



Being a teacher in a disadvantaged school: a narrative from a professional development perspective *

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine in depth the teaching story and professional experiences of a teacher working in a socioeconomically disadvantaged vocational high school, with a particular focus on professional learning and development. The research adopts a narrative inquiry design within the qualitative research paradigm. The participant teacher was selected using criterion sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, and the data were collected through a semi-structured interview form. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis tailored to the narrative research design. According to the findings, the idealistic thoughts regarding professional learning and development, which were strongly felt before starting to work at a school affected by disadvantages such as dropout, early marriage, and child labor, gave way to professional burnout, discouragement, and a sense of not being able to fully utilize one's professional potential. These disadvantages revealed the teacher's specific professional learning and development needs and led the participant to seek training to address them. The professional development and training activities undertaken by the participant were described as dysfunctional in terms of their scheduling. The lack of additional support provided to disadvantaged schools within these practices and the disregard of practicum-based learning were found to negatively affect the teacher's professional learning and development process. Based on the participants' experiences, the reasons for the ineffectiveness of professional learning and development practices include decision-making processes that overlook field applicability, a failure to consider the specific conditions of disadvantaged schools, and the excessive workload faced by teachers in such contexts, which limits their opportunities for continuous professional growth. This study reveals how the conditions of disadvantaged schools are reflected in teachers' professional learning and development and offers significant implications for future education policies through its suggestions for eliminating these disadvantages.

Keywords

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Introduction

While the literature on teacher development and learning expands daily, the fact that this topic underlies student and school achievement outcomes maintains research interest in the topic. Research evidence on teacher professional development and learning demonstrates that teacher learning varies depending on the teacher, the learning activities themselves, and the school context (Opfer & Peder, 2011). One dominant view in the literature on the relationship between the structural and cultural aspects of schooling, teacher learning, and change focuses on the capacity of schools to transform themselves into supportive environments for teacher learning and change (Sleegers & Leithwood, 2010). Therefore, it can be argued that the internal and environmental conditions of schools influence teachers' professional development and learning, and the most challenging of these conditions are thought to be related to schools located in disadvantaged areas.

There is research in the literature indicating a positive and significant relationship between a school's level of disadvantage and teacher turnover rates (Allen et al., 2018). The ineffectiveness of guidance services for disadvantaged school profiles in many schools places the burden of addressing students' mental and social-emotional behaviors on teachers (Walton-Fisette, 2020). Consequently, these schools face numerous challenges that impact not only student performance but also teachers' quality of work-life. However, there is also research evidence that highlights that despite poor socioeconomic conditions, some of these schools perform well, thus offering satisfactory work conditions for teachers, among other positive factors (Matla & Xaba, 2020). The varying impact of being a disadvantaged school on variables such as teacher motivation and turnover across cultures, contexts, and countries raises questions about its implications for teacher professional learning and development. Research indicates that disadvantaged student and school profiles increase teacher burnout and reduce their motivation, further disadvantaging schools. In addition, the same study draws attention to the inadequacy of the professional qualifications of teachers among the reasons that push the school to be disadvantaged (Tosun et al., 2020), making it necessary to address the professional learning and development (PLD) processes of teachers working in such schools. Therefore, the aim of the study was to reveal the reflection of the disadvantaged school environment on the professional learning and development of the teacher.

Disadvantaged School Characteristics

While poverty and social class differences emerge as the strongest factors in educational disadvantage in countries like the United Kingdom (White & Murray, 2019), there is research evidence that the situation is similar in the Turkish context. An examination of the environmental conditions of schools located in disadvantaged areas reveals that individuals there are often groups experiencing poverty and prone to violence, as well as immigrants, individuals with disabilities, women, and children (Toprakçı & Arslan, 2022). Furthermore, students in these areas may be experiencing and internalizing trauma stemming from various factors, such as poverty, hunger, violence, and drug addiction (Sutherland & Parker, 2020). Furthermore, disadvantaged groups in schools, such as those with chronic illnesses, high household care burdens, and working children, may be more absent from school than other children (Gencer et al., 2023; Gürgeç, 2024). One of the biggest challenges for schools in socially deprived areas is the high number of students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, who have lower educational aspirations and less access to institutionalized educational resources, which can create a negative learning environment (Klein, 2017). This negative learning environment is likely to create challenges not only for students but also for teachers' professional learning and development.

Teacher Professional Learning and Development

As a concept, teacher self-improvement is expressed under different concepts such as personnel development, in-service training, professional development, and continuing professional development in the literature. Professional development can be seen as a learning process that encompasses an individual's career and results from meaningful interactions of the teacher educator with their work environment (Kelchtermans, 2004). While professional learning is defined as the mobilization of the energy that emerges from the combination of teachers' skills and competencies (Senge, 2014), programs aimed at this end generally take place in formal environments such as teaching research groups and formal mentoring programs (Timperley, 2011). Within the context of formal learning environments, in-service training can be seen as the most prominent form of professional learning. This training is organized to ensure the individual and professional development of teachers and includes many objectives. These trainings involve ensuring the adaptation of new teachers to their duties; acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes that contribute to the goals, values and principles of the school; increasing teacher performance and satisfaction; enriching experience within the scope of career development; aims to achieve goals such as solving professional problems (Önen et al., 2009; Özbek et al., 2018). In addition, teachers can learn through informal interactions that occur during peer teaching, collaborative planning, and mentoring among colleagues (Little, 2012). In the professional learning process, teachers are individuals who can actively manage their own learning, collaborate with colleagues, update their teaching with student and teacher feedback, and observe and reflect on the learning of other teachers (Liu & Hallinger, 2018). Teachers' informal learning sources include intensive interaction with colleagues or other educational stakeholders, active participation in the process, direct reference to information sources, and learning by doing or gaining experience (Çelik et al., 2021). Regardless of the type, it is undoubtedly important that continuing professional development activities transform teachers into professionals who are constantly learning and researching (Özdemir, 2016). Furthermore, continuous professional development stands out as a prominent element among idealistic teachers (İğde & Yakar, 2021).

According to the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), more than 80% of teachers report that the professional training they receive has a positive impact on their teaching practices (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019). Providing teachers with support for professional development can potentially lead to higher job satisfaction (Chen & Ramos, 2024). Teaching standards established by the Institute for Teaching and School Leadership in Australia, similar to those of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the United States, encompass three teaching domains: professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional engagement. This professional engagement domain dictates that teachers engage in professional learning and engage professionally with colleagues, parents, caregivers, and the community, with a strong focus on developing teachers' professional expertise (Darling-Hammond, 2021). Moreover, rather than a series of isolated activities, professional learning is now conceptualized as a dynamic, interactive, and ongoing development process for teachers (Karacabey et al., 2020). Therefore, ethical, social, cultural, and political dimensions, as well as reflective and research-based aspects of teacher education, must be considered (Flores, 2023). Ensuring and sustaining teachers' professional learning and development can be more challenging in the adverse conditions of disadvantaged school contexts.

