher, Student, and Administrator. Within the second theme, communication, cooperation, and support were evaluated from the perspective of teachers and parents. The last theme, Psychological Factors had sub-themes of teacher, student, and parent.

Academic and Professional Dimension

As a result of the statements of the participants, the academic element was divided into sub-categories of teacher and student, and in this context, it was seen that the elements such as lack of classroom management experience and loss of time in teaching were observed for the teacher. For the student, factors such as failure, lack of learning, and loss of time in learning were observed. The professional dimension was divided into sub-categories in terms of teacher and administration, and in this context elements such as ignoring individual differences, effort, teaching difficulties, and opportunities for professional development were found for the teacher. In terms of administration, it was seen that effort, workload and student absenteeism were emphasized. When the expressions of the participants were examined, it was detected that teacher turnover had many negative aspects. It was emphasized that the greatest effect was in the academic sense. For example, when the expressions of Merve, who is the sixth teacher of her class, were examined, it was seen that teacher turnover caused loss of time in teaching/learning, and that in turn caused lack of learning. Merve expressed:

> If the student has not learnt the rules from previous teachers, she/he might not adopt my rules and ignores them. You constantly strive to overcome these challenges and you need to teach them everything from the beginning as if they were in kindergarten. On the other hand, since these are third grade students, the curriculum is very intense. They are already behind the learning goals of the curriculum. We need to catch them up.

Another emphasis on the same subject was made by Ertan, the fourth teacher of the class, who expressed his views as follows:

> Also, it was difficult for me to complete this process in a limited period of one year. When I entered the classroom, I saw that during the lesson some students were easily getting up without permission and throwing trash in the trash can. And those students are fourth graders; we expect this kind of behaviors in first grade or second grade, but not in fourth grade. When I ask a student, "Why did you stand up without permission?" the student can easily say that this is normal.

Based on these expressions, there is a clear lack of learning, and it is clear that there are academic and behavioral deficiencies due to time loss. Another emphasis on this subject is made by Nesrin, who is the seventh teacher of the class. He stated, "In the simplest term, students do not even have a notebook."

Lack of learning as a result of teacher turnover is also emphasized by parents. Parents drew attention to this by emphasizing the academic losses frequently experienced by students. On this subject, a parent, whose child was exposed to seven teacher turnovers, emphasized the academic loss experienced due to hourly paid teachers as, "They did not teach anything," and then continued as follows:

> My daughter was a successful student, but this process, which occurred at the end of the teacher turnover, damaged her. When our last teacher started to teach here, she/he recovered deficiencies of the class. Our teacher also had a hard time in this process because the students had fallen behind. We constantly compelled the kids because they turned into kids who didn't do anything.

Another factor that was emphasized by parents is inexperience of teachers which caused lack of classroom management and academic failure. Especially hourly paid teachers have a lack of classroom management experience. For example, a parent whose child was exposed to six teacher turnovers expressed the following:

> If it is the first teaching experience of paid teachers, they are acting very emotional and we need to calm them down. However, since permanent teachers are more experienced, they are acting more effectively when problems occur in the classroom. For instance, teachers could not make themselves listened by the students during class time and they, especially new paid teachers, were unable to teach students well. In this sense, students had a lot of difficulties in the classroom.

On the same subject, the parent of twins whose children were exposed to four different teachers expressed her views stating, “I wanted to change the first teacher myself. It was a class with a disciplinary problem and the teacher was very inexperienced and could not manage the class.” According to the statements of the participants, it was stressed that time loss and learning deficiencies caused by the teacher turnover brought about student failures. One of the parents, whose child was exposed to five teachers turnovers, expressed, “They would have been more successful if students had not experienced the teacher turnover. Successful students suddenly failed.” Another parent who has a child in the same classroom expressed her opinion on this

issue in this way, “As regulations do not allow students to fail in primary school, they passed the classes without learning anything, just by going to school and graduating at an inadequate level.” It is discovered that another disadvantage of teacher turnover is about professional dimension which was specified in two sub-categories: teachers and school administration. Teachers’ ignorance of individual differences, effort, professional development opportunities and teaching difficulties were observed. Related to school administration effort, workload and student absenteeism were revealed. With reference to ignorance of the individual differences, one of the classroom teachers, Nesrin, expressed:

> It is necessary to understand the learning levels of children. One of the biggest problems that occurred at the end of the constant teacher turnover is the lack of balance and order in the levels of learning outcomes. Among these, it is very difficult for the teacher to regulate teaching. I feel like I am teaching in a multi grade class. If there are students with special needs in the class - there were three of them in my classroom - They are the most negatively affected group in this process.

