TEACHER COMPETENCIES IN TURKISH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CONTEXT: A KEY TO UNLOCKING EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL

Ayşe ZAMBAK[1]

ABSTRACT

Extensive research has consistently emphasised the pivotal significance of education in the progress of a nation, underscoring the need to invest resources in education. This emphasis highlights the importance of teacher competencies, which refer to educators' fundamental skills, knowledge, and attitudes to effectively instruct and assist students, ensuring that these resources are utilised to their full potential. The significance of teacher competencies is immense since they directly influence student learning results, teacher job satisfaction, and the overall success of the educational system. Thus, educators, policymakers, and administrators must enhance and assist teacher skills to enhance educational results and foster a favourable and efficient learning atmosphere. For this reason, this study, which adopts the document analysis method, examines the steps and revisions taken so far in the field of teacher competencies in the context of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), the strengths and aspects that need to be developed in the historical development of these studies together with teacher standards in different countries. The study also offers suggestions for developing or re-updating the relevant competencies by referring to the "General Competencies for the Teaching Profession'' document shared by the Ministry of National Education in 2017 due to today's rapidly developing and changing dynamics.

Keywords: Teacher competencies, Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes

[1] Dr, Ministry of National Education, aysezambak@gmail.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1386-9920

TÜRK MİLLÎ EĞİTİM BAKANLIĞI BAĞLAMINDA ÖĞRETMEN YETERLİKLERİ: EĞİTİM POTANSİYELİNİ AÇIĞA ÇIKARMANIN ANAHTARI

Ayşe ZAMBAK[1]

ÖZ

Kapsamlı araştırmalar, eğitimin bir ulusun ilerlemesindeki kilit önemini sürekli olarak vurgulamış ve eğitime kaynak yatırımı yapılması gerektiğinin altını çizmiştir. Bu vurgu; eğitimcilerin, öğrencileri etkili bir şekilde eğitmek ve onlara yardımcı olmak için sahip oldukları temel beceri, bilgi ve tutumları ifade eden öğretmen yeterliklerinin önemini ortaya koymakta ve bu kaynakların tam potansiyeliyle kullanılmasını sağlamaktadır. Öğretmen yeterliklerinin önemi çok büyüktür; çünkü bu yeterlikler, öğrencilerin öğrenme sonuçlarını, öğretmenlerin iş memnuniyetini ve eğitim sisteminin genel başarısını doğrudan etkilemektedir. Bu nedenle eğitimciler, politika yapıcılar ve yöneticiler; eğitim sonuçlarını iyileştirmek ve olumlu, verimli bir öğrenme ortamı sağlamak için öğretmenlerin becerilerini geliştirmeli ve onlara destek olmalıdır. Doküman analizi yönteminin benimsendiği bu çalışmada; Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB) bağlamında öğretmen yeterlikleri alanında bugüne kadar atılan adımlar ve revizyonlar, bu çalışmaların tarihsel gelişimi içerisinde güçlü ve geliştirilmesi gereken yönleri ile birlikte farklı ülkelerdeki öğretmen standartları doğrultusunda incelenmektedir. Çalışma ayrıca, günümüzün hızla gelişen ve değişen dinamikleri nedeniyle Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından 2017 yılında paylaşılan "Öğretmenlik Mesleği Genel Yeterlikleri" belgesine atıfta bulunarak ilgili yeterliklerin geliştirilmesi veya yeniden güncellenmesi için öneriler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen yeterlikleri, Beceriler, Bilgi, Tutumlar

_____

[1] Dr, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, aysezambak@gmail.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1386-9920

1. INTRODUCTION

The tremendous technical breakthroughs of the twenty-first century and the sociological transformations that have resulted compel all civilisations to adapt to the ever-changing circumstances of the Information Age. This significant shift underscores the importance of high-level cognitive abilities such as effective communication, cultural awareness, collaboration, global competence, and solution-oriented thinking. As a result, teachers are now faced with new responsibilities. In addition to being a profession with numerous general duties, fulfilling these responsibilities necessitates specific competencies that serve as the foundation of a teacher's role.

Competency refers to the essential characteristics required to effectively meet the demands of a profession (Şişman, 2009). Conversely, Şahin (2004) asserts that competency should be viewed as the minimum standard for a job and underscores its significance in terms of professional performance. Competency is also described as the attributes that empower individuals to fulfil a specific role or the absence of attributes that hinder them from doing so. Teacher competencies encompass the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for educators to effectively and efficiently fulfil their roles (MEB, 2017).

Studies have long underlined the importance of education in a country's growth, highlighting the necessity to devote resources to education. Recently, research has focused on the relationship between development and the quality of education. Teachers, as practitioners, are responsible for interpreting any changes in the education sector and have the most direct impact on educational quality. Therefore, the presence of highly qualified teachers is essential for educational reform.

Studies on the characteristics of the teaching profession and teacher competencies in Turkiye began in the 1970s and are in line with similar studies conducted worldwide. Teaching was officially acknowledged as a profession for the first time in Turkiye's National Education Basic Law No. 1739, which was enacted in 1973 (Article 43). Article 45 of the same law pertains to the qualifications required for teachers. According to this law, all teachers must have graduated from a higher education institution and possess three essential qualifications: general culture, subject knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge.

The first official inquiry into teacher competency in Turkiye began in 1998. In 1998–1999, as part of the "Pre-Service Teacher Training of the National Education Development Project," teacher training standards and accreditation studies were conducted with the assistance of the World Bank and the Council of Higher Education (CoHE). Four aspects of teacher competencies are covered in this discussion: subject-specific and field-related education, the learning and teaching process, monitoring and evaluating student learning, maintaining student learning records, and complementary professional competencies (MEB, 2017). The MONE started working on the teacher competencies document in 1999, which was implemented in 2002. It is known that the teacher competencies document was created with three main categories in mind: general culture knowledge and skills, subject matter knowledge and skills, and education-teaching qualifications. MEB (2017). They passed on their competencies to universities offering undergraduate programs so that they may be considered for pre-service teacher education.

