Understanding a Group of Teachers Who Carry out a Duty in a Socioeconomically Disadvantageous Area in the Southeast of Turkey

Ali Culha[1], Hasan Demirtas[2]
[1]Harran University, 0000-0002-5215-0823
[2]Inonu University, 0000-0003-4159-8937

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Ali Culha[1]*, Hasan Demirtas[2]
[1]Harran University
[2]Inonu University

Abstract

We know that the socioeconomic structure of the areas around schools affects schools and their educational activities. Considering this fact, in the present study we sought to stress how the socioeconomic structure of the areas of schools where teachers carried out their duties affected the teachers. In the phenomenological study, we aimed to reveal the inequalities faced by the teachers who carried out a duty in a socioeconomically disadvantageous area in the southeast of Turkey. In order to collect data, we conducted face-to-face interviews with the teachers who experienced educational inequalities in their schools. We found that the teachers experienced both physical and educational inequalities, and these inequalities had individual and organizational effects. Due to these effects, the teachers had social and individual expectations. As a consequence, it is possible to state that the teachers had similar job definitions; however, they did not have similar opportunities in terms of the areas where they carried out a duty. We stress the necessity of actualizing fair applications that pay regard to the qualities of areas where teachers carry out a duty.

Keywords: Disadvantageous schools, Equality of opportunity, Inequality, Socioeconomics, Teacher.

Introduction

Please Today, income inequalities between qualified and unqualified labor in both developed and developing countries have rapidly increased, especially since the second half of the 20th century (Bound & Johnson, 1992; Acemoglu & Pischke, 2001). The increasing income inequality has triggered educational inequality and increased with it (Gregorio & Lee, 2002), which has profoundly affected people who live in socioeconomically disadvantageous areas. These developments have increased the importance and number of studies on the education of children who live in lower socioeconomic conditions. Researchers have placed a greater emphasis on inequalities faced by students due to socioeconomic reasons (Acemoglu & Pischke, 2001; Engin-Demir, 2009; Miller et al., 2019; Sedibe, 2012; Silva-Laya et al., 2020). On the other hand, it is known that these structural problems also affect teachers who carry out their duties in disadvantageous areas with a lower socioeconomic level. It is because, although teachers have similar job definitions, they do not have similar duties and situations. The qualities of schools affect teachers (Dawson & Shand, 2019). Despite these effects, the literature has a limited number of studies examining the situations arising from the socioeconomic characteristics of schools and how these situations affect teachers. Examining available research, the researchers usually focus on lower academic performance, difficulties of classroom management, and supports received in disadvantageous areas (Dawson & Shand, 2019; Pàmies Rovira et al., 2016; Steins, 2016). Researchers are not so interested in the inequalities faced by teachers who carry out their duties in disadvantageous areas. Unlike the abovementioned research, we intended to stress what kind of inequalities the teachers who carried out a duty in disadvantageous areas faced due to the socioeconomic characteristics of the area. We consider the present study a key element in covering this gap in the literature.

The socioeconomic context affects not only students but also schools. Schools in socioeconomically disadvantageous areas face certain financial, organizational, and cultural inequalities in terms of the personal and social development of students (Silva-Laya et al., 2020). These inequalities affect not only students but also the school culture, which includes teachers, classes, and the school itself (Gehrke, 2005). It is because the socioeconomic structure of schools is one of the factors affecting teachers (Kelly, 2004). Carrying out a duty in

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* Corresponding Author: *Ali Culha, aliculha@harran.edu.tr*

schools in disadvantageous areas means lower academic standards, poverty, and systemic inequalities (Dawson & Shand, 2019). In disadvantageous areas, most factors like socioeconomic level of families, social circle, and opportunities and possibilities in schools (such as classroom size, access to technology, environment, academic achievement of students, and teachers' years of employment in schools) affect not only the success of students but also the way the teachers carry out their duty. Teachers in schools in disadvantageous areas with a lower socioeconomic structure may face different problems compared to their colleagues from upper and middle socioeconomic environments. For example, teachers in such schools have to cope more with peer victimization among students (Ozkan & Ciftci, 2010). As a matter of fact, since teachers in these areas have to struggle with problems arising from the disadvantageous area and school and are not satisfied with present conditions (Ozdemir et al., 2015), they usually demand reassignment. Therefore, there is a faster circulation of teachers in these areas. Among the reasons why teachers are assigned to other schools are different conditions in other schools (Demirel Yazici & Cemaloglu, 2022), the school environment, success status, social opportunities, and the desire to carry out a duty in better schools. Encouragement applications are also necessary for teachers who carry out duties in these areas to have a longer period of duty (Dolu, 2020).

