



A GLANCE AT STANDARD DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND ACCREDITATION PROCESS AS SUSTAINING TOOLS FOR QUALITY IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN TURKEY

İsmail Yüksel* & Abdullah Adigüzel

Department of Education Sciences,
Faculty of Education, Anadolu University, Eskisehir, Turkey

*Corresponding author: ismailyuksel@anadolu.edu.tr

The demand for qualified teachers has been constantly on the increase all over the world. Quite naturally, the teacher education programs have gained renewed importance. It has become indispensable that the effort and resources assembled to teacher education should be effective and sustainable. In Turkey, with the foundation of republic, challenging changes occurred in accordance with the state's fundamental policy. Yet, these changes were temporal and conducted to just save the day. Moreover, they were limited to alter the teacher education program and inadequate in terms of sustainability. In this framework, the developed countries have focused on developing standards and establishing accreditation process to ensure sustainable the quality in teacher education. This has also influenced Turkey and since 1990s, the standard development studies in teacher education have been carried out and an accreditation process has been initiated. However, the researches and applications regarding these standards and accreditation process have not adequately been conducted. This study aims at pointing the standard development studies and accreditation process in teacher education in Turkey in order to gain insight about this standard development process and the current state.

Key Words: quality, teacher education, standard development, accreditation

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the globalization has been gaining speed among the countries. Especially this has been occurring with regards to economy, international relationships, information and the production and sharing of technology. As a consequence of these, the national characteristics of some countries in their social systems have started to change and weaken in time. In order to catch up with these overwhelming changes, it has become obligatory for countries to support one another, besides, to cooperate and interact with each other in their

attempts to rearrange their social systems. It has gained great importance for countries to share their experience related to their social problems and their solutions to these problems because the experiences of a certain country related to its education system or at any field of this country' educational system is considered to be, in one respect, a "model" for other countries (Sağlam, 1999).

For Turkey, which has been trying to be a member of European Union and trying to adapt to European countries, the changes emerging in the world are closely followed and taken as a model for the new regulations, improvements and innovations, as requirements of the European Union in every field. The European Union encourages Turkey, as well as other member countries, to foster cooperation with third countries and with the competent international organizations in the field of education, in order to produce qualified teacher workforce capable of educating young people to live in a changing, globalised world. Turkey, as an candidate EU member, is willing to be part of this cooperation, in order to improve the quality of teacher education (Maastricht Treaty, 1992).

The significance of teacher education is agreed as the quality of teacher education refers to training qualified teachers open to changes and innovations in the field. Thus, there have been major modifications in the Turkish educational system within the framework of those requirements for full membership of the EU. One of the most important requirements is that there should be noticeable developments in teacher education. In this context, Turkey has given particular attention to teacher education and defined standards and initiated accreditation of the faculties of education. In this study, based on literature review, the renewal studies conducted in teacher education programs have been dealt with, then the standards development studies and accreditation process in teacher education have also been examined.

QUALITY QUEST IN PROGRAMS: RENEWAL STUDIES

The concept of quality has long been probed by numerous researchers from many academic and business backgrounds. In spite of this, one general and common definition of quality is not agreed on due to the obscurity and comprehensiveness of quality as a concept (Liu, 2009). In other words, quality is not a static, but a dynamic concept, over time, that is treated differently depending on the current specifications and the particular objects concerned (Anand, 1997; Ruševieius & Makijovaite, 1998). Therefore, it connotes a variety of meanings and implies different things to different people. According to Ali & Shastri (2010) quality is appropriateness for use or purpose. Crosby (1979) considers it as conformance to standards while Deming (1986) defines quality as a predictable degree of uniformity and dependability at low cost and

suited to market. Yıldırım (2002) states quality as to be in degree of being convenient to the purpose and in teacher education context defines as being convenient to the standards. Kavrakoğlu (1996) also focuses on standards while making the definition. He defines quality as being convenient to the desired properties and to the standards. Thus, it can be inferred that quality and standard are both inseparable.

