

# Evaluation of Quiet Quitting: Is the Bell Ringing?

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## Abstract

This study empirically explores the concept of Quiet Quitting (QQ), which is defined as the factors that prevent teachers from feeling a sense of belonging to their profession despite their efforts in school settings. It also identifies the reasons why teachers do not feel engaged in their profession and the types of disengagement behaviors they exhibit. In this research, mixed research methods were employed, among which the exploratory sequential design was utilized. The design comprised two phases, the first being phenomenology with 32, and the second being the quantitative phase with 484 teachers in the Eskişehir region of Türkiye. The results provided evidence that although the QQ phenomenon was a post-pandemic trauma that occurred especially in Generation Z, the findings showed that QQ had very different dimensions in Türkiye and that its origins were deeper. The interpretation followed the four factors of QQ: management factors, social factors, economic factors, and factors that affected teachers' well-being. As aftereffects, teachers showed emotional distance, simurg effect, apathy, and revenge from the student. The conclusions and recommendations were discussed.

**Keywords:** Quiet Quitting, Turkish Educational Settings, Teacher Behaviours, Mixed-Method Study, Post-Covid 19.

## About the Article

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## Introduction

The COVID-19 has presented a difficult stage of growth for Turkish education (Yavuz et al., 2021), and for education in other parts of the world (A'yun et al., 2022; Armstrong-Mensah et al., 2020). As the saying goes, "order out of chaos." While all parties in education, including educators, have attempted to adapt to a new order, this new process has forced scholars in education to reconsider this situation. In recent years, a global interest in education has been on the rise, with a focus on expanding the horizons of all individuals by following trends. Studies related to education aim to improve the structure of global education systems (Molina & Lattimer, 2013) by emphasizing decision-making styles and data-based approaches in education (Schildkamp et al., 2017). Moreover, scholarly investigations strive to recognize gender, regional, and economic disparities that give rise to inequities in educational opportunities (Ferreira & Gignoux, 2008). Accordingly, recommendations are made to develop school environments that furnish students with enriching learning prospects (Uline, 2022).

Turkiye is experiencing progress in education in certain domains. Recent developments in the education sector in Turkiye are noteworthy. For instance, the personnel expenses of the Ministry of National Education's budget increased from 71.7% in 2019 to 72.9% in 2020 in conjunction with the rise in enrollment rates (Eğitim Reformu Girişimi [ERG], 2021). However, various concerns have been revealed by research on the working conditions and challenges encountered by teachers in Turkiye. First, teachers in Turkiye receive lower salaries compared to their counterparts in OECD countries (Demirel-Yazıcı & Cemaloğlu, 2022; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2018; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2022). Furthermore, teachers in Turkiye report low levels of job satisfaction (Ulukan, 2020) and often express concerns regarding organizational justice (Aydin & Karaman-Kepeneci, 2008), favoritism (Aydoğan, 2009), and the tediousness of school tasks and procedures (Kazak, 2019).

Educational policies are subject to constant change, and professional dignity is often lacking (Eğitim ve Bilim Emekçileri Sendikası [Eğitim-Sen], 2015). These challenges have led to burnout among teachers in Turkey (Seferoğlu et al., 2014), as well as the manifestation of organizational silence and cynicism behaviors (Demirtaş et al., 2016), reduced organizational commitment (Ergen, 2015), and a decline in the quality of work life (Erdem, 2008).

In recent studies, researchers have examined factors that contribute to Quiet Quitting (QQ), including burnout, using different variables. The resulting data have been analyzed within the framework of dependent and independent variable causality, indicating the need for a multifaceted approach to understanding this phenomenon. Additionally, previous research has explored and discussed changes in the lifestyles of teachers, suggesting significant differences from the past.

'Is it always the right thing to give 110% at work? Is this kind of diligence a virtue? There is little doubt that QQ stands in opposition to a hustle or rise-and-grind culture that demands a ceaseless commitment to

productivity and the pursuit of career-oriented goals. But that's kind of the point. The contention at play concerns whether there is anything morally wrong with fulfilling our contractual expectations but not seeking to rise above them (Arnet, 2022: n/a).'

'It is understood that the QQ that dominated the pre-pandemic period was not so secret and silent. With the change, employees are no longer putting their work at the center of their lives; they want to establish a work-life balance by prioritizing their private lives. It should not be forgotten that QQ is a long-term product of the process (Çimen & Yılmaz, 2023: 32).'

In this research, QQ is defined as a broad term in the existing literature and is empirically tested in Turkish schools for the first time. Initially, the factors that give rise to QQ among teachers were comprehensively identified, followed by the examination of the QQ behaviours that they exhibit as an aftermath. This study is noteworthy as it elucidates a prevalent and concerning trend of QQ in Turkish schools amongst local educators. Moreover, this paper offers international readers insight into the underlying causes of QQ, effective strategies to mitigate QQ, means to bolster organisational culture and teacher welfare, and, therefore, promote policy development and implementation.

### **Educational Settings in Türkiye**

The education system in Türkiye is characterized by a centralist approach, where the Ministry of Education develops the curriculum, and teachers are expected to implement it. However, studies have shown that teachers often make changes to the curriculum based on their preferences or student needs (Bümen et al., 2014). This centralist nature has been criticized for its organizational structure and its failure to mitigate existing inequalities in society (Özdemir & Demircioğlu, 2014). The system is highly exam-oriented, with national centralized exams holding significant importance in shaping the future of Turkish youth (Toksöz & Kılıçkaya, 2018). These exams have been found to significantly influence students' motivational sources and attitudes towards education (Polat, 2020). Additionally, the pressure and consequences attached to high-stakes tests have been observed to have various effects (Toksöz & Kılıçkaya, 2018). The impact of the university entrance exam on English language education has also been studied, highlighting its influence on pre-service teachers' perspectives. Furthermore, the system has faced challenges in meeting the needs of students and has encountered various problems due to its centralist state. The pandemic further accelerated the shift from traditional face-to-face education to total distance education in Türkiye (Korkmaz et al., 2021). The centralist and exam-based education system in Türkiye has also influenced adult education policies, with efforts made to harmonize the system with EU countries' systems (Vezne & Yıldız, 2021; Dilbaz, 2021). Moreover, the system has had a significant impact on career choices, with university entrance exam scores playing a substantial role in students' subject choices. The centralist nature of the system has also been found to affect consistency among curriculum, textbooks, and placement tests. Additionally, the system has influenced the evaluation and selection of students for higher education institutions. The impact of the system on student achievement has been a subject of study, with the effect of curriculum-based external exit exam systems being evaluated (Bishop, 2000). In conclusion, the education system in Türkiye is characterized by a centralist and

exam-oriented approach, which has significant implications for student motivation, inequality, and the overall educational experience.

The centralized educational system in Turkey significantly affects the academic, social, and cultural aspects of teachers' lives, imposing constraints that limit their creative and personalized teaching approaches (Collie et al., 2012), thereby undermining their job satisfaction (Sarpkaya and Kırdök, 2019) and academic freedom (Bourn & Soysal, 2021). This system's strict curriculum oversight and standardized educational practices hinder equitable learning opportunities and fail to meet the diverse needs of students across gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic backgrounds, undermining efforts to create a diverse and inclusive educational environment. Moreover, the system places undue pressure on teachers, affecting their professional and personal well-being and restricting their opportunities for professional development and meaningful student interactions. Advocating for systemic changes to grant teachers more autonomy could profoundly improve the educational framework, benefiting both educators and students by fostering a more dynamic and supportive learning experience.

### **Background of this Study**

When COVID-19 lost its impact, the situation that started in the United States in 2021 and spread to many countries, along with a significant number of employees resigning, was referred to as the 'Great Resignation Movement.' While the Great Resignation continues to reverberate in business circles, the concept of the QQ began to be discussed by 2022. The concept of QQ regained popularity worldwide with COVID-19 due to the disruption of work-life balance. This concept manifests itself through the inadequacies or negatives in psychological, social, physical, and economic conditions, leading individuals to be physically present in the workplace but not engaging in anything beyond their job description and working hours. The concept of QQ entails the individual's reaction to questioning themselves with questions like "for what?" "What am I doing?" "Is it worth it?" and the answers to these questions being against the employer or the workplace (Fuller & Kerr, 2022; Parker & Horowitz, 2022; Yıldız & Özmenekşe, 2022). This concept represents the employee's limited commitment to the workplace in terms of fulfilling assigned tasks and giving up any other tasks not specified in the job description (Çimen & Yılmaz, 2023; Formica & Sfodera, 2022).

The current business world has undergone a significant transformation, particularly with the impact of COVID-19. It is observed that this transformation has had negative impacts on both employees and employers. Employers have faced outcomes, such as downsizing, staff reduction, and changes in work patterns, while employees have started experiencing the burden of excessive workload and increased physical and mental exhaustion. In fact, this situation indicates that the problem existed before COVID-19 but was triggered by the pandemic itself (Fuller & Kerr, 2022; Önder, 2022). In a study conducted by Harter (2022), the percentage of employees under the age of 35 who claimed to be engaged in their work decreased by six points from 2019 to 2022. The same study also found that the percentage of young employees who strongly agreed that someone cared about

them, supported their development, and provided advancement opportunities experienced a decrease of more than 10%. The change brought some discussions on the ethics of work-life. Although it is not one of the classical virtues, working hard could be accepted as a moral virtue, which is an excellent character, generally worth cultivating before the pandemic. It is understood that the silent resignation that dominated the post-pandemic period was not so secret and innocent. With the change, employees are no longer putting their work at the center of their lives; they want to establish a work-life balance by prioritizing their private lives. It should be noted that silent resignation will change the work-life balance radically (Arnet, 2022). The destructive wave brought by the pandemic has prompted employers to develop strategies to protect their businesses and companies, while employees have focused on protecting themselves. Employers have assigned additional tasks to their remote workers that were not originally part of their job descriptions, flexed the concept of working hours by scheduling meetings at their convenience, and often refrained from making salary adjustments due to employees not physically being present in the office. On the other hand, employees have sought alternative solutions, such as renegotiating salaries and other financial benefits, and ensuring flexible working conditions and hours (Ulutürk, 2022). This process, which started with a lack of communication between employers and employees, particularly in the United States, led to millions of workers spending the majority of the year at home due to the pandemic, starting from the beginning of the spring of 2020.