The European Union Commission and the Turkish government signed a financing agreement on February 8, 2000, which resulted in the launch of the Basic Education Support Program. The program included a study on teacher qualifications. Activities for the project began in September 2002 and focused on areas such as communication, non-formal education, administration and organisation, educational quality, and teacher readiness. The Directorate-General for Teacher Training and Education was responsible for the teacher training component. The research aimed to identify the competencies educators require to meet EU standards. The "General Competencies for Teaching Professions'' were developed through workshops, pilot projects, and input from national and international stakeholders, including academics, professors, and specialists. This draft contained 233 performance indicators, 31 sub-domains, and six primary competency areas. To evaluate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values teachers need in relation to their subject matter, there have been attempts to develop "field-specific teaching competencies'' in addition to the general teaching competencies. Field-specific competencies were implemented in 2008 for primary education and in 2011 for secondary education (MEB, 2017).

In light of the recent advancements in education and enhancements in the Turkish education system, 'The General Competencies for the Teaching Profession' required updating. The revision of these competencies involved soliciting input from various entities, including YÖK (Council of Higher Education), ÖSYM (Assessment, Selection, and Placement Center), the Vocational Qualifications Authority, the Board of Education and Training, as well as other Ministry organisations. Valuable input was also received from numerous academicians and teachers, and a comprehensive analysis of educational and teaching policy materials from esteemed international organisations such as the European Council, World Bank, ILO, OECD, UNESCO, and UNICEF was conducted. Furthermore, competency documents from several countries, including the United States, Australia, Finland, France, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Singapore, were examined. Stakeholder meetings were organised to

ensure extensive participation in revising the teaching competencies. Despite the development of distinct competencies for each specific field, the general competencies were expanded to encompass subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, creating a comprehensive, unified framework. Consequently, the General Competencies of the Teaching Profession have been revised to include three additional categories of competency: "professional knowledge'', "professional skills'' and "attitudes and values''.

In parallel with these developments, the enactment of the Teacher Profession Law (No. 7354) in 2022 marked a significant legislative step toward the institutionalization of teaching as a profession in Turkiye. It has been claimed that the law's narrow scope and implementation issues prevent it from completely meeting the expectations of the teaching community (Demir, Sezgin, & Çalık, 2024; Akın & Çolak, 2024). Critics have also highlighted the law for failing to prioritize teacher well-being, involve stakeholders in policymaking, and clearly define professional rights and responsibilities (Altan & Özmusul, 2022; Tuna & Kazdal, 2021). In response to Constitutional Court annulments and public discussion, the Turkish MONE suggested a new version of the legislation and founded the National Education Academy to improve teacher training and standardization issues (Karataş, 2024).

The establishment of the National Education Academy (NEA) in 2024 marked a strategic transition in Turkiye's teacher training and professional development system, aligned with the legislative changes introduced by the Teacher Profession Law. The NEA is designed to centralize teacher preparation, administrator training, and in-service professional development by offering structured, practice-oriented programs across different stages of educators' careers (Polat, 2024). A core mission of the Academy is to cultivate continuous professional growth through the identification and periodic revision of educator competencies, ensuring their relevance in response to evolving educational needs (MEB, 2025). In this context, the NEA aims to equip teachers, school leaders, and educational personnel with essential pedagogical knowledge, values, attitudes, digital literacy, and instructional skills. By assessing the training needs of various stakeholders and designing targeted programs accordingly, the Academy seeks to enhance both the quality and relevance of educational practices. Viewed as a promising innovation, the NEA has the potential to bridge the persistent gap between theoretical training and real classroom demands, provided its implementation remains transparent, participatory, and aligned with both national priorities and international standards (Polat, 2024).

The historical, policy-based, and institutional developments highlight the growing importance of teacher competencies in shaping the quality of education in Türkiye. However, despite numerous reforms, there is still a need for systematic academic research to understand how national policies have reshaped the expectations, roles, and competencies of teachers. Thus, this study employs a document analysis approach to investigate the evolution of teacher competency frameworks and relevant policy documents. By analyzing national competency guidelines, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how teacher professionalization has been structured within the current educational reform agenda. In doing so, it contributes to the literature on educational policy and teacher development by offering insights into the relationship between policy discourse and competency-based teacher education in Türkiye.

1.1. Aim of the Study

This study aims to examine the development and current status of teacher competencies within the framework of the Turkish MoNE, emphasizing their pivotal role in enhancing educational quality and outcomes. Employing a document analysis method, the research explores the historical progression, structural features, and areas for improvement in Türkiye's teacher competency framework—particularly focusing on the "General Competencies for the Teaching Profession" document published in 2017. The study also conducts a comparative review of international teacher standards to contextualize Türkiye's approach within global practices. Through this analysis, the research seeks to offer evidence-based recommendations for updating existing competencies in line with contemporary educational demands, contributing to more effective teacher development and improved instructional practices in the Turkish education system.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing the document analysis method to explore the evolution, current status, and alignment of teacher competencies within the framework of the Turkish MoNE. Document analysis is an accepted research method that entails the methodical evaluation of official documents to derive insights into their meanings, contexts, and developments (Bowen, 2009; Morgan, 2022). This method is

particularly effective for analyzing policy documents, national reports, strategic papers, and laws influencing educational practices, which are the primary focus of this study (Cardno, 2018).

The study's data comprises primary sources, including the 2006 and 2017 versions of the "General Competencies for the Teaching Profession" issued by Turkey's Ministry of National Education (MoNE), as well as policy documents like the Teacher Strategy Document (2017–2023). Additional materials include national legislation, institutional publications, and comparative frameworks from countries such as Finland, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Canada. These resources were selected for their relevance in shaping and reflecting teacher competency standards.