Many countries have been trying to develop their teacher education programs forming teacher education program standards. These reforms have also affected Turkey beginning from 1980s. All of the institutions training teachers for each level of Turkish Education System were gathered under the roof of universities in 1982. This had some significant contributions to Turkish Education System such as, making the statue of the teaching profession better, carrying out research related to teacher education scientifically at Universities, and training pre-service teachers academically. However, as a consequence of the specialization, training at Education Faculties has started to become more and more academic, and has started to ignore some knowledge and skills that teachers are supposed to use in their teaching at schools in real life. Hence, teachers started to tend to work at more academic high schools and thus primary schools were totally neglected. As a natural consequence of this, the need for primary school teachers raised in 1990s quickly (YÖK, 1998). Therefore, in order to train the teachers who will meet the requirements of modern education, to increase the quality of education, and more importantly to respond the need for teachers, The Council of Higher Education carried out some reforms in teacher education in 1997, and this model started to be applied beginning from 1998–1999 academic year (Günçer et al., 1999).

In the center of the reforms related to teacher education, there were Education Faculties. The mission to train the pre-school, primary school and secondary education teachers was undertaken by Education Faculties. On the other hand, there are also some other ways to train secondary education teachers like, getting a master's degree from education, social and science institutes without thesis after having a branch degree from Education Faculties. When the general structure of the reforms related to teacher training is examined, it can be observed that the education faculties are significant institutes in teacher education (Gültekin, 2002; YÖK, 1998). Education Faculties consist of departments and departments consist of teacher education programs.

The following programs are at primary school teachers training departments at Education Faculties; pre-school, primary school, science, primary school mathematics and social sciences teachers. Pre-school teacher education departments train teachers for pre-school stage, and primary school teacher

education departments train teachers for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th grade of the primary schools. The departments of science, primary school mathematics and social sciences teacher education departments train branch teachers for the 6th, 7th and 8th grade of the primary schools. Turkish Language Teaching departments which were established as independent departments at Education Faculties train teacher for primary schools in Turkey. The teacher education programs at Foreign Language Teacher education departments train teachers for both primary school and secondary schools. The teacher education programs at Fine Arts Education train teachers for primary and secondary schools. Physical training and Sports department trains teachers for both primary and secondary education. The teacher education programs at special education departments train teacher for pre-school, primary and secondary education stage. Only Guidance and Psychological Consultancy programs train teachers for the three stages of education at Education Sciences department. Computer and Teaching Technology department train teachers for both primary and secondary education (Gültekin, 2002; YÖK, 1998; Sağlam, 2005).

The departments of science and mathematics training and social sciences training at Education Faculties train teachers for secondary education after getting a one and half year master's degree without thesis. On the other hand, it is possible for educational sciences, social sciences and science institute to train teachers for secondary education with one and half year master's education following a degree from a branch education from a related branch faculty (YÖK, 1998).

The reforms have helped the education faculties to gain the following characteristics (Baskan, 2001; Gültekin, 2002; YÖK, 1998):

1. With the reforms, the structure of the departments at education faculties has become parallel to that of face to face education at National Education System. Hence, new departments and programs training teachers for each stage of education system were made available at Education Faculties.
2. In order to increase the standards of teacher training, to make the faculties accredited depending on the standards, to increase the quality of teacher training, National Teacher Education Committee was established.
3. With the cooperation among the Council of Higher Education, Ministry of National Education, faculties and schools, new cooperations were led between the institutions training teachers and the schools at which teachers have their work experience. Teaching applications were emphasized more.

4. With new reforms, branch teacher education for secondary education was obligated to have a master's degree without thesis.
5. More emphasis was given to special teaching methodology in the field of teacher's subject matter knowledge, the duration of the programs was extended.

The above mentioned reforms in the field of teacher education aimed to train fully qualified teachers who will be able to achieve the goals of up-to-date education and to remove the shortcomings of the former teacher education programs depending on some widely accepted excuses. Growing qualified teachers in Turkey will be possible as long as the institutions which train teachers follow the teacher trainings standards that the Council of Higher Education determined in all fields.