About a year later, after the lockdowns were lifted, it was expected that employees would return to their workplaces as the impact of the pandemic weakened. However, around 47 million Americans refused to do so and did not go back to their jobs (Fuller & Kerr, 2022). In the United Kingdom, in May 2021, the university union signed a manifesto-like set of decisions to regulate work without resorting to strikes. While employees continued to perform their duties, they began to exhibit QQ behaviors, such as not rescheduling classes, appointments, meetings, or other tasks cancelled due to industrial action, not attending meetings longer than 50 minutes, not sending emails before 9:00 am, and after 5:00 pm, and not taking on more work than committed to. This situation indicated to the employers that the university would not function without the staff taking on additional tasks beyond their routine duties (Lord, 2022). DeSmet et al. (2022) identified the reasons behind the great resignation wave as low wages, the perception of employee impoverishment, a lack of recognition and a sense of disrespect for performance, a toxic culture, and job dissatisfaction and a lack of meaning. Zenger and Folkman (2022) found that managers who were concerned about the needs of others had the lowest percentage of resignations in the great resignation movement.

Youthall, a company that conducted research on QQ in Türkiye, determined that 24% of the young workforce experienced the process of QQ, while 47% were very close to QQ (Kariyer platformu..., 2022). Considering that Türkiye has the highest average weekly working hours in Europe (Duman, 2022), it can be expected that employees will work long hours and become exhausted. According to the data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (2021), only 16.3% of approximately 34 million employees in Türkiye

feel happy in their work due to job satisfaction, financial reasons, and success. In other words, it can be said that there is a majority who are unhappy and dissatisfied and are the target of QQ. Çimen and Yılmaz (2023) clarified the issues, such as the reasons that cause QQ, the behaviors by which individuals manifest QQ, and what to do to prevent them. Also, they proposed measuring employee expectations and, developing related practices, and creating a safe and supportive working environment as the first solutions that come to mind for preventing QQ. This study aims to explore the teachers' perceptions, and their experiences regarding the reasons for and aftereffects of QQ. The findings aim to assist teachers, educational administrators, and policymakers in mitigating the negative impacts that decrease teacher motivation and disrupt students' educational experiences. Therefore, the researchers prepared research questions, and they are related to (i) the aspects of QQ, (ii) How QQ is perceived at schools by teachers, and (iii) How much QQ is perceived at schools by teachers. Thus, we aimed to ask these questions to the teachers the following questions:

- How would you define and explain the factors that cause your limited commitment to your teaching profession due to your working conditions?
- How do the factors that cause you to have limited commitment to your teaching profession due to your working conditions affect you?

## Method

This study utilised an exploratory sequential design approach, commonly used in mixed methods research (Creswell et al., 2003). The design comprised two phases, the first being Phenomenology (N=32), and the second being the quantitative phase (N=484). This design is particularly beneficial when qualitative data exploration is an initial requirement for subsequent quantitative data collection. Exploratory sequential designs prove invaluable when tackling complex and poorly understood research problems or questions. Researchers can delve into the topic in great depth before moving on to the quantitative phase of design.

The initial qualitative phase furnishes contextual knowledge and comprehension that facilitate the creation of research tools, hypotheses, and the entire quantitative research plan. This approach can enrich and validate the research findings by merging the potentials of both qualitative and quantitative research techniques (Creswell et al., 2003). We initiated our exploration of the phenomena through a qualitative phase by conducting interviews to collect data. This approach provided us with comprehensive insights, allowing us to identify crucial patterns and themes in the data. Following this, researchers moved on to the quantitative phase where they employed surveys to collect numerical data.

Our objective was to validate the results obtained from the qualitative phase using statistical analysis to draw conclusions and generalize the findings with the quantitative

data. In the last step, both phases were put together, and we showed a full understanding of the research problem through a table-based display that put both findings next to each other (Fetters et al., 2013).

## Participants

### Phenomenology Phase

The phenomenology phase entailed conducting semi-structured interviews with 32 teachers (8 males and 24 females) who taught in various schools within the Eskişehir region of Türkiye. In the selection process, we utilised the snowball sampling discriminative exponential approach. This approach necessitates the recognition of a preliminary group of interviewees who will be interviewed. At the conclusion of their interview, these individuals will be asked to put forward potential subjects who exhibit comparable traits and are pertinent to the survey's objectives (Noy, 2008). Teachers' ages ranged from 21 to 52 (21 to 31=12, 31 to 40=17, 41 to 50=2, Upper 51=1). In terms of school types, six were from private schools, and six were from state schools. Table 1 depicts the participants' demographic information.

**Table 1.** Demographic values of phenomenology participants

Variables		Categories of variables										
		School types			Age				Gender			
		Private School	State school	Total	21 to 30	31 to 40	41 to 50	Upper 51	Total	Female	Male	Total
Qualitative Phase	Phenomenology	17	15	32	12	17	2	1	32	24	8	32

### Quantitative Phase

In the quantitative phase, we used convenience sampling, which refers to collecting data by convenience to collect data from the Eskişehir and Muğla regions of Türkiye. This technique lets us conduct the research quickly and conveniently. It is one of the most frequently used sampling strategies as well as the least desirable (see McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Answers were collected from 447 teachers with different teaching experiences, academic degrees, ages, and genders teaching at different schools. Their teaching experiences ranged from 0 to 31 (0 to 10=126, 11 to 20=170, 21 to 30=123, Upper 31=28). Regarding academic degrees, three were associates, 293 were bachelors, 145 were graduates, and six were doctorates. Their age ranged from 21 to

51 (21 to 30=37, 31 to 40=189, 41 to 50=154, and upper 51=67). As for gender, 447 teachers participated in the survey (Male=161 and Female=286). Table 2 presents participants' demographic information.

**Table 2.** Demographic values of quantitative participants

Variables	Categories of variables																	
	Teaching experience					Academic degree				Age			Gender					
	0 to 10	11 to 20	21 to 30	Upper to 31	Total	Associate	Bachelor	Graduate	Doctorate	Total	21 to 30	31 to 40	41 to 50	Upper 51	Total	Female	Male	Total
Quantitative Phase	126	170	123	28	447	3	293	145	6	447	37	189	154	67	447	286	161	447

### Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Study

High-quality qualitative research requires critical reflection and a rationale for the chosen framework used in the study. Our recent study was assessed using four criteria to evaluate its trustworthiness (Stahl & King, 2020): credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. We established alignment between QQ, research question, data collection, analysis, and results for credibility and chose and explained the sampling strategy, the depth and volume of data, and the analytical steps taken. For dependability, we provided sufficient information so that another researcher could follow the same procedural steps. Confirmability is another step in applying trustworthiness by showing how we reached our findings through detailed descriptions. Finally, transferability was achieved by describing the context of the research. The data from the phenomenology phase were analyzed using MAXQDA2022, and the qualitative design was analyzed using JAMOVI 1.1.9 Advanced Statistical Package.

### Reliability of the Quantitative Study

We obtained the consistency of our data collection tool's construct by measuring the test-retest reliability. To measure the construct of the data collection tool, we applied it to a group of teachers in the first part of May 2023 using it again on the same group of teachers 18 days later. We checked the test-retest correlation between two sets of Pearson's  $r$  scores which was found ( $r=+.91$ ) to be considered good reliability. We assessed the content validity through inter-rate reliability. Five academics assessed the questions in the beginning, demanding some corrections. We met their requirements and sent them back again. Finally, we calculated the Lawshe Content Validity Ratio (L-



CVR) with a panel size of 5 and the minimum number required to agree with an item essential for inclusion of 5 for every question (Lawshe, 1975).

## **Data Collection**

### **Phenomenology**

The initial stage of our qualitative research utilised phenomenology to reveal the nuanced and context-specific dimensions of user experiences (Weaver-Hightower, 2018). Our application of phenomenology allowed us to examine the distinct requirements, emotions, and perspectives of teachers in their perception of QQ and how these affected their professional and personal lives. The present study examined the experiences, behaviours, opinions, values, feelings, knowledge, and sensory perceptions of teachers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Sample research questions include: (i) What are the factors attributed to facing QQ? (ii) In what ways do the factors affect your emotions in relation to QQ? What was your response?

In this study, participant recruitment was actively conducted over four months, from January to April 2022. During this phase, initial interviews were carried out, and the data were analyzed using an inductive, non-directive approach. The research progressed through sequential qualitative phases. The insights gained from the phenomenological analysis in phase 2 informed the development of interview questions for subsequent teacher interviews. Before the pilot study, these interview questions were reviewed and approved by three field experts. The format of the teacher interviews comprised open-ended questions, specifically designed to explore teachers' perceptions of the QQ framework.

### **Phase 2 Quantitative Method**

The second phase of this study was a quantitative cross-sectional analysis focused on examining the predisposing factors affecting QQ. This phase involved collecting data from a varied group of teachers at a single time point, aiming for an impartial observation of variables, as described by McMillan & Schumacher (2006). The qualitative data from the first phase was analyzed to identify patterns and themes, aiding in the development of a new instrument or taxonomy for the quantitative stage. Following the qualitative analysis, the research team advanced to quantitative data collection, primarily through surveys. These surveys, formulated after the phenomenology phase, incorporated Likert-type questions that resonated with the qualitative findings. The purpose of the survey was to explore the dynamics of QQ and to validate the qualitative results. It was disseminated electronically via Google Docs, featuring a self-completion question format. For the analysis and interpretation of the quantitative data, the JAMOVI 1.1.9 Advanced Statistical Package was utilized, incorporating insights from the qualitative phase. The quantitative measurement of QQ was structured around four dimensions identified in the qualitative research. Key survey questions included assessing teachers' perceived societal value and experiences with psychological health issues. Descriptive analysis was employed to review both qualitative and quantitative survey data,

with the entire study receiving approval from the Eskiřehir Osmangazi University Ethics Committee in Turkiye.