2.2. Data Analysis

This study employed a structured content analysis to examine key documents related to teacher competencies. Initially, each document was reviewed in its historical context to better understand its background and purpose. The analysis then focused on identifying recurring themes such as professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, attitudes and values, field-specific competencies, and performance indicators. These themes helped frame comparisons of the documents in terms of their structure, content, and intended outcomes across different time periods. In addition, international standards were examined to highlight similarities and differences, offering insights into how Türkiye's approach aligns with or diverges from global trends. Through this systematic process, the study sheds light on the evolution of teacher competencies in Türkiye and explores ways they can be adapted to meet the changing needs of today's educational landscape.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. 2006 General Competencies for Teaching Profession

The MONE carried out the next stage of the research to determine the competencies of teachers. This study was based on the teacher qualifications document prepared in 2002 as part of the Basic Education Support Project (MEB, 2017, p.6). Professionals from various fields, such as academia, teaching, inspection, and labour unions, participated in the process of identifying skills. In addition, extensive seminars were organised. Based on the studies, it was concluded that defining the overall qualifications, main competencies, sub-competencies of the main competencies, and performance indicators would be the most suitable approach for the teaching profession. It was also recognised that teacher competencies encompass knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The draft document entitled "General Competencies for Teaching Profession'' was finalised on April 17, 2006, with reference number 2590. The publication appeared in the Journal of Announcements and was implemented by the regulations (MEB, 2017, p. 6). The following competencies are presented below in Table 1:

Table 1.
2006 General Competencies and Sub-competencies for the Teaching Profession

Competency Area	Sub-competencies
A. Personal and Professional Values-Professional Development: Teachers facilitate the learning and growth of students to the furthest extent, taking into account their social and cultural disparities, activities, and personal preferences. They get advantages from the collective expertise of other instructors, administrators, and specialists. They endeavour to achieve transformation and ongoing improvement via self-assessment. They are receptive to novel knowledge and ideas, actively engaging in self-improvement and contributing to the institution's growth. They gain knowledge of the laws about their trade.	1.1 Valuing, understanding and respecting students 1.2 Believing that students can learn and achieve 1.3 Giving importance to national and universal values 1.4 Self-assessment 1.5 Ensuring personal development 1.6 Monitoring and contributing to professional developments 1.7 Contributing to the improvement and development of the school 1.8 Following professional laws and fulfilling duties and responsibilities
B. Getting to Know the Student: The teacher has comprehensive knowledge of the students' characteristics, wishes, and demands and a deep understanding of the socio-cultural and economic factors associated with their family and surroundings.	2.1 Recognize developmental characteristics 2.2 Considering interests and needs 2.3 Valuing the student 2.4 Guiding the learner

Table 1. (continued)
2006 General Competencies and Sub-competencies for the Teaching Profession

C. Teaching and Learning Process: The teacher plans, applies, and coordinates the teaching and learning process. It facilitates the active engagement of students in the learning procedure.	3.1 Planning the lesson 3.2 Material preparation 3.3 Organizing learning environments 3.4 Organizing extracurricular activities 3.5 Diversifying teaching by taking individual differences into account 3.6 Time management 3.7 Behaviour management
D. Monitoring and Evaluating Learning and Development: The teacher assesses and analyses the students' progress and acquisition of knowledge. It allows students to assess their learning as well as the learning of other students.	4.1 Identify measurement and evaluation methods and techniques 4.2. Measuring student learning using different assessment techniques 4.3 Analyse and interpret data and provide feedback on student progress and learning 4.4 Review the teaching-learning process based on the results
E. School, Family, and Community Relations: The teacher acknowledges and understands the socio-cultural and economic features of the school's surroundings. It promotes the involvement of families and the community in the educational process and in school development studies.	5.1 Recognizing the environment 5.2 Utilizing environmental opportunities 5.3 Making the school a cultural centre 5.4 Family recognition and impartiality in dealing with families 5.5 Ensuring family involvement and cooperation
F. Program and Content Information: The teacher has an in-depth knowledge of the underlying values and ideas that underpin the Turkish National Education System. They also demonstrate proficiency in implementing the specific field curriculum by effectively using the appropriate strategy, purpose, objective, principles, and procedures.	6.1 Objectives and principles of Turkish National Education 6.2 Knowledge of special field curriculum and application skills 6.3 Monitoring, evaluating and developing the special field curriculum

Source: MONE, General Directorate of Teacher Training and Education, 2006

Alongside the general competencies required in the teaching profession, particular subject-area competencies for primary and secondary school teachers were also established. Specific performance indicators have been established for each competency area at the A1, A2, and A3 levels. The performance indicators were derived from the programs implemented in preschool, primary, and secondary education. The performance metrics for teachers in classrooms are distinct from those of other teachers. The knowledge level of field teachers is predicted to surpass that of non-field teachers due to their completion of many courses.

The teaching profession's general competencies, established under the "Support to Basic Education Project," comprise six fundamental general competencies, along with 31 sub-competencies falling under these six general competencies. Additionally, 233 performance indicators are utilised to demonstrate these qualifications. The specified credentials align with the globally recognised qualifications in terms of both their range and substance. Furthermore, the categorisation of credentials as "areas of competency'', "sub-competency'', and "performance indicators'' indicates that qualifications are organised within a structured framework (TED, 2009). However, these information, skills, and attitudes are combined, or the sub-competencies of this knowledge and abilities and the performance indicators that serve as evidence are provided extensively and intricately. TED (2009, p. 14) provides the following instances as evidence:

A1 Valuing, understanding, and respecting students (sub-competency)

A1.3 S/he considers students' characteristics in selecting and developing appropriate materials, resources, and activities to facilitate learning (performance indicator)

A2 Believing that students can learn and succeed (sub-competency)

A2.10 S/he believes that every student will be successful (performance indicator)

A4 Self-evaluation (sub-competency)

A4.4 S/he is open to different opinions and criticisms (performance indicator)

A5 Ensuring personal development (sub-competence)

A5.15 S/he has the willingness to do scientific research (performance indicator)

B3 Valuing the student (sub-competency)

B3.5 S/he values student ideas and output (performance indicator)

Performance indicators, such as expressions linked to values and attitudes, like belief, willingness, appreciation, and demonstration of respect, are utilised to assess performance, as illustrated in the abovementioned examples. However, performance indicators must be both "measurable and observable'' (Danielson, 2007, p. 15). Therefore, using these expressions as performance indicators is not recommended. Instead, it would be more appropriate and systematic to address the necessary aspects of the teaching profession with specific terms and to convey these terms with suitable performance indicators (Alan, 2019). By using clear, simple, and understandable language and defining observable and measurable competencies, these competencies can be employed more practically and effectively.