Another classroom teacher, Ertan, who made similar statements about the same subject, expressed his views as follows:

> In terms of the student, this varies according to the features of the student. However, this process is difficult for the children who have an insatiable desire for knowledge and have parental support as the teacher focuses on teaching other students or tries to maintain class order. In this respect, motivated students are prevented from learning and the learning process is not beneficial for them. For students who are not motivated to learn, this class is exactly what they want. The current learning environment contributes to this situation.

Another emphasis in the professional dimension is about teaching difficulties, which is a major challenge for teachers. Related to that, a classroom teacher, Reyyan, said, "I showed the white feather when I learned this because in a classroom which was exposed to teacher turnover a lot, one should not expect academic success. Students do not adopt the classroom rules and achieve academic goals." The other classroom teacher Merve had similar opinion and expressed this as follows:

> There were bad habits in those students and it was extremely difficult to change their habits in a short time. It is very difficult to instill a new behavior or change the old one in a classroom where the teacher turnover is constantly experienced. Because the teacher tries to teach the learning goals of the first grade in the fourth grade after three years passed. I even explained the school rules in the fourth grade.

It was emphasized that the only aspect of teacher turnover that can be called positive is creating the opportunity for professional development for teachers. What appears in the statements of the participant teachers is that this process develops teachers professionally. Ertan, one of the participating teachers, expressed this as, "The challenges are pushing you to look for new methods. When you think about how to overcome these challenges, you start looking for new ways and this stimulus contributes to both personal and academic improvement." Another factor emphasized by the participants is the efforts of teachers teaching to the students exposed to teacher turnover. As it was stated previously, effort also generates professional development need for teachers. A classroom teacher, Merve, expressed this as follows:

> It is already very easy to teach something in a classroom of fast learners. The class including students with learning difficulties is also challenging for a teacher. Therefore, I was busy looking for solutions to the issues I faced and had difficulties. I have always

> produced different alternatives to solve the issues. For example, how can I make students enjoy writing, how can I teach math students more easily, etc... To be able to solve these problems quickly, I pushed myself and started to find different activities as I was pushed. In this sense, I have improved myself as a teacher. It was a different experience that improved me.

Another classroom teacher Reyyan continued as follows:

> I simplified the content of the curriculum; I tried to teach with simple examples. In this sense, I was successful. We cannot keep academic expectations high in such classes. We try to teach the basic rules of whatever it is in the content. On the other hand, we as teachers want special education students to learn reading and writing and develop basic math skills.

The administrative factor that is another sub-category on the professional dimension emphasizes effort, also overlaps with the view of teachers. The assistant principal, Talha, explained administrative efforts as, "We spend a lot of effort to coordinate students exposed to teacher turnover. We usually organize one-on-one meetings with the parents, then we meet with the students and try to minimize any adverse behaviors, but this is such a long and distressing process." Another administrative challenge caused by the teacher turnover is workload. The assistant principal, Umut, stated this as follows:

> For example, we send letters to parents of the absent students. Each of those letters is extra work. We have been having continuous one-on-one meetings with troubled students and these meetings do not take just 5 or 10 minutes, even much more. We also make other sessions before these meetings. First of all, we have to meet with the parents to talk about the problems which we have and agree with them on some common denominators. We invite the student to our room with one of his classmates. We have conversation with the student and try to eliminate problems.