Professional Learning and Development in Disadvantaged Schools

In addition to professional learning and development training, contextual factors also significantly influence teachers' perceptions of their professional and personal identities. The socioeconomic contexts from which students come, in particular, have an impact on teachers' ability to measure student achievement (Day et al., 2006). Disadvantaged areas, one of these contexts, are defined as areas with lower socioeconomic and cultural opportunities than other regions (Köse, 2014). The resources available to schools in these areas also vary (Kondakçı et al., 2016). Disadvantaged groups include those experiencing poverty, social exclusion, or those experiencing or at risk of discrimination and violence, as well as immigrants, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, children, and isolated

elderly people (Disadvantaged Groups, 2024). Furthermore, disadvantage can arise from innate characteristics such as gender and skin color, as well as from socially acquired characteristics such as language, religion, and race (Çağlayan, 2021). There is evidence that professional learning and development, if significant, is a factor that ensures teacher recruitment and retention in schools and districts experiencing such disadvantages (Archibald et al., 2011). Teachers' lack of adequate conditions and energy to develop themselves and renew their knowledge in disadvantaged school environments negatively impacts their professional development (Tosun et al., 2020). Teachers, especially those working in high-needs schools, face numerous obstacles in their careers, including inadequate training, development, and autonomy support (Chang et al., 2022; Mendoza & Dizon, 2024). In high-poverty schools, the perceived organizational climate is a key factor in the stress-resilience-teaching relationship (Ellison & Woods, 2019). It is emphasized that it is not enough for disadvantaged school teachers to have a heart of gold; they must also possess a wealth of knowledge and expertise. It has been stated that teachers need to know how to connect the capital needed to move students into higher social classes with the existing cultures of these children's families and communities (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Therefore, in such schools, it can be argued that teachers' basic skills and competencies, as well as their ability to continue their professional learning and development processes, become even more important.

It has been determined that both the difficulties of working in disadvantaged schools (Akin et al., 2022; Allen et al., 2018; Burnett & Lampert, 2019; Klein, 2017; Matla & Xaba, 2020; Tosun et al., 2020; Walton-Fisette, 2020; White & Murray, 2019) and research on professional learning and development of teachers (Archibald et al., 2011; Day et al., 2006; Eroğlu & Özbek, 2020; İlğan, 2017; Karacabey et al., 2020; Little, 2012; Özdemir, 2016; Timperley, 2011) have a wide coverage in the literature. However, a research gap that explores in depth the professional learning and development stories of teachers who experience disadvantaged school conditions is striking, and due to the limitations of the literature review, it appears that research focusing on this topic is almost nonexistent. Exploring teachers' internal approaches to learning and development in disadvantaged settings, where the necessary conditions and needs for professional development are absent, is closely linked to concepts such as teacher career development and well-being, and their implications for these concepts need to be explored. Therefore, there is a need for research focusing on the professional learning and development of teachers in disadvantaged schools. This research explores the impact of disadvantaged school conditions on the teacher's emotional and intellectual world, professional development, and learning in a more in-depth manner by focusing on the teacher's own story and distinguishes it from other qualitative studies on this topic. The research results can guide for determination of the ways, forms, and relationships within the teacher's disadvantaged school context that influence the teacher's learning and professional development process, and for identifying variables to improve and develop these pathways. Furthermore, they can serve as a basis for informing instructional and professional development practices in disadvantaged schools, as well as the topics and methods of general in-service training and legal regulations for decision-makers. The main reason for conducting this research is to reflect the professional learning and development process of disadvantaged school teachers, who start the race one step behind the starting line compared to other schools and need to work harder to close this gap, based on the teaching story.

In this context, the purpose of this research is to examine the professional learning and development experiences of a teacher working in a disadvantaged school, focusing on their teaching stories and narratives. Therefore, the research sought to answer the following question:

How is the experience of teaching in a disadvantaged school reflected in the teacher's professional learning and development process?

Method

Research Design

The research was designed as a narrative research method based on a qualitative research approach. Narrative research is a research design in the human sciences in which the researcher examines the lives of individuals and solicits their own life stories from them (Reisman, 2008). This design analyzes the ways individuals experience life. In narrative research, the researcher, teacher, and students become narrators and characters in their own and others' stories, based on the notion of "the construction and reconstruction of social and individual stories" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Narrative research goes beyond simply retelling, compiling, or re-presenting a particular story; it requires a more careful analysis of the data, encompassing the participants, the researcher, and the cultural processes in which they participate (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009). It also considers not only the individual act of storytelling but also how researchers select, shape, and present stories to foster engagement with a broader audience (Ayers & Miller, 1997). According to this approach, professional stories allow us to understand how teachers establish connections between acquired theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge (Josselson, 2006) and how they cope with the different components of their roles as teachers (Dvir & Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2020). Furthermore, understanding professional development as a journey is a developmental concept guided by a wide variety of experiences, people, contexts, and interactions (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2016). Therefore, since the research focuses on the narratives of a teacher working in a disadvantaged vocational high school regarding the professional learning and development process, using this design is advantageous and preferred. In this context, the teacher's story of teaching in a disadvantaged school served as the basis for their narratives.

Research Context

The school where the research was conducted is located in a neighborhood with a population of 12,300 in a district with a population of 57,000 in a province in the Aegean Region of Turkey (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2022). The socioeconomic landscape of the area where the school is located is dominated by the prevalence of early marriages, the adoption of marketing as a profession by family members, including children, low parental education levels, the prevalence of school dropouts, and low school engagement (absenteeism). Problems in the neighborhood where the research was conducted were classified into four categories: educational problems, health problems, family problems and economic problems. Educational problems include school dropouts and low school engagement due to early marriage, while health problems include a lack of knowledge about hygiene. Family-related problems include a high divorce/separation rate, early marriage, and broken families. Economic problems include lack of social security due to the adoption of agriculture and marketing professions, low income, and not being able to pursue other lines of work (Özdemir & Demiriz, 2004). The school where the participant works is a vocational and technical high school located in this region. The school also includes an apprenticeship training center program. The high school has seven classrooms, 23 teachers, and 284 students. The high school consists of a prefabricated building and does not have a laboratory. According to the researchers, the socio-cultural situation of the school district negatively affects children's education and reduces school engagement by alienating children from school, which in turn leads to academic failure (Köse, 2014). Therefore, the fact that there is research evidence that the school can be considered socio-economically disadvantaged due to the regional conditions in which it is located demonstrates the suitability of the research context for the research purpose.

Participant

Data (experiential narratives) were collected through the experiences of a teacher who worked in a disadvantaged school. This single-participant design was chosen to focus more deeply on the teacher's teaching story and to create a more intimate and sustained interaction through multiple interviews with the same participant. Furthermore, it was believed that focusing on a single participant would reveal the effects of experiences in the context of a disadvantaged school on emotions, thoughts, professional learning, and development in a more striking, profound, and realistic manner.

The participating teacher was selected using criterion sampling, a purposive sampling method. Criterion sampling is the study of situations that meet a predetermined set of criteria. Criteria are created by the researcher, or a pre-established list of criteria can be used (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The criteria for selecting participants in this study were working in a disadvantaged high school and having worked at the school for at least five years, with a demonstrated understanding of the impact of these experiences on professional learning and development. Accordingly, a teacher who had been working at a disadvantaged vocational high school for over five years was selected as the research participant. For confidentiality, she is referred to as "Duygu."

Teacher Duygu and the researcher crossed paths in a social setting, and during their brief conversations about education, the researcher realized the profound impact of working at a disadvantaged school on the participant's professional development. The researcher identified the negative impact of working at a disadvantaged school on a teacher's professional development as a problem and aimed to explore the issue in depth. The researcher then conveyed the purpose and information about the study to Teacher Duygu, and an invitation was sent to the researcher. And she expressed her pleasure in participating voluntarily. Teacher Duygu teaches in a disadvantaged area. She is 45 years old and a woman. She is married with two children and has 19 years of experience. She holds a doctorate and began her career as a research assistant at a university. After two years at university, she continued her career as a biology teacher under the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). During his time at the Ministry of National Education, she was first assigned to a boarding school in Turkey's Eastern Anatolia Region. She has currently been teaching at a vocational high school in a city in the Aegean Region of Turkey for 11 years.