The concept of equality is defined as a legal norm that enables every individual in society to access the resources and opportunities of society in line with their needs (Uzunaslan & Tek, 2019), whereas the concept of inequality can be defined as the absence of the aforementioned norm. The system of education in Turkey has a less egalitarian structure (Cingöz & Gür, 2020). This structure affects the school's organization as an open system (Kazu, 2019). From this point of view, in the present study we discussed "inequality", a deep subject that is difficult to understand at first. In the study, we focused on a real-life situation like educational inequalities faced by teachers in an area with a lower socioeconomic level. In the phenomenological study, we aimed to reveal the inequalities faced by the teachers who carried out a duty in a socioeconomically disadvantageous area in the southeast of Turkey. In line with this purpose, we shaped the subproblems of the study as follows:

- What are the most common inequalities faced by teachers who carry out their duties in a socioeconomically disadvantageous area?
- How do the inequalities faced by teachers affect their professional lives and educational activities?
- What are the expectations of the teachers for the reduction of the inequalities they face?

Method

In the current study, we particularly chose a qualitative method because it was more appropriate for discussing deep, sensitive, and structural issues (Creswell & Báez, 2020).

Study Design

In the design of the present study, we used phenomenology, which is a qualitative research design. Studies conducted with this design focus on how individuals make sense of phenomena they experience and try to understand them (Patton, 2014). Researchers aim to reduce the personal experiences of participants related to the phenomenon to universal statements (Creswell, 2016). In the current study, we used the aforementioned design because we aimed to reveal the viewpoint of the teachers who experienced inequalities concerning the phenomenon of inequality and the meaning they attributed to the phenomenon in question.

Data Collection Tool

In research conducted with a phenomenological design, researchers collect data from individuals who have experienced the relevant phenomenon. Researchers usually try to collect data deeply by conducting interviews and observations (Merriam, 2018). We collected the data for the current study by conducting face-to-face interviews with the teachers who experienced educational inequalities. We know that interviews are the major source of data for qualitative research. Emotions, thoughts, and experiences are usually revealed in this way (Patton, 2014). When creating the data collection tool, we primarily specified the questions to be asked. We presented the form that we created to two academicians who were experts in the field of educational sciences and to a literature teacher. One of the academicians suggested that a new question be added (the second question on the interview form), while the other academician and the literature teacher mainly recommended specific linguistic changes so that the questions might be understandable. In line with these recommendations, we updated the interview form. The first section of the form had questions about personal information related to the participants, such as age, professional seniority, and educational background, whereas the second section had seven basic questions.

Data Collection Process

Prior to the data collection process, we applied for ethics committee approval. We received ethics approval from the Harran University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (dated 23.6.2022 and numbered 2022/99). Then we specified the school area to collect data. As we explained in the introduction, the knowledge and experiences of A.C., one of the authors in the present study, related to the area facilitated our work during the data collection process. For example, with the help of this experience, we chose schools in the area that were not much within sight and whose facilities we anticipated to be inadequate. Prior to conducting the interviews, we visited the schools and gave them information about the study. All the school administrators we interviewed agreed to give support to the study. Following the approval of the school administrators, we conducted preinterviews with the teachers who were to take part in the study. We informed them about the study and the questions that we planned to ask. Then we made appointments. We went to the schools on the days and hours of appointments. The participants signed voluntary participation forms, and we conducted the interviews. At the end of the interviews, we stressed that the present study, which aimed to attract the attention of implementers and policymakers, would reveal the inequalities faced by the teachers who carried out a duty in the aforementioned socioeconomic area, and in this sense, it would hopefully be useful for them. In order to inform those who were curious about the results of the study, we noted the e-mail addresses. Finally, we thanked them and left the school.

Working Group

The teachers in the working group carried out a duty in Garden (code name) province, which is located in the southeast of Turkey close to the border and can be accepted as being socioeconomically disadvantageous. Table 1 demonstrates specific data that supports our opinion that Garden is a disadvantageous area in terms of socioeconomic characteristics (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2022).

