

| Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi |

The Professional Development of Teachers in Türkiye: First-Year Outputs of the New Approach by the Ministry of National Education

Türkiye’de Öğretmenlerin Mesleki Gelişimi: Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı Tarafından Geliştirilen Yeni Yaklaşımın İlk Yılı Sonundaki Çıktılar

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Keywords

1. Teacher characteristics
2. Professional development
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Anahtar Kelimeler

1. Öğretmen özellikleri
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Abstract

Purpose: The trainings for teachers’ professional development were planned and implemented by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) for a long time in Türkiye. The MoNE has improved the teachers’ professional training system in late 2021 considering the teacher needs, school autonomy and recent research results on effective training policies. This study aims to evaluate the results from the first year of new approach via teacher participation and satisfaction data.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study is design as a casual-comparative research. The teacher population data from the last five years to evaluate the participation and satisfaction within comparative approach. The participation and satisfaction are measured via official participation data and teacher training survey by MoNE.

Findings: Results show that the new approach led a great boost in both the total- and individual participation in 2022. The improvement in participation reflected in all ISCED levels. The gender- and seniority distribution have become more balanced. Teachers’ satisfaction has maximized in all aspects of trainings in 2022.

Highlights: The new approach by MoNE has led a great increase in the participation: almost all teachers in Turkish education system participated the in-service trainings. New approach considering teacher needs and flexibility have a substantial potential for developing the teachers’ professional development.

Öz

Çalışmanın amacı: Öğretmen özellikleri, öğrencilerin öğrenme süreci ve eğitim sisteminin kalitesi için kritik önemdedir. Türkiye’de öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimi gelişim eğitimleri uzun yıllardır Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB) tarafından planlanmakta ve uygulanmaktadır. MEB, 2021 yılı sonunda mesleki gelişim eğitimleri için yeni bir yaklaşım geliştirmiş, bu yaklaşımda öğretmen ihtiyaçları okul otonomisi ve öğretmen eğitiminde etkinliği artıran politikaları dikkate almıştır. Öğretmen eğitimleri için Öğretmen Bilişim Ağı (ÖBA) adıyla yenilikçi bir platform kurulmuş, eğitim içeriklerinde uygulama becerileri öncelenmiştir. Bu çalışma öğretmen eğitiminde getirilen yeni yaklaşımın ilk yılı sonundaki sonuçlarını öğretmen katılımı ve memnuniyeti verileri aracılığıyla değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Materyal ve Yöntem: Bu çalışma nedensel karşılaştırma deseninde tasarlanmıştır. Yeni yaklaşımın oluşturduğu sonuçları değerlendirmek için son beş yılın öğretmen evrenine ait katılım ve memnuniyet verileri kullanılmıştır. Katılım ve memnuniyete yönelik veriler MEB tarafından toplanan resmi katılım kayıtları ve eğitim memnuniyet anketi aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Çalışmada herhangi bir örnekleme yapılmaksızın öğretmen evreni verileri kullanıldığından istatistiksel anlamlılık testleri uygulanmamıştır.

Bulgular: Çalışma bulguları, MEB tarafından geliştirilen yeni yaklaşımın öğretmen eğitimlerine toplam ve tekil katılımda büyük bir artışa yol açtığını göstermektedir. Bu artış tüm International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) düzeylerinde gerçekleşmiştir. Öğretmenlerin eğitimlere katılımında cinsiyet ve kıdem dağılımı daha dengeli hale gelmiştir. Ayrıca 2022 yılında öğretmenlerin memnuniyet düzeyleri incelenen tüm boyutlarda en üst düzeye ulaşmıştır. Bulgular, öğretmen ihtiyaçlarına odaklanan, okul otonomisini ve eğitim çeşitliliğini artıran bu yeni yaklaşımın öğretmenlerin eğitimlere katılımını ve eğitimden memnuniyetlerini artırmak için büyük bir potansiyele sahip olduğunu göstermektedir.

Önemli Vurgular: MEB’in geliştirdiği yeni yaklaşım öğretmen eğitimlerinde katılımı, eğitimlerin kapsayıcılığı ve öğretmen memnuniyetinde büyük bir artış göstermiştir. İlk kez, Türk eğitim sistemindeki neredeyse tüm öğretmenlerin eğitimlere katılımı sağlanmıştır. Eğitimler için okullara özel bütçe ayrılması ve yeni geliştirilen ÖBA platformu hem okul otonomisini hem de eğitimlere katılımı artırmıştır. Çalışma bulguları, öğretmenlerin ihtiyaçlarını dikkate alan ve eğitim politikalarıyla desteklenen yeni yaklaşımın öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimini daha etkin kılacak potansiyele sahip olduğunu göstermektedir.

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INTRODUCTION

There is consensus among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers that teacher qualifications contribute to educational quality (Blömeke, Olsen & Suhl, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2000; OECD, 2005; Yoon *et al.*, 2007). The teacher occupies an important position in the classroom and thus determines a variety of educational elements. Considering the individual characteristics and differences of students, they guide the learning process and select appropriate teaching methods.