### **Phase 3: Building the Mixed Methods Integration**

This research adopted a dual-analytical approach to integrate and generate meta-inferences from qualitative and quantitative data (Table 3). The initial phase involved sequentially linking each study to the subsequent one, with tables playing a crucial role in aligning the findings of each study. O’Cathain et al. (2010) propose an additional step in the final phase of research, which involves using a joint display for meta-inferential analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, as discussed by Bazeley (2016). This analysis entails placing qualitative quotes and themes alongside quantitative measures, followed by a comprehensive summary comparing these two components. The hermeneutic cycle, a phenomenological concept, was used to interpret the findings. The results from the quantitative phase complemented each other, confirming the effectiveness of this integrative approach, as also noted by Moran-Ellis et al. (2006).

Table 3. Phases of the study

Phase 1- Qualitative Phase		Phase 2-Quantitative Phase																						
Themes	Sub-themes	Items	Never						Sometimes						Always						Mean	SD	%95 CI	
			1		2		3		4		5		6		7		Low	Up						
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%								
Management State	EA's management style	Unplannedness	EA distributes responsibilities fairly	107	22	62	12,7	81	16,7	51,4	111	22,5	22,5	71	15	29	6	23	4,9	26,1	3.33	1.74	3.17	3.49
		Intimidation	EA uses threatening language	49	10,1	59	12,1	62	12,8	35	81	16,8	16,8	85	17,5	71	14,6	77	16,1	48,2	4.40	1.85	4.23	4.57
	Teacher drudge	Handyman, Advertiser, Nannying teacher	EA gives trivial tasks.	23	4,8	32	6,6	33	6,8	18,2	58	12	12	101	20,9	81	16,8	155	32,1	69,8	5.17	1.78	5.00	5.33
		Emotional pressure	EA applies pressures.	31	6,4	29	6	44	9,1	21,5	85	17,6	17,6	102	21,2	80	16,6	111	23	60,8	5.05	1.77	4.88	5.21
Social State	Mobbing	Favoritism, Discrimination	Teachers are exposed to mobbing	24	4,9	34	7	33	6,8	18,7	66	13,4	13,4	91	18,9	71	14,8	166	34,1	67,9	4.82	1.78	4.65	4.98
		Stigmatization																						
Social State	Worthless teacher	Social prejudice	Society is biased	18	3,7	15	3,1	15	3,1	9,9	16	3,3	3,3	38	7,9	76	15,7	306	63,2	86,8	6.05	1.61	5.90	6.20
		Unworthy teacher	Society renders value to the teachers	165	34,1	112	23,1	79	16	73,2	59	12,3	12,3	48	10,1	15	3,1	6	1,2	14,5	2.58	1.55	2.43	2.72
		Pitiful teacher	MoNE renders value to the teachers	250	51,5	104	21,6	61	12,6	85,7	42	8,7	8,7	15	3,1	7	1,5	5	1	5,6	2.01	1.35	1.88	2.13
	Life zest-less teacher	Student pressure	Students respect teachers	71	14,7	88	18,2	80	16,5	49,4	113	23,3	23,3	72	14,9	41	8,5	19	3,9	27,3	3.48	1.65	3.33	3.63
Group pressure																								
Economic State	Poverty	Parent pressure	I am economically promising for my family.	206	42,6	99	20,5	78	16,1	79,2	55	11,4	11,4	27	5,5	13	2,7	6	1,2	9,4	2.29	1.48	2.15	2.43
		Workload pressure		My salary allows me to live well.	212	43,8	91	18,9	88	18,1	80,8	60	12,2	12,2	17	3,5	6	1,4	10	2,1	7	2.30	1.52	2.16
Well-being State	Health problems	Private life-less teacher	Psychological and physical disorders	115	23,8	88	18,2	38	7,9	49,9	70	14,5	14,5	67	13,7	38	7,8	68	14,1	35,6	3.53	2.10	3.34	3.73
		Unhappy and demotivated teacher		I have psychological problems.	103	21,1	74	15,3	50	10,4	46,8	60	12,4	12,4	67	13,9	58	12	72	14,9	40,8	3.74	2.12	3.54

### 3. Results

This study investigates Turkish teachers' experiences of the QQ phenomenon, exploring how it emerged and how it affected them through qualitative and quantitative methods.

#### 3.1 Phase I Qualitative Results

We employed a phenomenological study to explore the dynamics that prompt teachers to engage in QQ. We investigated a self-reinforcing sequence of events or circumstances in which teachers are driven to perpetuate each other, resulting in a negative outcome or a situation that begets it. The origin of this self-perpetuating harmful cycle lies in administrative factors, making it challenging to disrupt. Subsequently, social and economic factors fuel this cycle. Unfortunately, this leads to adverse impacts on the physical and psychological well-being of teachers.

##### 3.1.1 Management Factors

In this study, teachers most often referred to the administration dimension of QQ. In Türkiye, the education system and administration are centrally managed, resulting in similarities across schools regarding climate and architectural structure. School management boundaries are generally determined by the education system's structure and objectives. School administrators are expected to possess the necessary competencies to accomplish expected outcomes and align school goals with predetermined objectives.

School administrators are crucial to the success of education, as their failure can lead to the failure of the entire system. Our study highlights the concept of justice as a critical factor that initiates a vicious cycle in school administration. During the study, it was noted that participant teacher G15 considered justice to be a self-sufficient virtue, akin to happiness. However, it was also found that school principals are not always fair in their actions: *"I don't believe they display a high degree of impartiality. I perceive unjust acts are being perpetrated."* According to teachers' perspectives, school principals possess power and resources derived from laws. Teachers perceived this power and stated that they were exposed to nepotistic behavior by principals. G25 attributed the origins of nepotism to *"union influence or mutual interests."* Unions, which serve to ensure social integration in organized societies, have been identified as a phenomenon that generates tension and conflicts among teachers in our study. Therefore, the management component appears to function as a mechanism that unevenly distributes power and resources, ultimately resulting in injustice.

A less equitable management climate has given rise to a whistleblowing mechanism that relies on mutual benefit to maintain its sustainability, prompting teachers to engage in QQ. Participant teacher G23 stated that *"the system for reporting misconduct was established and supported by the school principal in both public and private schools."* The presence of both favoritism and whistleblowing mechanisms hinders the ability of school principals to establish an equitable administration. Moreover, this creates a one-way communication

style from the principal to the teacher, perpetuating a vicious cycle. The language used in communication becomes threatening, resulting in discrimination. School principals primarily discriminate based on gender. Participant G18 stated, *"Especially in activities where dominance is important, only male teachers are given tasks."* Additionally, school principals exhibit preferential treatment towards teachers who are their close acquaintances. Conversely, teachers who are less familiar with the principal are assigned challenging, intricate, and oftentimes mundane tasks pertaining to the upkeep and repair of the school. During registration periods, teachers at private schools are assigned to promote their institution at stands set up on streets and in shopping malls or to distribute brochures. Participant G4, who was very dissatisfied with this situation, expressed his views as follows: *"On occasions like school introduction days, you're doing the school's advertising like an advertiser. Teachers are given brochures to distribute, and promotion is done at shopping malls."*

In addition to favoritism, school principals sometimes utilize an oppressive management style towards teachers, which can be considered unfair. One of the emotional pressures that teachers often perceive is being made to feel guilty. Participant G7 exemplifies this by stating, *"For example, I had a task to complete at school but was sick that day, unable to attend and do my work. The following day, pressure was immediately applied to make me feel guilty."* In addition to favoritism, school principals employ an unfair management style that oppresses teachers. The initial emotional pressure experienced by teachers is guilt induction. For instance, participant coded G7 emphasizes *"feeling emotional pressure due to sickness causing them to miss a school assignment. The next day, the principal immediately attempted to induce a sense of guilt in the participant."* Teachers reported that school principals insinuated that teachers were neglecting their duties and discriminated against them on this basis. Our finding suggests that favoritism in schools creates emotional pressure. In this case, favoritism emerges as a pragmatic tool resulting from the social hierarchical structure within the school and the relationship between the administrator who possesses authority and the teacher who favors them. The finding revealed by Participant Teacher G32's coding indicates that every vice principal has a teacher nearby. In addition, school administrators engage in the behavior of psychological violence by ignoring it as a form of emotional pressure. For instance, teacher G11 reported that the school principal disregards her with unresponsiveness, stating, *"For instance, we have paperwork to do. He turns his face... He ignores us. He doesn't greet us."*

Another situation that caused emotional pressure for teachers was the expectation of their students' success. Some teachers believed that this expectation was unrealistic. Teacher G26, who worked at a private school, explained that emotional pressure arose when a student fell short of achieving the desired target on an exam. *"...Our school places great importance on academic success and organizes all educational processes in this direction. So, there is pressure on us in this regard. Because whenever there is even the slightest change in the exam results of students, we are interrogated..."*

### **Social State**

In our research on the perception of QQ by teachers, we identified the concept of status, which determines the position and reputation of teachers in society. We examined the

impact of society's perception of teachers as it reflects their societal status. We revealed the effects of status on teachers' self-esteem, social relationships, and stakeholder interaction.

Society harbors negative attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments about teachers and the teaching profession. These widely held views lead to generalizations about educators. The initial factor behind such generalizations is the working hours and working conditions of teachers. G21 described a societal perception that has arisen in recent years as follows: *"They say things like, 'You earn money by working very little, lying down all day.'"* The social perception indicated a decline in the social status of teachers, resulting in their devaluation and subsequent feelings of being devalued.