Data Collection Tools

Data were collected using a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher in accordance with a narrative research design. The interview form was based on questions appropriate for narrative research within the framework of the literature on the problems of disadvantaged schools and the professional learning and development of teachers. The following points were considered in the development of the questions (Etherington, 2011):

- Cultural contextuality: Questions aimed at exploring details about beliefs, values, and habits.
- Embodied nature: Questions that ground the narrative in real-life experience by shaping the narrator's participation in events and the embodied nature of the events, feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and opinions related to the events.
- The importance of other people: Questions related to how the narrator's network of relationships influences events and the identity of the other characters.
- The narrator's choices and actions: The narrator is an active participant in the events and makes choices based on values, beliefs, and goals. Therefore, questions related to these choices were:
- Historical continuity: Questions related to historical continuity to understand the narrator as coming from somewhere (contextual information) and going somewhere else.
- Beginning, middle, and end: A story needs recognizable parameters; otherwise, it appears chaotic or meaningless. The story begins with an event or decision, or some recognizable trigger. The narrative then develops toward some kind of completion. Questions related to the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
- Metaphors, symbols, and creative, intuitive ways of knowing: Questions related to metaphors, symbols, and intuitive ways of knowing that help capture vivid representations of experiences.

In developing the questions included in the interview form, a comprehensive literature review was conducted based on the research purpose. Draft questions, tailored to the research question and narrative research design, were presented to an expert from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, who has experience in narrative design. After consulting two experts from the Department of Educational Administration, an expert from the Department of Turkish Language and Literature was consulted to examine the language and expression aspects, and necessary adjustments were made based on their opinions. Some of the questions asked in this research context are as follows: “How did you decide to become a teacher? What influenced you in making this decision? Could you tell me about your predominant feelings and thoughts regarding your professional learning and development in the early years of your teaching? The school you currently work at is described as a “disadvantaged school.” What are your thoughts on this? How does teaching at this school make you feel? What training do you think you need to receive to strengthen your professional skills? Are there any efforts at your school or within the ministry to meet your professional learning and development needs? If yes, what are these efforts? What are your thoughts on the adequacy and effectiveness of these efforts? What do you think is the reason for this? What are the impacts of your relationships with school stakeholders—since you have to deal with more challenges than other schools—on your professional learning and development? Could you tell me how they make you feel and think?”

Implementation Process

In the narrative design, data can be in the form of documents and writings such as field notes related to shared experiences, observations of others, journal entries, storytelling, metaphors, pictures, interview transcripts, etc. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Interviewing was used as the data collection technique in this study. Interviewing is defined as a necessary technique for expressing events and phenomena in the individual's environment and revealing unobservable behaviors and feelings (Merriam, 2018). During the interview process, the researcher begins with a position of curiosity and focuses on questions that address the storyteller's cultural context. These questions are crucial for capturing the context through the narrator's feelings and emotions, thoughts, ideas, and attitudes regarding events; the importance of other people; the narrator's choices and actions based on beliefs, values, and goals; historical continuity; and symbols, metaphors, and intuitive and creative ways of knowing that represent their experiences (Etherington & Bridges, 2011). Therefore, the interview questions focused on the participants' feelings about the environment, the thoughts that influenced their choices, and historical continuity. The data presented in this study consists of the participants' interviews, which were recorded in the form of questions and answers. Two interviews were conducted with the participant on days and at times convenient to him, each lasting 40-45 minutes. The interviews were held in a social place, in a warm and friendly atmosphere. Before the interview, the participant was given a brief chat to help them relax, and attention was paid to creating a long-term interaction to gather in-depth data.

Data Analysis

There are four typologies for analyzing narrative research data: thematic analysis, structural analysis, dialogic analysis, and presentational analysis. The first of these, thematic analysis, analyzes the content of the data and analyzes what the participants say. In structural analysis, the researcher focuses on how the story is told. In dialogic analysis, the production of the story occurs through the interaction between the participant and the researcher. Presentational analysis, which is developed by elaborating on dialogic analysis, analyzes the arguments, body language, gestures, and facial expressions used by the participant while telling the story (Reisman, 2008). Data in the study were analyzed using thematic narrative analysis, which identifies themes and categories based on the participant's story (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). Raw interview data were stored in a computerized environment. Before data analysis, the participant was asked if there were any areas they wished to correct, and confirmed the transcription. The researcher analyzed the data in two rounds. After the initial analysis, the codes and themes were rechecked at three-day intervals to prevent data loss and miscoding. The data obtained were first coded, then organized into categories and themes, defined, and finally interpreted, according to the order suggested by Creswell (2021). An example of how the

classification into codes, categories, and themes was performed during data analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample Data Analysis

Theme	Category	Code	Quote (Expression)
The first years of teaching	Dominant emotions and thoughts	Decision to become a teacher	"I actually decided to become a teacher when I was a child. My father influenced me more because he was a teacher, and when I saw him, when I saw his students respect him, when they saw him outside and asked how I was, I was very impressed. That's why I decided to become a teacher."

Table 1 includes a direct statement from the participant, stating that she decided to become a teacher because of the respect her students showed her father, who was a teacher. This statement was defined and coded as "Decision to become a teacher." This code was then organized under the category "Dominant emotions and thoughts" and placed under the theme "Early years in teaching." The analysis was completed by continuing to separate the data into codes, categories, and themes.

Validity and Reliability

Validity is defined as taking the necessary precautions to obtain accurate data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). While less emphasis is placed on validity in narrative research than in others, it has been recommended that multiple validity strategies be applied in all qualitative research designs, regardless of type (Creswell, 2021). Multiple strategies were implemented to ensure validity and reliability in the study. One of these is a detailed explanation of the research process, which is crucial for establishing validity (Merriam, 2018). Therefore, an attempt was made to support research validity by providing detailed explanations of the interview form creation, data collection, and data analysis processes. Thus, a detailed explanation of the research process also strengthened the transferability of the findings to similar contexts. To ensure content validity, the semi-structured interview form was developed with expert opinions, and the strategy of including direct quotes from the participant (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016) also supported research validity. To ensure validity, a long-term interaction strategy was implemented, and interviews were conducted multiple times and kept as long as possible.

In qualitative research, reliability also refers to the consistency between the responses of multiple coders (Creswell, 2021). It has been stated that consistency can be determined by examining the consistency of definitions in coding and the rate of agreement between coders (Gibbs, 2007). Therefore, multiple coders were used for the transcribed interviews. A doctoral researcher with a doctorate in educational administration conducted the control coding using the reliability formula of Miles and Huberman (2015) ($\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Consensus}}{(\text{Consensus} + \text{Disagreement})} \times 100$). Coding consistency was found to be 86.5%. Care was taken to ensure consensus with the coders when creating categories and themes, as consensus-based coding contributes to the quality of the research and the reliability of coding (Kuckartz, 2014). In addition to all these, to increase coding consistency and prevent the overfamiliarity effect, the researcher repeated the coding twice, three days apart.

The Role of the Researcher

According to Merriam (2018), the researcher should identify individual biases, assumptions, and worldviews that may influence the study, and also engage in self-critical self-reflection. In this context, the researcher holds the assumptions and prejudices acquired in the field of educational administration through reading and experience. The researcher has extensive research in the field of educational administration, as well as experience in the field through graduate education and administrative practice. Therefore, the researcher demonstrated sensitivity to this issue, being aware of the bias and manipulation that these biases and prior knowledge might introduce. Considering her social connection with the participant, the researcher maintained an objective, sincere, and genuine attitude during the interview process without directing the participant. She was meticulous in her

efforts to approach the topic from a different perspective. Furthermore, by positioning herself critically, without being influenced by her preconceived notions, the researcher attempted to critically explore the professional learning and development of teachers within the context of disadvantaged schools.