Professional development and training of teachers are assessed in two contexts: the first is the initial training process (e.g., preservice training or initial teacher training), during which teacher candidates acquire professional skills; and the second is the training they receive during their tenure in the profession (for example, in-service or professional teacher training) (Boeskens, Nusche & Yurita, 2020; OECD, 2019). The initial training of teachers is vital to ensuring that they have adequate skills when they begin their professional careers, but in-service training allows them to enhance their skills and adapt to the changing demands of education (Boeskens, Nusche & Yurita, 2000; OECD, 2019; Reynold, 1999; Yoon *et al.*, 2007). As a result, although initial teacher training is critical to the development of teachers' pedagogical skills, its impact decreases if it is not followed by a well-established in-service training program (Boeskens, Nusche & Yurita, 2000).

As educational norms and teacher expectations have changed over the past few decades (Boeskens, Nusche & Yurita, 2000; OECD, 2009; Reynolds, 1999), in-service trainings have become increasingly important. New technologies in education have created new opportunities for learning and access to information (Guggemos & Seufert, 2021). Students' learning needs are also becoming more complex due to the increased number of national and global migrants, as well as the diversity of students' backgrounds and learning preferences (OECD, 2015). It is imperative that teachers adapt quickly to these new conditions, utilize current educational materials, and integrate technology effectively (Guggemos & Seufert, 2021, OECD, 2015, De la Calle *et al.*, 2021).

Technology advancements and easy access to information have a significant impact on educational transformation (De la Calle, *et al.*, 2021; Winthrop, Williams & McGivney, 2016). Global efforts to provide students with skills rather than information are indicative of this shift. Therefore, teachers must be able to make informed decisions regarding students' learning and assess students' skills using appropriate methods and tools. Recent educational approaches place an emphasis on students' skills and literacy, as well as their ability to use their knowledge in new conditions (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020).

Similarly to the COVID-19 pandemic, which spread across the globe in 2020, it has also presented new challenges for education systems and students' learning (CEDEFOP, 2020; Istenic, 2021; Özer & Suna, 2020; Özer *et al.*, 2017). As educational processes migrate to virtual environments, teachers are required to possess a wide range of digital and pedagogical competencies (De la Calle *et al.*, 2021; OECD, 2021). In this period, teachers possessing effective digital skills were able to use alternative methods to overcome educational challenges. Since the pandemic, education has become increasingly digital, making it even more critical for teachers to become proficient at using these technologies and to transfer their competencies to digital environments (OECD, 2021).

Professional development training is essential to teachers' adaptation to the aforementioned changes (ILO, 2015; Opfer, 2016). A rapid pace of change in education and the accompanying increased expectations placed on teachers make the characteristics of in-service training activities particularly important. PISA 2015 results indicate that teachers in higher-performing countries participate in more professional development training than their peers in lower-performing countries. In order to maximize educators' adaptation to changing technologies and methods over time, most education systems design in-service training with a lifelong education approach.

There are three steps involved in the professional development of teachers that affect student outcomes (Yoon *et al.*, 2007). The first step of the process is to provide training to teachers in order to improve their knowledge and skills. By revising their knowledge and skills, teachers are able to improve classroom instruction, which in turn enhances students' skills to a higher level (Yoon *et al.*, 2007). Several studies have demonstrated that in-service professional development is most effective when it is practice-oriented rather than theoretical, considers teacher needs, examines the reasons behind students' learning styles and behaviors, is structured as interrelated modules, and occurs in educational institutions (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Desimone, 2009; Kennedy, 2016, 2019; Opfer, 2016). Therefore, effective in-service training systems must prioritize the skills that teachers are able to directly transfer to their classroom processes and to the learning of students. Furthermore, best practices recommend that in-service trainings should be interrelated and conducted throughout the year in educational environments rather than only at certain times of the year.

The professional development of teachers in Türkiye has become systematic and regulated since the 1980s (Aydın, 1987; Baykan, Güngen & Ünal, 1987; Günel & Tanrıverdi, 2014; Ülker, 2009). For many years, professional development trainings were traditionally planned and implemented by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) (MoNE, 2022; Yazıcı & Gündüz, 2011), using a centralized approach for both planning and implementation to meet the training needs of teachers. As the primary provider of teacher training, MoNE contributed significantly to the development of teachers' skills. There is evidence that Turkish teachers consider these trainings beneficial and find them satisfactory (Ay, 2022; Doan, 2009; Kaleci, 2018; Nemli, 2017; Özer, Suna & Sunar, 2021). It should be noted, however, that this centralized approach has also posed structural difficulties. The first limitation is that teacher training can only be conducted by a limited number of teachers based on the available resources (EARGED, 2006). Since the content of professional development modules is decided centrally, scholars have emphasized that teachers' opinions

should be considered when developing these modules (Arslan, 2015; EARGED, 2006; Gülşen & Yörük, 2021). Additionally, these trainings have the potential to be improved in terms of their quality, including the competence of the trainers, the practicality of the skills emphasized, and the environment in which they are conducted (Arslan, 2015; EARGED, 2006, Aslan Keleş, 2019).

