

The comparison of elementary teacher training policies in the United Kingdom and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to compare the training policies of elementary teachers applied in the Turkish Republic Of Northern Cyprus today and the training polices applied in the United Kingdom who was the colonial of Northern Cyprus for many years. For this reason, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus's elementary teacher training institutions, programs, teacher candidate selection and training period were examined. In addition, in the study from the colonial years (1878-1960) to the present day, leaving the legacy of policies applied in many areas of elementary teacher training in the United Kingdom were investigated. Elementary teacher training practices in the United Kingdom and North Cyprus were compared and evaluated. Research was carried out with the document scanning method. As a result of the research, similarities and differences between the two countries have been identified, in the light of this information it has demonstrated to the extent that the teacher education policy in Northern Cyprus remains under the influence of United Kingdom teaching policies.

Keywords: Elementary teacher education training, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, United Kingdom.

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1. Introduction

The teachers, who implement and affect education policies through their practices, give meaning to education services, give a spirit to education by functioning it and the initiator, developer, implementer of education services, are the indispensable elements of education systems (Metek, 2013). Since good and qualified education comes with qualified teachers, the most important factor of an education system is the teacher (Kavcar, 2002). The need for quality teachers is a major problem in whole world particularly for the developing countries; many national and international organizations carry out comprehensive studies on the subject (Aykaç, Bilgin & Kabaran, 2014 quoted from UNESCO, 2012). The reason is that the more qualified and successful teachers are, the more qualified and success of education system directly improves. The most basic common characteristics of education systems with high student success is the qualified teachers (Aykaç, Bilgin & Kabaran, 2014 quoted from Barber & Mourshed, 2007).

The profession of teaching and teacher qualification has always been a popular subject in many countries. This indicates the significance of teacher training systems and teacher training programs of universities. While there are different teacher training systems, universities apply various training programs. In the framework of teacher training, admission conditions of universities, quality of training, evaluation systems vary in every country (Abazaoglu, 2014).

Teaching profession, importance of teacher, teacher training and roles of teachers are subject and norms that are always popular in almost every community. For the last 10 years, many developed countries, particularly USA, have started to question teaching and teacher training systems and initiated reforms. The main justification of such is the expectancy for teaching profession to have more significance in 21st century (Baskan, 2001).

In order to keep up with the our century, fall behind developed countries, integrate universal values such as democracy, human rights into society, provide the society with advanced thinking skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, the teachers, hence teacher training institutions, have major roles. Therefore, the existing teacher training experiences and education system should be analysed and radical policies should be established in this field by reviewing the teacher training processes of other countries (Aykaç, Bilgin & Kabaran, 2014).

The review of teacher training systems of different countries and following the related current situation and developments are important for the future plans of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In this study, the training policies of elementary teachers applied in the Turkish Republic Of Northern Cyprus today and the training polices applied in the United Kingdom who was the colonial of Northern Cyprus for many years were assessed. The United Kingdom has left its legacy in many areas from the colonial years (1878-1960) to the present day. For this reason, the Turkish Republic Of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom elementary teacher training institutions, programs, teacher candidate selection and training period were examined and compared. As a result of the research, it has indicated to the extent that the teacher education policy in Northern Cyprus remains under the influence of United Kingdom teaching policies.

1. Method

This research was conducted by using document-scanning method. Documentary scanning means the data collection by assessing the existing information and documentation (Karasar, 2005).

2. Results

The findings of study are categorized under five titles. The relevant findings are as follows:

- 1) Historical development of elementary teacher training in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (1937-2015)
- 2) Elementary teacher training institutions in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom
- 3) Admission conditions for elementary teacher training institutions in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom

- 4) Training periods of teacher candidates in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom
- 5) Elementary teacher training program models applied in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom

3.1 Historical development of elementary teacher training in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (1937-2015)