DEVELOPING STANDARDS AND INITIATING ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The great extent of the reforms carried out in Turkey in the field of teacher education consists of standard adaptation in teacher education and dependently developing an accreditation model related to the institutions in the field of teacher training. The Teacher Education National Committee undertook the responsibilities such as, increasing quality standards in the field of teacher training; dependently, rehabilitating the conditions of the institutions, increasing the quality of the service and coordinating the studies related to accrediting. The missions of this committee can be listed as follows (YÖK, 1998):

1. Establishing teacher education programs and their curriculum and updating them.
2. Adapting national scales related to teacher education subjects and evaluating the related practices.
3. Adapting new national standards for new teachers and ensure that they are applied.
4. Monitoring and controlling teacher education programs and ensures that they are applied.
5. Ensuring that teacher education programs are mostly based on practice in real settings.
6. Supporting the teacher education programs and accepting conditions for students

7. Ensuring that studies are carried out in the best way possible.
8. Helping the staff in their professional developments through in-service training and scholarships abroad for training purposes.
9. Coming up with the necessary models and substructure related to faculty-school cooperation, which is one of the most important dimensions in the field of teacher training.
10. Making plans related to teacher education for both long-run and short-run.
11. Coming up with advice related to all kinds of issues in the field of teacher education to The Council of Higher Education.
12. Making the process of training pre-school teachers effective and fruitful under the lights of modern scientific findings which are considered to serve the country and the priorities of the country satisfactorily.

Turkish Teacher Education Accreditation System consists of seven fundamental standard domains as teaching, personnel, students, faculty-implementing school cooperation, physical substructure, management and quality assurance. Each standard domain has also input standards, process standards, and output standards (Günçer et al., 1999). The examples related to the outlook in the domain of standards and standard groups, which constitute the base of the process of accrediting education faculties training teachers for pre-schools, primary schools and secondary school are given in Table 1.

Table 1: The Outlook Depending on the Standard Groups of the Standard Domains in Turkish Teacher Education Accreditation System.

<i>Domains</i>	<i>Input Standards</i>	<i>Process Standards</i>	<i>Output Standards</i>
Teaching	Monitoring the bachelor's degree programs determined by The Council of Higher Education.	Matching between the teaching programs previewed in advance and practice stage.	Pre-service teachers' having the subject knowledge that the program previewed.
Personnel	The number and the qualification of the teaching staff for each program.	Teaching staff's achieving sufficient professional development.	Teaching staff's having enough relevant teaching-training skills.
Students	Students' having the required qualifications to be able to start the program.	The consultancy services provided for students' professional developments.	Being successful for the pre-service teachers who are about to graduate.
Faculty-School Cooperation	Having legal and managerial regulations related to the application studies.	Ensuring the faculty-school cooperation.	Reaching the capability for the pre-service teachers to be able to fulfill the task as professional teachers.
Physical substructure	School buildings' being adequate and having substructure.	Utilizing the schools and classes the most effectively.	Helping the pre-service teachers have the capability to use the laboratory and training tools.
Management	The administrative organization should be appropriate to manage the faculty.	The administrative units should be able to carry out their responsibilities the most effectively and fruitfully.	Administration's having used manpower and financial facilities the most effectively.
Quality assurance	Having quality assurance policy and the methods for application at the level of faculty.	Utilizing the findings of the quality assurance to develop the faculty as a whole unit.	Reflecting the findings of monitoring the graduates on quality assurance system.

Source: Günçer et al., 1999

The standards related to input standards show the standards required to train the teachers with qualifications. The process standards indicate what instructors and the pre-service teachers should do to be able to reach the competence level in their subject area. Finally, the output standards point out a certain level that individuals should reach as a consequence using sufficient amount of input following an appropriate way (Günçer et al., 1999).