At the end of 2021, the MoNE initiated an important paradigm shift in teacher professional development. This policy change encompassed factors that increase the effectiveness of training, research-based development areas, and feedback from teachers. The new approach represents a significant shift from the conventional centralized approach to a decentralized and school-based approach to teacher training. This redesigned professional development policy takes into account the local needs of each school when determining the training requirements. This is the first time that schools have been allocated a unique budget for teacher training. As a result of this approach, schools will have greater autonomy in identifying and meeting their training needs. Meanwhile, MoNE has developed a new digital platform to improve the efficiency and coverage of online teacher training, the Teacher Informatics Network (BA). The delivery of face-to-face teacher trainings has been transferred from external venues to educational institutions and teacher training centers. Additionally, the new approach emphasizes the importance of practical skills and application of knowledge. In sum, the revised professional development model takes teachers' opinions into consideration when identifying training needs, increases school autonomy and provides financial support for training that supports teachers' practical skills, and repositions schools as teacher training hubs.

The new approach takes important steps toward addressing long-standing issues regarding teacher professional development in Türkiye. As a result of the improvements, multiple dimensions of teacher education have been addressed and solid solutions have been provided for the issues raised in the related studies. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the initial results of the revised teacher training approach in Türkiye through participation data and teacher opinions after the first year of implementation in 2022. Data from the first year of the new approach was compared with previous five-year data on teacher training. Participation rates, individual participation rates, seniority and gender distributions, and teacher satisfaction levels were analyzed and compared.

Findings from Türkiye on Teacher Professional Development

The purpose of this section is to present the findings of the existing studies on the training and professional development of teachers in Türkiye alongside the best results from the OECD The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) cycles. There has been a considerable amount of research that highlights the need for centralized planning and implementation of teachers' in-service trainings in Türkiye (EARGED, 2006). It has been indicated that centralized planning does not adequately consider teachers' opinions on educational needs or the differences between regions in educational needs (Yüner, 2022). As well as motivation loss, teacher trainings are largely compulsory, and feedback is rarely gathered or considered in the planning and implementation of such trainings (Arslan, 2015; EARGED, 2006; Gülşen & Yörük, 2021). Additionally, teachers have expressed a need for greater participation in trainings, as well as clarity regarding the selection of teachers and school administrators for professional development (Aslan Keleş, 2019).

The need for more practical, application-based activities in teacher training has also been highlighted by studies. Educators and school administrators believe that professional development modules tend to emphasize theoretical knowledge rather than practical skills (EARGED, 2006; Aslan Keleş, 2019). According to both Turkish teachers and administrators, practical training enhances classroom performance and student outcomes more effectively than theoretical training (Boeskens, Nusche & Yurita, 2020; Yoon et al., 2007). Finally, previous studies have recommended expanding the range of topics covered in trainings in order to provide teachers with a wider selection of options (EARGED, 2006). Consequently, the revised approach in Türkiye has incorporated social-emotional learning and leadership skills, as well as more traditional and foundational subjects.

The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) provides information on teacher qualifications and professional development activities across more than 20 countries. Since the TALIS is focusing on professional development in education and presents comparative findings, it is one of the most frequently cited studies on teacher qualifications. Results from the TALIS cycle in Türkiye provide valuable insights into the professional development of teachers in the country.

Turkish teachers participated in only 74.8% of professional development activities over the past year and a half, which is the lowest level among the 23 participating countries (OECD, 2009). Furthermore, the duration of teacher training in Türkiye (14.9 days) was shorter than the TALIS average (17.3). As a result, Türkiye performed lower than the majority of OECD members in terms of participation in professional development and training duration in 2008. Moreover, the results indicate that Turkish teachers are more likely to participate in theoretical professional development activities, such as conferences and seminars, as compared to the TALIS average of 48.9%. However, practice-oriented activities, such as workshops and lectures, are less popular in Türkiye (62.3% in Turkish, TALIS average of 81.2%). Teachers from Türkiye were most commonly cited for low professional development participation because it was difficult to find appropriate training (46.6% in Türkiye, 42.3% on average TALIS), conflicting trainings with work (34.7% in Türkiye, TALIS average 46.8%), or family responsibilities (31.2% in Türkiye, TALIS average 30.1%).

The results of the TALIS 2018 cycle ten years later indicate that the participation rate of Turkish teachers in professional development activities has increased to 93.6%, which remains below the OECD average of 94.5% (OECD, 2019). Table 1 summarizes the results of TALIS 2018.

Table 1. Participation in Professional Development Trainings in Türkiye —TALIS 2018

	Teachers			School Administrators		
	Primary School	Junior-Secondary School	Upper-Secondary School	Primary School	Junior-Secondary School	Upper-Secondary School
Türkiye	95.2	93.6	92.1	95.4	96.3	94.7
TALIS Average	95.8	93.8	94.8	97.0	98.7	98.9
	Primary School		Upper-Secondary Education			
	Women	Men	Women	Men		
Türkiye	95.4	94.9	91.7	92.6		
TALIS Average	95.9	95.4	95.0	94.7		
	Primary School		Upper-Secondary Education			
	5 Years or Less	More than 5 Years	5 Years or Less	More than 5 Years		
Türkiye	97.7	94.7	92.4	92.0		
TALIS Average	95.2	95.9	93.2	95.0		

Table 1 indicates that 95.2% of primary school teachers, 93.6% of junior secondary school teachers, and 92.1% of upper secondary school teachers in Türkiye reported participating in professional training in the past year. The rates are slightly lower than the average for TALIS. Similarly, school administrators in the Turkish sample participated at a rate above 90%, but below the average of TALIS.