Table 1. Socioeconomic data related to Garden province

Population	2.143.020
Number of nonliterate	114.505
Unemployment rate	15%
Employment participation rate	40.6%
Mean household size	5.12
Immigration rate	-12.84
Income per capita	3075 Dollars

Considering the data in Table 1, it is possible to state that Garden is socioeconomically disadvantageous. However, in order to collect richer data, we chose to focus on a narrower area, which was more appropriate for the focal point of the present study. At this point, we took into account the data from research entitled Socioeconomic Development Order of Districts, which was published by the Department of Trade and Industry in 2022 (Socioeconomic Development Ranking of Districts, 2022). According to the abovementioned research, a large part of the districts in Garden are socioeconomically at the last two levels. However, Rose (code name) District attracted our attention in terms of accessibility. The abovementioned research suggests that Rose is ranked in the fifth area in terms of socioeconomic development and is ranked approximately 700th out of 973 districts. Therefore, we aimed to reach the teachers who carried out their duties in schools in these districts. At this point, as a prerequisite, we chose the teachers from different provinces or areas. It was because we anticipated that the teachers who were unfamiliar with the qualities and possibilities of the area would particularly feel the phenomenon of inequality more deeply. Therefore, we created the participants in the present study via purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling enables researchers to choose situations that contain rich information at the point of depth of a study and to reach more information within the frame of the qualities of the specific group chosen (Patton, 2014). With this method, we conducted interviews with 18 teachers in five different schools. In line with ethical principles, we gave each participant a nickname. Table 2 demonstrates the demographic characteristics of the teachers in the working group.

Table 2. Personal characteristics of the participants

Nickname	Gender	Age	Years of Employment in School (year)	Educational Background	Professional Seniority (year)	School Grade
Kerem	Male	38	8	Bachelor's degree	14	Elementary
Mert	Male	28	3	Bachelor's degree	3	Secondary
Duru	Female	33	6	Bachelor's degree	10	Elementary
Yaren	Female	31	8	Bachelor's degree	8	Elementary
Burak	Male	27	4	Bachelor's degree	4	High school
Doruk	Male	31	1	Bachelor's degree	1	High school
Ece	Female	28	2	Bachelor's degree	2	High school
Azra	Female	26	2	Bachelor's degree	2	Elementary
Yağmur	Female	38	12	Bachelor's degree	6	Secondary
İpek	Female	33	7	Bachelor's degree	3	Secondary
Alp	Male	28	5	Postgraduate	5	Elementary
Işık	Female	27	3	Bachelor's degree	3	Secondary
Pelin	Female	29	6	Bachelor's degree	6	Secondary
Başak	Female	30	2	Bachelor's degree	7	Secondary
Pınar	Female	29	6	Bachelor's degree	6	Elementary
Cem	Male	35	8	Bachelor's degree	8	High school
Emre	Male	30	5	Bachelor's degree	5	High school
Tuna	Male	25	1	Bachelor's degree	1	High school

When determining the participants, we paid attention to choosing both female and male participants and teachers who carried out a duty in elementary schools, secondary schools, and high schools. We aimed for maximum diversity. As Table 2 demonstrates, the participants were aged 25 to 38 years. Their professional seniority ranged from one year to 14 years, and their years of employment in school ranged from one year to twelve years. As the table demonstrates, in terms of educational background, all of them had a bachelor's degree, whereas one was a postgraduate. The shortest duration of the interview was 25 minutes, and the longest was 36 minutes. We conducted the interviews in quiet places where the teachers would feel comfortable. We typed out all the interviews.

Analysis of the Data

We primarily read the data acquired in general. After having an opinion about the data, we started the analysis. While doing this, we used the content analysis technique. Content analysis degrades large-scale qualitative data sets into codes and themes and then interprets them (Patton, 2014). Accordingly, we examined the interview forms and specified codes. We created a code chart. We clustered the codes written on the chart under themes, which created a meaningful whole. In addition, we tried to place emphasis on citations and context in line with the nature of qualitative research.

Validity and Reliability Studies

In qualitative research, there is consensus on following ethical principles from the beginning of the research until the end in order to increase validity and reliability (Merriam, 2018). In this context, we paid attention to ethical principles at all stages of the present study. In order to increase the validity and reliability of the study, we used some of the strategies recommended by Creswell (2017) and Patton (2014) for qualitative research. The first of these strategies was triangulation. As is known, the triangulation approach plays a role in strengthening the research and enables researchers to test the consistency of the data acquired (Patton, 2014). In the current study, we tried to increase the validity with the participation of more than one researcher using the triangulation types. As the two authors in the study, we analyzed and compared the data individually. Of the twelve codes created, ten were synonymous, the same, or similar. We debated over the two and arrived at a consensus. Miles and Huberman (1994) find at least 80% conformity between coders to be adequate for reliability. Accordingly, it is possible to say that this requirement was also met. Another strategy was member control. Following the initial analyses, we interviewed three participants (Yaren, Yağmur, and Tuna) once again. These participants examined the analyses and did not object at all. They stated that the codes and themes reflected their opinions. Finally, we used the direct citation strategy, which might best reflect the themes.