The history of elementary teacher training in North Cyprus has started with the Teachers College. Omorfo Teachers College was constituted of Turkish and Greek Cypriot male students. In addition to entrance exam, there was “Ordinary” and “Distinction” English test. Since British Administration appointed the college principals as the people with pedagogical academic background, they were British. The teachers were a mix of Turkish-Greek-British. The medium of instruction was English. There were two or three-hour Greek lessons for Greek Cypriots and Turkish for Turkish Cypriots. The courses were concentrated on culture, profession and skills. There were History, Geography courses as well as courses on educational sciences and methodology. Female teachers were raised in the college in 1940s. Female teachers had to pass the college entrance test and observe for a year under the supervision of a classroom teacher and responsibility of College Directorate. In 1943, two separate Teacher Training Centres were established for both Turkish and Greek Cypriot females. The students of centre were practicing during the term in district schools of the centre and then finishing their two-year term by taking training courses. The medium of instruction for Turkish Cypriots was Turkish, Greek for Greek Cypriots. In order to give service both to female and male students from both communities, a new school was established in South part of Nicosia in 1958. However due to the events in 1958 between two communities, Turkish and Greek students could not study together. Therefore; the building was left completely to Greek Cypriots. A building located in Terresenta, close to Paphos Gate was given to Turkish Cypriots (<http://www.aoa.edu.tr>). With the foundation of Republic of Cyprus in 1960, Ataturk Teachers Academy has continued to train elementary school teachers up until today. Apart from the Academy, universities were established after Peace Operation and they have continued to provide teacher training programs.

3.2 Elementary Teacher Training Institutions in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom

The findings regarding the elementary teacher training institutions in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Elementary teacher training institutions in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom

| Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus | United Kingdom |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Ataturk Teachers Academy Education | Universities |
| Faculties of Universities | Colleges |
| | Education Academies |

As it is mentioned in Table 1, the elementary teacher training institutions in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom were compared. For teacher training, the teacher training is in the power of universities, colleges and academies (Aykac, Bilgin & Kabaran, 2014). There is a multi-headed structure on teacher training in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The need for elementary school teachers is covered by Ataturk Teachers Academy (Balci, 2015). In addition to the academy, the other institutions that train teachers are Near East University established in 1988, Eastern Mediterranean University in 1979, Girne American University in 1985, International Cyprus University in 1997 and European University of Lefke in 1990.

3.3. Admission conditions for elementary teacher training institutions in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom

The findings regarding the admission conditions for elementary teacher training institutions in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Admission conditions for elementary teacher training institutions in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom

| Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus | United Kingdom |
|---|---|
| An exam held by each university or Ataturk Teachers Academy entrance exam | Secondary Education II. Term Diploma and special selection criteria |

As it can be observed from Table 2, there are variations in admission conditions for elementary teacher training programs among Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom. In United Kingdom, the application of students, who get C from basic courses in Secondary Education General Certificate, are evaluated by an interview and preliminary elimination (Aykaç, Bilgin & Kabaran, 2014). The admission to Ataturk Teachers Academy is undertaken via an entrance exam. The school carries out the exam. The admission to the universities located in Turkish republic of Northern Cyprus is undertaken by an entrance exam carried out by each university (Balci, 2015).

3.4 Training periods of teacher candidates in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom

The findings regarding the training periods of teacher candidates in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Training periods of teacher candidates in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom

| Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus | United Kingdom |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 4 years/ 4+1 years | 3+1 years / 4+1 years |

As presented in Table 3, the teacher training can be assessed in 2 groups as 3 or 4 years bachelors and 1-year post-graduate certificates (Abazaoglu, 2014). The teacher training periods of institutions in North Cyprus are 4 year for bachelor's degree and 5-year period including the post-graduate pedagogical formation.

3.5 Elementary teacher training program models applied in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom

The findings regarding the elementary teacher training program models applied in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Elementary teacher training program models applied in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and United Kingdom

| Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus | United Kingdom |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Simultaneous Model | Simultaneous Model Successive Model |

As seen in Table 4, the simultaneous model is applied during the elementary teacher training in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The simultaneous and successive models are applied together in teacher training in United Kingdom (Kiziltas & Kucukoglu, 2012).

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1. Conclusion

The elementary teacher training programs in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus were assessed in this study. As a result of comparative assessment of elementary teacher training programs, the similarities and differences between two countries were identified. The admission conditions, training periods and models applied in teacher training programs are different between the countries of subject matter. The admission to teacher training institutions is possible by taking the entrance exam conducted by each institution; while the application of a student is evaluated by his diploma grade. When the university education periods are compared in the related countries, such period is 3 years in United Kingdom and 4 years in TRNC. Some differences were also identified in the models applied in elementary teacher training programs; United Kingdom applies simultaneous and successive models together, whereas only simultaneous model is applied in TRNC.

3.2. Recommendations

All countries need qualified teachers for quality, good education. In order to meet the need for qualified teachers, qualified student input should be provided to teacher training institutions. Therefore the admission conditions of teacher training institutions in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus should be regulated and the admission to an institution should not be only on the basis of student's success in entrance exam but also different criteria appropriate to teaching should be developed.

Another change should be performed on the teacher training programs. A successive training to be provided in teacher training institutions that is concentrated on professional skills and practices is considered to be more beneficial in training qualified teachers.

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