Ethical Issues

This study was conducted in accordance with research ethics procedures. An application was made to the Adnan Menderes University Educational Research Ethics Committee for research ethics permission, and approval was granted on February 29, 2024, numbered 2024/2. Before the first interview, the participant was presented with a voluntary consent form, and written permission was obtained. They were informed that the information collected would not be used for purposes other than the research and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. To protect the participant's personal information, they were given a code name to ensure confidentiality.

Findings

The findings are based on Teacher Duygu's narratives, which reflect on her professional learning and development from her experiences at the disadvantaged school where she worked. The themes, categories, and codes that emerged from this context are presented in Figure 1 and Table 2, with direct quotes from the participant and corresponding codes also included in the subheadings.

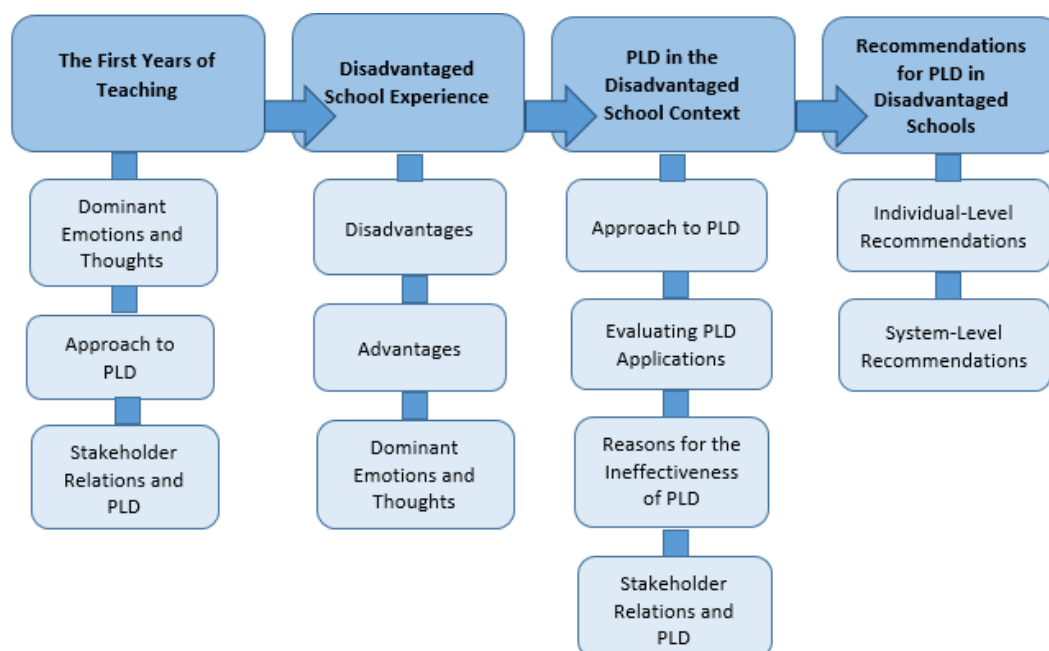


Figure 1. Professional Learning and Development Themes and Categories in the Disadvantaged School Context

Early Years in Teaching

In keeping with the historical nature of the narrative research, the participant's views on her early experiences before starting work at a disadvantaged school were first obtained. Within the scope of Duygu Teacher's narratives about her first years in her profession, three categories were formed: dominant emotions and thoughts, approach to PLD, and stakeholder relations and PLD. Teacher Duygu stated that her father was also a teacher and that she chose this profession because of the respect her students showed her. The participant began teaching at a multi-program high school with a boarding house. She described her professional satisfaction during her years there as follows: "When I try to compare it to where I work now, the student and parent profiles there were very different from where I work now. .../You could get rewarded for your efforts and achieve academic success." Teacher Duygu particularly emphasized that she possessed an idealistic power during that period. Comparing her experiences at a disadvantaged school, she explained that this idealistic power gradually faded away:

“I was very selfless, very idealistic, I was saying I could do anything and I was doing it.../ Even if we create the opportunity here, even if you do, the students and parents have no interest in you. After a while, your idealism gradually disappears.”

Table 2. Themes, Categories, and Codes Regarding the Reflection of Disadvantaged School Experience in PLD

Theme	Categorie	Code
The first years of teaching	Dominant emotions and thoughts Approach to PLD Stakeholder relations and PLD	Decision to become a teacher Professional satisfaction Idealistic power Desire to learn and develop Continuous improvement through benchmarking Parent support
Disadvantaged school experience	Disadvantages Advantages Dominant emotions and thoughts	School dropout Early marriage Lack of family environment (broken family/non-marital status) Child labor Lack of healthy emotional communication Low school engagement (absence) Recognizing PLD needs Initially idealistic Discouragement and fatigue in later years Happiness in the positive transformation of graduating students, Thinking that one is not fully using one's potential
PLD in the disadvantaged school context	Approach to PLD Evaluating PLD applications Reasons for the ineffectiveness of PLD Stakeholder relations and PLD	Meeting recognized PLD needs Training programs are ineffective in terms of timeframes. No additional support is provided to disadvantaged schools during implementation. Neglecting practical courses negatively impacts the PLD. Disadvantages necessitate more support for the PLD. Decisions are made without considering suitability for the field. The special conditions of disadvantaged schools are not taken into account. Teacher success is measured by exam success. Inadequate parent-student readiness and physical facilities. Teacher overload prevents opportunities for PLD. The determinant effect of administrator justice on PLD The negative impact of parental indifference on PLD Students' contribution to PLD learning together
Recommendations for PLD in disadvantaged schools	Individual-level recommendations System-level recommendations	Providing psychological support and guidance to teachers Creating special funding for disadvantaged schools Making additional improvements to minimum teaching materials and physical conditions Working with teachers in the field through specialized ministry units Providing face-to-face training during seminar periods

Teacher Duygu emphasized her constant desire to learn and develop during these early years of her career, saying, *"I mean, I had a desire to learn everything. I can do everything, I don't know this, I should do this, look, they're doing this, I'm lacking in this, I should participate."* She also compared her own skills and opportunities with other classes, saying, *"Look, they're using Web 2.0 tools, I should use them too. Here's what they're doing to the kids, we should have it too."* She also stated that she was engaged in a constant professional learning effort. The participant stated, *"...our parents were also supporting us there. It was a small place, but the parental support was very important, it was nice,"* and that she also received parental support and considered this support very important.

Therefore, in her early years as a teacher, Teacher Duygu experienced professional satisfaction through idealistic thoughts. The participant believed she could achieve anything professionally while teaching, and with the support she received from her parents, she felt a constant desire for professional learning and development. These emotions and thoughts led Teacher Duygu to maintain a positive attitude toward professional learning and development in her early years.

Disadvantaged School Experience

Teacher Duygu's experiences of disadvantaged schooling were considered significant in terms of their impact on her professional learning and development. The participant's narratives in this theme, which describe the disadvantaged school context, were categorized under disadvantages, advantages, and dominant feelings and thoughts.

Disadvantages and advantages

Teacher Duygu stated that disadvantages in the school and region where she works include school dropout, early marriage, lack of family environment, child labor, lack of healthy emotional communication, and low school engagement (absence). The participant stated, *"Where I work, there is a bride price; they still charge it to girls under current circumstances. When I interviewed parents, we said, 'Look, this girl is very smart, she needs to study, she needs to go to school,' and they said, 'Teacher, they took it from me, why shouldn't I?' That's sad. They see what they've been through as befitting themselves, as befitting their children. That's the saddest thing."* She emphasized the continuation of outdated practices like bride price. The participant noted that parents' perspectives on education regarding child labor are very narrow. She responded, *"They say, 'I go to the market here or there with my children, and I earn in 15 days what you earn in a month. If I bought another stall, I could double that amount. Why should she go to school?'"* Teacher Duygu's current conditions at a disadvantaged school appear unsuitable for professional learning and development. However, the participant offered an interesting insight, stating that the school offers advantages alongside these disadvantages. She emphasized that this situation provides an advantage in recognizing the needs of the PLD (Problem Learning Development) by saying, *"It's a disadvantaged school, but you can say 'I'm lacking in something,' and you make an effort to improve yourself."* Therefore, the school's current disadvantages and advantages contributed to the teacher's process by helping her recognize her professional learning and development needs.