3.2. 2017 General Competencies for Teaching Profession

After 11 years since establishing the general qualifications for the teaching profession in 2006, the MONE introduced a new framework for general competencies in 2017. The new framework was implemented in response to the need for updated qualifications and national and global developments, innovations, and their impact on education. By collaborating with academicians, teachers, and various institutions such as YÖK (Council of Higher Education), ÖSYM, Vocational Qualifications Authority, and the Board of Education and Discipline, the general competencies for the teaching profession were revised. Additionally, MONE updated these competencies by studying the general qualifications of international institutions such as the OECD and UNESCO and countries known for their strong education systems. According to MONE (2017, p. 8), the most notable characteristic of the updated general competencies for the teaching profession is defined as follows:

"Instead of determining a specific field competency for each teaching field, subject area knowledge and competencies were added to general competencies. Thus, a holistic and single text was created to include the competencies of each teacher in their field".

Accordingly, General competencies are classified into three categories: professional knowledge, professional skills and attitudes, and values. There are 11 sub-competencies and 65 performance indicators associated with each of the three main competence categories. Table 2 shows the new general competencies for the teaching profession released in 2017 (MEB, 2017, pp. 13-16).

Table 2.
2017 General Competencies and Sub-competencies for the Teaching Profession

A. Professional Knowledge	B. Professional Skills	C. Attitudes and Values
A1. Content Knowledge	B1. Planning of Education and Teaching	C1. National, Moral and Universal Values
S/he has an advanced and critical perspective on theoretical, methodological, and factual knowledge in their subject field.	S/he plans education and teaching processes effectively.	S/he observes national, moral, and universal values.
A2. Pedagogical Content Knowledge	B2. Creating Learning Environments	C2. Approach to Students
S/he has good knowledge of their subject area's curriculum and pedagogical content.	She/he prepares appropriate teaching materials and builds a healthy and safe learning environment where effective learning can be achieved for all students.	S/he has an attitude that supports the development of students.

Table 2. (continued)
2017 General Competencies and Sub-competencies for the Teaching Profession

A3. Knowledge on Legislation	B3. Managing the Teaching and Learning Process	C3. Communication and Cooperation
An individual and teacher s/he conduct/themselves according to the legislation related to their duties, rights, and responsibilities.	S/he manages the teaching and learning process effectively.	S/he establishes an effective communication and cooperation with students, colleagues, families, and other educational stakeholders.
	B4. Assessment and Evaluation	C4. Personal and Professional Development
	S/he uses the methods, techniques, assessment, and evaluation tools that fit the purpose.	By carrying out self-appraisal, s/he participates in personal and professional development activities.

Source: MONE, General Directorate of Teacher Training and Education, 2017

MEB (2017, p.12) asserts that this updated competency framework can serve as a valuable resource for shaping university teacher training programs' content and identifying and cultivating the essential qualifications for prospective teachers. Moreover, the new competencies are designed to assist current educators in recognising their individual strengths and areas for improvement. Additionally, it is suggested that teachers' performance could be assessed in accordance with the aforementioned competencies using an objective evaluation system that will be developed.

In the publication "General Competencies for the Teaching Profession'' in 2006, as part of the Teacher Training Component of the Support to Basic Education Project, there were 31 sub-competencies and 233 performance indicators across six general competence areas. The 2017 publication by the General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development showed a reduction in the number of competencies and indicators compared to 2006. The new text includes 11 competencies and 65 competency indicators in 3 general competency areas. This indicates a simplification in the general qualifications. Despite the fewer competencies and performance indicators, the 2017 competency document is seen to have a broader and more inclusive framework.

When comparing the overall competencies of the teaching profession in terms of content, the competencies of "professional knowledge'', "professional skills'', and "attitudes and values'' serve as a foundation. Both sets of competency standards include specific field competencies that teachers should have in their respective subjects. However, it can be inferred that the 2017 proficiency indicators encompassed more general and inclusive expressions compared to the 2006 indicators and established a framework covering all teaching fields. Similarly, in both competency frameworks, teachers are expected to possess legislative knowledge about their profession. Nonetheless, the 2017 competency framework adopted a broader scope, placing emphasis on the Constitution of the Republic of Turkiye, as well as citizenship rights and responsibilities.

The 2006 and 2017 competency documents on teaching and managing the learning process highlighted the importance of teachers showcasing the required skills specified in the curriculum, efficiently managing time, considering the various needs of students, including those with special needs, taking into consideration the cultural and socioeconomic aspects of the environment and students, collaborating with relevant individuals and institutions as necessary, and effectively utilising information and communication technologies. In addition, the 2017 competence document emphasised the significance of encouraging active student engagement, integrating activities that stimulate analytical reasoning, connecting lessons to students' everyday experiences, and addressing challenging behaviours within the teaching and learning process.

In the 2006 and 2017 competency texts, there is a focus on safeguarding children's and human rights, as well as promoting respect for individual and cultural differences and nurturing national, spiritual, and universal values in students. The 2017 competency text also emphasises the importance of teachers being attuned to the natural environment, history, and the preservation of cultural heritage. Both competency texts stress the value of regarding students as individuals, believing in their capacity to learn, guiding their development, and serving as positive role models. Additionally, they underscore the significance of using the Turkish language effectively, possessing strong communication skills, demonstrating respect, empathy, and tolerance, collaborating with colleagues and families, and contributing to the advancement of the school.

When it comes to personal and professional development, teachers are encouraged to take pleasure in their profession, engage in self-assessment using feedback from educational stakeholders, boost their personal and professional growth, actively participate in cultural and artistic endeavours, prioritise their well-being and health, and adhere to professional and ethical standards. Additionally, the 2017 competency document emphasises the importance of teachers staying informed about both national and global issues.

