



## Teachers' Opinions on Their Professional Stress: A Qualitative Study

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### Abstract

The intense stress experienced by teachers can affect the future of societies by causing many problems in their individual lives and in the schools they work. For this reason, the aim of the study is to examine teachers' opinions on the causes, consequences and coping strategies of the stress they experience in the profession. Phenomenology, one of the qualitative research designs, was used in the research. The study group of the research consists of 28 teachers working in Yeşilova district of Burdur province in the spring semester of 2018-2019 academic year, which was determined by the maximum variation sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods. Data were collected by semi-structured interview form and analyzed by content analysis. According to the research findings, it was determined that the most important source of stress for teachers was parents. They expressed that behaviors such as parents' lack of interest in their children's education, holding the teacher responsible for the failure of their children and intervention of the teachers in their works are among the important sources that create stress in themselves. This was followed respectively by students, teaching profession, school management, physical conditions and colleagues. It was concluded that individual consequences of occupational stress were psychological, physiological and behavioral, on the other hand, organizational consequences were low performance, decrease in school commitment, absenteeism, alienation and burnout. Teachers stated that they used positive thinking, participation in social activities, physical movement, prayer / worship, effective communication, regular nutrition and depersonalization strategies to cope with stress. In addition, it was concluded that supportive organizational structure, participatory management, improvement of the physical environment, in-service training, elimination of stress sources and psychological help activities in the workplace were carried out in order for teachers to cope with stress in schools. According to the results of the study, it may be recommended to give effective parent education seminars to parents and to organize activities that may increase their communication with teachers. Policies can be developed to ensure that students behave in accordance with classroom and school rules. For future research, carrying out similar studies based on the perceptions of other education stakeholders may provide different perspectives on the subject.

### Keywords

Teaching profession  
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## Introduction

The rapid changes in the current century have a significant impact on social and economic life. It is inevitable for people to have biological, psychological and social difficulties as the complex life conditions become more perceptible. In parallel with this, stress, accepted as a disease of recent times, is more common in working environments. Teachers, who are regarded as the most important personels of the education system, frequently encounter sources of stress in their professional lives due to the effects of globalization and competition as well as their constant interaction with people. The intense stress teachers experience can affect the future of societies by causing many problems in their individual lives and in the schools they work. For this reason, effective strategies should be developed in order to enable teachers to cope with stress, to improve their physical and mental quality of life and to increase their performance.

The concept of stress is one of the major topics that behavioral scientists focus on. Stress, existence of which depends on the interaction between two complex systems, the environment and human (Lazarus, DeLongis, Folkman and Gruen, 1985), can be defined as the physiological and psychological reaction of an individual to an environmental stressor (Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly, 1988). Stress, as it is perceived, has been explained as a condition that occurs when the bodily and spiritual limits of the organism are enforced and threatened against anything affecting the organism (Yıldırım, 1991). It was stated that stress is a result of environmental requirements with detrimental outcomes for the individual's health (Cohen, Kessler and Gordon, 1997). As a result of the changing nature of professions and the fact that organizations are even more difficult to survive in a competitive environment, employees are quite likely to experience stress. Stress, in particular, negatively affects employees who spend most of their time in the workplace and causes disruptions in both daily and working life. At this point, the concept of professional stress has turned into a phenomenon that organizations should take seriously. Antonova (2016) defined professional stress as a form of physiological and emotional arousal that employees experience when exposed to a situation that threatens them or a conflict environment. Professional stress is considered one of the most significant workplace health risks in many developed countries (Spector, 2002). Stress, handled as a dynamic process between the person and his environment in work life (Hart and Cooper, 2001), has different sources. Individual and organizational losses occur as a result of employees encountering stress sources.

