

Formation of the professional status of teachers on the basis of a synergetic approach to the organisation of methodological work

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Suggested Citation:

Kabulovna, I., Altayevna, T. B. & Kamalovich, K. A. (2022). Formation of the professional status of teachers on the basis of a synergetic approach to the organisation of methodological work (Ainash). *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*. 17(7), 2321-2332 <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v17i7.7690>

Received from March 24, 2022; revised from May 13, 2022; accepted from July 23, 2022.

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to receive teacher opinions on the formation of the professional status of teachers on the basis of a synergistic approach to the organisation of methodological work. This research was created in accordance with the qualitative research method. The study group of the research consisted of 40 primary schoolteachers working in various primary schools in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in the 2021–2022 academic year. The data of the research were collected with a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. As a result of the research, the majority of primary schoolteachers participating in the research stated that teachers' behaviour in accordance with the ethical principles of the profession, providing a qualified teaching education, transforming them into a profession with high economic returns and improving their personal rights are factors that positively affect the status of the teaching profession. The majority of primary schoolteachers participating in the research evaluated the low economic return of the profession, the insufficient personal rights of the profession, the lack of appreciation of the teacher in the education system and the high expectation from the teacher as factors that negatively affect the status of the teaching profession. The majority of primary schoolteachers participating in the research determined that developing the reorganisation of teacher training policies, providing professional motivation in-service trainings for teachers, creating a sharing platform for teachers and working to improve the perception of society in a positive way are suggestions for the formation of the professional status of teachers on the basis of a synergetic approach to the organisation of methodological work.

Keywords: Occupational status, teaching profession, teacher opinions;

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1. Introduction

The teaching profession is a profession that has very important functions and responsibilities in all societies when evaluated in terms of social, economic, cultural and political aspects (Bastick, 2000). Since education is in interaction with many fields (such as social, law, politics and economy), the quality, value and status of the teacher, who is one of the most important stakeholders of the education system, will also affect the developments in other fields (Yaman, Yaman, & Eskicumali, 2001). From this point of view, the teaching profession is one of the special professions that requires professionalism.

1.1. Theoretical and conceptual framework

A teacher's efficiency requires having some professional qualifications such as having sufficient knowledge, mastering teaching methods and practices, keeping the lesson alive, controlling student development and using measurement and evaluation methods/techniques (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004). Strengthening the professionalism of teachers is shown as an important way to increase teacher quality, teaching status and education quality (Darling-Hammond, Hylar, & Gardner, 2017). The process of providing professional professionalism of teachers primarily begins with their involvement in teacher training programmes (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Uzunboylu & Hursen, 2013).

Teacher training programmes allow the formation and development of two basic elements of teacher professionalism, especially professional knowledge and professional ethical behaviours. Developing these elements in the curriculum can be seen as the first step to ensure professionalism in teachers (Lankford, Loeb, McEachin, Miller, & Wyckoff, 2014). It is important that the content and structure of teacher education programmes have a wide knowledge and depth (Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000; Sandholtz & Ringstaff, 2013). In addition to content knowledge, programmes should ensure that teachers have an adequate understanding of classroom practice and professionalism (Kramer, 2003; Reese, 2010).

Professional development activities support teachers to develop skills that will be beneficial for their learning, teaching practices and development of students (Desimone, 2009). Effective professional development programmes are studies that have an impact on teachers' skills and tendencies, classroom practices and beliefs and help create professional learning communities (Borko, 2004; Nir & Bogler, 2008; Schunk & Usher, 2011). Status, in a sense, is a society's positioning of its members, giving them a meaning and value. Social status refers to the position that an individual or a group occupies on a social prestige scale (Verhoeven, Aelterman, Rots, & Buvens, 2006). The status of teachers is an important area of inquiry in understanding the importance attached to education in each country (Fwu & Wang, 2002; Ifanti & Fotopoulou, 2011).