In addition, Table 1 indicates that there is virtually no gender gap in the participation in professional development training. At both the primary and secondary levels, the difference in participation rates between men and women is below 1%. As well, the data indicate that less senior teachers participate in professional development trainings in Türkiye slightly more than their more experienced colleagues.

METHOD/MATERIALS

Research Design

The study is designed in the form of a descriptive research. Descriptive research allows researchers to describe phenomenon, occurrence, event, that happens in the present (Creswell, 2002). Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) also mentions that descriptive research includes explaining, analyzing, and classifying something in interest through various statistical and data collection methods such as survey, interview, questionnaire, & tests. This involves identification of characteristics of a particular phenomenon through observation, or exploration of correlation between two or more variables (Williams, 2007). This descriptive design is used to investigate how the participation and satisfaction indicators have changed after a comprehensive revision of teacher training approach in Türkiye.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data which is analyzed in this study is already collected by the Information Technologies (IT) Department and Directorate General for Teacher Training and Professional Development (TTPI) (Official Letter No. E-87446353-622.03-73544294). In this manner, this study analyzed the secondary data on teachers' participation and satisfaction on teacher trainings. The study considered the total participation (each teacher is considered as the number of his/her participation), the individual participation (each teacher is considered once independent from the number of his/her participation). Based on the TALIS findings indicate that the participation may change based on gender and ISCED levels, the study also involves the change in participation by gender and ISCED levels. The participation and satisfaction data from the last five years (2018 and 2022) were selected to have an appropriate benchmark for interpretation. This approach allows analyzing the changes in participation, satisfaction within subgroups and years. Data on teachers' satisfaction was collected by the IT and TTPI Departments after the completion of teacher trainings through "post-training survey". The common items in survey regarding the face-to-face and online trainings were considered to increase the comparability among years. Research has demonstrated that the survey provided reliable and valid results regarding teachers' opinions in a variety of areas (Özer, Suna & Sunar, 2021). The study do not use any statistical analyses focusing on the significance of means or percentages between the subgroups or years due to the fact that data teacher population data is considered. In this manner, the study do not uses samples as the representative of teacher population. In both the participation

and satisfaction aspects, teacher data is completely anonymized. Thus, researchers analyzed the participation and satisfaction level with demographic and professional variables without any identifying information about teachers.

Research Population

The population of the study consists of teachers who participated the professional development trainings (in-service trainings) between 2018 and 2022. From the individual perspective (each teacher is considered once independent from the number of his/her participation), the yearly number of teachers who participated the in-service trainings has varied between 458.641 and 1.006.053 between 2018 and 2022. As mentioned in data collection and analysis section, this study used no sampling method to maximize the advantage of teacher population data.

FINDINGS

Participation in Training Programs

Teachers' professional development is greatly influenced by the extent and quality of their training. In order for these trainings to have a significant impact, it is important to determine the number of teachers who benefit from them. For a country with more than 1.2 million teachers, the inclusiveness of trainings is even more imperative. Participants in in-service training were evaluated based on the number of total participants and the number of individual participants. Participants who participated in more than one activity were included in the total number of participants. In order to gain insight into how many teachers attended at least one in-service training, it is necessary to measure individual participation.

Over the past five years, the total number of Turkish teachers who have participated in in-service training is shown in Figure 1.

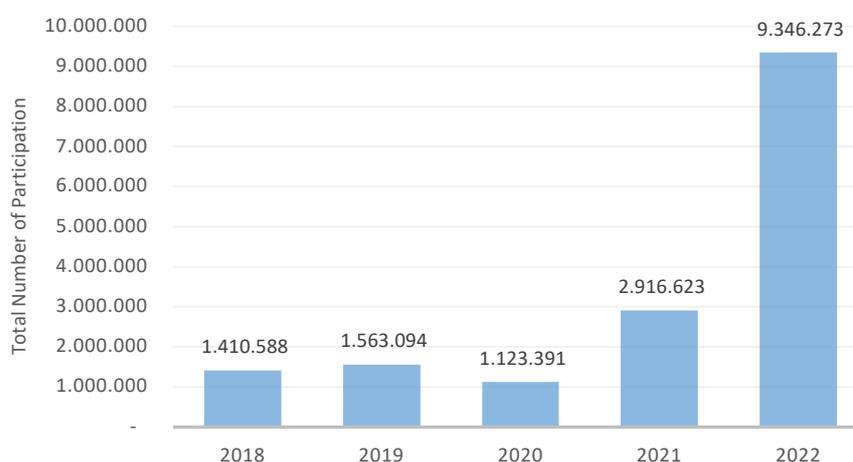


Figure 1. Total participation in professional development trainings between 2018 and 2022

As shown in Figure 1, teachers' participation in professional development activities increased significantly between 2018 and 2021, reaching a peak in 2022. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, participation ranged between 1.11 million and 1.56 million, before slowing down to 1.12 million in 2020 as a result of limitations caused by the pandemic. Compared to previous years, there was a significant increase in teacher participation in trainings in 2021 due to the return of face-to-face education in schools. Lastly, the new approach significantly accelerated participation, resulting in more than 9 million teacher training participants by 2022. As compared to 2021, the increase is approximately 220%, and compared to 2020, it is 731%. As a result of the new approach, the inclusiveness and coverage of teacher training programs have increased significantly.