Limitations

The area where we collected the study data was mainly an area of people who can be considered urban poor. Socioeconomic characteristics in rural areas and inequalities faced by teachers may vary. In addition, since the cultures of different areas may vary, the inequalities faced by teachers may vary as well. Finally, the data in the present study consisted of the views of the teachers who came to the area from another region. Inequalities faced by teachers who are born and raised in the same area may also vary. Due to all these reasons, the present study makes no claim to generalization.

The role of the researchers

The current study in which I took part as one of the researchers (A.C.) was inspired by a school in a socioeconomically disadvantageous area where I had carried out a duty for nearly six years. During this time, I often heard complaints, especially from teachers who were unfamiliar with the area. These complaints were mainly about the socioeconomic characteristics of the school area. My colleagues, who came to school cheerfully like little kids when they were first appointed to their duty, would begin to dislike the school over the years. Then they would leave the school at the earliest opportunity to work in places with better possibilities. I know that things are still the same. This desire to understand the teachers and hear their voices has impelled me and my researcher colleague to plant the seeds of the present study. The seeds have grown and given us the study as a fruit. We expect that the study will pave the way for understanding the educational inequalities faced by teachers who carry out their duties in socioeconomically disadvantageous areas. In addition, we would like to stress the other side of the medallion by evaluating the concept of inequality, which is commonly used by students, from the viewpoint of teachers.

Results and Discussion

We expressed the data acquired from the interviews conducted with the teachers primarily with codes and then with themes in a way to create a meaningful whole. First, we tried to reveal the inequalities faced by the teachers who carried out their duties in socioeconomically disadvantageous schools. Based on the views of the teachers who expressed the inequalities they faced, we created the codes and themes in Table 3.

Table 3. Themes and codes related to the inequalities faced by the teachers
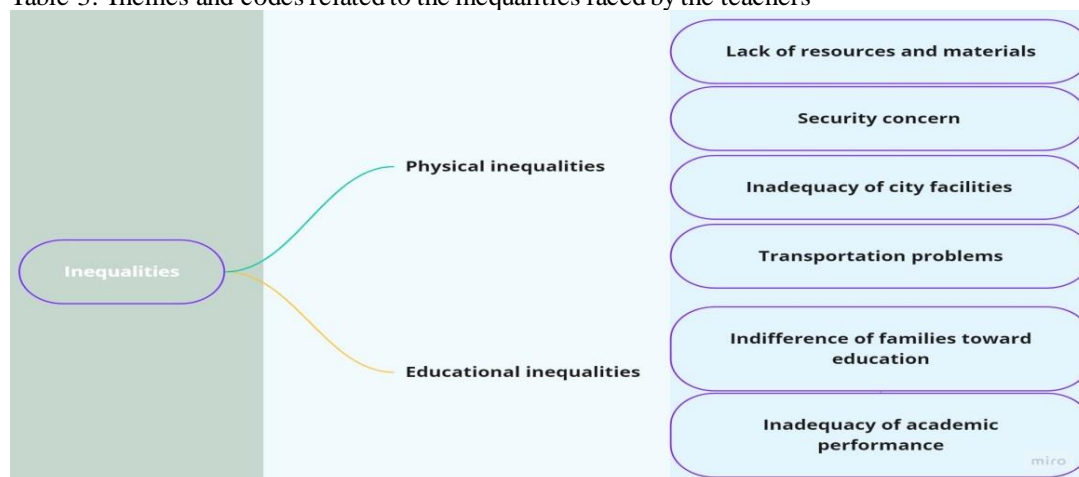
We clustered the inequalities faced by the teachers who carried out their duties in socioeconomically disadvantageous schools as physical and educational inequalities. Within the scope of physical inequalities, lack of resources and materials came to the forefront as an inequality faced by the teachers who took part in the current study. Since eight teachers out of 18 carried out a duty in schools in a socioeconomically disadvantageous area, they stated that they were either ignored or pushed into the background by the Directorates of National Education in terms of the allocation of resources and materials. Concerning this matter, two of the teachers stated, "*In socioeconomically advantageous areas, classes are supported by a variety of resources. However, this is not possible in this area. Sports equipment is inadequate... (Teacher Yaren)*". Actually, we know that the basic needs of schools in Turkey are met by the Ministry of National Education. In addition, other shareholders may provide public and financial support. This support may vary according to the environment of the school. In other words, the views of the teachers who took part in the present study on this matter might be associated with the social and economic structure of the school environment.