The greatest responsibility for achieving the goals of a society's educational services is given to school organizations, especially to teachers in schools. Teaching is a profession that provides students with opportunities to help them learn, succeed and improve themselves and to feel the warmth of working as a team. In addition, according to Kyriacou (2016), teaching is a difficult and highly expected profession and from time to time all teachers experience stress at work. Social change and the effects of this change on teachers have caused difficulties in the teaching profession in recent years. As a result of social change, teachers are faced with increasing expectations of parents and society at the point of curriculum implementation and educational outcomes. This situation creates intense stress on teachers (Kelly and Berthelsen, 1995). Teaching is described by some authors as a highly stressful profession (Chan, 2003; Kyriacou, 2016; Özdemir, Sezgin, Kaya and Receptoğlu, 2011; Schwab, Jackson and Schuler, 1986). The causes that lead to stress in the teaching profession can be listed as students, parents, workload (quantity, quality, time pressure, paperwork, curriculum intensity, extracurricular work), problems arising from relationships with colleagues and superiors (Boyle, Borg, Falzon and Bagglioni, 1995; Dunlop and Macdonald, 2004; Johnstone, 1989; Kelly and Berthelsen, 1995; Shernoff, Mehta, Atkins, Torf and Spencer, 2011). In addition, in the studies conducted, teachers stated that factors such as continuous changes (Dunlop and Macdonald, 2004), lack of resources (Shernoff et al., 2011), increasing parent and community expectations (Kelly and Berthelsen, 1995) and low salaries (Hansen and Sullivan, 2003) also cause stress.

Regardless of the source, employees are exposed to stress at work and depending on the intensity of stressors, stress can have beneficial or detrimental effects on performance (Bourne and Yaroush, 2003; Eren Gümüştekin and Öztemiz, 2005). Professional stress is often defined by its individual and organizational negative consequences. The negative effects of stress were also examined in this study. As the sources of stress vary among individuals, reactions to stressful

situations may also differ (Tsai, Fung and Chow, 2006). The negative consequences of stress for the individual can be classified as physiological, behavioral, mental and emotional problems (Örücü, Kılıç and Ergül, 2011). Since teaching is a profession with a high potential for stress (Kyriacou, 2016), individual effects of stress can be seen in teachers periodically. In the studies conducted, it was reported that the stress in teachers has individual effects such as fatigue, heart and stomach problems, headache and chest pain, tension, increased smoking, anxiety, irritability, low mood, unhappiness, distractibility, lack of motivation, loss of appetite, insomnia, frequent illness, indecision, anger, fear of failure, negligence and insensitivity (Adams, 1999; Altıok, 2009; Göksoy and Argon, 2014; Gupta, 1981; Spector, 2002; Tsai, et al., 2006). On the other hand, organizational consequences of intense stress experienced by teachers such as decreased performance, decrease in creativity, increase in mistakes, absenteeism and increase in turnover rate can be seen (Altıok, 2009; Johnstone, 1989; Wilson, 2002). Besides, it was noted that stress has economic effects on the education system in terms of lost teaching time and additional costs of teachers who have changed places (Wilson, 2002).

Prolonged high-level stress is harmful to the teachers, students and functioning of the whole school (Hansen and Sullivan, 2003). Because the sources of stress in schools are numerous and varied, teachers should be very cautious in meeting changing demands (Kelly and Berthelsen, 1995). Individual strategies used by teachers to cope with stress can be listed as physical movements, meditation, time management, conflict management, regular sleep, balanced nutrition (Balaban, 2000), effective communication with family and friends, prayer and worship, referral to family counselling (Dunlop and Macdonald, 2004), positive approach (Özdemir et al., 2011), participation in social, cultural and sports activities. Organizational strategies used to reduce teacher stress are explained as role openness, equal distribution of workforce, assignment in line with everyone's abilities, and in-service training for the skills needed (Gupta, 1981). It has been pointed out that effective relationships with colleagues and managers will reduce professional and personal stress (Dunlop and Macdonald, 2004; Shernoff et al., 2011). Improving working conditions in schools, ensuring participation in decisions and creating a supportive school culture can also reduce the intensity of stress experienced by teachers.