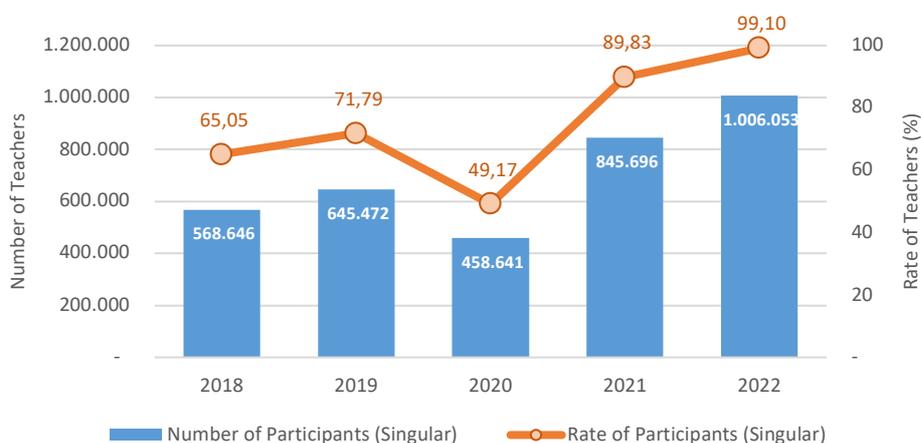


Figure 2. The number and rates of individual participation in in-service trainings between 2018 and 2022*

*Teachers working in pre-school, primary education, junior, and upper-secondary education institutions are considered.

The figure below illustrates the significant increase in the number of individual teachers participating in professional development activities toward 2022. During the period between 2018 and 2020, the percentage of teachers participating in trainings varied between 49% and 72%, but in 2021 it reached 90%. More than one million teachers attended trainings by the end of 2022, which means that almost all teachers in the Turkish education system took part in trainings. Based on the similarity between Figure 1 and Figure 2, it appears that the increase in individual participation reflects the increase in total participation. The results of this study demonstrate a significant increase in the number of teachers participating in teacher training programs, as well as a rise in individual participation.

The figure below illustrates the change in teacher training hours between 2018 and 2022, in terms of the first quarter, first half, and first year.

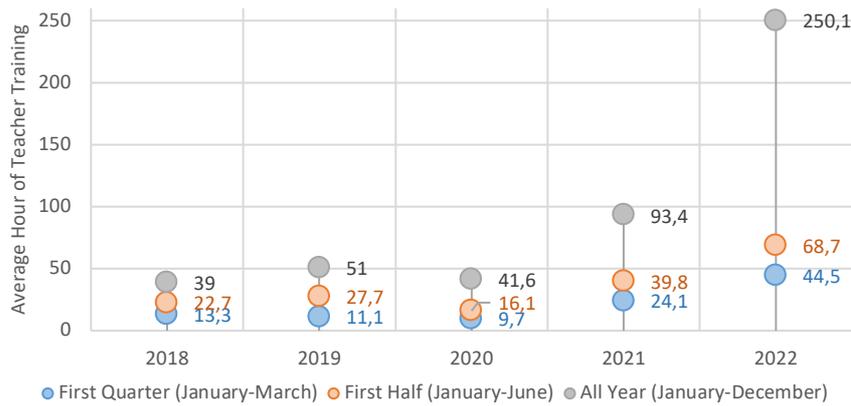


Figure 3. Average hours of training per teacher from between 2018 and 2022*

*The average training hour for each month has been calculated cumulatively to cover the trainings received from the beginning of the year until the end of the month

As shown in Figure 3, the average number of hours of education per teacher began increasing after 2020, reaching its peak (69 hours) in 2022. Training hours, which were comparatively close in 2018 and 2019 (22.7 hours in 2018, 27.7 hours in 2019), decreased significantly in 2020 (16.1 hours) due to pandemic restrictions. Teacher training, which increased significantly in 2021, reached its highest level in 2022. As compared to previous years, the data indicates significant increases, especially during the second half of the year (from July to December) 2022. The average number of hours of training per teacher in 2022 has increased by nearly twofold compared to 2021 (93.4 hours in 2021; 250.1 hours in 2022) and by fivefold compared to 2020 (41.6 hours in 2020; 250.1 hours in 2022). As a result of these findings, teachers received longer periods of training as well as a substantial increase in total participation.

Based on ISCED levels, Figure 4 illustrates the changes in participation rates in Türkiye over the past five years.