Lastly, The Teacher Strategy Document (2017-2023), developed by the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE), intended to provide a detailed framework for enhancing teacher competencies and facilitating the professional development of educators in Turkiye. This document emphasised MoNE's dedication to improving teacher education quality, concentrating on recruiting, professional development, and performance evaluation to address the changing needs of the educational sector. As the end date approached, assessments of its influence indicated varied results. Although there were advancements in teacher quality and compliance with international standards, the document was deficient in areas like sustainable financing for continuous training programs and the successful execution of performance-based evaluation methods. The identified limitations underscored the need for a more cohesive support framework and enhanced flexibility in future systems to more effectively meet both general and specialised educational requirements within the Turkish environment.

4. TEACHER COMPETENCIES/ STANDARDS ACROSS COUNTRIES

Teacher competencies and standards function as critical benchmarks for maintaining high-quality education worldwide. The Teachers' Standards in the United Kingdom, set forth by the Department for Education, delineate eight essential teaching standards and three professional standards that serve as a framework for both novice and experienced teachers (Department for Education [DfE], 2021). The standards highlight the necessity of solid subject knowledge, adaptability in teaching to meet diverse student needs, effective behaviour management, and the significance of planning ambitious lessons. The United States adheres to the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, created by the Council of Chief State School Officers. These standards outline the fundamental skills and knowledge necessary for teachers to foster each student's potential, emphasising learner understanding, content knowledge, instructional practices, and professional responsibility (CCSSO, 2011).

The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession established by the Ontario College of Teachers in Canada outline a framework for professional and ethical behaviour among educators. These standards promote a dedication to student development within a secure and inclusive environment and a comprehensive understanding of curriculum and student learning (Ontario College of Teachers, 2016; Holden & Kitchen, 2016). The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, emphasises the significance of professional knowledge, effective teaching practices, and ongoing professional development (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2011). These frameworks jointly seek to improve teaching effectiveness and facilitate the professional development of educators (Lipscombe et al., 2020)

The Ministry of Education in Singapore has established the Teacher Growth Model, emphasising three primary competency areas: professional practice, leadership development, and personal effectiveness. This model highlights the necessity for educators to promote student growth through effective teaching methods alongside ongoing professional development (Goodwin & Low, 2021). The Finnish National Agency for Education in Finland establishes comprehensive competency criteria that emphasise pedagogical skills, assessment and evaluation methods, collaboration, and a dedication to lifelong learning, reflecting the nation's focus on teacher autonomy and professional expertise with a master's degree, which emphasises both subject and pedagogical expertise (Niemi & Lavonen, 2020; Ranta et al., 2023). The Professional Teaching Standards established by the South African Council for Educators are designed to improve teaching quality and accountability in South Africa. The standards encompass professional knowledge, pedagogical effectiveness, moral behaviour, and continuous professional development (Kimathi & Rusznyak, 2018; South African Council of Teachers (SACE), 2018). The diverse frameworks from various countries demonstrate a global commitment to establishing rigorous standards for teacher effectiveness, ensuring educators are equipped to enhance student achievement and growth.

The competencies and standards for teachers established by various countries reflect both shared principles and distinctive national priorities, underscoring a global commitment to enhancing educational quality. While many frameworks converge around core themes such as pedagogical knowledge, subject expertise, and ethical practice, the unique sociocultural, political, and economic contexts of each country shape how these competencies are interpreted and applied. For instance, Finland's emphasis on teacher autonomy and its requirement for a master's degree are deeply embedded in a decentralized education system and a cultural tradition of trust in educators (Chung, 2013). In contrast, the United States adopts a more policy-driven and accountability-oriented model, where standardized testing and performance metrics play a central role (Deming & Figlio, 2016). Similarly, Singapore's Teacher Growth Model reflects the nation's broader values of meritocracy, efficiency, and leadership within a highly structured education system (Rajandiran, 2020; Wong, 2018). These examples illustrate how

national ideologies, governance structures, and systemic needs profoundly influence the design and implementation of teacher competency frameworks. In the case of Türkiye, although recent reforms show increasing alignment with international benchmarks, the centralised nature of policy development—especially through the establishment of the National Education Academy—reveals the country's unique approach to standardising teacher training. Recognising these contextual dimensions is essential for understanding how competency frameworks function in practice and for ensuring that reforms remain responsive to local needs while benefiting from global insights.

A common thread across international frameworks is the strong emphasis on professional knowledge and pedagogical competency. Countries such as the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, and Australia require teachers to possess deep content knowledge as well as the skills to effectively communicate that knowledge to diverse student populations. This dual emphasis reinforces the idea that teaching is not only about subject mastery but also about adapting instruction to meet varied learning needs. Student-centred approaches, inclusive practices, and the ability to differentiate instruction are recurring themes, reflecting a commitment to equitable learning environments. These shared priorities highlight that while the language and structure of competencies may vary, there is a broad international consensus on the foundational attributes of effective teaching.

A notable similarity is the focus on professional development and lifelong learning. Countries such as Singapore, Canada, and Finland promote continuous professional development, reflecting a shared recognition that teaching is a dynamic profession necessitating ongoing skill improvement. This focus enhances teacher effectiveness and enriches the educational environment by promoting collaboration and the exchange of best practices among educators. Moreover, ethical conduct and dedication to student welfare are prevalent themes in the standards across various countries, indicating a common understanding that educators should not only convey knowledge but also serve as role models and protectors of their students' well-being.

Although there are notable overlaps, the standards of each country also emphasise unique aspects that represent local educational philosophies and priorities. Finland's teacher standards prioritise teacher autonomy and professional trust, enabling educators to maintain significant freedom in their instructional methods. This starkly contrasts with nations such as the United States, where the emphasis is primarily on accountability measures and standardised assessments. The Finnish model requires that teachers have master's degrees, demonstrating a dedication to elevated academic standards for educators, distinguishing it from nations with less rigorous educational criteria for teaching professionals.