This persistent devaluation is systemic in nature. G7 states: *"I think the teaching profession is somewhat belittled nowadays. I believe it should be one of the most esteemed professions in this country."* The full extent of the value decrease was total. Teachers reported receiving criticism from all segments of society, which can occasionally escalate to disrespectful behavior. G19 supports this view with the following statement: *"As a teacher, I see that even a bus driver disrespects a teacher. I see a teacher who has led students in singing the national anthem being scolded by the administrators."* As a result, teachers felt worthless in the social appearance process. This worthlessness caused teachers to show various reactions. Participant G29, who feels worthless, expressed that I posed distance with the family, saying: *"...I provide the knowledge required by my profession, I express my thoughts about the children, and then I remain silent. I try to keep a distance with my parents."*

Another reflection that teachers showed was the decrease in commitment to their profession and they only focused on their primary duties, avoiding extra tasks, as expressed by participant G26: *"We only do what our profession requires. I don't feel like doing anything extra."* Teachers attained social status in society through their achievements, conduct, and the highly qualified individuals they instruct. This status was earned and was influenced by factors, such as teachers' social contributions to society, job performance, and professional excellence. This recognition can result in individuals gaining a respected status in society based on their professional expertise and experience.

In this study, it was discovered that teachers had a perception of social mobility in reverse, meaning that they experienced lost status. As a result, teachers tended to devalue themselves. Participant G22 states, *"Teachers devalue themselves. This happens due to their choice of clothing, their lack of knowledge about their labor rights, and their inability to unite. Their inability to unite among themselves exacerbates this situation."* G16, another participant, argued that *"the behavior of some colleagues contributes to this self-devaluation showing inappropriate behavior, such as harassment, further diminishes the value of teachers."* We identified given status and lost status as the two qualities that determined the position of teachers in society and led to reverse social mobility.

Teachers emphasized the pressures they experience as the primary reason for these qualities. Overall, societal pressures in the form of student workload and family obligations have been found to lead teachers to exert more control over their students

rather than foster their autonomy. Moreover, policymakers in the field of education in Türkiye are known for frequently altering laws, practices, and norms, resulting in swiftly changing societal expectations and regulations. Unfortunately, these changes often result in a negative impact on families, students, and educators. For a considerable period, academic failure and failing grades have not been implemented in the Turkish Education System. Grade repetition is viewed as a disciplinary measure by teachers, but this can erode their power. Consequently, students across all levels of education believe that they will not fail and repeat a grade. However, primary school marks the beginning of a structured learning experience for children. Disciplinary authority is a crucial component for upholding the sustainability of this structure. G13 mentioned the absence of this element in the following words: *"Students sometimes exceed the boundaries of discipline, subjecting teachers to disrespectful behaviors because they know no sanction"* With these words, G13 stated that students sometimes exceeded the limits of discipline and behaved disrespectfully towards teachers. This pressure was even harsher and worse in private schools. Teachers remarked that private school students utter heartbreaking words to teachers, and some students with higher socio-economic backgrounds say, *"Your salary is my shoe money."*

The actions and beliefs of parents can result in teachers feeling pressured and exhibiting particular behaviors. This pressure is amplified for instructors employed in private schools. Additionally, teachers working in small, boutique schools, where tuition is lower than in chain schools, face pressure from principals, parents, and students. In the Turkish education system, achieving high grades at the time of graduation is crucial for success in the central placement exams. Therefore, teachers face significant pressure from educational administrators, parents, and students. They are urged to inflate grades, and if they resist, their exam papers may be tampered with. Despite stakeholder pressure, when teachers decline to comply with demands, parents and students express dissatisfaction under various pretexts. According to G4, *"the Ministry of Education used to have a parent complaint hotline and presidential contact center (CİMER) established primarily for lodging complaints regarding teachers."* In public schools, there appears to be a growing challenge in the education system regarding how grades are determined for students. It appears grades are based on the insistent requests of parents and the urgings of school administrators, some of whom may have been appointed without merit.

Participants especially from private schools' expressed discomfort with the excessive workload imposed on teachers beyond their primary duties and the pressure from extra tasks. G8 states, *"Excessive workload, extra workload. Coming here on weekends outside regular class hours, the absence of Sundays. These are the things that lower my motivation."* Besides workload pressures, private school teachers were exploited.. In the teachers' employment contract, salaries were shown as the minimum wage. If the salary is more than the minimum wage (and some teachers earn less than the minimum wage), they hand over the rest of the salary. In this way, they also reduce their insurance costs. The pressures had negative effects on teachers, but most of the time, teachers cannot react because politicians, yellow unions, and religious groups harm teachers as the instruments of pressure. In such a situation, participant G20 expressed their reaction as follows: *"I don't engage in*

activities with their children. For example, when they want to do an activity outside of school, we exclude that child from that activity. I transfer the pain to the child."

### Economic State

Economic challenges faced by teachers in Turkey were a contributing factor to QQ in our research. Economic insufficiencies lead to feelings of worthlessness among teachers because the income they receive does not provide them with a comfortable life. In this context, participant G1 clearly illustrated how economic concerns could lead to both financial and emotional distress: "I worry about my finances, especially during the pandemic when insurance contributions were not paid, salaries were incomplete, and we received part of our salaries in cash. These things really hurt me." Teachers worked extra jobs outside of teaching, and this described the extent of their poverty beyond the teaching profession. Nearly every participant teacher had expressed their economic challenges. Participant G19 not only addressed economic poverty but also openly expressed regret for choosing the teaching profession, saying, "I think I will experience very serious, difficult days financially. Because my children will grow up, they will want to go to school, get married. Maybe I will want to buy a house, a car, or a summer house. My father was also a teacher, and during his time, it was possible to achieve these with a single salary. Currently, even with two salaries, we can't manage it," conveying their concerns about how poverty affects not only them but also their children.

### Well-being State

Teachers experience various health issues as a result of their profession. Facing physical and psychological problems, teachers move away from self-sacrifice and focus solely on their core duties, only completing their daily routines. G1, who experienced physical discomfort due to intense stress, stated, "I already have eczema as a disease, but stress affects it the most. I had a problem at school, and because of that, I went and got some help." Many of the teachers dealt with stressful working environments causing some physical reactions, such as teeth grinding and poor-quality sleep. Participants emphasized their physical issues related to stress. Those who cannot overcome these problems on their own seek professional help, as indicated by statements from participants like G9 "I haven't sought support due to the problems I've experienced, but there have been times when I took tranquilizers.", G11 "I received support for anxiety disorder and am taking medication for hypertension.", and G15 "I'm going to therapy. I receive psychological support because it's very difficult to continue under current conditions."

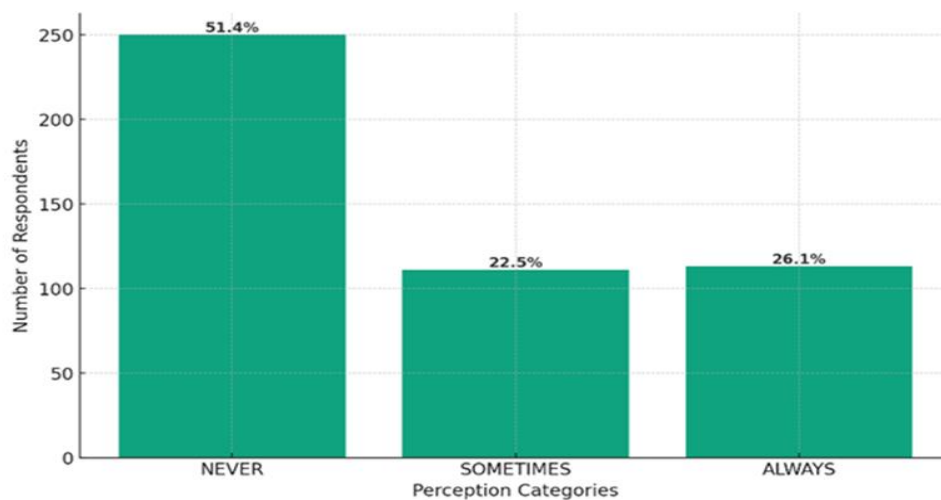
## 3.2 Phase 2 Quantitative Phase

The qualitative data contained information about teachers' QQ perceptions, such as managerial, social, financial, and well-being aspects (see Table 3). A total of 14 questions were asked and analyzed descriptively according to a seven-Likert data collection tool that changed from 1-Never to 7-Always. For example, the question of "EA distributing duties fairly" was answered as 1-Never distributed fairly to 7- Always distributed fairly. When we analyzed the results, we did not consider 4 because it seemed undecided or mediocre. Thus, the decision was taken NOT DO, 1-3 and DO, 5-7.



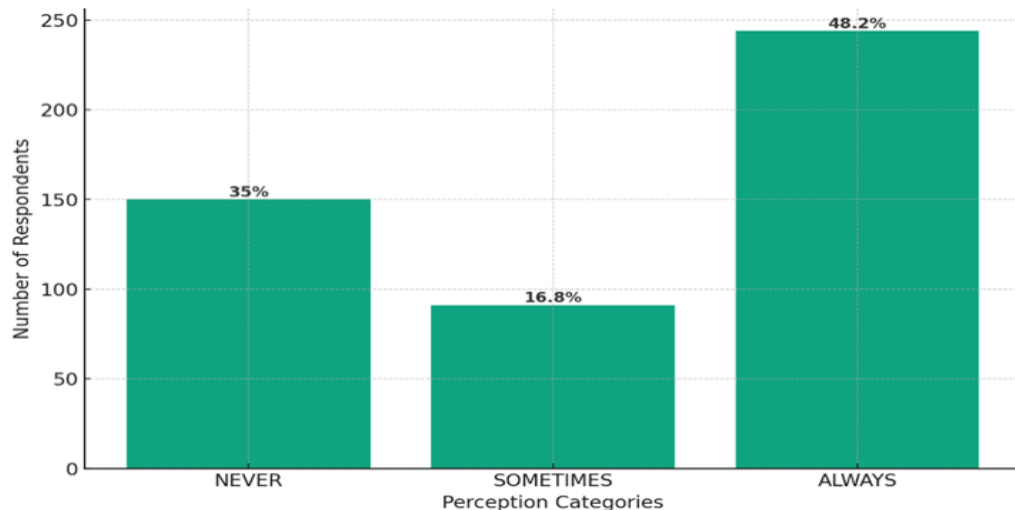
Based on the responses of teachers to the first question was "I believe that education administrators do not distribute tasks related to education fairly." Teachers' perceptions were: [(Never. N=250 %=51,4); (Sometimes. N=111, %=22,5); and (Always. N=113, %=26,1)]. Figure 1 reflects that a majority of teachers perceive that education administrators do NOT distribute tasks related to education fairly (NEVER), followed by those who believe it happens SOMETIMES or ALWAYS. This visualization accurately represents the teachers' opinions on this matter with the revised data.