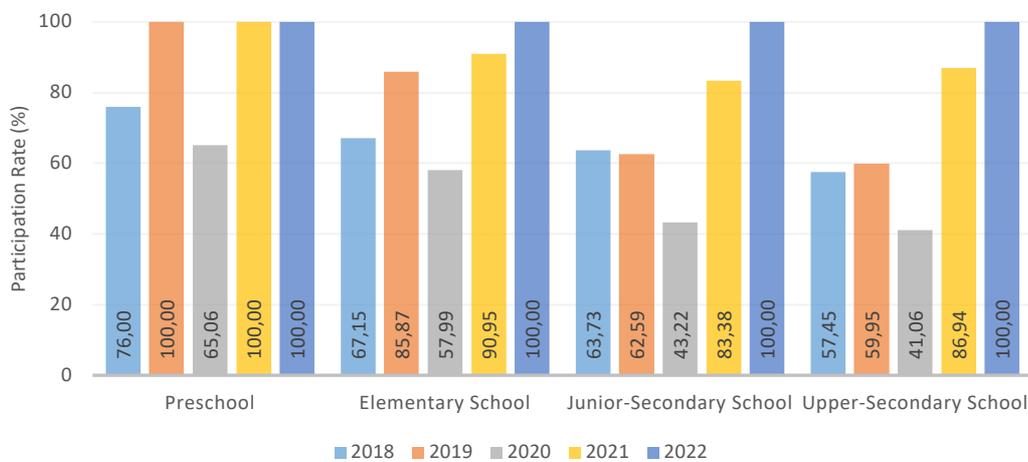


Figure 4. The participation rates of different levels of education between 2018 and 2022—ISCED levels*

*Teachers working in pre-school, primary education, junior-, and upper-secondary education institutions are considered

Figure 4 illustrates the significant increase in participation among teachers from all education levels since 2021, which peaked in 2022. On the other hand, the participation rates from 2020 indicate a negative impact of the pandemic across all levels of education. Furthermore, it indicates that participation at the pre-school and elementary levels increased in 2018 and 2019. Over the course of these years, participation rates consistently decreased from pre-school to upper secondary education. This resulted in a greater level of participation by junior and upper secondary teachers in the new approach to teacher professional development. By 2022, Türkiye's teacher participation rates in professional development trainings exceeded the TALIS averages.

Over the past five years, Figure 5 provides information on the distribution of women who have participated in in-service training.

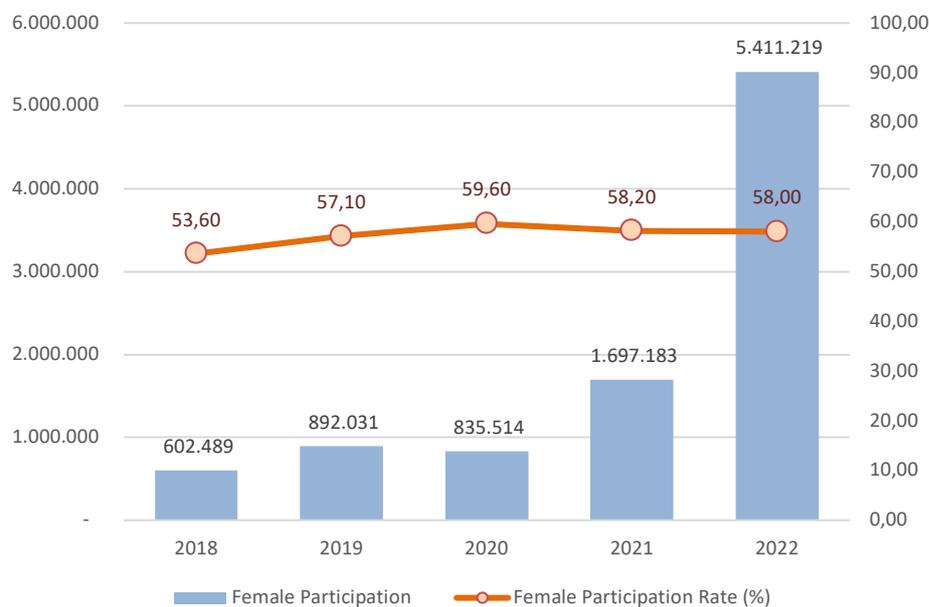
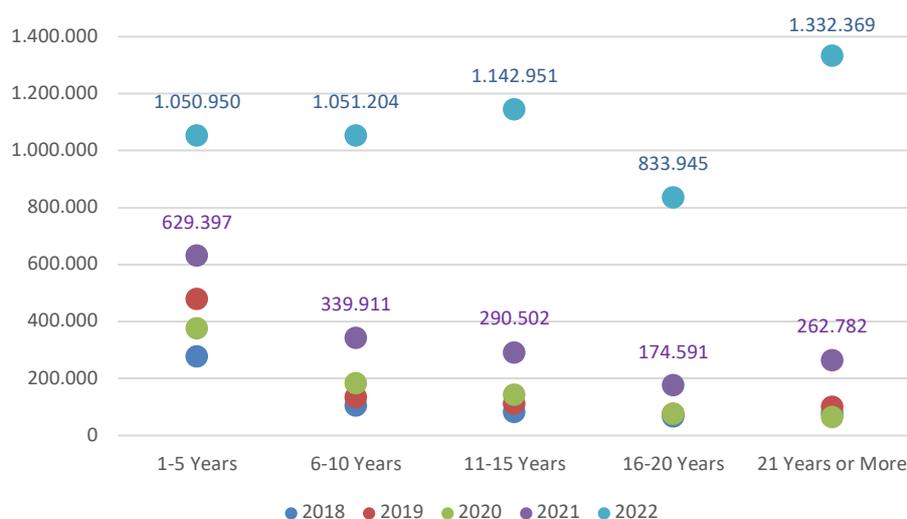