A portion of the participants stated that they did not feel fully safe around school or in the city. The female teachers particularly stated that they could not go out at night and were attentive to wearing clothes that would

not attract much attention. Concerning this matter, Teacher Ece stated, "*When I am home, I try not to go out alone at night. I feel uncomfortable with the glances of people around school. People find the way I get dressed, dye my hair, and drive to be odd.*" Most female teachers mentioned this situation. Therefore, it is possible to say that the cultural characteristics of school environments may also affect teachers.

Another inequality faced by the teachers was the inadequacy of city facilities. One-third of the participants stated that the social infrastructure and social activities in the area where they carried out a duty were too weak. For example, Teacher Alp expressed his thoughts as follows: "*I would like to spend the best years of my life in a place that has greater social opportunities and where people are more open to communication. We look forward to the holidays. Probably more than the students.*" As can be seen, the socioeconomic characteristics and social life in the city did not satisfy these teachers. It is known that a great number of teachers are assigned to the city during teacher assignments, which are made centrally every year in Turkey. We believe that teachers who are assigned need to be supported in social life.

The last code created under the physical inequalities theme was transportation problems. The teachers stated that they had to dwell in another district due to the socioeconomic characteristics of their school, which had brought along time and cost problems related to transportation. Concerning this matter, one of the teachers stated, "*I cannot live in this area. I live in another district, and this brings along transportation problems. We cannot take the bus, because the fuel is too expensive to afford (Teacher Cem).*" Observing the school environment, we anticipate that the teachers do not dwell near the school due to the present social and cultural structure. Therefore, we understand that they face inequalities regarding transportation problems.

Half of the participants stated that their families did not care about school and education. The participants perceived the effects of this situation as inequality. For example, Teacher Başak stated, *"Families have a lower level of education in general. They do not take care of their kids. We cannot receive feedback regarding our activities. They are just so careless. This decreases our motivation They may want to take their kids home from school for a variety of reasons (such as visiting a relative, cleaning, etc.). As a consequence, they do not adequately support the development of their kids."* We believe that this insensibility is related to the socioeconomic structure of families. Educational background and economic structure of families may prevent them from considering education a priority.

Some of the participants stated that one of the inequalities they faced due to carrying out a duty in a socioeconomically disadvantageous area was the inadequacy of academic performance among students. Concerning this matter, Teacher Azra stated, "*Financial impossibilities affect the academic performance of kids very much. I think even the responses of kids to any incident or question are different in socioeconomically advantageous areas.*" From this point of view, it is possible to talk about a correlation between socioeconomic structure and academic performance. In addition, we believe that the teachers' perception of an inequality concerning this matter is worthy of discussion.

With the aforementioned themes and codes, we tried to answer the first question of the present study. After revealing the inequalities faced by the teachers, we tried to find out how these inequalities affected their professional lives and education. We created the themes and codes in Table 4 based on the common statements of the participants.

Table 4. Themes and codes related to the effects of the inequalities faced by the teachers
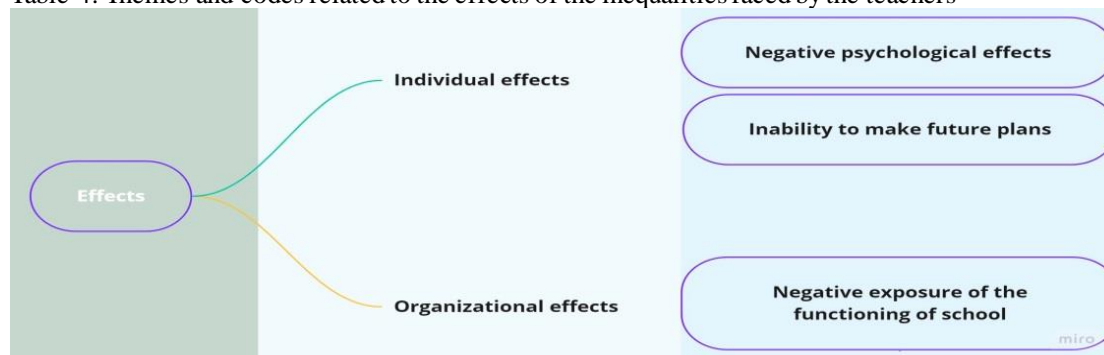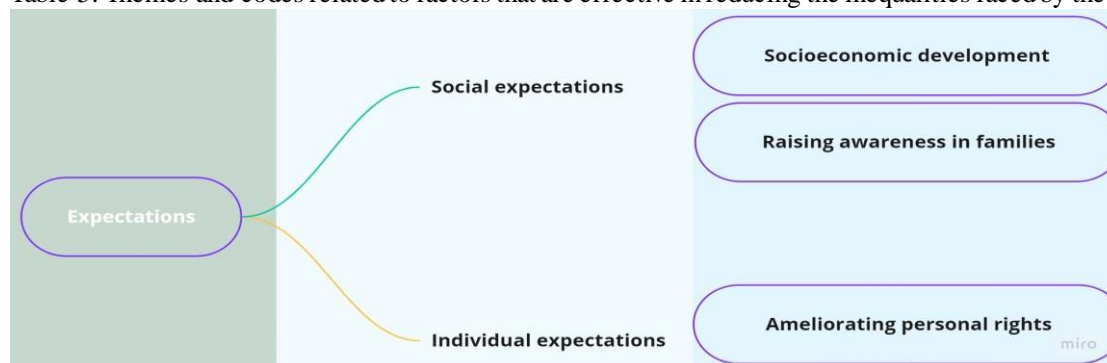