Dominant emotions and thoughts

Teacher Duygu stated that during her experience at a disadvantaged school, she continued to feel the same idealistic strength she had at the beginning of her professional career, and that this belief was dominant, saying, *"I worked in the east, I can do it here too. After all, it's my school, I can go, I can do it. The child is the same, nothing has changed, the curriculum is the same."* However, she added that in later years, she felt a sense of discouragement and fatigue due to the lack of reciprocity from parents and students for the dedication shown. She explained these feelings by saying, *"For example, when I first started there, I said we were enthusiastic, we were doing everything. Now, doing the same things, not getting the same attention from the children, not getting the same attention from the parents, it's tiring. Now, professional discouragement has set in."* Teacher Duygu expressed her happiness at the positive transformation she saw in the students who managed to graduate, and that she sometimes felt renewed enthusiasm with this idealistic strength, but after a while, she returned to the same feelings of discouragement and fatigue. A striking finding was that the participant stated that due to this discouragement, she did not fully utilize her teaching potential, achieving only 40-50% of her performance in the first years of her

career. Teacher Duygu expressed her views on these issues by saying, *"You know, when you see that there's no enthusiasm in children, you get fed up. I think I'm experiencing professional weariness right now. So, when I look back, I'm only doing 40-50% of the work I did when I first started, meaning I'm not working to my full potential."*

It was determined that Teacher Duygu's idealistic thoughts persisted in the early stages of her professional learning and development in the context of a disadvantaged school. However, over time, due to factors such as parental and student indifference in the disadvantaged school context, this idealism gave way to feelings of discouragement and fatigue. The participant also pointedly stated that these feelings and thoughts prevented her from fully realizing her professional potential.

Professional Learning and Development in the Disadvantaged School Context

This theme constitutes the most striking part of the research and encompasses Teacher Duygu's narratives about how her experiences in a disadvantaged school context reflected in her professional learning and development. The findings for each category comprising this theme are presented under separate subheadings.

Approach to professional learning and development

When Teacher Duygu began working at a disadvantaged school, she recognized and worked to address their professional learning and development needs. The participant teacher observed that students had learning disabilities stemming from family relationships, such as dyslexia, autism, and attention deficit disorder. At the time, she was unsure how to accurately identify these problems and how to intervene. She also noted that this situation created a gap in her understanding. She stated the following about this situation:

"Marriage outside the community is very rare here, so most children are actually related, meaning they share some common genes, and this can lead to some problems in children, learning disabilities. For example, there are things like dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, autism. I didn't know much about these things. Actually, yes, we did learn, but I didn't know how to intervene, how to detect them, what the methods would be./.../ We always think about things like that, but there are also gifted children. For example, a child might have a distraction, might not listen to me in class, might draw pictures, but if the child is gifted, they understand what I say. They need special education. So, I considered myself as lacking in this regard."

Recognizing these professional learning needs in herself, Teacher Duygu volunteered to attend a course organized by the Guidance and Research Center in the district to meet her professional learning and development needs. The participant's statements on this topic are as follows:

"When I first started, I volunteered for the 180-hour Guidance and Research Center's district-wide course. We tell children with special needs, 'This child doesn't understand anything, I explain it, but they don't understand.' Okay, the child can't do this, but what's the underlying reason? /.../ In the course I attended, I learned the following from an expert: 'First, look at the student's report. Based on that, you should start with one learning outcome based on their level. It doesn't matter if you write one learning outcome for the entire year; no one will ask why you wrote one.' /.../ After teaching the child that one learning outcome, add the second learning outcome right below it. Frankly, I wasn't very familiar with it. But after that course, I realized it/.../ After that, I received training for gifted individuals provided by official institutions."

The participant recognized his professional shortcomings when faced with the challenges of his disadvantaged school environment. Then, she voluntarily attended courses opened by official institutions. It was determined that the participant felt a need to continue his professional learning and development within a disadvantaged context.

Evaluating professional learning and development practices

The research participant evaluated the practices of the administrative units regarding professional learning and development during his tenure at a disadvantaged school. She noted that although the ministry organized numerous professional learning and development programs, she did not participate because the timing was inconvenient. She suggested that these programs would be more effective if offered during seminar periods or mid-term breaks:

"Yes, there are projects that are being implemented, but they are not functional. The Ministry is working hard, but they are being implemented just for the sake of it, and I cannot participate. If they were to open these projects during seminar periods, as I said, and of course, they are available at school during the mid-term breaks, teachers could do these projects then."

Regarding the Movement for Increasing Opportunities and Improving Technology (FATİH) project, which focused on professional learning and development, the participant stated, *"What's right for one school isn't right for another. For example, I'm in a disadvantaged area, and yes, a smart board has been installed. But our school has only had it for two years. The Fatih project is a good project, using technology in education is great, but while all the other schools are using it, our school has only had it for two years/.../More support is needed to close the gap. We don't receive that support."* However, according to Teacher Duygu, not all schools should be put in the same category, and to close the gap stemming from their disadvantages, they should be provided with more support than other schools in these kinds of applications.

Teacher Duygu stated that the necessary emphasis was not placed on the practical courses required for her field (biology) at a disadvantaged school, and that this situation negatively impacted her professional learning and development. The participant explained that she provided the materials needed for the practical courses herself and tried to engage students in practical exercises required for her field:

"For example, when I teach biology to children in 9th grade, I say "single-celled organisms," and the children can't quite grasp it. What is this single-celled organism? Microscopes are so old-fashioned, there's no binocular microscope, no stereoscopic microscope. I prepare a single-celled culture, and I bring the culture. I plug the missing device into the computer, which I motivate in the best way I can, and show the children the single-celled organism. I want the lab to click on the child's head so they understand when I say "single-celled."/.../ Due to the physical conditions, we don't have laboratories at our school, so we closed them. We had to build classrooms, but our physical conditions aren't sufficient for laboratories right now, and because of that, the lab was closed, meaning there's no professional support whatsoever."

She also emphasized that the disadvantages of the school and the district necessitate more support than usual for professional learning and development, and that adequate opportunities for professional development should be provided not only to students but also to teachers. Regarding this, the participant said, *"I think extra support should be provided, not only to students but also to teachers, because if you want to teach and learn something professionally, you need to have the resources."* Teacher Duygu made an important assessment, emphasizing that while there is a lot of theoretical training provided by the Ministry, this needs to be supported by practice. She explained this situation with the following words:

"Yes, there's a lot of in-service training, a lot on every subject. Not only that, but I also use technology/.../But I just listen. Some things need to be put into practice, and they're left hanging/.../Yes, I have an idea on the subject, but I don't have the skills to put it into practice. The important part is how we can integrate the training the Ministry provides into children's lives and education. Let that training have a reward. For example, I took drama training, and I applied it in a quiz show."

Therefore, the participant acknowledges that there are practices for professional learning and development. However, she views these practices as dysfunctional and inadequate in terms of the time and additional support they require to be tailored to the disadvantaged context. Overall, the participant expressed negative opinions about the professional learning and development practices at the disadvantaged school.