Figure 5. The Participation of Women In-Service Training Participants between 2018 and 2022

According to Figure 5, teacher participation in professional development in-service training differs significantly by gender. As approximately 60% of current teachers in Türkiye are women, it is important to measure and monitor this ratio across in-service trainings. It is important that a greater proportion of women are represented in teacher training in this context. Figure 5 shows that even though the number of women participating increased from almost 602 thousand to 5.4 million (reaching almost tenfold) in just five years, the higher rate of participation of women remains unchanged. As a result, new approaches lead to a greater level of inclusivity and reflect the gender distribution of teacher populations in Türkiye.

In Figure 6, the gender distribution of teachers who completed in-service training between 2018 and 2022 is shown.

a. Number of participation by women in-service trainings by seniority (total participation approach)



b. Rate of participation by women in-service trainings by seniority (%)-(total participation approach)



Figure 6. Participation of Women in Teacher Trainings by Seniority Group between 2018 and 2022

As shown in Figure 6, there was an increase in women's participation in all seniority groups in both the frequency and rates. Although the training participation rate of women is higher among cohorts that are relatively new to the teaching profession, it decreases as seniority increases. However, the share of participation by women peaked at all seniority groups. The participation has increased between nearly twofold (within the first five years) and six fold (within the first 21 years or more) compared to 2021. Women teachers' seniority distribution has become more balanced in 2022. In particular, the percentage of teachers with more than 11 years of experience has increased significantly. This is also critical for increasing representation of highly-senior women teachers in professional development trainings.

Teachers' Satisfaction from In-Service Trainings

Over the past five years, Figure 7 shows the results regarding teachers' satisfaction with in-service training activities.

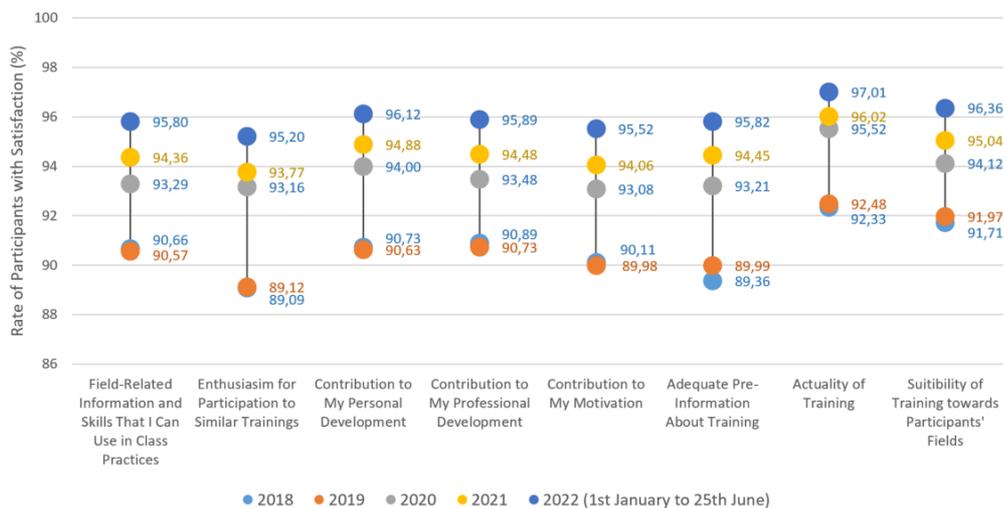


Figure 7. Teachers' Rate of Positive Responses to Diverse Aspects of Trainings between 2018 and 2022

Figure 7 indicates that teachers were highly satisfied with the educational activities of in-service trainings; however, the level of satisfaction varied from year to year. Teachers' satisfaction with teacher training activities reached its highest level in all areas covered. It is important to note that the extent and coverage of teachers' training resulted in an increase in their satisfaction. In addition, the areas of greatest satisfaction since 2018 were the desire to participate in new trainings, the increase in teacher motivation as a result of the trainings, and the improvement of preliminary data.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In-service training is an important mechanism for developing the skills of teachers and improving their abilities. Teachers are required to adapt to the profound changes in educational technologies, unexpected contingencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and the expansion of educational functions in the social sphere. The education system should therefore provide well-qualified professional development infrastructures for teachers and monitor the effectiveness of such infrastructures.

In Türkiye, in-service teacher training programs conducted by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) have served as the primary mechanism for professional development for teachers. These in-service trainings have been structured by the MoNE with a centralized approach for many years, with the Ministry of the Navy taking sole responsibility for designing, planning, and implementing them.