The teaching profession is generally considered as an occupation that meets a large number of parents' expectations regarding the education, training and personality development of their children. These expectations also feed stress sources (Ravichandran and Rajendran, 2007). Professional stress in industry is considered in terms of monetary along with lost production. However, loss in education results in talented teachers leaving the profession or deterioration in teaching skills (Wilson, 2002). In both cases, intense stress comes at a serious price on teachers, students, schools and even societies. Because teaching is not just a matter of knowledge transfer, it is a profession that requires understanding student psychology, following scientific developments closely and guiding students effectively. Due to this, stress, a concept that negatively affects human health and productivity, is also important for teachers as a problem that should be addressed. It is thought that determining and controlling the sources of stress experienced in the teaching profession, knowing the consequences of stress and coping strategies will contribute to the solution. For this purpose, it is important to determine the opinions of teachers on the subject. However, it is seen that there are few qualitative studies on the subject in the literature. It is believed that an in-depth and detailed examination of teacher opinions in this study will be a guide for developing effective policies regarding professional stress. The main purpose of the study is to determine teachers' opinions about the stress they experience in the profession. To this end, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the teachers' sources of professional stress?
2. What are the consequences of professional stress experienced by teachers?
3. What strategies are used to cope with stress in the teaching profession?

## Method

In this part of the study; information about the research model, study group, data collection tool, data collection and analysis, validity and reliability were given.

### *Research Model*

In this study, phenomenology, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. In phenomenological approach, it is focused on phenomena that are recognized but we do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding about (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005) and it is aimed to gain a deeper understanding about the nature or meaning of participants' experiences (Van Manen, 2016). Therefore, phenomenology design was chosen in the study, as it was tried to understand the perceptions of teachers with their own explanations and to make a deep sense of them based on their professional stress experiences.

### *Study Group*

Maximum variation sampling method, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used to determine the study group. This sampling method was adopted to deal with the stress-related situations experienced in the teaching profession from different perspectives. The aim of maximum sampling is to reflect the diversity of individuals who will be a party to the problem studied in the sample (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). While determining the study group, attention was paid to the fact that the teachers work in different school types and their gender, age and branches are different because these differences may contribute to the diversification of teachers' opinions on the subject. In this context, 28 teachers working in primary, secondary and high schools in Yeşilova District of Burdur Province participated in the study in the spring semester of the 2018-2019 academic year. Demographic information of the participants was given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic information of the study group

Personal Characteristics		f	%	Participant Codes
Gender	Female	17	60.7	T1, T4, T5, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T16, T17, T18, T19, T23, T24, T27
	Male	11	39.3	T2, T3, T6, T14, T15, T20, T21, T22, T25, T26, T28
Age	21-30 age	8	28.6	T9, T11, T14, T15, T16, T17, T18, T26,
	31-40 age	12	42.9	T1, T2, T7, T10, T12, T13, T19, T22, T23, T24, T27, T28
	41 age and over	8	28.6	T3, T4, T5, T6, T8, T20, T21, T25,
Teaching field	Verbal	10	35.7	T1, T7, T11, T13, T15, T16, T18, T19, T22, T25
	Numerical	6	21.4	T6, T10, T12, T17, T20, T26
	Primary education	8	28.6	T2, T3, T4, T5, T8, T23, T24, T27
	Other	4	14.3	T9, T14, T21, T28
School Type	Primary	9	32.1	T2, T3, T4, T5, T8, T22, T23, T24, T27
	Secondary	11	39.3	T6, T7, T9, T10, T11, T13, T15, T16, T17, T19, T28
	High School	8	28.6	T1, T12, T14, T18, T20, T21, T25, T26,

As shown in Table 1, 17 of the teachers included in the study are female and 11 are male. Participants' ages range from 26 to 54; 8 are in the 21-30 age group, 12 are in the 31-40 age group, and 8 are in the 41 and over age group. 10 of the teachers are verbal, 6 are numerical, 8 are primary school and 4 are in other teaching fields (psychological counseling and guidance, technology design, special education, music). 9 of the teachers participating in the research work in primary school, 11 in secondary school, and 8 in high school level.