**Figure 1.** Teachers' perceptions of fairness in task distribution by EA



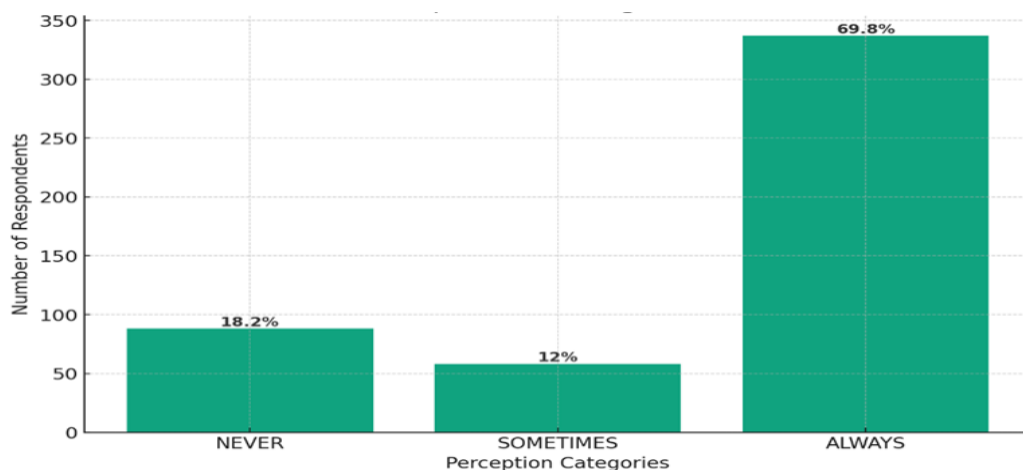
The second question, "Education administrators use threatening language in school," teachers' perceptions were: [(Never. N=169 %= 35); (Sometimes. N=81, %=16,8); (Always. N=233, %=48,2)]. Figure 2 shows that a significant proportion of teachers perceive that administrators ALWAYS use threatening language, followed by those who believe it NEVER happens, and a smaller group perceives it happens SOMETIMES.

**Figure 2.** Teachers' perceptions of EA using threatening language in school



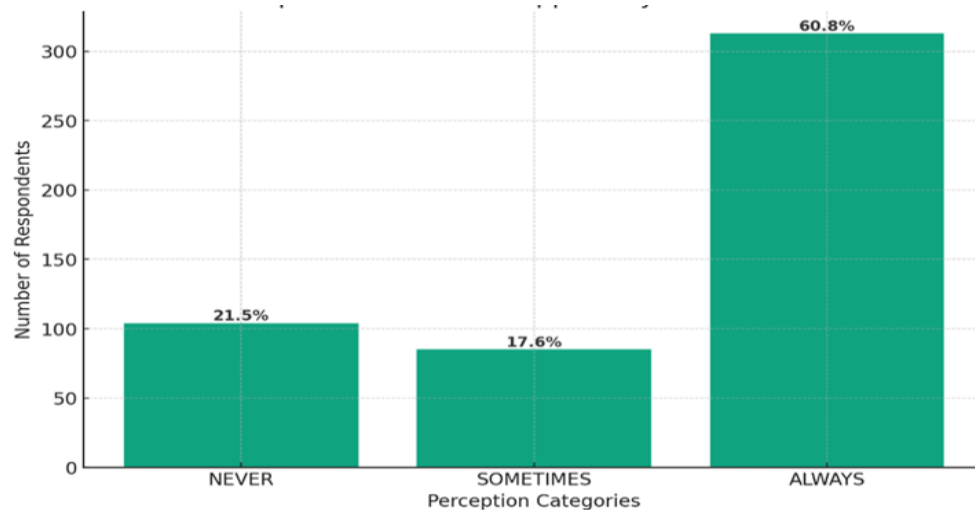
The third question is "Teachers are given trivial tasks," Teachers' responses were: [(Never. N= 88 %= 18,2); (Sometimes. N=58, %=12); (Always. N=337, %=69,8)]. Figure 3 clearly illustrates that most teachers perceive that they are ALWAYS given trivial tasks. This is followed by those who believe it NEVER happens and a smaller group who perceive it happens SOMETIMES.

**Figure 3.** Teachers' perceptions of being given trivial tasks



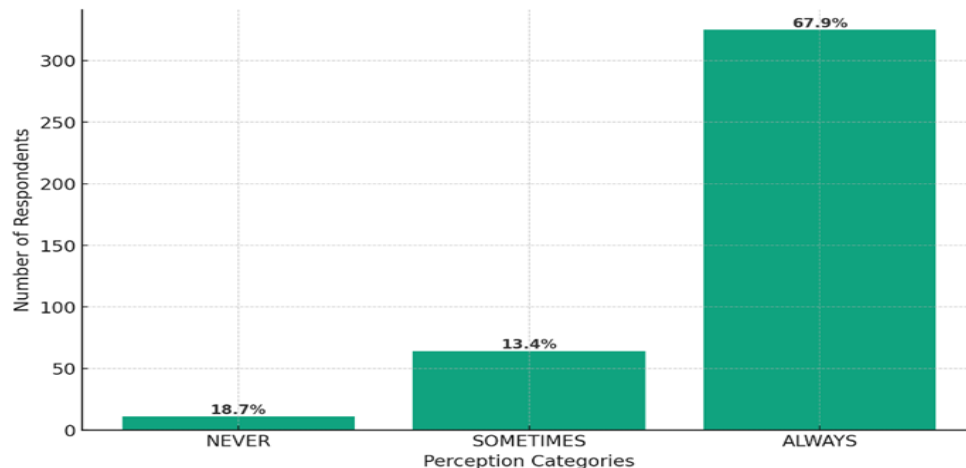
The fourth question is "EA applies pressures". Teachers' responses were: [(Never. N= 104 %= 21,5); (Sometimes. N=85, %=17,6); (Always. N=313, %=60,8)]. Figure 4 reveals that a majority of teachers perceive that they are ALWAYS under pressure from education administrators, followed by those who believe it NEVER happens and a smaller group who perceive it happens SOMETIMES.

**Figure 4.** Teachers' perceptions of pressure applied by EA's



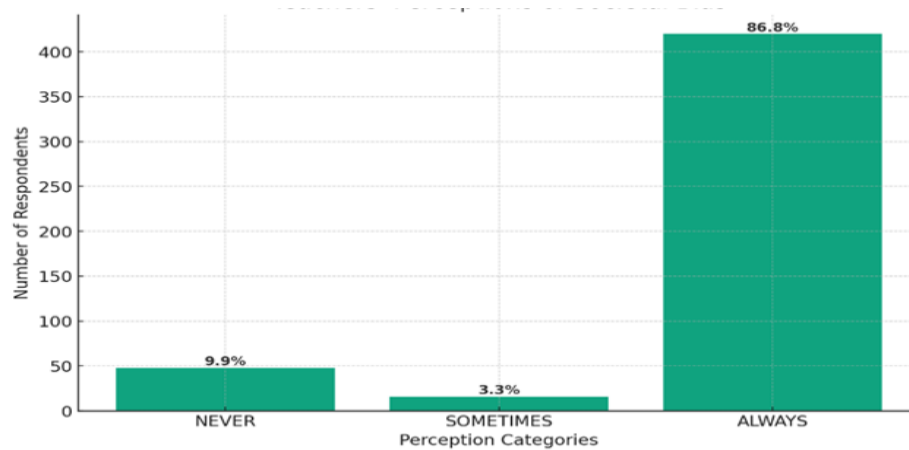
The fifth question is "Teachers are exposed to mobbing". The results were [(Never. N=10 %= 18,7); (Sometimes. N=63, %=13,4); (Always. N=322, %=67,9)]. Figure 5 shows that most teachers perceive that they are ALWAYS exposed to mobbing. A smaller proportion believes it NEVER happens, and an even smaller group perceives it happens SOMETIMES.

**Figure 5.** Teachers' perceptions of being exposed to mobbing.



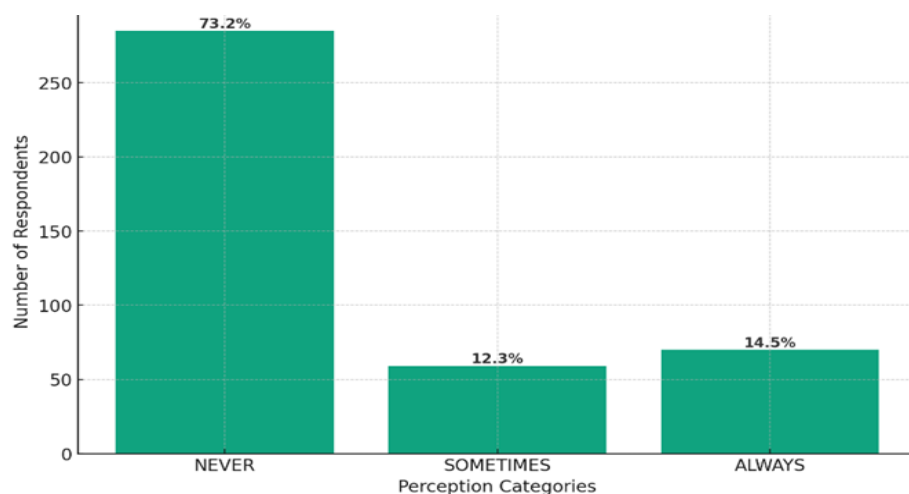
The sixth question "Is Society biased?" They replied as [(Never N=48 %=9,9); (Sometimes. N=16, %=3,3); (Always. N=420, %=86,8)]. Figure 6 shows that an overwhelming majority of teachers perceive that society is ALWAYS biased, with a very small proportion believing it NEVER or SOMETIMES happens.