Despite the fact that previous research has indicated that teachers in Türkiye benefit from the MoNE-designed in-service trainings (Ay, 2022; Doğan, 2009; Kaleci, 2018; Nemli, 2017; Özer, Suna & Sunar, 2021), these studies also provided valuable feedback on the areas that need improvement in order to enhance professional development nationwide. These studies recommended that trainings be designed in accordance with teachers' opinions, that practical skills be prioritized over theoretical knowledge, that teacher and administrator participation be increased, and that training subjects be diversified. Thus, proposed models for in-service training include increasing school autonomy, allocating a specific budget for teacher trainings, establishing teacher training hubs in educational institutions, increasing the coverage and extent of trainings, prioritizing practical skills, and designing trainings according to a lifelong learning approach.

According to the data-based studies on training effectiveness, teachers' long-term feedback on teacher training is mostly consistent. The research suggests that effective in-service training should emphasize social and emotional skills in addition to academic subjects, place an emphasis on practice rather than theory, reflect teachers' opinions and needs, and take place in an educational setting. A teacher training program with these characteristics has a greater potential to accelerate student achievement.

Among the three priorities articulated by the Ministry of National Education at the end of 2021, teachers' professional development was identified as one of the themes of the 20th National Education Council, which brings together a wide range of stakeholders in the Turkish educational system. By incorporating feedback from teachers and key research findings on effective teacher training, the in-service training approach was significantly improved in late 2021.

The new approach to teacher training aims to achieve two objectives: 1) increasing the coverage and extent of trainings by maximizing participation, and 2) revising training subjects and content according to teacher needs. Therefore, the MoNE revised the training program by adopting a practice-oriented approach, expanding and diversifying training subject matter, and repositioning schools as teacher training centers. The allocation of a school-based budget also increased the autonomy of individual schools in determining and meeting their teacher training needs. Additionally, a teacher and administrator mobility program was piloted to enable school staff to observe best practices in diverse schools throughout Türkiye and implement these practices at their own institutions. In order to achieve this transformation, the MoNE increased the budget allocated for in-service training by 35 times in 2022, amounting to approximately 300 million Turkish Liras.

As part of this study, we evaluated the initial results of the new approach on teachers' participation in and satisfaction with in-service trainings after the implementation of the first year, 2022. The preliminary results of the study indicate that the new approach resulted in a significant increase in participation in in-service training, exceeding the total number of participants since 2018. As a result, only half of 2022 is expected to have higher participation levels than the previous four years combined. In Türkiye, nearly all teachers have participated in at least one annual in-service activity for the first time. A significant increase in participation has also resulted in an increase in the average number of teaching hours per teacher, from 39 hours in 2018 to 250.1 hours in 2022 as a result of increased participation. As emphasized in the TALIS findings, teachers with greater seniority have participated significantly more than in previous years. In the period between 2018 and 2022, teachers with more than 20 years of experience more than doubled their participation in in-service training. Thus, the seniority distribution has become more balanced since 2021 as a result of an increase in the number of highly experienced teachers participating. According to the gender distribution data, women participation increased in all seniority groups at the same time. All indicators of participation improved as a consequence of the improvements.

The second objective of this study is to illuminate teachers' levels of satisfaction with training. After the in-service training, teachers were asked to complete a training questionnaire to assess their satisfaction with the training. Across all aspects of the training, including content, subjects, implementation, and motivation, teacher satisfaction increased. In 2022, the percentage of teachers who believe that training contributes to their personal and professional development, increases their motivation, and improves their practical skills peaked. The revised in-service training model has contributed to an increase in teacher satisfaction by taking into account the needs of teachers and diversifying the subjects. This is also important for the alleviating the achievement gap between schools (Atar, 2014; Suna et al., 2021; Suna & Özer, 2021; Suna et al., 2020a, 2020b), which is a long-term problem of Turkish education system (Özer, 2022a, 2022b). According to these findings, teacher satisfaction and access to in-service training increased concurrently in 2022.

With the enactment of the Teachers' Profession Law No. 7354 in 2022, the MoNE has taken an important step towards further supporting teachers. A new approach to teacher education is introduced by this law, which promotes teachers' postgraduate

education and encourages their postgraduate education. A clear definition of teaching as a career path will provide teachers with an improved experience with teacher training, as well as an increase in their personal rights (Özer, 2022a). Providing qualified in-service training for teachers leads to a cumulative increase in educational quality (Özer, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c). A strong in-service training program and the support of teachers' personal rights could lead to an increase in job satisfaction for teachers. When teachers find more opportunities to improve their skills and their well-being increases, these improvements will be reflected in their education processes, which ultimately will lead to continuous improvement in the education system. From the perspective of previous studies and working hypotheses, it is imperative to discuss the results and how they can be interpreted. It is important to consider the findings and their implications in the broadest possible context. There may also be a discussion of future research directions.

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Statements of publication ethics

We hereby declare that the study has not unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

Author contribution

M.Ö. conceived of the presented idea. M.Ö and H.E.S developed the theory and performed the computations. M.Ö and H.E.S verified the analytical methods. All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript.

Researchers' contribution rate

The study was conducted and reported with equal collaboration of the researchers.

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