The context of educational leadership varies significantly across countries. The Teacher Growth Model in Singapore emphasises leadership development, requiring teachers to demonstrate effectiveness in their classrooms while also assuming leadership roles within their schools and communities. In South Africa, there is a focus on professional accountability and ethical behaviour; however, the framework may prioritise the resolution of systemic challenges within the education system, which reflects the country's distinct socio-economic context. The distinctive features demonstrate the influence of cultural values, societal needs, and educational challenges on frameworks, ensuring alignment with local contexts and global standards for teacher effectiveness.

In conclusion, teacher competencies and standards across different countries exhibit core similarities, including the significance of professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, and ethical behaviour. However, they also embody distinct national traits influenced by cultural, social, and educational contexts. The interaction between similarities and differences enhances the global discussion on teacher effectiveness. It offers insights into how various educational systems can learn from each other to improve practices and outcomes.

4. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Competencies, in a theoretical and descriptive meaning, refer to cognitive structures that underpin certain teacher behaviours. In a practical sense, competencies include a range of abilities that enable teachers to effectively navigate complex and dynamic professional contexts and effectively resolve challenges (Blömeke & Delaney, 2012; Korthagen, 2004). The Turkish Ministry of National Education (MONE) publications comprehensively analyse the evolution and present status of teacher qualifications in Turkiye. An essential aspect of assessing this information is analysing its thoroughness, logical consistency, pertinence, and applicability. The document precisely charts the development of teacher competencies in Turkiye, commencing from the 1970s. This historical analysis emphasises the progressive evolution and enhancement of teacher qualifications and standards, demonstrating a flexible reaction to evolving educational demands and global influences.

The comprehensive competencies include various educational factors, such as professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. This comprehensive approach ensures that numerous factors of teaching quality are considered rather than relying just on topic knowledge. The competency framework outlined in the 2006 document was quite multi-faceted, with a wide range of sub-competencies and performance indicators. In contrast, the 2017

document featured fewer competencies and indicators, using more inclusive and general terms. This suggests that the 2017 document is more straightforward and easier to understand.

The commitment to aligning Turkish educational standards with global best practices is evident in incorporating international benchmarks and considering global educational practices (from organisations such as OECD, UNESCO, and countries with advanced education systems). Enhancing teacher competencies is vital for aligning Turkish educational standards with global best practices. This requires complying with global standards and promoting a culture of ongoing professional growth among educators. Teachers should possess a high level of competency in contemporary pedagogical methodologies, including integrating technology, student-centred learning approaches, and inclusive education practices (Mynbayeva et al., 2018; Skrbinjek et al., 2024). Moreover, possessing cross-cultural skills and a profound understanding of global educational trends is vital, as it allows educators to effectively equip pupils for a world that is linked on a global scale (Schleicher, 2018; UNESCO, 2015). By prioritising these specific areas, Turkiye can develop a teaching staff that has the necessary skills and expertise to provide top-notch education that aligns with the benchmarks established by prominent global organisations like OECD and UNESCO.

The focus on ongoing professional development and self-evaluation for teachers is a beneficial component. It acknowledges that teaching is a dynamic profession that needs continuous learning and adjustment. To state the areas that need further study, one can suggest that the revised General Competencies for the Teaching Profession states that the previous competency frameworks (2006) had an extensive list of skills and performance indicators (233), which were excessive and impractical to apply. The simplification implemented in the 2017 framework is an improvement, although some intricacies and redundancies may still exist that might potentially confuse teachers. Another argument emphasises that several indicators of performance associated with values and attitudes (such as beliefs, values, and willingness) are challenging to measure. For competencies to be used successfully in assessments and professional development, they must have clarity, specificity, and measurability.

The revised General Competencies for the Teaching Profession have been consolidated into a comprehensive framework, including field knowledge and field education material to obviate the need to establish distinct specialised competencies for each area. Therefore, the Ministry accepted the removal of certain specialised area skills since they were no longer required, as suggested. Nevertheless, the transition towards a broader competency framework in 2017, which integrates subject matter knowledge into general competencies, may weaken the emphasis on specialised areas. Although a unified framework has its benefits, it may not adequately cater to the distinct problems and needs of various educational disciplines as well as a more specialised approach.

Critics of the generalised approach argue that eliminating field-specific competencies prevents the framework from fully addressing specialised disciplines. Effective foreign language teaching, for instance, requires both broad pedagogical competencies and specialised linguistic skills, which extend beyond general teaching. Consolidating competencies into a single framework may thus prevent educators from obtaining specialised skills necessary for quality teaching in specific areas. Although the 2017 revision aimed to simplify competency use, the absence of specialised competencies may leave educators inadequately prepared to address field-specific requirements, impacting education quality in these fields over time. To address these concerns, a hybrid model that integrates the streamlined structure of the general competency framework with specialised competencies could be beneficial. This dual approach would allow educators to cultivate both general teaching skills and the specialised knowledge essential for their particular disciplines. Reintroducing specific competencies for specialised fields, such as foreign language education, could preserve the efficiency of the streamlined framework while meeting diverse educational needs.

The competency document lacks comprehensive information about the actual use of the competencies in day-to-day teaching. These competencies may be clarified by establishing a correlation between them and their practical representations in real classroom environments so that teachers can grasp the fundamental rationales for each competency item and see them as attainable in genuine classroom scenarios (Marzano et al., 2011). Teachers are more inclined to see these skills achievable if the gap between their theoretical explanations and practical outcomes can be overcome. To do so, efficient execution would require strong support systems, including comprehensive training initiatives, ample resources, and a well-defined assessment process, which are not adequately addressed.

Teacher competencies must be adaptable to the demands of the present and the requirements of contemporary educational trends, as they are dynamic rather than static (Gümüş, 2022). Additionally, to more effectively comply with the needs of students, it is important to share a variety of implementations of these competencies while also considering the context-dependent variations in educational environments. Additionally, while the document acknowledges the involvement of several stakeholders in the process, it lacks clarity about the level of engagement and how their input was incorporated into the final competencies. Increased openness and involvement of teachers'

perspectives might improve the significance and approval of these competencies. All stakeholders need to take part in the decision-making process since it promotes a democratic environment and increases the respect of pre-service and in-service teachers. In other words, it is vital that pre-service and in-service educators have a say in developing teacher competencies.