Following the model prepared by Accreditation Studying Group, as shown on Table 1, the institutions dealing with teacher education are accredited depending on whether they are fitting the standards. The explanation on the measurement and evaluation of each used standard is carried out following three main ways as, indicators, evidence and grading. The indicators help instructors and the working team see if they match with some certain standards while evidence demonstrates the documented data which shows if faculty has reached

the aimed standards. Grading guides to decide if the performance is very good, satisfactory, acceptable or insufficient (Günçer et al., 1999).

In Turkish Teacher Education Accreditation System, the numbers of faculties to be visited per year, and the length of time between visits are decided by The Council of Higher Education. However, the first round of visits focuses on input and process standards, with a preview only of output standards. Later rounds of visits will focus on input, process and output standards. They will particularly consider how well programs prepare students to meet the national competencies of beginning teachers. The process accreditation consists of the following steps as usual:

1. A set of teacher education standards by which programs are judged and an explication of each standard, by indicators, evidence, and grading are stated.
2. An assessment team is selected from academic staff nominated by faculties and they are to attend to a training program.
3. Faculty of education and its programs to be accredited are chosen and the faculty is informed a training program for the accreditation process.
4. Self-evaluation report by the faculty, describing how they work to meet the standards and giving the faculty's own evaluation of how well they achieve the standards is prepared and delivered to assessment team.
5. Assessment team reviews the material in the self-evaluation report and other documents, observes facilities and classes, and interviews with deans, staff, students, and others.
6. A draft evaluation report by assessment team with its own assessment of how the faculty meets the standards for accreditation, along with a confidential recommendation about the accreditation status of the programs is constructed and sent to faculty dean if assessment team fails to consider relevant information, or if there are problems or deficiencies after the visit.
7. The visited dean examines draft evaluation report and gives a response.
8. Assessment team constructs the final evaluation report and delivers it to The Council of Higher Education attaching the dean's response.
9. The Council of Higher Education reviews the documents and makes an accreditation decision.

Visiting teams of assessors serve a key function in the accreditation process. While the Council of Higher Education is responsible for checking that

accreditation decisions are made, it cannot visit every faculty, observe the facilities, see teaching in action, talk with students, and review the partnership arrangements. Nor can the Council of Higher Education directly review evidence that new teachers meet the national competencies. The Council relies on the work of the visiting assessors to gather the evidence and make judgements about how well faculties meet the accreditation standards. As a conclusion, this process started in 1998-1999 academic years and since then, faculties of education preparing their self-evaluation reports have been consummating their insufficiencies according to their capacities and needs.

CONCLUSION

After the declaration of the republican system in Turkey, it was aimed by the authorities to keep the reforms running in the field of law, politics, economy, and culture keeping the purpose of becoming contemporary and developed which is the most basic policy of the state in mind. Thus, keeping the idea in mind as a starting point, helping a complete social adaptation is dependent on education, continuous attempts were performed to be able to promote to required level with regards to the quality and quantity in education. Since the declaration of the Republican System in Turkey, reforms at education have been required and various teacher education models have been applied for the purpose of increasing the quality of teachers.

Nowadays, Turkey has been adapted to European Union monitoring all of the developments in all countries, especially the ones in the European Union. In this process, especially the innovations in the field of teacher education issue have been monitored and seen as a model. Since 1980s, the reforms related to teacher education in the world have also affected Turkey. Gathering all of the institutions training teachers for every stage of education system under the roof of universities have had many significant contributions to making the status of teaching profession better, to making scientific research on teacher education at academic level, to training teachers' trainers academically.

Turkey which was influenced by the higher education reforms in England restructured its teacher education models and this model started to be applied beginning from 1998–1999 academic years. One significant dimension of this restructuring is adapting new standards in teacher education and dependently developing an accrediting model related to the institutions in the field of teacher training. Turkish Teacher Education Accreditation System consists of input, process and output standards in seven domains as teaching, personnel, students, faculty-implementing school cooperation, physical substructure, management and quality assurance. However, no application has been done at faculties to see

to what extent restructuring and teacher education program standards which were developed for the purpose of accrediting are carried out.