### *Data collection tool*

In this study, a semi-structured interview form was used to collect teachers' opinions about the stress experienced in the teaching profession. In the interview form method, the interviewers, adhering

to the subjects or fields they have prepared previously, have the freedom to ask both pre-prepared questions and additional questions in order to get more detailed information about these questions (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). In the process of preparing the interview form, firstly, five questions were prepared. The opinions of three field experts were consulted on whether the interview questions prepared were suitable for the purpose of the study. For the language validity of the interview questions, the recommendations of two language teachers were taken into account. Utilizing the recommendations given by the experts, some questions were removed, some were combined and some were reorganized, the number of questions was reduced to three and the form was finalized. The pilot study of the data collection tool was carried out with three teachers and these teachers were not included in the main study.

In the semi-structured interview form, there are four questions about the personal information of the participants and three open-ended questions on the subject. The first of the open-ended questions is "What are the professional sources of stress you experience while practising your profession?" The second question of the research is "What are the consequences of the professional stress you experience?" and the last question is formed as "What strategies are used to cope with stress in the teaching profession?" During the interview, probing questions were used in order to make teachers understand the questions better and to obtain more detailed data on the subject.

#### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

Research data were collected in the spring semester of 2018 - 2019 academic year. The data collection process took approximately three months. The teachers determined for the interview were first informed about the study. The date and time of interviews with the teachers were determined and the interviews were conducted in the schools where the participants work, in the settings they prefer. The interviews, which lasted 30-45 minutes on average, were recorded with the consent of the participants. At the end of the meeting, the recordings were transferred to the computer. The texts created were delivered to the participants and the participants were asked to indicate any statements they wanted to add. The documents obtained at the end of this process were used in data analysis.

The data were analyzed through content analysis. The main purpose in content analysis is to reach the concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data. In the content analysis, the processes of (i) coding the data, (ii) finding themes, (iii) organizing and defining the data according to codes and themes, (iv) interpreting the findings (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005) were followed. In the analysis process, firstly, interview notes and audio recordings were transferred to the computer environment. All written interviews were read and evaluated. As a result of the evaluation, the themes under which the data can be organized were determined and then, categories were created for each question. In order to examine the reliability of the coding, the same data were re-coded by an expert except the researcher and the codings were compared. If the same option was selected in the coding keys, consensus was accepted and if a different option was selected, it was accepted as a difference of opinion. In order to determine the level of similarity between the two encodings, the reliability ratio between codings was calculated using the formula "Reliability = [Consensus / (Consensus + Disagreement)] X 100" (Miles and Huberman, 1994). As a result of the calculation, the reliability of the research was calculated as 82%. Since it is considered as sufficient to have a compliance percentage above 70% (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005), It can be said that coding reliability is ensured. By discussing the results of the first codings by the coders, the codes that were agreed upon in the sections where there was a difference of opinion were taken, the others were not included in the analysis. Corrected codes were tabulated within the themes and frequency values were presented. Exact quotes from the opinions of the participants were given in the relevant parts of the study. Participants whose opinions were given were marked in the text as T1, T2,... T28.

#### ***Validity and Reliability***

In order to ensure validity in the study, the strategies of credibility (long-term interaction, depth-focused data collection, diversification, expert review, participant confirmation) and transferability (detailed description, purposive sampling) (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005) were used. In the interviews with the study group, the interviews were carried out when and where the participants wanted to give more sincere answers and long-term interaction was achieved. While developing the

interview form used in the data collection process of the research, the relevant national and international literature review was made in detail. Participants with different characteristics in terms of gender, age, teaching field and type of school were included in the study and diversification was ensured. During the preparation of the interview form, necessary corrections were made by using field expert examination and review. In order to avoid situations that may arise from subjective assumptions and misunderstandings, audio recording was made during the interview with the permission of the participants and the necessary notes were taken. Later, the written findings were presented to the participants for their review and necessary corrections were made by obtaining participant confirmation. Some of the teachers' statements were quoted exactly and the opinions of the participants were included. In the study, a detailed description was made by explaining the data collection and analysis processes. Participants included in the study were selected to reflect the difference in terms of personal characteristics and purposive sampling method was used.

Consistency and verifiability strategies (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005) were used in the study to ensure reliability. For this purpose, attention was paid to ask some interview questions to the participants in a different way and record them. The process followed during the development of the data collection tool, creation of codes, data collection and analysis were presented in detail.

## Results

In this section, the findings obtained from the analysis of the collected data were given in tables and examples from the speeches of the participants were presented.