Reasons for the ineffectiveness of professional learning and development practices

Teacher Duygu stated that the practices implemented for professional learning and development were ineffective and offered her views on the reasons for this. The participant emphasized that decisions made without considering their relevance to the field made the PLD practices ineffective, saying, *"With us, everything is on paper!.../I mean, if something is to be done, we should first go to the field and see how it works in practice, based on what's written on paper."* The participant also emphasized that the failure to consider the special circumstances of disadvantaged schools was another reason, saying, *"I don't believe that every school or every disadvantaged region can be given equal professional development work. Because it's not legislated, saying 'School A should do it differently, School B should do it differently,' but rather, it's a general initiative aimed at both schools and teachers."* Teacher Duygu also believes that one of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of professional learning and development practices is that teacher success is measured by exam performance, which trivializes professional practice. The participant expressed her thoughts on this as follows:

"Unfortunately, in our country, everything is measured by exam success, so you tend to abandon experimentation. Your success is determined by how many biology exams your student completed on the TYT exam, and you're a success! How many biology exams they completed, and you're a failure! Successful by what? Successful by whom? Successful by many factors: the teacher, the student, the parent, the student's current state of mind during the exam, whether they attended school, and so on."

Teacher Duygu strikingly stated that the exaltation of exam success has overshadowed practices like experiments, which contribute to professional learning and development. This situation highlights the negative impact of an exam-focused education system on professional learning and development. Furthermore, she emphasized that inadequate parent-student readiness and physical facilities render PLD practices ineffective, saying, *"Are all schools the same? For example, I went to a science high school. You can do anything in a science high school. The child is ready, the parent is ready, the physical facilities are sufficient, you can do anything. My school is prefabricated; do I have enough resources? I don't."* Teacher Duygu emphasized that excessive workloads do not provide opportunities for PLD and render PLD practices ineffective, saying, *"Right now, we're teaching things like how to gather students, how to bring them together, how to teach them social rules, rather than our own professional development!.../We've been putting professional development on the back burner for a long time now; if you have it in you, you do it yourself. For example, I learned Web 2.0 tools myself."*

Stakeholder Relationships and Professional Learning and Development

The participant was also asked how stakeholder relationships impact professional learning and development in disadvantaged school environments. The participant explained that administrative justice is a determining factor in the PLD process, saying, *"If my manager is good and encourages me in terms of professional learning and development, and if he or she is fair to me, I work harder. But if my relationship with my manager isn't good, neither my professional development nor my mood nor my peers will be good at all. But with a fair environment, I achieve more of everything."* Teacher Duygu addressed the lack of interest from parents in such schools, stating that this has a negative impact on PLD. In this regard, she said, *"Parents' attitudes and behaviors really take you one step forward or one step back professionally. For example, the attitudes and behaviors of certain data make me feel professionally exhausted!... /I don't think the parent profile in disadvantaged regions of our country is truly supportive of professional learning and development."* The participant happily noted that her students contribute to her own professional learning and development. Emphasizing that they learn together with their students, Teacher Duygu drew attention to this situation with these words:

"But I think I've learned a lot from my students, and I also think they've contributed a lot to me professionally. I tell them, "Yes, I'm a biology teacher, but I may not know everything about biology; I only have an opinion. I'll tell you I don't know what I don't know, but if you ask me, I'll go home and research it, and I can learn it too." And they ask such positive questions, which encourages me to learn. That's why I love students; sharing with them makes me happy. If you ask, "Administration, parents, students?" I prefer students, and it has a positive impact on my professional development."

As can be seen from the statements above, Teacher Duygu finds her interactions with her students, rather than with administrators or parents, to be the most supportive and positive during the professional learning and development process in a disadvantaged school context. The participant stated that her students' curiosity and questions encourage her to learn, clearly expressing their positive impact on her students' professional development.

Recommendations for Professional Learning and Development in Disadvantaged Schools

Teacher Duygu was asked about her suggestions for supporting the professional learning and development of teachers working in disadvantaged schools. The participant offered some striking suggestions on this matter, categorized at the individual and system levels. Teacher Duygu stated that these teachers, who work under challenging conditions, should be provided with psychological support and guidance primarily. She made the following statements on this topic:

"First of all, teachers are exhausted and need psychological support/.../ I'm currently experiencing professional burnout. This year, I'm using 40% of the effort I put in last year./.../ Because you've been working in a disadvantaged area for 12 years, 12 years is plenty of time to burn out./.../Because after a while, you burn out, constantly encountering negative conditions, and when you think, 'This is never going to get better, this is my life' you're psychologically exhausted. You have to provide this to the disadvantaged area so that teachers can focus on their own development and professional learning."

The participant emphasized the necessity of providing psychological support to teachers so they can focus on their professional learning and development. The participant's words highlight the psychologically negative impact of constantly encountering negative conditions. Furthermore, the fact that teachers report experiencing professional burnout after working in disadvantaged schools for extended periods is an important finding in terms of professional learning and development.

The participant also offered system-level suggestions for supporting teachers' professional learning and development in disadvantaged schools. Among these, regarding the creation of special funding for disadvantaged schools, she said, *"There should be funding for teachers in disadvantaged areas, not for teachers, but for children. This should be provided to disadvantaged areas so teachers can focus on their own development and professional learning."* She emphasized the importance of providing funding for children to focus on their professional development. She also suggested additional improvements to the school's minimum teaching materials and physical conditions:

"We need easy access to innovations, technologically speaking. I'm talking about physical facilities, but I don't have the physical resources for a "prefabricated school." For example, if I put a microscope on a board and put single-celled organisms there, I'd like to show them all, like the moving "euglena" and the "amoeba," all under one microscope. But I need to be able to attach it to a smart board; that equipment should be provided for me/.../ Yes, it is provided, but it's not sufficient. So, physical facilities need to be improved."

The participant suggested that special ministry units be established to support the PLD program, saying, *"The ministry should have a dedicated unit, and it shouldn't be 'I did it on paper,' but rather*

one-on-one discussions with teachers in the field." Teacher Duygu also added face-to-face training during seminar periods to her system-level recommendations, explaining:

"I also believe that we could be in a better position if, instead of watching three- or five-minute videos during our seminar periods, we could provide face-to-face training on any topic, such as first aid, giftedness, special education, or individualized education, for a week with experts in the subject."

Teacher Duygu believes that supporting the PLD process requires providing teachers with psychological support and guidance to protect them from the psychological strain caused by disadvantage. She also advocated for special assessments of disadvantaged schools and the creation of dedicated funds, which could help teachers focus on their professional learning and development. Teacher Duygu also emphasized the need for further improvements in teaching materials and physical conditions in such schools. In addition, the participant suggested that the Ministry establish special units for disadvantaged schools and conduct practical fieldwork with teachers on this issue.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This research focused on revealing the reflection of a teacher's teaching experience in a disadvantaged school on the professional learning and development process. According to the research results, Teacher Duygu displayed a positive attitude towards professional learning and development in the first years of her teaching career. During that time, she held idealistic views and felt a sense of professional (job) satisfaction. With the positive support she received from parents, these dominant feelings and thoughts were reflected in the teacher's professional learning and development as a desire for continuous learning and improvement. Similar to the findings, idealism is considered a professional competence within the scope of teachers' professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, and the continuous self-improvement that idealist teachers prioritize is their professional qualities (İğde & Yakar, 2021). Wang et al. (2024) highlighted the link between teachers' job satisfaction and professional development. Job satisfaction, as a good predictor of teachers' professional performance (Ololube, 2006), increases in-class professional performance (Avcı et al., 2022). Furthermore, it has been established that effective teachers frequently collaborate and share with parents within the context of professional development activities (Eroğlu & Özbek, 2020), and that a positive parental approach has a positive impact on and increases teachers' professional productivity (Hatipoğlu & Kavas, 2016). Based on the findings and literature, it is possible to argue that idealistic thoughts and professional satisfaction, along with the positive support and approaches they receive from parents, positively impact teachers' professional learning and development during their early years. Therefore, during their first years as teachers, they have full faith in their professional learning and development, a desire to learn and develop, and thus experience professional satisfaction.