**Figure 6.** Teachers' perceptions of societal bias



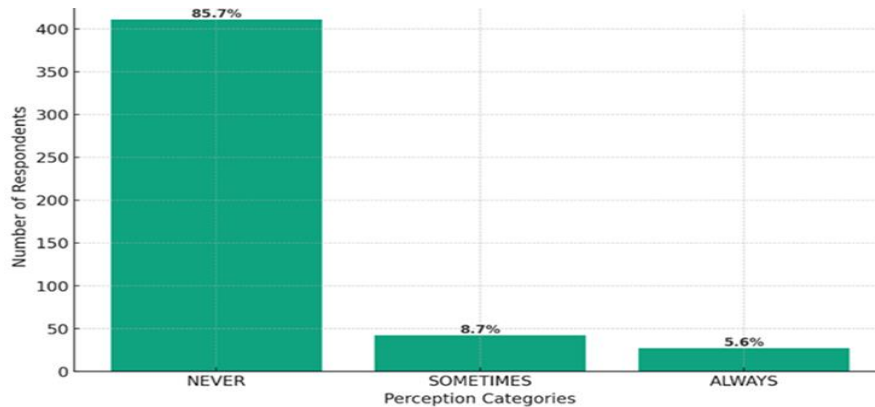
The seventh question of the research, aimed to address the issue of "Society giving teachers the value they deserve," was asked. According to the answers [(1-3. N=285 %=73,2); (4. N=58, %=12,3); (5-7. N=68, %=14,5)]. Figure 7 clearly shows that most teachers feel that society NEVER gives them the value they deserve, as indicated by the high percentage in the NEVER category. This is followed by smaller proportions in the SOMETIMES and ALWAYS categories.

**Figure 7.** Teachers' perceptions of the value society places



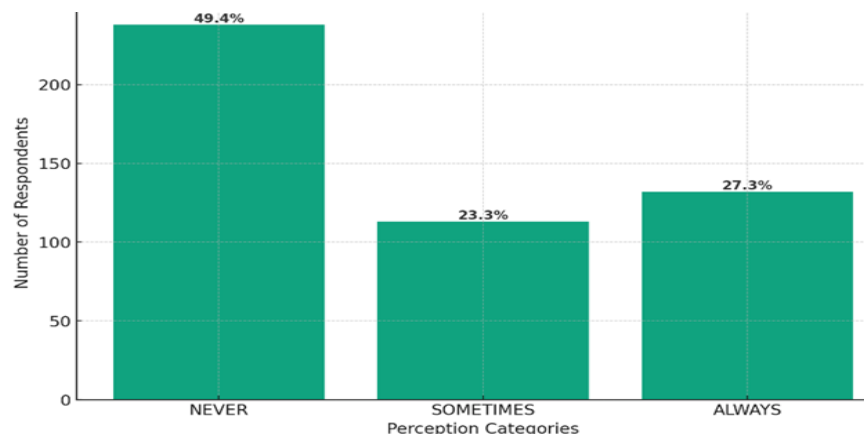
The eighth question "MoNE gives teachers the value they deserve" was asked. According to the answers [(Never. N=411 %=85,7); (Sometimes. N=42, %=8.7); (Always. N=27, %=5,6)]. Figure 8 clearly shows that most teachers feel that MoNE NEVER gives them the value they deserve, as indicated by the high percentage in the NEVER category. This is followed by smaller proportions in the SOMETIMES and ALWAYS categories.

**Figure 8.** Teachers' perceptions of the value given by MoNE



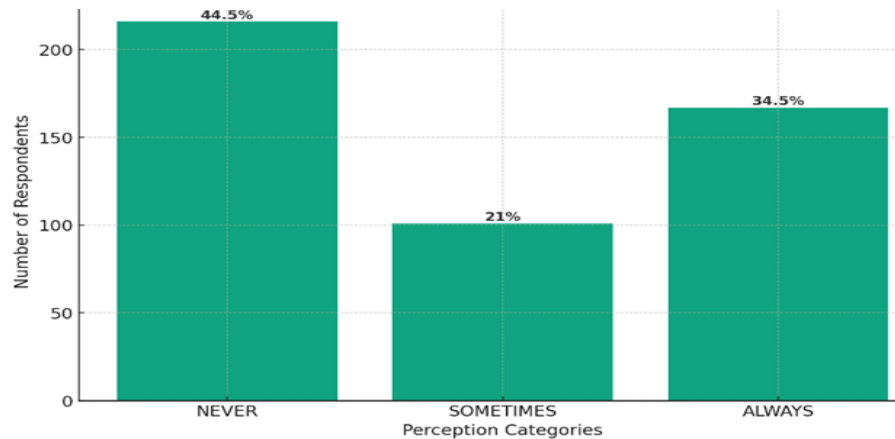
The ninth question is "Students respect teachers". The answers were [(Never. N= 238 %=49,4); (Sometimes. N=113, %=23,3); Always. N=132, %=27,3)]. Figure 9 illustrates that a substantial proportion of teachers perceive that students NEVER respect them, while a notable number believe that respect is shown SOMETIMES or ALWAYS. This provides insights into how teachers view the level of respect they receive from their students.

**Figure 9.** Teachers' perceptions of students' respect towards teachers



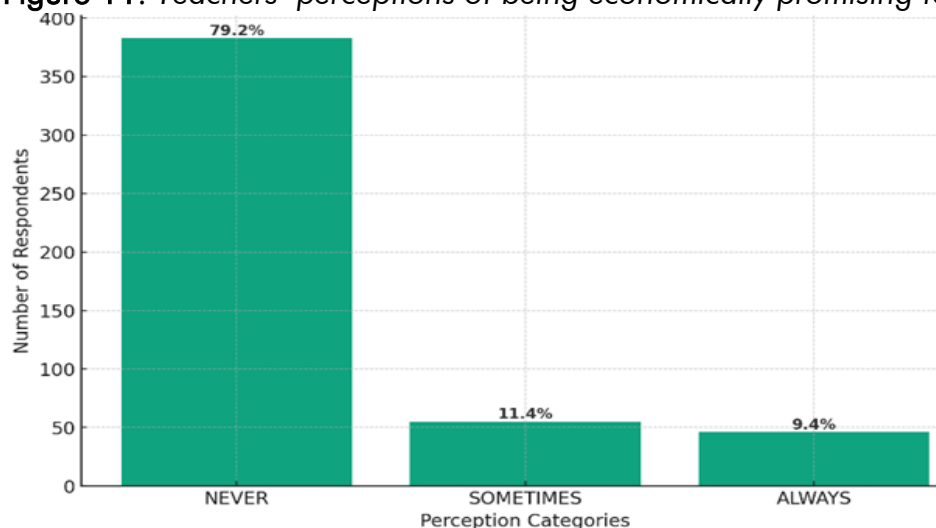
The tenth question was "I am valuable." The answers were [(Never. N=216 %= 44,5); (Sometimes. N=101, %=21); (Always. N=167, %=34,5)]. Figure 10 reveals that a significant proportion of teachers feel they are NEVER valuable, while others perceive themselves as valuable SOMETIMES or ALWAYS. This provides insight into how teachers view their own values in their professional context.

**Figure 10.** Teachers' self-perceptions of being valuable



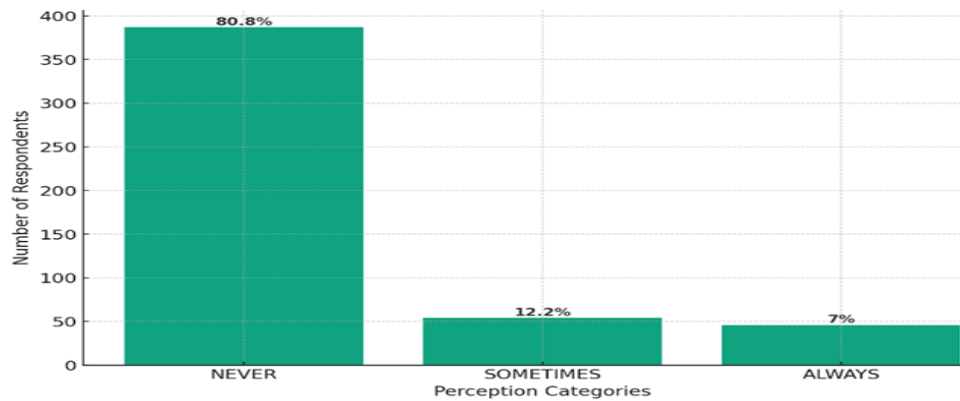
The eleventh question of the research was "I am economically promising for my family." The answers were [(Never. N=383 %=79,2); (Sometimes. N=55, %=11,4); (Always. N=46, %=9,4)]. Figure 11 indicates that a substantial majority of teachers feel they are NEVER economically promising for their families, with smaller proportions perceiving themselves as sometimes or always economically promising. This highlights the economic concerns and perceptions among the surveyed teachers.

**Figure 11.** Teachers' perceptions of being economically promising for their family



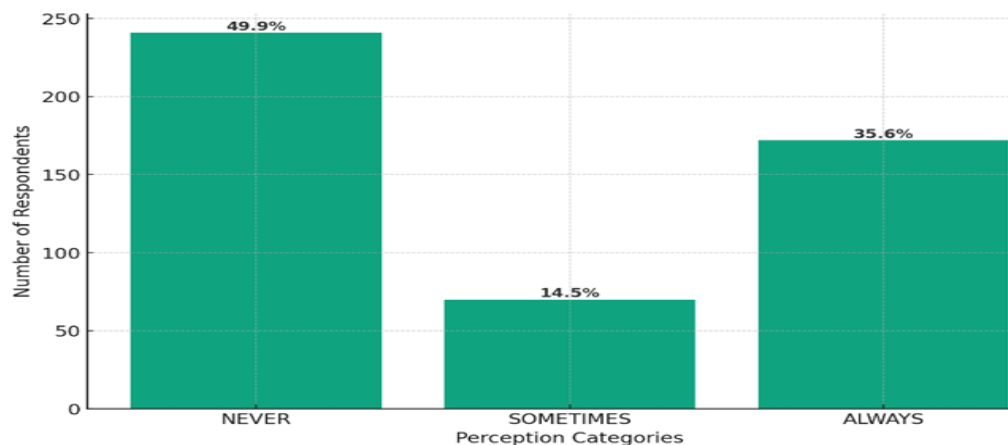
The twelfth question was "My salary allows me to live well". The answers were [(Never. N=387 %=80,8); (Sometimes. N=54, %=12,2); (Always. N=46, %=7)]. Figure 12 illustrates that most teachers feel that their salary does NOT allow them to live well, as indicated by the high percentage in the "Never" category. This is followed by smaller proportions of people who feel this way SOMETIMES or ALWAYS. This visualization conveys the financial challenges faced by the surveyed teachers.