Regarding one's ability to teach linguistically and culturally diverse students, teachers must unite learners from diverse backgrounds, integrate culturally diverse aspects into their teaching, establish a nurturing and secure environment for all students, and treat and evaluate different children equally (Gürbüz, 2021; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The General Competencies for Teaching Profession document generated by the MONE does not include any need for intercultural proficiency in this particular aspect. The only component that discusses respect for moral and universal principles is the 'attitudes' section. Therefore, it cannot be deemed adequate in the relevant domain of expertise since language instruction encompasses universal and cultural aspects. To enhance the effectiveness of the General Competencies for the Teaching Profession document, it is necessary to include the appropriate competence areas via an update.

Last, the document recognises the need to adjust to technological progress. However, it could include more details on the particular skills and knowledge required for digital literacy and implementing technology into education. Due to the rapid rate of technological advancements, this field requires more concentrated attention, especially regarding the rapidly expanding effect of artificial intelligence. To illustrate, using AI and technologies, including competencies such as using AI-supported learning tools, monitoring student performance with data analytics, using virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies, developing ethical and safety awareness, and managing online learning environments, will help teachers create a more dynamic, personalised, and efficient learning environment. At the same time, it will support students in developing their 21st-century skills by increasing their interest in technology (Hinojo-Lucena et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2020).

Professional development is one of the key areas of use and includes a significant body of literature; thus, the "General Competencies for the Teaching Profession" should be organised to facilitate it. It has been acknowledged, although, that this document is by no means intended to serve as a framework within which most educators from various disciplines may self-evaluate to figure out their requirements for professional growth or to understand exactly what is required of them. Because of this, competencies set at a logical and ideal level might be useful in identifying what is needed for professional development for teachers. Similarly, using performance and proficiency indicators to facilitate teacher growth and make reasonable use of them in assessments would help raise the quality of teachers (Tosuntaş, 2020). Additionally, it should be made sure that pre-service teachers are capable of self-evaluation and are aware of the competencies needed by the profession. Therefore, it may be argued that the competencies need to be constructed with more precise justifications and real-world examples so that they can function as a guide and an assessment standard for teachers and teacher candidates.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive and well-intentioned endeavour to establish clear and consistent standards for the skills, knowledge, and attitudes teachers in Turkiye should possess. However, for these competencies to have a unique impact, they need to be unambiguous, quantifiable, and feasible to implement, with robust support structures in place to promote their adoption and ongoing growth. Moving ahead, it is crucial to prioritise improving clarity, simplification, and practicality.

REFERENCES

Alan, B. (2019). *Genel öğretmen yeterliklerinin belirlenmesi ve yeterliklere dayalı bir hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitimi programının tasarlanması* [Yayınlanmamış doktora tezi], Anadolu Üniversitesi.

Akın, U., & Çolak, İ. (2024). Öğretmenlik Meslek Kanunu: Ama Nasıl?. *Anadolu Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, *8*(1), 1-27.

Altan, M. Z., & Özmusul, M. (2022). Geleceğin Türkiye'sinde öğretmen refahı: Öğretmenlik meslek kanununun kayıp parçası. *Ahmet Keleşoğlu Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, *4*(1), 24-42.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2011). Australian professional standards for teachers. AITSL. https://www.aitsl.edu.au

Blömeke, S., & Delaney, S. (2012). Assessment of teacher knowledge across countries: A review of the state of research. *ZDM, 44*(3), 223-247.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative research journal*, *9*(2), 27-40.

Cardno, C. (2018). Policy document analysis: A practical educational leadership tool and a qualitative research method. *Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Yönetimi, 24*(4), 623-640. doi: 10.14527/kuey.2018.016.

Chung, J. (2023). Research-informed teacher education, teacher autonomy and teacher agency: The example of Finland'. *London Review of Education, 21* (1), 13. doi: https://doi.org/10.14324/LRE.21.1.13.

CCSSO. (2011). *InTASC model core teaching standards: A resource for state dialogue*. Retrieved from http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2011/InTASC_Model_Core_Teaching_Standards_201 1.pdf

Danielson, C. (2007). Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching (2nd ed.). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Deming, D. J., & Figlio, D. (2016). Accountability in US education: Applying lessons from K-12 experience to higher education. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *30*(3), 33–56. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.30.3.33

Demir, A. M., Sezgin, F., & Çalık, T. (2024). Öğretmenlik mesleğinin sosyal statüsünün geliştirilmesi bağlamında öğretmenlik meslek kanununun incelenmesi. *Kapadokya Eğitim Dergisi*, *5*(1), 135-150.

Department for Education. (2021). Teachers' standards: Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies. Department for Education. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications

Goodwin, A. L., & Low, E. L. (2021). Rethinking conceptualisations of teacher quality in Singapore and Hong Kong: A comparative analysis. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 44*(3), 365-382.

Gümüş, A. (2022). Twenty-first-century teacher competencies and trends in teacher training. In Y. Alpaydın & C. Demirli (Eds.), *Educational theory in the 21st century* (pp. 243–267). Maarif Global Education Series. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9640-4_11

Gürbüz, A. (2021). *A study on EFL instructors' multicultural teaching competence at tertiary level in Turkey* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Çukurova University.

Hinojo-Lucena, F.-J., Aznar-Díaz, I., Cáceres-Reche, M.-P., Trujillo-Torres, J.-M., & Romero-Rodríguez, J.-M. (2019). Artificial intelligence in higher education: A bibliometric study on its impact in scientific literature. *Education Sciences, 9*(1), 51. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci9010051

Holden, M., & Kitchen, J. (2016). Evolving practices: Admissions policies in Ontario teacher education programs. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation, 39*(4), 1-28.