The status attributed to the teaching profession in the society affects the working quality and efficiency of the people who practice the profession, as well as being effective in choosing the profession and in the entry of qualified individuals into the profession (Henson, Kogan, & Vacha-Haase, 2001; Poekert, 2012). The teaching profession and teachers, who are also highly valued socially, have managed to maintain their social status for many years, despite the difficulties of working and living conditions (Goker & Gunduz, 2017; Loxley, Johnston, Murchan, Fitzgerald, & Quinn, 2007). The high status of the teaching profession shows that it has the characteristics of a professional profession. These

characteristics are listed as offering life-long career opportunities, having a positive image in the media, providing high financial fees, being valued by society and being subject to external regulations (Hargreaves et al., 2007). The value and status of the teacher in society, which is the most important factor in determining the quality of education, is one of the important factors affecting educational outcomes (Kersting, Giwin, Thompson, Santagata, & Stigler, 2012; Sanders, Wright, & Horn, 1997) because the increase in teacher status can directly increase the performance of students. Therefore, the status of the teaching profession should be taken seriously and efforts should be made to improve it (Kalin, Cepic, & Steh, 2017).

1.2. Related research

In his research titled 'The Prestige and Status of Teachers and Education', Hargreaves (2009) states that teachers are responsible for preparing the new generation for life and ensuring the intelligence development of children. In the study, it was stated that while the status of the teaching profession was expected to be high, it was not perceived as such due to various reasons. Hoyle (2001) in his research titled 'Educational Leadership' determined that protecting teachers as individuals who are passionate about their jobs, improving their education levels and ensuring their job satisfaction can be achieved by increasing their professional status and prestige. Perera, Granziera, and McIlveen (2018) examined the personality profiles of teachers. In addition, the differentiation status in the variables of job participation, job satisfaction and self-efficacy according to the personality profiles of the teachers were also investigated. The research provides new evidence showing that sustained interactions of personality, job involvement, job satisfaction and self-efficacy variables must be taken into account for the effectiveness of teaching.

The work of Lynch, Hennessy, and Gleeson (2013) provides an argument for the development of a charter teacher initiative to accredit the professionalism of experienced and accomplished teachers in Ireland. In the study, the current situation of the teaching profession was examined based on the findings obtained from Irish and international studies. Issues surrounding the accreditation of successful teachers are addressed through a review of a number of charter teacher initiatives. Hildebrandt and Eom (2011) examined the motivation factors of teachers who have achieved a national occupational standard in professionalisation. The results of this study reveal various motivations for teacher professionalism to teachers of different ages, based on different incentives.

Tschannen-Moran (2009) conducted his research on secondary schoolteachers. The findings of the study show that the level of teacher professionalism is not only related to the professional guidance of school leaders, but also to trust in the school. In the study of Senol (2020), 'What is the level of teachers' professional status, job satisfaction and self-efficacy perceptions?' sought answers. In the results, it was concluded that the perception of job situation was average and the perceptions of job satisfaction and self-efficacy were high. Interpreting these results, the teachers concluded that although they do not see their status as high, they continue to practice their profession and think that they have the competence to carry out their specialisation.

Lai and Lo (2007), in their study examining education reform practices in Hong Kong and Shanghai, concluded that Hong Kong teachers only tend to adopt policies that they think are beneficial for students' learning, while Shanghai teachers tend to comply more with the state's requirements. The

aim of Tan and Ng (2012)'s work was to examine the development of teacher professionalism in Cambodia and the problems and challenges in this field. Hargreaves' (2009) four-dimensional model of teacher professionalism is used to frame the discussion of the development of teacher professionalism in Cambodia. The research results show that Cambodian teachers need more teacher collaboration within a culture of trust and accountability.

1.3. Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to receive teacher opinions on the formation of the professional status of teachers on the basis of a synergistic approach to the organisation of methodological work.

1. What are the teachers' views on the factors that positively affect the status of the teaching profession?
2. What are the teachers' views on the factors that negatively affect the status of the teaching profession?
3. What are the recommendations of teachers on the formation of the professional status of teachers on the basis of a synergistic approach to the organisation of methodological work?