When quick changes and developments happen, it is a widely accepted approach to renew the teacher education program standards in almost every five years. The teacher education program standards adapted a decade ago in Turkey have not been renewed or updated since they were not used for the purpose of accrediting. The reasons for this are;

- There is communication breakdown between The Council of Higher Education which is responsible for teacher education and Ministry of National Education which employs teachers.
- There is no voluntary independent organization which adapts teacher education program standards and accredit the education faculties depending on to what extent they match the standards.
- Teacher Education National Committee is not so functional although it is responsible for adapting new standards in Turkish Education System, making the conditions of the institutions training teachers better, improving the quality of their service, and coordinating the accrediting studies.
- The accrediting studies should be considered as an operation for the purpose of control and inspection rather than as the studies for the purpose of improving the quality and fruitfulness.
- As a consequence of the governments' policies, it seems that accrediting and disaccrediting of the faculties are impossible under current conditions.

As a result, it is a necessity to overcome the above mentioned obstacles, updating the teacher education program standards as soon as possible and accrediting education faculties evaluating to what extent they match with the standards.

REFERENCES

- Ali, M. & Shastri, R., K. (2010) Implementation of total quality management in higher education, *Asian Journal of Business Management* 2(1): 9-16,
- Anand, K.N. (1997). Quality: An evolving concept. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 8 (4): 195–200.
- Baskan, G. (2001). Öğretmenlik mesleği ve öğretmen yetiştirmede yeniden yapılanma [Teaching profession and new structure in teacher training]. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 20: 16–25.
- Crosby, P. B. (1979). *Quality Is Free*. McGraw-Hill, New York.
- Deming, W. E. (1986). *Out of Crisis*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Gültekin, M. (2002). Eğitim fakülteleri öğretmen yetiştirme programlarının yeniden düzenlenmesi kapsamında ilköğretime öğretmen yetiştirme [Teacher education for primary schools with in the context of rearrangement in teacher education programs in faculties of education]. *Anadolu Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*. 1–2, 12: 49–65,.
- Günçer, B. (1999). *Türkiye’de Öğretmen Eğitiminde Standardlar ve Akreditasyon* [Standard and Accreditation in Teacher education in Turkey]. Ankara: YÖK Yayınları,.
- Kavrakoğlu, İ. (1996). *Toplam Kalite Yönetimi*. İstanbul: KalDer Yayınları (3. Basım).
- Liu, J. (2009). Education for sustainable development in teacher education: Issues in the case of York University in Canada. *Asian Social Science*, 5(5):46-49.
- Maastricht Treaty. (1992). *Maastricht treaty*: Provisions amending the treaty establishing the european economic community with a view to establishing the european community. Retrieved from <http://www.eurotreaties.com/maastrichtec.pdf>
- Ruşevieius, J. & Makijovaite, R. (1998). Total Quality Management: Philosophy, Methods, Models. *Forum Ware*, 1(4): 58–65.
- Sağlam, M. (1999). *Avrupa Ülkelerinin Eğitim Sistemleri* [Education Systems of European Countries]. Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Sağlam, M. (2005). Öğretmen Okullarının Kuruluşunun 157. Yılı Kutlama Etkinlikleri kapsamında sunulan “Türkiye’de Toplumsal Değişme ve Öğretmen Eğitimi Modelleri” [Social Change in Turkey and Teacher Education Models]. Kocaeli: Konuşma.

Turkish Higher Education Council (YÖK). (1998). Eğitim Fakültelerinin Öğretmen Yetiştirme Programlarının Yeniden Düzenlenmesi [Re-arrangement of Teacher education Programs in Faculties of Education]. Ankara: Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı.

Yıldırım, H. (2002). Toplam kalite yönetimin temel kavramları [Basic concepts of total quality management]. *Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 17:5.