Karataş, İ. H., (2024). Yeni öğretmenlik Meslek Kanunu teklifi ve Millî Eğitim Akademisi'nin kurulmasına dair. *Okul Yönetimi (SAJ), 4*(1), 1-10.

Kim, S. H., Song, K. O., & Yoon, K. H. (2020). Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Education: The Case of South Korea. *Journal of Education and Learning, 9*(3), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v9n3p1

Kimathi, F., & Rusznyak, L. (2018). Advancing professional teaching in South Africa: lessons learnt from policy frameworks that have regulated teachers' work. *Education as Change, 22*(3), 1-25.

Korthagen, F. A. (2004). In search of the essence of a good teacher: Towards a more holistic approach in teacher education. *Teaching and teacher education, 20*(1), 77-97.

Lipscombe, K., Grice, C., Tindall-Ford, S., & De-Nobile, J. (2020). Middle leading in Australian schools: Professional standards, positions, and professional development. *School Leadership & Management, 40*(5), 406-424.

Marzano, R. J., Frontier, T., & Livingston, D. (2011). *Effective supervision: Supporting the art and science of teaching*. ASCD.

MEB Öğretmen Yetiştirme ve Eğitimi Genel Müdürlüğü (2006). *TEDP: Temel eğitime destek projesi öğretmen eğitimi bileşeni öğretmenlik mesleği genel yeterlikleri*. Ankara. http://oygm.meb.gov.tr/www/ogretmenlik-meslegi-genel-yeterlikleri/icerik/39.

MEB Öğretmen Yetiştirme ve Geliştirme Genel Müdürlüğü (2017). *Öğretmenlik mesleği genel yeterlikleri. Ankara*. http://oygm.meb.gov.tr/www/ogretmenlik-meslegi-genelyeterlikleri/icerik/.

MEB. (2025, Mart 19). *Millî Eğitim Akademisi Başkanlığı Yönetmeliği, Resmî Gazete'de yayımlandı*. https://www.meb.gov.tr/milli-egitim-akademisi-baskanligi-yonetmeligi-resmi-gazetede-yayimlandi/haber/29629/tr.

Morgan, H. (2022). Conducting a qualitative document analysis. *The qualitative report*, *27*(1), 64-77.

Mynbayeva, A., Sadvakassova, Z., & Akshalova, B. (2018). Pedagogy of the twenty-first century: Innovative teaching methods. In O. Bernad-Cavero & N. Llevot-Calvet (Eds.), *New pedagogical challenges in the 21st century—Contributions of research in education* (pp. 20–45). IntechOpen. https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.72341.

Niemi, H., & Lavonen, J. (2020). *Teacher education in Finland: Persistent efforts for high-quality teachers. In Teaching the world's teachers* (pp. 153-178). Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ontario College of Teachers. (2016). Standards of practice for the teaching profession. Ontario College of Teachers. Retrieved from

https://www.oct.ca/-/media/PDF/Standards%20Poster/OCTStandardsFlyerENPUBLISH.pdf.

Polat, M. (2024). *Milli Eğitim Akademisi ve öğretmen yetiştirme sürecinin dönüşümü* (İLKE Politika Notu No. 60). İLKE İlim Kültür Eğitim Vakfı. https://doi.org/10.26414/pn060.

Ranta, S., Kangas, J., Harju-Luukkainen, H., Ukkonen-Mikkola, T., Neitola, M., Kinos, J., ... & Kuusisto, A. (2023). Teachers' Pedagogical Competence in Finnish Early Childhood Education—A Narrative Literature Review. *Education Sciences, 13*(8), 791.

Rajandiran, D. (2020). Singapore's teacher education model for the 21st century (TE21). In F. M. Reimers (Ed.), *Implementing deeper learning and 21st century education reforms* (pp. 59–77). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-57039-2_3

SACE. (2018). *Professional teachind standards. South African Council for Educators*. Retrieved from https://www.sace.org.za/assets/documents/uploads/sace_31561-2020-10-12-Professional%20Teaching%20Standards%20Brochure.pdf

Schleicher, A. (2018). *World Class: How to Build a 21st-Century School System*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264300002-en.

Skrbinjek, V., Vičič Krabonja, M., Aberšek, B., & Flogie, A. (2024). Enhancing teachers' creativity with an innovative training model and knowledge management. *Education Sciences, 14*(12), Article 1381. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14121381

Şişman, M. (2009). Öğretmen yeterliliklerini yeniden düşünmek. *Türk Yurdu Dergisi, 29*, 37–41.

Tosuntaş, Ş. B. (2020). Öğretmenlik mesleği genel yeterliklerinin incelenmesi. *Academy Journal of Educational Sciences, 4*(1), 53-61.

Tuna, C. & Kazdal, Y. (2021). Türkiye'de öğretmenlik meslek kanunu tasarılarının incelenmesi. *Kosova Eğitim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, *2*(2/2), 16-42.

Türk Eğitim Derneği (TED) (2009). *Öğretmen yeterlikleri*. Ankara: Türk Eğitim Derneği.

UNESCO. (2015). *Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good*. UNESCO Publishing. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232555.

Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Rethinking the curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(1), 20-32. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053001003

Wong, H. M. (2018). *A teacher-led interpretation of the teacher growth model: An inquiry into the professional identity of Singapore teachers* (Research Brief Series). National Institute of Education. https://repository.nie.edu.sg

ÇALIŞMANIN ETİK İZNİ

Yapılan bu çalışmada "Yükseköğretim Kurumları Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Yönergesi" kapsamında uyulması belirtilen tüm kurallara uyulmuştur. Yönergenin ikinci bölümü olan "Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiğine Aykırı Eylemler" başlığı altında belirtilen eylemlerden hiçbiri gerçekleştirilmemiştir. Bu çalışma etik kurul izni gerektirmemektedir.

ÇATIŞMA BEYANI

Araştırmada herhangi bir kişi ya da kurum ile finansal ya da kişisel yönden bağlantı bulunmamaktadır. Araştırmada herhangi bir çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.