2. Methods and materials

2.1. Research method

This research was created in accordance with the qualitative research method. Qualitative research is one of the forms of knowledge production developed by people to understand their own potential, to solve their secrets and to explore the depths of the social structures and systems they have built with their efforts. In studies designed with qualitative method, there is an effort to reach a deep perception about the event or phenomenon examined (Hatch, 2010). In this direction, in this research, on the basis of a synergistic approach to the organisation of methodological work, teachers' opinions on the formation of teachers' professional status were taken in accordance with the qualitative research method.

2.2. Participants

The study group of the research consisted of 40 primary schoolteachers working in various primary schools in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in the 2021–2022 academic year. Of the primary schoolteachers participating in the research, 23 are female and 17 are male. Eight of the primary schoolteachers have 1–5 years, 13 have 6–10 years, 9 have 11–15 years and 10 have 15 years or more of experience. It was stated to the primary schoolteachers who participated in the research that their participation in the research was on a voluntary basis.

2.3. Data collection tools

The data of the research were collected with a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. While creating the research questions, the researches in the field were examined. The semi-structured interview form created was presented to the opinion of three experts. In line with the expert opinions, the questions in the form were edited. The prepared form was applied to two primary

schoolteachers after they evaluated the clarity of the questions. Primary schoolteachers stated that the questions in the form were clear and understandable. In the semi-structured interview form, there are demographic questions to determine the gender and seniority distribution of two primary schoolteachers. In the semi-structured interview form, there are three open-ended questions in order to get the opinions of the primary schoolteachers on the formation of the professional status of the teachers on the basis of a synergistic approach to the organisation of the methodological work. The questions in the semi-structured interview form are given below.

1. What are your views on the factors that positively affect the status of the teaching profession?
2. What are your views on the factors that negatively affect the status of the teaching profession?
3. What are your recommendations for the formation of the professional status of teachers on the basis of a synergistic approach to the organisation of methodological work?

2.4. Data collection process

In order to collect the research data, firstly, group interviews were conducted with primary schoolteachers in order to provide information about the content and ethical principles of the research in the schools they teach. After informing about the content of the research, the teachers who agreed to participate in the research voluntarily made an appointment for the day and time when the semi-structured form would be applied. It was ensured that primary schoolteachers filled in semi-structured interview forms in a quiet environment at the appropriate time. It took approximately 30–35 minutes for each teacher to fill out the form. It took about 1 month to complete the interviews with 40 primary schoolteachers who constituted the study group of the research.

2.5. Data collection analysis

Content analysis method was used in the evaluation of semi-structured interview forms. Content analysis requires a more detailed examination of the collected data and reaching the concepts, categories and themes that explain this data. Content analysis focuses on collected data; codes are extracted from the events and facts that are frequently repeated in the data set or that the participant emphasises on heavily: from the codes to the categories and from the categories to the themes. In short, data (codes) that are found to be similar and related to each other are interpreted by bringing them together within the framework of certain concepts (categories) and themes. In content analysis, the content of participants' views is systematically separated (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Accordingly, in this research, primary schoolteachers' views on the formation of teachers' professional status on the basis of a synergistic approach to the organisation of methodological work were transformed into findings by the content analysis method.

3. Results

In Table 1, the opinions of the primary schoolteachers participating in the research on the factors that positively affect the status of the teaching profession are evaluated.

Table 1. Factors affecting the status of the teaching profession

Theme	Category	F	%
Factors that positively affect the status of the teaching profession	Teachers' behaviour in accordance with the ethical principles of the profession	36	90
	Providing a quality teacher education	31	77.5
	Conversion into a profession with high economic returns	28	70
	Improving personal rights	25	62.5
	Persons suitable for the teaching profession should be teachers	23	57.5
	Ensuring that the teaching profession is valued by the society	19	47.5
	Developing a positive perspective of the media towards the teaching profession	16	40
	Positive and professional relationships between stakeholders	11	27.5
	Increasing the number of in-service trainings for teachers	7	17.5
	Increasing the quality of in-service training for teachers	5	12.5