The study explored the disadvantages of the disadvantaged school where the teacher worked to demonstrate the school context, which is crucial for professional learning and development. The school and school district included disadvantages such as dropout, outdated practices such as bride price, lack of family environment, child labor, lack of healthy emotional communication, and absenteeism. These disadvantages, which are not particularly conducive to professional learning and development, were found to provide an advantage to the teacher. This advantage stemmed from the teacher's awareness of professional learning and development needs due to the unique characteristics of the school district. While it has been noted that teachers frequently face professional training and development needs in disadvantaged schools (Chang et al., 2022; Mendoza & Dizon, 2024), research has also shown that teachers have a high awareness of their individual learning skills, demonstrating a constant desire to learn (Çilek et al., 2023). Therefore, the school's context, which includes various disadvantages, has become an advantage for the teacher by creating a need for professional learning and development awareness and contributing to this development process.

The study also identified the dominant feelings and thoughts experienced by teachers during their experiences at a disadvantaged school. Accordingly, the idealistic thoughts and professional satisfaction felt by teachers in their early years of teaching transformed into feelings and thoughts of professional burnout, discouragement, and a sense of underutilization of professional potential after a prolonged (12-year) tenure at a disadvantaged school. Similar evidence exists in the literature. Burnout, one of the many problems experienced by teachers in Turkey (Özdemir, 2007), refers to low professional effectiveness and decreased productivity in terms of personal accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Burnout has been considered an occupational hazard for people-centered professions such as education for years (Maslach et al., 1996), and it has been noted that disadvantaged students and school conditions increase teacher burnout levels (Tosun et al., 2020). Therefore, the problematic school environment caused by disadvantages has diminished teachers' idealistic thoughts and professional satisfaction, which support development and learning, and transformed them into feelings and thoughts such as professional burnout and discouragement. Furthermore, this disadvantaged context prevents teachers from reaching their full professional potential. A solution to this situation could be to impose a quota (4-5 years) on tenure in disadvantaged schools and to include more professional training and social activities in these schools to ensure teachers maintain and maintain their professional learning and development.

It has been determined that teachers' approach to professional learning and development in disadvantaged schools is to identify and address professional development needs in response to frequently encountered learning difficulties in students. Research has also shown that teachers who are more exposed to professional development have higher levels of job satisfaction (Toropova et al., 2021), and that teachers with autonomous motivation are more engaged in professional development and learning (Gorozidis & Papaioannou, 2014). Therefore, it can be argued that participants are driven to address their professional learning and development needs to gain insight into students' learning challenges and adapt to the disadvantaged school context. Furthermore, an inverse relationship has been found between turnover and disadvantage in Norwegian schools (Falch & Rønning, 2007). This result may stem from the idealistic perspective held by teachers in disadvantaged schools. The recognition of professional learning needs in disadvantaged schools, coupled with an idealistic perspective, and their focus on addressing these needs, supported and ensured the continuation of the professional development process.

The study also conducted an evaluation of professional learning and development practices in a disadvantaged school. This evaluation determined that the training practices were dysfunctional in terms of timeliness. Similarly, it was emphasized that professional learning and development training overlapped with teachers' working hours, that training programs tailored to their needs were not offered, and that other family responsibilities left them with limited time for training (Köseoğlu et al., 2020). The study results indicated that disadvantaged schools were not provided with additional support in professional learning and development practices, and that disadvantaged individuals required more support for professional learning and development. However, it was emphasized that teachers need different professional learning and development practices due to the different types of schools they work in, student profiles, and student readiness (İlğan, 2017). Furthermore, the study found that failure to consider the special conditions of disadvantaged schools in professional learning and development practices also made these practices ineffective. Teachers who experience disadvantaged school conditions struggle with more challenges. Therefore, they need professional learning and development more than other teachers. Because these teachers experience more specialized conditions, their professional learning and development needs are also unique. Therefore, the specific needs of disadvantaged school contexts necessitate more specific professional development practices and increased support for teachers.

Research results indicate that neglecting practical training due to the limited resources of disadvantaged schools negatively impacts professional learning and development. In the literature, the majority of science and technology teachers emphasize the importance of laboratory practices and

recommend that professional development training provided to teachers be made ongoing at regular intervals (Böyük et al., 2010). Considering that professional learning and development would be incomplete without a practical component, the necessary practical training should be provided, especially for branches requiring a laboratory environment, such as science. This ongoing training can prevent teachers from becoming professionally atrophied within their own fields. Research results indicate that one of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of professional learning and development practices is that measuring teacher success by exam success trivializes practices such as experiments, which contribute to professional learning and development. A study examining teachers' opinions on the high school entrance exam emphasized that teacher success is measured by the number of successful students on the exam, and that the exam system puts pressure on teachers and hinders professional development (Dilekçi et al., 2023). Therefore, while practical courses such as experiments within the scope of "theory + practice" have been observed to contribute to the professional development of teachers, the Ministry should prioritize these practical courses and allocate the necessary physical conditions and time. Furthermore, the fact that teachers' overload due to the challenging conditions of disadvantaged contexts does not provide opportunities for professional learning and development has been found to be a reason for the ineffectiveness of these practices. Similarly, while the literature indicates that teachers cannot allocate sufficient time to professional learning and development activities due to their workload and intensity (Eroğlu & Özbek, 2020), it should be kept in mind that this workload can increase even more in disadvantaged contexts. To eliminate this situation, it would be beneficial to allocate effective and productive time for professional learning for teachers experiencing disadvantaged school conditions and to introduce legal regulations for this. Thus, teachers can dedicate a significant amount of time, other than the time allocated to teaching, to their own development and continue their professional learning and development activities in disadvantaged schools.

In disadvantaged schools, stakeholder relationships appear to be crucial for teachers' professional learning and development. Among these stakeholders, the justice provided by the administrator is a key determinant of teachers' professional learning and development. While the combined provision of administrator justice and professional development opportunities increases teacher motivation (Ünsal & Görücü, 2023), the leadership of the administrator and the culture of trust and respect within the school have been found to be more effective than other factors in professional satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2012). Therefore, in schools with various challenges, a fair, respectful, and trusting environment provided by the administrator can be seen as motivating teachers for professional learning and development. The study determined that students, another stakeholder, contribute to teachers' professional learning and development in the context of disadvantaged schools. The participating teacher singled out her students for professional learning and development among all stakeholders and continued the learning process with her students. Similarly, it was noted that students, as collaborators in professional development, engage in a learning process alongside teachers, and teachers continue to expand their understanding of professional education practices (Sprott, 2019). Therefore, even under challenging circumstances, teacher interaction with students can be seen as a crucial element in the professional learning and development process. It has been identified that the Ministry, a system stakeholder, needs to support the theoretical professional learning and development training provided to teachers in disadvantaged schools with practical application. Teachers in OECD countries emphasized that the most effective element of the professional development training they receive is the opportunity to apply new knowledge and ideas in the classroom (86%) (OECD, 2019). Therefore, the importance of dedicated time for professional learning and development is also highlighted here. Indeed, learning by doing or experience is also an informal form of professional learning and development.