Communication, Collaboration and Support

When the expressions of the participants in the study were examined, three categories were obtained: communication, cooperation and support. These categories were analyzed in subcategories of teachers, parents and administrators. High teacher turnover prevented teachers from understanding students. A parent whose child experienced four teacher turnovers expressed this situation as follows:

> Actually, the process is as follows. At first, parents are trying to express themselves. In the beginning I too did so, and I felt the need to give information about my child to the teacher because the teacher did not know anyone and all parents like me did not want to waste time either. Parents are always trying to help the teachers at this stage.

Another parent, whose child was exposed six teacher turnovers, made a similar statement on the subject:

> Because the teacher has just started teaching in that classroom, a process is needed until he/she gets to know the class. Since the teacher is unable to establish the full relationship with the students, she/he cannot advance their learning. When she/he completes the establishing the relationship process and then starts the next level, the teacher leaves the class again and the process starts from the beginning one more time. We experience the same things over and over again.

Assistant Principal Umut emphasized the communication between parents, teachers and students with these words:

> We as administrative staff are struggling with some issues such as providing teacher-student communication, trying to improve the quality of the existing education, ensuring the communication between the teacher and parents, teachers who believe that they are accepted by parents, and the teachers who do not feel a part of the classroom culture.

As Assistant Principal Umut stated, teachers' not feeling a part of the class culture causes them to be uninterested in the classroom. The parents of a student, who was exposed to five different teachers, expressed their views on this subject as follows, “Hourly paid teachers are completely different than other teachers. They are not interested in students' learning like permanent teachers. In this process, we did not see much effort from paid teachers.” When the opinions of the participants were analyzed, it was detected that, as a common emphasis, the most affected party in this process is students. As a result of teacher turnover, it was emphasized that students experienced lack of communication and loss of cooperation. The parents of a student, who experienced six teacher turnovers, emphasized this situation with the following words:

> Until our last teacher, my daughter lost a lot. In frequent teacher turnover the student feels anxious as s/he is unable to figure out the communication style of the teacher. It is not possible for the student to understand the teacher's communication style immediately. When the last teacher was appointed to the class, during the first year, my daughter was not active until she got used to the new teacher. In the second year, our teacher figured out and my daughter was more active. My daughter did not experience this with the previous teachers. If she'd had only one teacher from the start, my daughter would probably be at a much higher level now.

Another parent expressed her/his view on the subject as follows, "Yes, it is generally a negative process. Students experience attachment problem and problem of trust." One of the important factors that the participants emphasized about the turnover of teachers is the support factor. When the opinions of the participating parents were examined, it was clear that there was a lack of support for parents from school administration. The support of teachers by the school administration was not regular or steady, either. Regarding this, a parent whose student experienced five teacher turnovers expressed this as follows:

> The administration does not help you anyway; they send you back by saying a few clichéd sentences. I hope nobody will experience this situation. Ministry of Education of National Education (MoNE) needs to deal with this problem as soon as possible. This process is a loss and annoyance for everyone.

A parent whose student experienced seven teacher turnovers said

> I don't think the administration is eager to help parents. When we tried to contact with them, the administration did not want to deal with our problems; then we submitted a letter of complaint to the MoNE, and then our teacher was appointed as a permanent teacher.

On the other hand, it was also observed that there were teachers who could not get support from the school administration. The classroom teacher Reyyan expressed her opinions on this issue as follows:

> For the administration, a classroom experiencing a lot of teacher turnover has turned into the natural state of the school…because it is an institution receiving a lot of appointments and experiencing high teacher turnover. It is an institution that already has 60 teachers and the turnover is too high. There is no precaution they take in this regard. When there was a problem, they could easily say this classroom experienced many teacher turnovers.

Psychological Factors

Participants drew attention to another point regarding the turnover of teachers; it has psychological effects on teachers, parents and students. It was discovered that the participant teachers experienced psychological challenges such as negative attitudes regarding students. The classroom teacher Merve said, “Students recovered faster in a behavioral sense, at least they learned the rules. In such a class, you cannot raise your expectations very much.” Another psychological problem experienced by teachers is the loss of teaching motivation. The classroom teacher Merve continued to explain her thoughts about motivation by stating the following:

> I thought about how much it could tire me. If I had approached this class with the view that this class, which has already experienced four- five teacher turnovers, could not achieve anything anymore, this class really would not have achieved anything. There are also teachers who think this way. They can give up hope from their students by saying that no matter what I teach, there is already a year left.