In Table 1, the views of primary schoolteachers participating in the research on the factors that positively affect the status of the teaching profession are categorised. 90% of the primary schoolteachers stated behaviour in accordance with the ethical principles of the profession, 77.5% stated providing qualified teacher education, 70% stated turning it into a profession with high economic return and 62.5% stated improving their personal rights and status of the teaching profession as positive influencing factors. The factors that positively affect the status of the teaching profession show that 57.5% of the primary schoolteachers are suitable for the teaching profession, 47.5% give value to the teaching profession by the society and 40% of them stated that the media develops a positive perspective towards the teaching profession. 27.5% of the primary schoolteachers stated positive and professional relationships between stakeholders, 17.5% stated increasing the number of in-service trainings for teachers and 12.5% stated increasing the quality of in-service trainings for teachers.

In Table 2, the views of the primary schoolteachers participating in the research on the factors that negatively affect the status of the teaching profession are evaluated.

Table 2. Factors negatively affecting the status of the teaching profession

Theme	Category	F	%
Factors that negatively affect the status of the teaching profession	Low economic return of the profession	35	87.5
	Insufficient personal rights of the profession	33	82.5
	Lack of appreciation of the teacher in the education system	29	72.5
	High expectations from the teacher	22	55
	Teachers' discrediting of the profession	17	42.5
	Lack of performance, reward and promotion system	15	37.5
	Deficiencies in teacher training policies	12	30
	Failure to achieve success in education	9	22.5
	Ignoring talent in student selection for education faculties	6	15
	Leaving the teacher alone in the educational process	3	7.5

In Table 2, the views of primary schoolteachers participating in the research on the factors that negatively affect the status of the teaching profession are categorised. Of the primary schoolteachers who participated in the research, 87.5% said that the economic return of the spouse was low, 82.5% said that the profession's personal rights were insufficient, 72.5% said that the teachers were not valued in the education system and 55% said that there were high expectations from the teacher. They evaluated the status of the teaching profession as factors that negatively affect it. Of the primary schoolteachers, 42.5% stated that teachers discredit the profession, 37.5% stated the lack of performance, reward and promotion system and 30% stated deficiencies in teacher training policies as factors that negatively affect the status of the teaching profession. 22.5% of the primary schoolteachers said that they could not achieve success in education, 15% said that talent was ignored in the selection of students for education faculties and 7.5% said that the teacher was left alone in the education process.

In Table 3, the recommendations of the primary schoolteachers participating in the research on the formation of the professional status of teachers on the basis of a synergistic approach to the organisation of methodological work are evaluated.

Table 3. Establishment of professional status of teachers on the basis of a synergetic approach to the organisation of methodological work

Theme	Category	F	%
Recommendations of teachers on the formation of their professional status	Reorganising teacher training policies	34	85
	Providing professional motivation in-service trainings for teachers	32	80
	Creating a sharing platform for teachers	25	62.5
	Carrying out studies to improve the perception of society in a positive way	21	52.5
	Generating innovative solutions to teachers' professional problems	16	40
	Ensuring that qualified people prefer the profession	10	25
	Involving teachers in decisions about education	5	12.5
	Conducting team spirit building activities among teachers	2	5

In Table 3, the recommendations of the primary schoolteachers participating in the research on the formation of the professional status of teachers on the basis of a synergistic approach to the organisation of methodological work are categorised. 85% of the primary schoolteachers who participated in the research recommended the reorganisation of teacher training policies, 80% of them recommended providing professional motivation in-service trainings for teachers and 62.5% of them recommended creating a sharing platform for teachers on the basis of a synergetic approach to the organisation of the methodological study. 52.5% of the primary schoolteachers recommended that efforts should be made to improve the perception of society in a positive way, 40% recommended innovative solutions to teachers' professional problems and 25% recommended that qualified people prefer the profession. In addition, 12.5% of the primary schoolteachers recommended that teachers should be included in the decisions taken regarding education and 5% recommended that team spirit should be formed among teachers.