As Table 4 demonstrates, the inequalities faced by the teachers had individual and organizational effects. The majority of the teachers indicated that they had bad psychology due to the inequalities they faced. Concerning this matter, one of the teachers stated, "*Sometimes I question myself in a professional sense. The kids have problems, and we cannot solve them. I just feel upset, said Teacher Doruk.*" Another teacher stated, "*It decreases our movement so much... We give up at some point... (Teacher Emre).*". We actually find it normal for the inequalities faced by the participants to affect their psychology negatively. Indeed, we understand that the teachers feel upset, less motivated, and experience negative emotions like stress and burnout due to the inequalities they face. Also, we know that it is not easy to get rid of these psychological moods.

A part of the participants indicated that the inequalities they faced affected their future plans, prevented them from making plans, and caused a sense of uncertainty and restriction. Among these participants, Teacher Pelin stated, "*I have to spend the best years of my life here. I don't know how much energy I will have when I return to my home town. I cannot make plans for the future. We feel restricted and trapped.*" At this point, as we explained in the characteristics of the working group, we believe that it is noteworthy to remind you that the teachers who took part in the present study were strangers to the area where we conducted the study. We find it perfectly normal for the teachers to want to return to their home town and carry out their duties there.

Some of the teachers who took part in the study indicated that inequalities affected the functioning of the school negatively. They stressed that the lower socioeconomic characteristics of the school environment affected the school negatively. Concerning this matter, Teachers Burak stated, "The financial *situation of the students affects the functioning of the school. We cannot even join a simple social activity. Some students even come to school without eating and don't eat anything at school either. Sometimes I want to recommend a book, but I just forget about it because I know they cannot afford it.*" Socioeconomic characteristics of the school environment may affect school activities. However, we would like to stress that some teachers consider this situation an injustice and are negatively affected by it.

With the abovementioned themes and codes that we created concerning the impacts of the inequalities faced by the teachers, we gave an answer to the second question of the present study. Finally, we tried to reveal the factors that might be effective in reducing the inequalities experienced in education, according to the views of the teachers who took part in the study. Table 5 demonstrates the themes and codes created in line with the views of the participants.

Table 5. Themes and codes related to factors that are effective in reducing the inequalities faced by the teachers

As Table 5 demonstrates, nearly one-third of the teachers who took part in the current study stressed the necessity of the socioeconomic development of the area for solving the inequalities faced. The teachers indicated that they expected long-term and permanent policies from the government, municipalities, and universities. They believed that these policies would ameliorate the socioeconomic structure of the area. Concerning this matter, one of the teachers stated, "Rather than individual efforts, we need to struggle altogether. We need permanent solutions far from political thoughts. We need to believe that we can change things together. (Teacher Azra) Another teacher stated, "We need a whole mobilization with policymakers, trainers, families, and students (Teacher Emre). We believe that the teachers have quite realistic expectations regarding the socioeconomic development of the area. Indeed, considering the qualities of the area where we conducted the study, it is possible to consider the expectations of the teachers to be natural and necessary.

Of the 18 participants, seven stressed the necessity of raising awareness in families in order to solve the inequalities they faced. Concerning this matter, Teacher Yağmur stated, "There is a need for more educated people. There is a need for more literate people who will live here and change things here. For this, we need to train parents and raise awareness among people." This expectation of the teachers demonstrated that they were well aware of the importance of family in children's education. In addition, this expectation may indicate the desire of the teachers to carry out a duty in schools with more conscious parents.