### *Findings related to Teachers' Sources of Professional Stress*

The opinions of the teachers participating in the study about the sources of professional stress were grouped by content analysis and the findings were given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Teachers' sources of professional stress

Theme	Sub-themes	f
Teachers' sources of professional stress	Parents	27
	Students	26
	Teaching profession	25
	School administration	21
	Physical conditions	19
	Colleagues	17

In Table 2, six sub-themes related to teachers' professional stress sources were formed. In this theme, the most repeated source of professional stress by teachers was stated as parents (f=27). Students (f=26) ranked second, and teaching profession (f=25) third, as sources of repetitive professional stress. Some of the participants' opinions on these sub-themes were stated as follows:

*“There are two types of parent profiles that bother me. The first is the parents who are not interested in their students at all, and the other is the parents who are involved in teacher's work. Most of the time, we cannot focus on our education and instruction work because of dealing with them.”* (T12, parents). *“Although some of the parents do not fulfill their duties, the problems and failure of the child are attributed to the teacher. The parents of some successful students also state that the success comes from them and the student.”* (T16, parents). *“Parents are behaving as teachers with the information they learn from the Internet or its surroundings. They ignore the information we receive from universities and our experience in the profession. However, their interference in our work makes the events worse.”* (T21, parents).

*“That students with no sense of responsibility do not attend the class, they are busy with other things during the lesson, their uninterested, reluctant attitudes and excessive noise prevent the flow of the lesson. Some students block students who are willing to listen to the lesson.”* (T23, students). *“Today, students' being more self-confident than necessary and even this excessive self-confidence in the dimension of disrespect creates important problems.”* (T5, students). *“The violent behaviors of students, their constant harming each other and their ignoring of school rules make*

*especially school guard duty days unbearable. Students know that teachers no longer have authority.”* (T13, students).

*“Teaching has become such that everything is done or shown as done on paper. Unnecessary paperwork, exhausting school guard duties, timeless and non-need-oriented seminars are important sources of stress for me in the profession. Also, something is constantly changing in the education system. Something else comes before fully grasping one of the implementations.”* (T5, teaching profession). *“Teaching is a profession that requires sacrifice, but it should not be ignored that this profession is also made due to its financial return. Teachers who work economically for less pay than other professions take more lessons or deal with other jobs to fill this gap. This causes stress on teachers.”* (T15, teaching profession). *“That the profession of teaching, a heartfelt work, is increasingly discredited in the society, it does not receive the necessary respect, and it is thought that teachers are responsible for all problems in the education system makes the profession stressful. People think that teachers are always on holiday. However, our mission begins from the moment we enter the school garden. This is not the same in other professions, it is until you finish your work time. We take care of students even during breaks. Nobody mentions that teaching is intense and tiring.”* (T16, teaching profession). *“Our profession is very tiring. Because we work hard at school. We go home and then, written and oral exams, preparation for the subject we will teach, preparing the texts that students can work with ... We don't have time for our own family. Despite this, there is a perception in the society that teachers are not working. In addition, not distinguishing between those working and not working in the teaching profession, that is, our career opportunities are insufficient and the distribution of work is not fair decrease our motivation.”* (T1, teaching profession).

#### **Findings related to the Consequences of Professional Stress Experienced by Teachers**

The consequences of the professional stress experienced by the teachers were grouped by content analysis and the findings were given in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The consequences of professional stress experienced by teachers

Theme	Category	Sub-themes	f	
The consequences of professional stress experienced by teachers	Individual consequences	Psychological	22	
		Physiological	15	
		Behavioural	13	
	Organizational consequences		Decrease in performance	14
			Decrease in school commitment	13
			Absenteeism	6
			Alienation	4
			Burn out	2

In Table 3, teachers' opinions on the consequences of professional stress they experienced are divided into two as individual and organizational results. In the category of individual consequences of professional stress, psychological results were the most repeated opinion (f=22), while physiological results were the second (f=15). Examples of teachers' opinions belonging to the category of individual consequences of professional stress are as follows:

*“Professional stress causes pessimism, fatigue, and negative thoughts.”* (T2, psychological consequences). *“In times of intense stress, I feel lonely. I experience extreme anxiety. I become reluctant and unhappy. I do not want to do anything.”* (T5, psychological consequences). *“Stress has consequences for me such as lack of attention, fatigue, nervousness and impatience.”* (T23, psychological consequences). *“At the end of a stressful day at school, I have headache and insomnia.”* (T21, physiological consequences). *“Stress causes fatigue and stomachaches.”* (T27, physiological consequences).