The research also provided recommendations for the professional learning and development of teachers working in disadvantaged schools. The recommendation at the individual level was to provide teachers with psychological support and guidance. Research has reported that teachers' lack of sufficient knowledge about emotional and social development in their relationships with at-risk students who have challenging experiences increases their emotional burden (Alisic, 2012), negatively impacting

teachers' professional attitudes and motivation, as well as their physical and psychological health, in an already challenging teaching environment (Yurduseven et al., 2022). Therefore, providing psychological support and guidance is deemed essential to eliminate the psychological stress created by constantly encountering negative conditions in disadvantaged schools and to better focus on professional development. Emphasizing the inevitability of professional burnout after long-term employment in such schools, this support becomes even more crucial for continued professional development. System-level recommendations include creating special funding for disadvantaged schools to enable teachers to focus on professional learning and development, and making additional improvements to minimum teaching materials and physical conditions. Literature evidence also emphasizes the importance of ensuring that socioeconomically and culturally disadvantaged students have equal access to educational opportunities, emphasizing that these students only have the opportunity to change their socioeconomic status and circumstances through education (Toprakçı & Arslan, 2022). Minimizing the problems and challenges that create disadvantages for students can improve teachers' professional conditions and help them focus more easily on their professional learning. Furthermore, research has emphasized that school administrators believe the Ministry should provide additional materials, resources, and budgets to disadvantaged schools (Akin et al., 2022). Therefore, within the scope of teacher professional learning and development, support with special funds and additional improvements, as well as positive discrimination, is essential to help these schools break out of the cycle of disadvantage. System-level initiatives to support professional learning and development include working with dedicated ministry units in the field with teachers and providing face-to-face training during seminars. Similar to the results, the ministry emphasized that professional development seminars offered by teachers via distance learning should be delivered in schools as practical training sessions in which teachers participate (Kahyaoglu & Karataş, 2019). It was also emphasized that provincial and district units of the ministry should be aware of the disadvantages of schools and prioritize teachers' opinions and support professional training (Özdemir & Kazancı Tınmaz, 2024). In this context, it can be argued that the specific situation of disadvantaged schools deserves special attention, not general rules, regarding teacher professional learning and development. Teachers in these schools should participate in research groups focused on disadvantaged schools with ministry experts, conduct fieldwork, and have a voice in policy decisions. Furthermore, the training provided during the seminars should be implemented face-to-face to ensure greater effectiveness.

This research is limited by the views of a single participant selected at a specific time to provide an in-depth and detailed understanding of the impact of the disadvantaged school context on teachers' professional learning and development, and by the validity and reliability of the data collection tools used to measure these views. The interviews are limited to reflecting the experiences of a single participant working in a disadvantaged school on their professional learning and development. To overcome this limitation, a separate study could be conducted with multiple participants and employing quantitative or mixed research designs.

Recommendations based on the research results are as follows:

- Idealistic teachers working in disadvantaged schools and regions can be supported with material and moral rewards, provided with the best opportunities to address their professional learning and development needs, encouraged to lead other teachers in these areas, and additional incentives and career support mechanisms can be incorporated into education policy.
- Collegiate learning and professional learning communities can be established within the framework of a collaborative learning culture among teachers in disadvantaged schools, and teachers can be encouraged to support each other.
- Policy decisions can be made to design school-based continuous professional development programs sensitive to the local context for teachers working in disadvantaged schools.

- The timing of professional learning and development training can be carefully evaluated based on teacher participation, thus avoiding wasted time and resources.
- Education policies can be developed to develop mentoring/coaching systems that pair new teachers or those in need of support with experienced teachers in disadvantaged regions.
- Internships can be incorporated into teacher education policies, alongside theoretical training specifically for disadvantaged contexts.
- Teachers can be supported with specialized training tailored to the cultural, economic, and social structures of the disadvantaged communities in which they work; and models for collaboration with families and the community can be developed.
- The effectiveness of professional learning and development policies implemented for disadvantaged communities can be regularly monitored and continuously revised based on feedback from teachers, and these can be incorporated into educational policies.
- Professional learning processes can be supported by implementing community collaboration and socio-cultural sensitivity policies to focus on the social context of disadvantaged areas.
- Professional learning and development programs that are more specialized than general education can be implemented for teachers in disadvantaged schools.
- Emphasis can be placed on practical courses conducted in laboratories to prevent the atrophy of teachers' professional practice skills.
- By employing a sufficient number of teachers, teachers can be encouraged to spend the majority of their time on their own professional learning and development, as in countries such as Singapore and Japan, which have achieved high performance in the PISA exams.
- School principals can support teachers' professional learning and development by creating a fair environment within the school.
- Theoretical training designed for professional learning and development can be designed to be applied by teachers in classroom teaching. • Psychological support and guidance programs can be implemented for teachers in disadvantaged schools to support their professional learning and development.
- Special additional funds and budgets can be established for disadvantaged schools to ensure that students have the same opportunities as students in other schools.
- Ministry units can conduct regular fieldwork with teachers to reduce disadvantages, ensuring that policy decisions are made based on the relevance of these studies to the field.
- Phenomenological studies can be conducted on the impact of disadvantaged school conditions on teachers' professional identities.
- Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-use research can be conducted on the problems of disadvantaged school administrators and the needs and expectations of school stakeholders.
- Longitudinal studies can be conducted on the professional development process in the context of disadvantaged schools.

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Appendix 1

Interview Questions on Professional Learning and Development in a Disadvantaged School Context

Dear participant, this research is being conducted by Dr. Nurdan ÖDEMİŞ KELEŞ to examine the professional learning and development experiences of a teacher working in a disadvantaged school, focusing on their teaching stories and narratives. The first section contains personal information, while the second section contains "Interview Questions." The questions and your responses will be recorded with your permission and later analyzed by the researcher. The interview is planned to last approximately 40-45 minutes. The information obtained from the study will be used solely for research purposes, and your personal information will be kept confidential. Your participation in the interview is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. Thank you for your contribution to the research by answering the questions.

Dr. Nurdan ÖDEMİŞ KELEŞ
Adnan Menderes University
nurdan.keles@adu.edu.tr

A. Personal Information

Age:

Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male

Branch:

Professional Seniority:

Type of school:

Tenure at current school:

Date of service at current school:

Date and duration of interview:

B. Interview Questions

1. How did you decide to become a teacher? What influenced you in making this decision?
 - What kind of school did you start working at?
 - What emotions did you experience?
 - What were the most distressing, worrying, hopeful, and happy events you encountered at school?
2. Could you tell us about your predominant feelings and thoughts regarding your professional learning and development in the early years of your teaching career?
 - What actions did you take based on these feelings and thoughts?
3. The school you currently work at is described as a "disadvantaged school." What are your thoughts on this?
 - What are the disadvantages? Are there also advantages?
 - What do you think are the reasons for these disadvantages?
 - How does teaching at this school make you feel? What are your thoughts?
4. What training do you think you need to receive to strengthen your professional skills?

5. Are there any activities at your school or within the ministry to meet your professional learning and development needs? If yes, what are these activities?
 - Are the activities at the school parallel to those at the ministry, or are they mutually supportive?
 - What do you think about the adequacy and effectiveness of these activities? Why?
6. What are the impacts of your relationships with school stakeholders—since you have to deal with more challenges than in other schools—on your professional learning and development? Can you tell us how they make you feel and think?
 - Relationships with administrators
 - Relationships with parents
 - Relationships with students
 - What are the children like? What are their dreams and goals? What do they tell you about outside of class? What do they expect from you?
 - Your Ministry/System Relationships
7. What were the most upsetting, worrying, or satisfying experiences you've experienced at this school? Could you share them?
8. Because you work at a disadvantaged school, do you feel you need more development opportunities, support, guidance, and encouragement than your other colleagues regarding your professional learning and development?
 - If yes, why? What would you recommend be done in this regard?
 - If no, why do you think so?
9. What are your final thoughts?