Of the teachers who took part in the current study, nearly one-third indicated that based on the socioeconomic characteristics of the school environment where they carried out a duty, they expected specific ameliorations in their personal rights. Concerning this matter, Teacher Cem stated, "Teachers who carry out a duty in such schools can have specific positive discrimination. For example, teachers who have been carrying out a duty in such schools for more than a certain period of time can retire a few years earlier." Teacher Emre stated, "The personal rights and financial income of teachers should be ameliorated. These teachers should have positive discrimination." Actually, we know that school areas in Turkey are grouped according to specific qualities, and teachers are given service points according to the school area. However, considering the views of the teachers who took part in the present study, we see that there is no fair evaluation. In addition, we would like to stress

that the teachers expect more personal rights. In this way, we gave an answer to the third question of the study. We evaluated the findings that we explained individually until here in the discussion and conclusion section with a holistic sense in company with the relevant literature.

Results and Discussion

In the present study, which sought to reveal the inequalities faced by the teachers who carried out a duty in socioeconomically disadvantageous areas, we found that the teachers experienced physical and educational inequalities. The previous literature is in agreement with the fact that these schools face a variety of difficulties arising from a lack of physical infrastructure, resources, and materials that are necessary for educational activities, and this situation has a negative effect on equality in education (Anali & Sahin, 2020; Karatas & Cakan, 2018; Kozikoglu & Senemoglu, 2018; Tosun et al., 2020). In addition, we know that inadequacies related to cultural, financial, and social resources prevent academic activities in schools from being among the primary activities and being appreciated (Rivera Maulucci, 2010). Therefore, the possibility of facing lower academic performance may increase. Children who grow up in areas that face lower socioeconomic conditions like unemployment, poverty, and the need for social aid may display worse academic performance, which may bring along fewer educational acquisitions for students (Hall et al., 2022; Miller et al., 2019). It is because it is harder for these students to concentrate on school and academic activities. Considering that the socioeconomic structure of the school environment affects the academic life of students (Cochran-Smith, 2016; Sedibe, 2012), carrying out a duty in schools with lower academic performance may cause teachers to feel inadequate and dissatisfied (Kelly, 2004). Therefore, we understand that the teachers in the present study considered this situation an inequality.

The teachers who had difficulty coming to school dwelled in other places due to the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the area where they worked, which made it difficult for them to come to school and caused economic loss. The teachers desired to carry out their duties in areas with better opportunities and a higher sociocultural structure. We understand this desire. On the other hand, as some teachers indicated, transportation problems may sometimes lead to safety concerns and problems (Karatas & Cakan, 2018). Studies on education usually handle the matter of safety in the context of students and ignore the safety of teachers. However, teachers may experience safety concerns at an individual, organizational, and social level both inside and outside the school (Berkowitz et al., 2022). When undesirable situations like aggression, trauma, and violence are experienced around school, it will become difficult for teachers to carry out their duties, and safety concerns will increase (Maring & Koblinsky, 2013). Female teachers may even feel these concerns more intensely. From this point of view, it is possible to state that the cultural characteristics of school environments may repress teachers. Female teachers may particularly feel neighborhood pressure due to the cultural characteristics of the area. This can be related to factors like lower educational levels, social and economic opportunities, and lifestyle.

Inadequate city facilities were another physical inequality faced by the teachers. Educational quality can be lower, especially in schools in shantytowns, ghettos, or other disadvantageous areas. Although these schools are in the city center, they are socially, culturally, and economically far from other areas of the city. Such an environment may trigger the desire of teachers to carry out a duty in different school areas (DeMatthews vd., 2022; Mitra et al., 2008; Kraft vd., 2015). In situations where a whole city has social, cultural, and economic deprivations, teachers may desire to carry out a duty in a different area. In that case, teachers may compare themselves to colleagues who carry out a duty in areas with socially, culturally, and economically better opportunities and consider this an inequality. We can accept the existence of such a phenomenon specific to Turkey. As we specified in the introduction section, it is possible to say that a similar situation will arise considering the qualities of the area where we collected the study data.