Regarding this subject, the classroom teacher Ertan expressed his opinions as follows:

> For the teacher, a class that experiences a lot of teacher turnover is not a preferred class. The teacher does not prefer this; she/he is exposed to it. This obligation also negatively affects teacher's motivation. This negative effect influences the teacher's interest in students and commitment to the educational process and causes a poor learning environment.

Another psychological effect expressed by the participants' common opinions is anxiety. It was observed that the new teachers experienced anxiety in the classroom after the teacher turnover. On this subject, the classroom teacher, Reyyan, said, "At first my anxiety level was high, but when I realized I was improving myself, my confidence increased." Another classroom teacher, Nesrin, expressed her opinion on this matter with the following:

> We have anxiety when we think what awaits. Because not only the school administration but also my colleagues warned me to be careful as students experienced a lot of teacher turnover, they argued with their teachers, they behaved rude. For this reason, there is confusion and anxiety!

It is noticed that one of the challenges highlighted by the participants is the problem of adaptation. The classroom teacher Merve explained this as follows:

> It is very difficult to teach in such a classroom. I have not had a teaching experience in such a class before. This may be related to the general characteristics of the classroom, but the class I was teaching was not a very efficient class in academic and behavioral terms. It was a slightly lower class. Teacher turnover may have had an effect on this. If everyone has their own style, every teacher has a unique style. Therefore, the student has to adapt to this.

Umut, the vice principal, expressed his views as follows, "Teacher turnover causes a disruption in education. Adaptation problems for students, teachers and parents are also very common." Among the psychological problems faced by teachers in this process are pressure and comparison. When the expressions of the participants were examined on the subject, the classroom teacher Merve explained this situation as follows, "Teachers teaching in a classroom where students were exposed to teacher turnover are exposed to the comparison. When you are compared to the previous teacher, you cannot do what you want to do in the class. My teaching style is compared; even your clothing is compared." The Vice Principal Umut expressed his views about the pressure as follows:

> Even when a very qualified teacher takes the classroom, the parents always complain. They always have an urge to complain about the teacher. Even though the teacher did nothing, I met the parents who came to me and complained about this teacher. The first day they said, 'She/he ignored my child.' Their purpose is just to complain, to tire us. Dealing with these parents complicates our work, prevents us from doing our own work, and is mentally tiring.

As a result of the interviews with the participants, it is identified that another group that is exposed to the psychological effects of teacher turnover are students. As understood from the

expressions of the participants, students develop undesirable behaviors and show negative behaviors, such as technology addiction, not adapting to rules, and peer bullying. A parent whose student experienced six teacher turnovers explained this as follows:

> Boys developed an interest in tablet and phone games; also, the children of parents who did not have technological devices in their homes also started playing card games. There was a big trend in technology, especially our last paid teacher directed the students to open YouTube channels and Instagram accounts. Recently, girls started opening WhatsApp groups on their mothers' phones. There has been such a trend.

It was also observed that the students did not adapt to the classroom rules and showed undesired behavior such as peer bullying. Regarding that, Vice Principal Umut expressed that:

> Students acquire undesirable behaviors in this process. Students exhibit unexpected behaviors both in the classroom and home environment. Students are bullying each other. For instance, they push each other, harm the school supplies in the classroom, and their classmate communication gets disrupted.

Also, the classroom teacher Can stated that:

> When the student comes to school, he says he is feeling sick and wants to go home. This causes disciplinary problems. Besides, some students are fleeing from the classroom to hide somewhere in the school. The meaning of that is these students are not eager to follow the directions of the teacher because they feel out of place, and they isolate themselves from the learning environment.