**Figure 12.** Teachers' perceptions of their salary allowing a good living



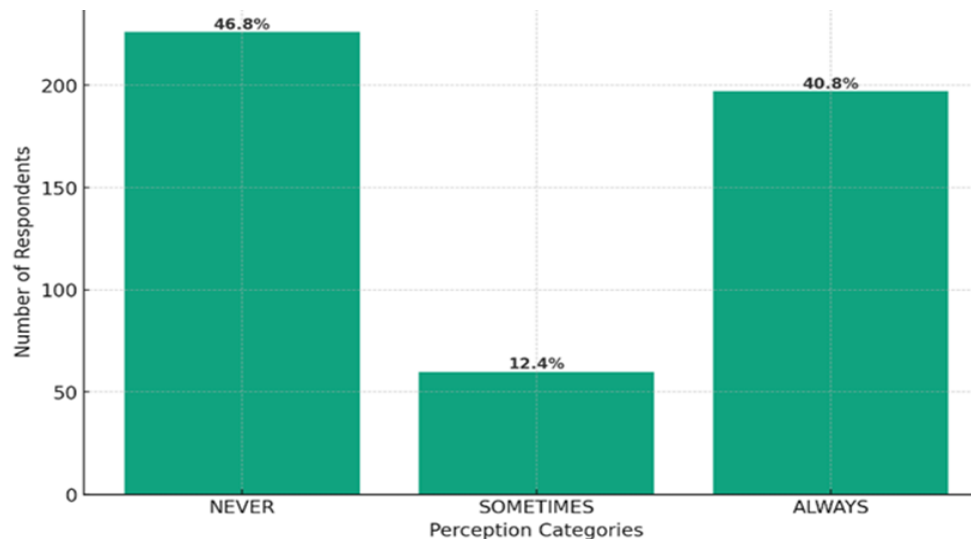
The thirteenth question was "I experience psychological problems." The responses were [(Never. N: 241 %: 49,9); (Sometimes. N=70, %=14,5); (Always. N=172, %=35,6)]. Figure 13 indicates that nearly half of the teachers reported they NEVER experience psychological problems, while a significant portion feel they experience these problems ALWAYS or SOMETIMES. This provides crucial insights into the mental health and well-being of the surveyed teachers.

**Figure 13.** Teachers' perceptions of experiencing psychological disorders



The last question asked, "I experience physical health problems as a teacher." Teachers' perceptions were [(Never. N=226 %=46,8); (Sometimes. N=60, %=12,4); (Always. N=197, %=40,8)]. Figure 14 illustrates that a substantial proportion of teachers feel they NEVER experience physical health problems, while a notable number report experiencing these problems ALWAYS or SOMETIMES. This visualization provides a clear view of the physical health concerns among the surveyed teachers.

Figure 14. Teachers' perceptions of experiencing physical disorders



### Phase 3 Meta-Inferences and Revealing Predisponent Effects

#### Meta-inferences

The important findings from the three studies were combined in Table 1, which was used to investigate the factors of QQ, how they emerged as precursors, and what behaviors they led teachers to adopt as successors. Lastly, meta-inferences were drawn.

**Management Factor Meta-Inferences:** In Table 1, the 'Qualitative Phase 1' section delineates several dimensions, with the primary one being the management styles of educational administrators. The initial qualitative findings suggested a tendency for schools to be managed haphazardly, characterized by the use of threats and discriminatory practices by school principals. This aspect was subsequently quantitatively evaluated by querying teachers on their perceptions of the fairness in task distribution related to education. The responses indicated a predominant perception of unfair task distribution by educational administrators, with 51.4% (N=250) responding 'Never', 22.5% (N=111) 'Sometimes', and 26.1% (N=113) 'Always' (N=484, Mean=3.33).

Additionally, the use of threatening language by educational administrators was quantitatively assessed. A significant 48.2% (N=233) of teachers perceived that administrator always used threatening language, while 35% (N=169) believed it never occurred, and 16.8% (N=81) felt it sometimes occurred (N=484, Mean=4.40), indicating a high level of affirmative responses.

The second sub-dimension under management style revealed teachers' perceptions of being assigned unnecessary tasks at schools. This qualitative finding was corroborated by quantitative data, where a considerable majority, 69.8% (N=337), reported always



being burdened with trivial tasks, compared to 18.2% (N=88) who felt this never happened and 12% (N=58) who experienced it sometimes (N=484, Mean=5.17).

Mobbing within schools emerged as a significant challenge in the qualitative phase, leading to teachers' QQ experiences. This was quantitatively explored by assessing whether educational administrators exerted pressure on teachers. A substantial majority, 60.8% (N=313), perceived constant pressure from educational administrators, while 21.5% (N=104) believed this never occurred, and 17.6% (N=85) felt it sometimes happened (N=484, Mean=5.05).

Furthermore, the pressure was linked to expectations of students' academic performance, with teachers reporting high levels of mobbing. A striking 67.9% (N=322) of respondents perceived constant exposure to mobbing, compared to 18.7% (N=10) who never experienced it and 13.4% (N=63) who encountered it occasionally (N=484, Mean=5.08). These data indicate a prevalent perception among teachers of being subjected to significant levels of mobbing at schools.

**Social Factor Meta-Inferences:** The investigation delineated social factors as a contributing secondary dimension that precipitated teachers' experiences of QQ. A notable perception among teachers was that they were undervalued and subjected to societal prejudices. Quantitative data indicated a strong sense of bias perceived by teachers, with a considerable majority (86.8%, N=420) consistently experiencing this, contrasted with a minority who never (9.9%, N=48) or occasionally (3.3%, N=16) felt such biases (N=484, Mean=6.05). This suggests a dominant belief among educators regarding the prevalence of bias within society, with only a small fraction perceiving its absence or infrequency.

Moreover, the survey revealed a significant sentiment among teachers about being undervalued by society. A substantial majority (73.2%, N=285) reported never feeling valued for their profession, while smaller proportions sometimes (12.3%, N=58) or always (14.5%, N=68) felt valued (N=484, Mean=2.58). This indicates a pervasive feeling of lack of recognition for their professional contributions. In addition, this study explored teachers' perceptions of the Ministry of National Education's policies towards their profession. An overwhelming majority (85.7%, N=411) believed that the Ministry never accorded them the value they deserved, with smaller percentages sometimes (8.7%, N=42) or always (5.6%, N=27) feeling valued.

This study also identified societal pressure as an influencing factor. Quantitative findings showed that teachers experienced pressure from students, with a moderate perception of student respect (N=484, Mean=3.48), where 49.4% (N=238) never felt respected, 23.3% (N=113) sometimes did, and 27.3% (N=132) always felt respected.

A significant phenomenological finding was the negative impact of teaching on teachers' personal lives, contributing to their unhappiness. The quantitative data supported this, showing that teachers felt only moderately valued due to their profession (Never: 44.5%, N=216; Sometimes: 21%, N=101; Always: 34.5%, N=167; N=484, Mean=3.87).

**Economic Factor Meta-Inferences:** These research outcomes suggest a prevalent state of poverty among teachers, underlined by apprehensions concerning their future, primarily attributed to inadequate remuneration. This notion was corroborated in the quantitative phase of this study, where a significant proportion of educators indicated that their monthly earnings were insufficient for a satisfactory standard of living. Specifically, 80.8% (N=387) of the participants reported never being able to lead a comfortable life on their current income, 12.2% (N=54) sometimes experienced this difficulty, and 7% (N=46) consistently faced this issue (N=484, Mean=2.30).

The survey findings further revealed that a substantial majority of the teaching cohort experiences financial strain due to their salaries. A notable percentage of educators disclosed an inability to maintain an adequate living standard with their present income. Additionally, a majority expressed a lack of economic optimism for their family's future. Concerns regarding their low-income levels and future prospects for themselves and their dependents were prevalent. Survey data indicated that 79.2% of teachers never felt positive about their future prospects, 11.4% occasionally harboured positive feelings, and 9.4% consistently felt optimistic (N=484, Mean=2.29).

**Well-being state meta-inferences:** The concluding aspect contributing to educators' experiences of QQ pertains to the emergence of a state of well-being, signifying health-related issues within the teaching profession. It was observed that during the interviews, certain educators encountered psychological and physical discomforts. The quantitative analysis revealed that educators were subject to moderate levels of psychological health afflictions. According to survey data, out of 484 respondents, 241 (49.9%) reported no experience with such issues, 70 (14.5%) encountered them occasionally, and 172 (35.6%) consistently experienced them. Furthermore, the frequency of physical health problems among teachers varied, with 46.8% never experiencing them, 12.4% sometimes, and 40.8% always experiencing them (N=484, Mean=3.74).

## Conclusion and Discussion

The purpose of this study is to reveal the reasons and types of QQ behaviors that caused important challenges to the social, psychological, and physical lives of teachers working in private and public schools in Türkiye and more importantly, what lessons can be learned for the well-being of teachers and the quality of education. In this study, we investigated the concept of QQ in the Turkish school system. We used the conceptual framework and dimensions in the phenomenology phase and revealed which factors cause QQ. Finally, we compared the findings from the quantitative phase and the phenomenological phase.