In the category of organizational consequences of teachers' professional stress, poor performance was the most repeated opinion by the participants (f=14), while decrease in school

commitment was the second (f=13). Samples of participant opinions belonging to the organizational consequences category of professional stress are as follows:

*“The teaching profession is productive when it is carried out fondly. I become more reluctant when I have professional problems, my energy is running out, so my productivity decreases.”* (T5, poor performance). *“On stressful days, I cannot do the activities I want to do with my students. I teach a routinized course, in short, my performance drops.”* (T10, poor performance). *“After the events that depressed me at school, my concentration decreases and I cannot be dynamic. I want to leave school immediately.”* (T25, poor performance). *“When my work environment is stressful, I go to school unwillingly. I isolate myself from the school environment. I don't talk too much with my colleagues. I do not have fun with the students as I do at other times.”* (T21, decrease in school commitment). *“Because my motivation is low, my feet go backwards. I don't want to work there. The thought of asking to be appointed elsewhere arises.”* (T22, decrease in school commitment).

#### **Findings related to the Strategies for Coping with Stress in the Teaching Profession**

The opinions of the teachers on the strategies of coping with professional stress were grouped by content analysis and the findings were given in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Strategies for coping with professional stress

Theme	Category	Sub-themes	f
Strategies for coping with professional stress	Individual strategies	Positive thinking	13
		Social activities	12
		Bodily movement	9
		Prayer / worship	8
		Effective communication	5
		Regular nutrition	4
		Depersonalization	2
	Organizational strategies	Supportive organizational structure	6
		Participatory management	5
		Improving physical environment	4
		In-service training	4
		Eliminating sources of stress	3
		Psychological help at work	3

In Table 4, the opinions of the participants on strategies for coping with professional stress were divided into two, primarily individual and organizational strategies. Statements in the category of individual strategies, one of the strategies of coping with professional stress, were expressed under seven sub-themes. In this category, positive thinking was the most repeated opinion (f=13), while participation in social activities was the second (f=12). Sample teachers' opinions belonging to the the category of individual strategies are as follows:

*“When something bad happens to me, thinking that it can be worse, I try to be optimistic. I think of friends who have experienced worse events than me.”* (T9, positive thinking). *“It is necessary to move away from prejudices. I try not to magnify and dwell on the events.”* (T15, positive thinking). *“I try to take a lesson from the events experienced”* (T23, positive thinking). *“In order to get away from professional stress, one should turn to social activities and activities such as going on a walk should be done in a natural environment.”* (T5, participating in social activities). *“I participate in activities such as cinema, swimming, football and chatting with my friends whom I feel close to. Thus, I try to forget the events I went through.”* (T25, participating in social activities).

Statements in the category of organizational strategies, one of the strategies of coping with professional stress, were expressed under six sub-themes. In this category, supportive organizational structure was the most repeated opinion (f=6), while participatory management was the second (f=5). Sample teachers' opinions belonging to the organizational strategies category are as follows:



*"When we have important problems, although we mostly try to overcome them, the school administration and colleagues provide psychological support."* (T25, supportive organizational structure). *"When there is unity and togetherness in the school environment, morale increases. Communication is established more easily. Therefore, in order to overcome stress, a school atmosphere in which integrity is achieved, which is their common goal, should be provided."* (T27, supportive organizational structure). *"When decisions are made about school and students, asking my opinions makes me feel important. I know better what to do and when, and I relax."* (T12, participatory management). *"Our school has an environment where communication is open. We can express our thoughts and this makes us more comfortable."* (T19, participatory management).