A similar view on the subject comes from a parent whose child was exposed to six teacher turnovers, “At that time, the children saw the school as a park among themselves. They lost their respect for each other. Since there were no lessons, constant quarrels and discussions began

among themselves. This also ruined the children's relationship." It is emphasized by the common opinion of the participants that teacher turnover causes negative attitudes and loss of learning motivation in students. Regarding this subject, one of the parents whose child was exposed to five teacher turnovers stated, "My child was willing and determined to learn, but because of teacher turnover he lost his motivation and did not want to do anything. For example, he stopped doing his homework." It is clearly underlined that teacher turnover caused a change in students' attitudes. It is also discovered that students experience fear of abandonment. Regarding this, a parent whose child was exposed to five teacher turnovers expressed the following, "Teacher turnover leaves deep marks in children. The biggest problem is whether the new teacher will leave again, so this uncertainty raises the distrust towards the teacher." In addition to that, students also experience loss of self-confidence. One of the parents whose child was exposed to four teacher turnovers stated this as:

> The child is influenced by teacher turnover very much. There is a loss of self-confidence in the child. He is afraid of how the teacher will react if he answers even the question he knows. I tell my children that they should ask over and over again what they do not understand and cannot do but the children abstain because they do does not know how the teacher will react to them. This is a loss of self-confidence.

Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

The turnover of teachers emerges from a combination of different factors depending on culture, context and country practices. This situation arises in America due to the turnover costs of teachers' salaries and the inefficiency of the working environment in education. In a study conducted by Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) regarding the aforementioned situation, reasons for the teacher turnover in America were identified as: certified teachers leaving school, lack of administrative support, working with low salaries, high working pressure,

dissatisfaction, searching for other career opportunities, and poor working conditions. Under these conditions, the research uncovers that 90% of the need for teachers is caused by teachers who leave the profession. The emerging need for teachers also causes teacher turnover. Teachers are always recruited to fill vacant positions and become part of teacher turnover.

As for the reasons for the turnover of teachers in Turkey specifically, retirement, maternal leave, and assignment to another region are common as are medical excuses, personal organization change requests, educational institutions' expectations, and being assigned to a new place in the system owing to external reasons. Employment of permanent, contracted and temporary status teachers within the framework of the Civil Servants Law No. 657 (DMK) and the exact contract period and number of such employees not being determined before the academic year for temporary (hourly paid) and permanent (contract / permanent) status cause teacher transfers. This situation leads to problems not only for teachers working in temporary status but also for teachers who start working in permanent positions as well as for students. It is observed that teachers working in temporary status and hourly paid teachers have difficulties in communicating with students and there is a problem of acceptance by parents (Polat, 2013). As Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) and Donley, Detrich, Keyworth & States (2019) put forward, there are many adverse aspects of the turnover of teachers. In line with this, the current study also reveals that teacher turnover negatively affects teachers, students, parents and school administrators in academic and professional dimensions in terms of communication, cooperation and support.

The greatest problem caused by the turnover of teachers is that teachers who do not have professional experience are assigned to the vacant positions, and those teachers cannot respond to the academic needs of the students during their teaching period. For this reason, it is identified

that teacher turnover brings about academic and professional problems. The inadequacy of the hourly paid teachers who teach in the classes due to teacher turnover and their inexperience in classroom management cause students to fall behind academically. Polat (2013) also stated that early career hourly paid teachers are inexperienced and have challenges of classroom management. In addition to that, the frequency of teacher turnover also affects academic success of the students in a negative way. It is discovered that the disadvantages experienced by groups of learners who were exposed to one or more teacher turnover are not similar. It is detected that the frequency of teacher turnover increases academic failure. In line with the findings of the current study, excessive teacher turnover has a negative effect on students' school success (Gibbons, Scrutinio, & Telhaj, 2018; Ingersoll, 2003; Sorenson & Ladd, 2018). In their study, Chetty, Friedman and Rockoff (2014) and Lee (2018) emphasize that classroom teachers have the strongest effect on students' education. They state that this effect is directly proportional to their achievements in academic life, both in the short and long term. Ronfeldt, Loeb and Wyckoff (2013) emphasize that schools with lower teacher turnover are generally more successful than those with higher teacher turnover. In addition to the frequency of teacher turnover, the grade of the students exposed to teacher turnover is also critical. The current study suggests that teacher turnover in the second and fourth grade of primary school caused different results. The adaptation of the students to the teacher and the time spent by the teacher with the students is not a problem in the first years of the primary school. However, students at the end of the primary education experience challenge to adapt to the teacher and develop a relationship with the teacher. Academic success of the students is influenced by positive relationship between students and teachers. The break of the positive relationship due to the teacher turnover effects the student's school absenteeism. A well-established teacher-student relationship depends on a

process and that the positive relationship within this process ensures the student's attendance in the lesson (Ronfeldt, 2013).