4. Discussion

The majority of primary schoolteachers participating in the research stated teachers' behaviour in accordance with the ethical principles of the profession, providing a qualified teaching education, transforming them into a profession with high economic returns and improving their personal rights are factors that positively affect the status of the teaching profession. Bogler (2001) evaluated teachers' job satisfaction and concluded that the value given to the profession affects their job satisfaction.

The majority of primary schoolteachers participating in the research evaluated the low economic return of the profession, the insufficient personal rights of the profession, the lack of appreciation of the teacher in the education system and the high expectation from the teacher as factors that negatively affect the status of the teaching profession. According to the research results of Nartgün and Ural (2007), it has been observed that a significant number of teachers have negative thoughts about the practice of promotion in the teaching profession, increasing the social status of the teacher in terms of prestige, recognition and success, increasing the effectiveness of the teaching process, increasing job satisfaction, enabling professional development and supporting the development of the sense of belonging.

The majority of primary schoolteachers participating in the research stated reorganising teacher training policies, providing professional motivation in-service trainings for teachers, creating a sharing platform for teachers and working to improve the perception of society in a positive way as suggestions for the formation of the professional status of teachers on the basis of a synergetic approach to the organisation of methodological work. Bakioğlu and Banoglu (2013) in their suggestions regarding the research results stated that in order to develop positive attitudes towards teachers' career steps, encouraging studies should be carried out on the career development of existing specialist teachers.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) stated that an effective professional development practice imposes duties on politicians and managers. In addition, the research emphasised the role of the state in increasing student achievement and supporting teachers' professional development. When the researches in the field are examined, it is seen that there are studies in which it is stated that the development of the status of teachers depends on some factors. In these studies, teacher-oriented solutions were presented in order to increase the status of the profession, such as giving importance to their profession, dedicating time to their professional development and being united. These suggestions are thought to be an important step in increasing the professional competence and performance of teachers, in order to increase the status of the teaching profession (Cockburn, 2000; Symeonidis, 2015).

5. Conclusion

In the education systems of the world, teachers are one of the most strategic parts of obtaining the quality learning outcomes determined by the countries according to their own conditions. It is inevitable for teachers, who have such strategic importance, to have a good social and institutional status. The increase in the expectations of the society from education and therefore from teachers has changed the roles of teachers in the education system. Due to the basic nature of the information age, the rapid increase in information and the rapid obsolescence of this information, the expected teacher role has

changed. The fact that the teacher meets the roles and expectations required by the age can positively affect the status of the teaching profession in the society. In this direction, in this research, it is aimed to get teachers' opinions on the formation of the professional status of teachers on the basis of a synergetic approach to the organisation of methodological work. As a result of the research, the majority of primary schoolteachers participating in the research stated that teachers' behaviour in accordance with the ethical principles of the profession, providing a qualified teaching education, transforming them into a profession with high economic returns and improving their personal rights are factors that positively affect the status of the teaching profession. The majority of primary schoolteachers participating in the research evaluated the low economic return of the profession, the insufficient personal rights of the profession, the lack of appreciation of the teacher in the education system and the high expectation from the teacher as factors that negatively affect the status of the teaching profession. The majority of primary schoolteachers participating in the research stated the reorganising teacher training policies, providing professional motivation in-service trainings for teachers, creating a sharing platform for teachers and working to improve the perception of society in a positive way as suggestions for the formation of the professional status of teachers on the basis of a synergetic approach to the organisation of methodological work.

6. Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are stated:

1. In order for teacher candidates to be more competent in a professional sense, teaching practices can be increased by making more cooperation with schools, and teachers and education experts who are experts in their fields can be benefited from in the training of teacher candidates.
2. In addition to improving the personal rights of teachers, authorities and responsibilities can be given to perform their profession professionally.
3. It can be stated that efforts to improve the status of the teaching profession should be carried out in a systematic and holistic way, including many elements from teacher training to the working conditions of teachers, from the point of view of the media to the teacher and the importance that society gives to the teacher.

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