### **Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study was conducted with the aim of determining teachers' opinions on professional stress. Accordingly, the following conclusions were drawn about the sources of professional stress, the consequences of professional stress, and the strategies used to cope with professional stress.

Teachers stated that they mostly experience stress caused by parents in schools. In recent years, parents' expectations from teachers have increased. Increased worries as a result of increased expectations and parents' erroneous attitudes increased the presence of stress on teachers. Teachers stated that parents' not being interested in their children's education, holding the teacher responsible for their children's failure and interfering with the teacher's work are among the important sources that create stress for them. However, parents have an important role in student behavior and academic success. Shernoff et al. (2011) stated in their study that courses for parents such as parenting, workshops, and mental health would reduce the stress in the teaching profession. In addition, parents' positive and informative approaches affect teachers' performance positively (Hatipoğlu and Kavas, 2016).

Teachers stated that they, in the second place, experienced stress caused by the students. The fact that teachers spend most of their working hours in their classrooms makes teacher-student relationships the most likely source for meeting the need to belong. Positive relationship with students is the predictor of teachers' feeling happy (Spilt, Koomen and Thijs, 2011). To the extent that students are harmonious, respectful, and willing to learn, teachers tend to feel less work-related stress (Gupta, 1981). Teachers receive intrinsic rewards as a result of close relationships with students, but experience negative effects when relationships with students are described as unkind, controversial or cold (Spilt et al., 2011). The stress experienced by teachers related to student behavior and discipline is negatively associated with teaching efficiency. In other words, if a teacher experiences stress caused by student behavior, his/her efficiency in teaching may also be lower (Collie, Shapka and Perry, 2012). In this study, participants stated that students' negative behavior towards their teachers and friends, their apathy and reluctance to the lesson, their failure, disrupting the course order and making noise were important sources of professional stress. When research on the subject is examined, it is understood that this finding bears similarities to some research results (Akpınar, 2008; Boyle et al., 1995; Göksoy and Argon, 2014; Kaya and Alım, 2015; Özdayı, 1990).

Teachers stated that they, in the third place, experienced stress caused by the teaching profession. Participants expressed the gradual decrease in social status and dignity, low income level, unnecessary paperwork, assignment as an on-duty teacher, constantly changing practices, inefficient seminars and inadequacy of career opportunities as the reasons for stress arising from the profession. Similar to the results of this study, Akpınar (2008), Kaya and Alım (2015), Özdayı (1990) and Wilson (2002) concluded that inadequate salary, low promotion opportunities, excessive workload, responsibilities of on-duty teachers, paperwork and low social status are teachers' sources of professional stress. In addition, in this study, the participants mentioned respectively school administration, physical conditions and colleagues as sources of stress after the teaching profession. Teaching, which has been seen as a job of love from past to present, became a stressful profession as a result of the realities of social life.

Many aspects of the work environment can cause stress for teachers. As the number and intensity of stressors increase in school, teachers are more likely to experience stress. The longevity of these stressors tends to increase the negative effects of stress (Gupta, 1981). Most of the teachers

participating in the study stated that they experienced the psychological consequences most and physiological ones in the second rank among the individual results of professional stress. Psychological problems experienced by the participants as a result of stress in general can be listed as pessimism, fatigue, having negative thoughts, and feeling of loneliness, excessive anxiety, and unhappiness, lack of attention, tension and impatience. Similarly, Göksoy and Argon (2014) found out that psychological consequences such as irritability, demoralization, anxiety and uneasiness unhappiness, distraction, inability to motivate, fatigue arose as a result of negative stress on teachers. In this study, the teachers expressed that stress generally causes physiological consequences such as headache, insomnia, weakness and stomach pain. This finding parallels the results of Göksoy and Argon (2014)'s research. In general, the stress phenomenon discussions point to its negative consequences. For example, stress is associated with ailments such as heart attacks, ulcers, high blood pressure. It was also found that stress increases possibilities such as drug and alcohol addiction (Gupta, 1981). Negative emotions that cause stress threaten teachers' personal self-esteem and health (Kelly and Berthelsen, 1995).