In the literature reviews, we have seen that the QQ phenomenon is a post-pandemic trauma that occurs especially in Generation Z employees (Xueyun et al., 2021). However, in this current research, we have seen that QQ has very different dimensions in Türkiye

and its origins are deeper. Teachers struggle with severe problems (Kurt & Duran, 2019). For example, administrative problems that push teachers to QQ (Frostenson, 2015; Skinner et al., 2021) cause them to involuntarily perform tasks outside the definition of teaching (Kazak, 2019; Sugden, 2010; Toker Gökçe & Özen, 2019), while socially devaluing them (Cane, 1987) and negatively affecting their health. This is a vicious circle. Negative administrative attitudes first discredit teachers (Daliri-Ngametua & Hardy, 2022). Then, they are subjected to mobbing through various apparatuses, such as discrimination and labeling (see Table 3). The teacher who is victimized by various elements firstly encounters a sense of worthlessness in society and then meets with both physical and psychological disorders. Again, the fact that the state pays teachers salaries so low that they are almost living on the hunger line in Turkey is a major factor causing QQ, which in turn leads teachers to exhibit aftereffects, such as minimum performance, not showing commitment, producing low-quality work, taking it out on the students, moonlighting, and apathy. Generally, a significant relationship exists between the student-teacher ratio and academic achievement (Ajani & Akinyele, 2014). However, in a study conducted among 8th-grade students and teachers in Türkiye, no significant relationship was found between the number of students per teacher and student achievement. This finding shows that teachers are engaged in QQ behavior (Suna et al., 2021).

The finding that EAs' management styles are a crucial factor leading teachers to QQ is in line with the literature. More importantly, managerial factors create a butterfly effect, gradually causing problems to grow and paralyzing teachers' functions. However, management styles are a factor that determines and directs teacher policies. Teaching is a specialized profession and involves robust professional and pedagogical training processes. Policies contrary to this are practices that will discredit the teaching profession in the eyes of society. In Turkey, the Ministry of National Education's practice of "paid teaching" is an example of this. While this practice may be deemed necessary in exceptional circumstances, it is being generalized in increasing numbers every day, although it is also mentioned as a "weakness" in MoNE reports (Aktaş Salman et al., 2021).

Teachers see themselves as doing drudgery because their professional independence at school, especially their decisions about what and how to teach their students, are not made autonomously but centrally. However, teachers should have a sphere of authority and freedom in matters related to their profession. In short, teachers are not autonomous and free. In Turkey, decisions about education are made by the central organization and this rate is the highest among OECD countries (Korlu et al., 2021). Teacher autonomy is also related to teachers' subjective well-being (Frostenson, 2015). In addition, subjective well-being is a situation that empowers and motivates teachers. In our study, we reached results that disrupted teachers' subjective well-being and made their psychological and physical integrity sick.

Increasing teachers' autonomy through educational policies and positioning them as active subjects in society play an important role in educational reforms. For this, teachers

should be given a certain amount of autonomy because each child is as unique as a fingerprint and one size does not fit all (Graves, 2009). Teachers need to be given the opportunity to think and act together about how they can transform their work practices and professional identities (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Thanks to this facility, when teachers work together in groups, they can produce new knowledge and disseminate this knowledge; this way of working will cause teachers and principals to transform school and classroom practices (Ayan, 2020). Shortly, the consequence is an eviscerated form of schooling that may jeopardize students' long-term academic and social development in Turkey if not necessary steps are taken. We mean that bells are ringing.

### **Limitations of the Study and Recommendations**

The findings of this research should be interpreted with some warnings because of their limitations. The first limitation of this study is that the data were collected between September 2022 and April 2023. The economic condition worsened after the election in May 2023 because some economic decisions were taken; all the goods prices were increased twofold, and extra direct taxes were burdened on the people. We believe that data should be refreshed especially after the election. The second limitation is that Türkiye's political system is getting much more oppressive. Thus, teachers were anxious when they took part in both qualitative and quantitative parts of this research in case they could be spotted as they were criticizing the power.

Despite these limitations of current research, we hope that the umbrella concept of QQ that was developed out of our current study will furnish a suitable base for EA's, educational planners, and policymakers to develop a successful and sustainable school ethos for their schools, with the aim of improving learning and attainment for all pupils. Whilst we understand the conceptual framework and have developed a beneficial heuristic device for our research, there are of course other factors that could have been dealt with and incorporated into the successful healing of the effects of QQ and improved teacher resilience. We propose that any other options should be considered in any further research on the reasons for and aftereffects of QQ.

#### **Disclosure statement**

There was no discussion of any potential conflicts of interest by the author(s).

#### **Ethics Permission**

This research's ethics approval was granted by the Eskişehir Osmangazi University Social Sciences and Humanities Human Research Ethics Committee in Türkiye on February 27, 2023.

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## Genişletilmiş Türkçe Özet

Bu araştırma, COVID-19 salgınının Türk eğitimi üzerindeki etkisini incelemekte, zorlu büyüme evresini vurgulamakta ve bunu eğitimdeki küresel eğilimlerle karşılaştırmaktadır. Son yıllarda, veriye dayalı karar alma süreçlerine vurgu yaparak ve eğitim fırsatlarındaki toplumsal cinsiyet, bölgesel ve ekonomik eşitsizlikleri ele alarak bireylerin ufkunu genişletmeyi ve küresel eğitim sistemlerini iyileştirmeyi amaçlayan eğitime yönelik küresel odaklanma artmıştır. Türkiye'de eğitime ayrılan bütçenin artması eğitim alanında kayda değer bir ilerlemedir, ancak OECD ülkelerine kıyasla daha düşük öğretmen maaşları, düşük iş tatmini ve örgütsel adalet ve kayırmacılıkla ilgili endişeler gibi sorunlar devam etmektedir. Türkiye'de öğretmenlerin karşılaştığı tükenmişlik, örgütsel sessizlik ve bağlılığın azalması gibi zorluklar, eğitim politikalarında ve mesleki saygınlıkta değişiklik yapılması gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır. Sessiz İstifa (QQ) kavramı, Türk okullarında türünün ilk ampirik çalışması olarak Türk eğitimi bağlamında incelenmiştir. Mevcut literatürde geniş bir şekilde tanımlanan QQ, öğretmenler arasındaki nedenleri ve sonuçta ortaya çıkan davranışlar açısından incelenmiştir. Bu çalışma, Türk eğitimciler arasında QQ'nun yaygınlığını ortaya koyması ve altında yatan nedenlere ilişkin içgörü sağlaması açısından önemlidir. Ayrıca, QQ'yu azaltmaya, kurum kültürünü ve öğretmen refahını artırmaya yönelik stratejiler sunmakta ve politika geliştirme ve uygulamayı teşvik etmektedir. Bu çalışma, QQ'nun uluslararası düzeyde anlaşılmasına, öğretmenler üzerindeki etkilerine ve eğitim politikası ve kültürüne yönelik çıkarımlarına katkıda bulunmaktadır. Bu karma yöntem çalışmasında araştırmacılar, karmaşık bir araştırma problemini anlamak için keşfedici bir sıralı tasarım yaklaşımı kullanmışlardır. Çalışma, 32 fenomenolojik görüşmeyi içeren nitel bir aşama ile başlamış, örüntüler ve temalar hakkında derin içgörüler sağlamıştır. Bu aşama, 484 katılımcıyla yapılan anketleri içeren bir sonraki nicel aşama için araştırma araçlarının ve hipotezlerin oluşturulmasını sağlamıştır. Amaç, nicel verilerin istatistiksel analizi yoluyla nitel bulguları doğrulamaktır. Çalışma, hem nitel hem de nicel yöntemlerin güçlü yönlerini birleştirerek araştırma konusunun kapsamlı bir şekilde anlaşılmasını sağlamıştır. Bu aşamaların entegrasyonu, genel araştırma sonuçlarını zenginleştirmek ve doğrulamak için her iki aşamadan elde edilen bulguları yan yana getiren tablo aracılığıyla sunulmuştur. Araştırma, QQ'ya yol açan faktörleri belirlemek için fenomenolojik bir aşama ile başlayan ve ardından doğrulama için nicel bir aşama ile devam eden karma bir yöntem yaklaşımı kullanmaktadır. Bulgular, Türkiye'de QQ'nun benzersiz boyutlara sahip olduğunu ve kökenlerinin Z kuşağı çalışanlarında tipik olarak görülen pandemi sonrası travmadan daha derin olduğunu göstermektedir. Öğretmenler, idari sorunlar, öğretmenlik dışındaki görevler, sosyal değersizleştirme ve düşük maaşlar gibi zorluklarla karşılaşmakta ve bu da minimum performans, bağlılık eksikliği ve düşük kaliteli iş gibi sonuçlara yol açmaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca, Türkiye'de öğrenci-öğretmen oranı ile öğrenci başarısı arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olmadığını ve öğretmenlerin QQ davranışlarına katıldığını göstermektedir. Çalışma, yönetim kararlarının öğretmenlerin işlevleri üzerinde yarattığı kelebek etkisine vurgu yaparak, öğretmenler arasında QQ'ya yol açmada yönetim tarzlarının önemini vurgulamaktadır. Özellikle eğitim içeriği ve yöntemlerine ilişkin karar alma süreçlerinde öğretmenlerin

özerkliğinin olmaması, öznel refahlarını ve mesleki özgürlüklerini önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir. Türkiye'de eğitimle ilgili kararların diğer OECD ülkelerine kıyasla daha fazla merkezileşmesi, öğretmen özerkliğini ve refahını zayıflatmaktadır. Araştırma, öğretmenlerin özerkliğinin ve eğitim reformlarına aktif katılımının artırılmasını savunmakta, öğretmenlerin özerklik ve işbirliğine dayalı çalışma uygulamaları yoluyla güçlendirilmesinin yeni bilginin yaratılmasına ve yayılmasına, okul ve sınıf uygulamalarının dönüştürülmesine yol açabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Çalışma, bu konuların ele alınmaması halinde öğrencilerin akademik ve sosyal gelişimleri üzerindeki potansiyel uzun vadeli sonuçlar konusunda uyarıda bulunmakta ve Türk eğitim sisteminde acil bir reform ihtiyacına işaret etmektedir.

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