Gallagher (2013) emphasizes that a strong student-teacher relationship will encourage learners to be academically and socially productive by providing good performance. Taylor and Tyler (2012) emphasize that teachers who are unable to be permanent for more than three years cannot achieve academic success in their classrooms. The findings of the current study are in line with that of Taylor and Tyler (2012) stating that both teachers and parents emphasize that teacher turnover resulted in loss of academic achievement. Both teachers and school administrators stated that experiencing teacher turnover exhausted them and brought about an extra workload. They emphasized that classes with high turnover were particularly demanding classes because of the fact that the teaching method of each teacher was different from that of others, and this disrupted the harmony in the classroom and students fell behind academically compared to students of other classes. It is discovered that especially the students who are exposed to high teacher turnover have communication and adaptation challenges with the new teachers. It is also emphasized that parents have difficulties in communicating with teachers in the process. It is concluded that parents have difficulties in communicating especially with hourly paid teachers and they do not want hourly paid teachers to teach their children. The results which were obtained in this study are similar to the results of the research conducted by Polat (2013) and Torun (2010). In their research, it was revealed that parents did not want to have an hourly paid teacher as constant change harms the communication between teachers and parents. Another important point emphasized by the participants is that the process of teacher turnover could be resolved with cooperation between parents and teachers and between teachers and the administration. However, the current study presented that school administration cooperates with

teachers but not with parents. Cooperation with parents, according to the statements of the participant teachers, has a positive effect on the management of the classes. For example, in his study, Wallace (2013) states that school administrators are obliged to shape the vision of the school, lead teaching, manage people and processes, and provide a student-friendly and safe school environment. From the common statements of the participants, it is concluded that the process affects especially the students negatively. In this process, it is observed that the students have a lack of motivation and this lack of motivation adversely affects their success. The study also presented that teacher turnover caused indirect results. Students who are exposed to high turnover of teachers develop negative attitudes towards the school and the teacher. At the end, students have undesired behaviors such as technology addiction, not obeying the rules, and peer bullying. It is also observed that the students who are frequently exposed to teacher turnover in early years of the primary education have problems in establishing trust and attachment. These students have a fear of being abandoned and have difficulty in bonding. Ronfeldt (2012) accordingly emphasized that trust between teacher and student was a preliminary indicator of student success. It is emphasized that the process of building the relationship between the student and teacher with each new teacher for the students takes a lot of time, this process destroys the secure teacher-student relationship, and this negatively affects student performance by damaging the motivation of the students. Additionally, it is emphasized that there is an increase in anxiety levels of students as a result of teacher turnover and this anxiety negatively affects trust in education. In his study, Guin (2004) stated that it was very difficult to create an element of trust for a school that constantly added new teachers because teachers, students and parents had difficulties in establishing connections and building trust when they were dealing with a stranger whom they did not know. It was concluded that the parents who participated in this research also

had high anxiety levels due to teacher turnover, believing that their children would fail academically and that they could not improve themselves.

Current research reveals that the teacher turnover is a topic worth exploring in many ways. It is clear that conducting separate studies with the dimensions of school administration, teacher and student is vital in order to improve the existing literature and to cope with the adverse consequences of the teacher turnover. However, it is seen that there is a need to carry out projects and research at a macro level by using quantitative research methods in order to reveal the general situation in the context of school district, education level and school type. It is also observed that there is a need to carry out projects and research at macro level by using quantitative research methods in order to reveal the general situation in the context of school district, education level and school type.

The current study revealed that policies should be developed by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and local authorities in order to reduce adverse effects of teacher turnover on school culture, teachers and students and eliminate teacher turnover. In addition, providing training to school management and teachers, who are subjected to teacher turnover and academic and psychological support to students and parents are among the activities that should be carried out as a result of the policy.

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