While the majority of the participants stated that they experienced the low performance mostly among the organizational consequences of professional stress, they expressed that they experienced a decrease in school commitment in the second place. Göksoy and Argon (2014) concluded in their study that stress causes poor performance, indecision, pressure and anger towards students, fear of failure, negligence and insensitivity. In a similar study, Altıok (2009) concluded that professional stress negatively affects teachers' performance. He pointed out that negative effects come out in the form of unwillingness to attend school, feeling of inadequacy, decrease in the quality of the work and getting the day off or receiving medical report. Different from the results of this study, Örucü et al. (2011), in their study, concluded that there is no relationship between professional stress and professional performance. Stress leads to a decrease in self-esteem, success, effectiveness and adaptation to one's professional role (Kelly and Berthelsen, 1995). Teachers, emotionally burned out by professional stress, run the risk of skepticism and depersonalization and as a result they may feel that they have little to offer students or to earn their own or even quit the profession. Those who do not quit the profession, despite their unhappiness, perform at an insufficient level until retirement and continue to work in a tense class climate by taking aggressive and sometimes harsh measures. In both cases, stress comes at a serious price for teachers, students, schools, parents and even societies (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). Similar to the findings of this study, there is research in the literature concluding that the work stress experienced by employees negatively affects organizational commitment (Demirel and Akça, 2008; Sökmen and Şimşek, 2016; Türker, 2013).

It is quite difficult to completely eliminate the factors that cause stress on teachers in school environments. Therefore, it is necessary to use stress coping strategies effectively in order to be least affected by the negative consequences of stress. In this study, the participants expressed that they mostly used positive thinking and secondly participation in social activities among individual strategies to cope with professional stress. Tavlı and Ünsal (2016) also found out in their study that the participants used the methods of developing positive thoughts or seeking the good sides of events to cope with stress. Positive thinking diverts the stressful people from negativities, directs them to positive events and ultimately relieves them. Social activities are actions carried out by employees for the purpose of evaluating their free time. These are social, cultural and sportive activities such as going to the theater or cinema, doing sports, spending time with friends, listening to music and painting. The person enjoys performing these activities and gets away from work stress. According to Kyriacou (2016), effective stress coping strategies are not things that can be developed once and used in the same way throughout teaching career. In order for these strategies to be effective, teachers should constantly review and change these strategies by taking into account their own changes as an individual and the change of the work in the process.

Expecting the employee to cope with the phenomenon of stress in working life with individual solutions on his / her own can cause significant losses to both the individual and the organization in the long run. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze stress at the organizational level as well as the individual (Yamuç and Türker, 2014). However, Göksoy and Argon (2014) found in their studies that most of the teachers did not receive institutional support against stress and instead developed personal

solutions themselves. In this study, the teachers stated that among the organizational strategies, the structure of the supportive organization was used the most and participatory management, in the second place, was used to cope with professional stress. Establishing a structure that is less centralized, enables participation in decisions, allows upward communication and encourages employees by constantly supporting them can be an effective method to deal with organizational stress (Güçlü, 2001). By means of the participatory management approach, employees are prevented from work alienation and their creativity, efficiency and productivity increase, as a result, positive changes occur in organizations (Erdal, 2009). Besides individual strategies that teachers use to cope with stress, getting the necessary support from their institutions can greatly reduce the stress experienced in the school environment and can create a springboard effect in the education system.

According to the results of the study, it may be suggested to organize effective parent training seminars for parents and various activities that can increase their communication with teachers in order to minimize teachers' stress caused by parents. Policies can be developed to ensure that students behave in accordance with classroom and school rules by allowing them to have longer meetings with the counsellor. Cooperation between the ministry and the media can be established to bring social respect and dignity to the teaching profession. In addition, it may be recommended to eliminate teachers' economic problems, reduce unnecessary paperwork and make career planning practices in teaching. In order to support teachers to cope with professional stress institutionally, schools can be turned into environments that are far from formality and where participation in decisions is ensured. This study reflects the opinions and experiences of a limited group. Therefore, for future research, it may be recommended to conduct the subject with a larger sample group using quantitative or mixed research methods. Besides, carrying out similar studies based on the perceptions of school administrators, parents and students may provide different perspectives on the theme.

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