Another matter was that families did not care about school. In schools in socioeconomically disadvantageous areas, families not caring about and supporting schools adequately and not collaborating with schools pose a noteworthy pedagogical problem (Anali & Sahin, 2020; Tosun et al., 2020). In these schools, families have limited interest and participation in school, especially due to inadequate cultural and economic capital. Parents are usually unable to spend time with their kids due to longer working hours, and thus, they do not have the academic skills to support school activities. They have limited participation in parent's meetings and other school activities (Martínez, 2014; Sedibe, 2012). Indeed, inviting these parents to school may be intimidating for them (De Lange et al., 2012). However, the participation of families in school, especially in these areas, may make more positive contributions. Stronger parental networks may enable parents to actively take part in school and prevent disadvantageous situations (Li and Fischer, 2017).

Considering the abovementioned inequalities, it is crucial to increase the motivation of teachers, prevent them from experiencing burnout, and provide them with welfare (Miyajima, 2008). It is possible to say that teachers in schools in areas where poverty is experienced more intensely have difficulty being pedagogically effective. These teachers who are intimate with difficult student groups experience burnout more often and get estranged

from their productivity, which may affect their professional development negatively (Kelly, 2004; Sass et al., 2012). At this point, supporting teachers in terms of professional development may increase their commitment to their school and profession as well as their motivation (Kelly, 2004). Teachers with a higher level of self-efficacy perception and psychological resilience may be expected to carry out their duties more effectively in disadvantageous schools. When these teachers realize that they work under harsh conditions, their passion and motivation for their profession may increase (Dawson & Shand, 2019).

Situations faced by teachers in and around school may affect the functioning of the school. For example, Allen et al. (2018) found a positive, if not very great, correlation between the disadvantage level of the school area and the replacement rate of teachers. Similarly, DeMatthews et al. (2022) suggest that teacher turnover is higher in low-socioeconomic regions. This result indicates that teachers who carry out a duty in disadvantageous areas will have a higher possibility of quitting school. Moreover, the difficulties faced by teachers may have a negative effect on their ability to develop a sense of belonging at school. They may desire to go to areas where they can carry out their duty under better conditions (Karatas & Cakan, 2018). This may cause uncertainty and make it difficult for teachers to shape their future plans. On the other hand, as the qualities of the school environment affect the attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors of students, we need to stress that it is hard to manage the behaviors of students in school and in the classroom, apply the rules, and add social skills (Maring & Koblinsky, 2013). For example, it is possible to state that teachers who carry out a duty in disadvantageous areas have greater difficulty in classroom management (Steins, 2016). Such an environment may affect the functioning of the school negatively.

We revealed that the teachers who carried out a duty in socioeconomically disadvantageous areas had social and individual expectations, like the socioeconomic development of the area, raising awareness in families, and ameliorating personal rights. The extent of conditions among families who live in disadvantageous areas, such as unconsciousness, indifference, the absence of a place to study, domestic violence, and child labor, may affect the academic performance of children. At this point, it is crucial that awareness be raised in families (Ozcan et al., 2018). It is possible to say that families with better socioeconomic opportunities will be more conscious of their interest in education. Finally, considering the crucial role of ameliorating the occupational, social, and economic conditions of teachers in increasing the professional esteem of teaching (Sahin, 2018), ameliorating personal rights may make positive contributions, especially for teachers who carry out a duty in disadvantageous areas. For example, incentives that can compensate for the difficulties in teachers' working conditions can be useful in this regard (Kolbe & Strunk, 2012).

Conclusion

As a consequence, considering the findings obtained in the present study, it is possible to state that teachers who carry out their duties in socioeconomically disadvantageous areas experience a variety of inequalities in physical and educational fields. From this point of view, we conclude that teachers do not have similar opportunities and possibilities in the context of the areas where they carry out their duties. Accordingly, we believe that it is necessary to fairly actualize physical and educational applications that consider the qualities of the areas where teachers carry out their duties. We think that these applications will positively affect not only teachers, but also students and educational activities.

Recommendations

In light of the study findings, we can recommend that policymakers, schools, and municipalities extend programs aimed at the training of families in socioeconomically disadvantageous areas in particular. We suggest that schools in such areas be supported more often in terms of the resources and materials used in educational activities. Teachers who carry out a duty in disadvantageous areas can be encouraged to take part in activities like trips, concerts, sports competitions, and festivals. Off-price transportation support can be provided to these teachers by collaborating with municipalities. Strengthening the psychological resilience of teachers at all levels, from school administration to ministry, can have a positive effect. Ameliorations can be made, particularly in the personal rights of teachers who carry out a duty in disadvantageous areas. Finally, we certainly stress the need for strengthening the socioeconomic structure of families for a permanent solution.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Ethical Approval

Ethical permission (23/06/2022-2022/99) was obtained from the Harran University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee for this research.

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