

A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN TEACHING PRACTICE PROCESS IN POLAND AND TÜRKIYE

Abstract

Changes seen in the content and quality of education systems are among the most discussed topics in the world. These changes depend on the parallel content and quality changes taking places in teacher education programs. In recent years, the insufficiencies of education systems in many countries have been associated with the state of teacher education programs and continuous reforms and studies have been carried out in this regard. As a result, it can be seen that there are many different teacher training programs and practices in the world. During the teaching practice, school administrators take on important responsibilities. The purpose of this article is to examine the education policies and types of teaching practice activities in the context of teacher training programs in Poland as well as to compare the education process of school administrators in Türkiye and in Poland. The case study method was used in this article for the training policies of teaching practice activities examined in Türkiye and in Poland.

Keywords: teaching practice, faculty-school cooperation, policy, education policy, education program

Streszczenie

Zmiany w jakości i treści kształcenia należą do najczęściej dyskutowanych tematów na świecie. Zależą one od treści i jakości zmian w kształceniu nauczycieli. W ostatnich latach wiąże się niedoskonałość systemów edukacji wielu krajów z kształceniem nauczycieli i prowadzi ciągłe badania reformatorskie w tym zakresie. W rezultacie widać, że na świecie istnieje wiele różnych programów szkolenia nauczycieli i praktyk nauczania. W trakcie praktyki nauczycielskiej na dyrektorach szkół spoczywają ważne obowiązki. Celem tego badania jest zbadanie polityk edukacyjnych i programów zajęć praktycznych w systemie kształcenia nauczycieli w Polsce oraz porównanie wykształcenia dyrektorów szkół w Turcji i Polsce. Metoda studium przypadku

zastosowana w niniejszej polityce badawczej i szkoleniowej w zakresie praktyki pedagogicznej została zbadana w Turcji i Polsce.

Słowa kluczowe: praktyka pedagogiczna, współpraca wydziału ze szkołą, polityka, polityka edukacyjna, program edukacyjny

Introduction

Education, which aims to preserve the existing values of a society as well as transfer them to future generations, aims to provide individuals with the knowledge and skills to sustain their lives and contribute to social life [MEB, 2017a]. Aiming to better respond to high social and economic expectations, all countries are working to improve their education systems and undertake important reforms [OECD, 2005].

There is a remarkable relationship between education and the human capital of countries, and quality education also affects the economic development of countries. The quality of education is more important than its duration and “teacher quality” is the most important school variable affecting student achievement [Kalkınma Bakanlığı, 2018; OECD, 2011]. Improving the quality of teacher education is highly effective in improving the quality of education at all levels and the status of the teaching profession [ETUCE, 2008]. Only teacher qualifications cannot increase the quality of education. The quality of education in school also depends on the competencies and vision of school administrators who can respond to students’ needs and contribute to the development of teachers. For this reason, the importance of school administrators in the process should not be ignored [Czerkawska, Pintel, Witkowski, 2022].

Expectations from education are rising around the world. Being aware of this process, the European Union countries pay attention to the formation of education policies in this direction [Darling-Hammond, 2000; 2017; ETUCE, 2008]. Education policy is a set of tools and rules adopted to achieve strategic objectives related to a specific field of socio-economic activity. Educational policies, which are a part of social policy, define the tools for the development of human and social capital and cover all problems related to the education system, the organization of the teaching process, and teaching methods [Noworól, 2012]. The essence of education policy is to make choices and decisions regarding the purpose, direction, and organization of all issues related to education, such as the organization of the education system [Dziewulak, 2020].

Governments utilize different sources and documents in determining their education policies. European Union countries also take into account the policy recommendations of the Union when determining their education policies. Changes in the roles and responsibilities expected from school administrators necessitate changes in the educational policies of countries. Considering that school administrator selection and training policies are determined in line with the educational

policies of countries, it is noteworthy that there are different policies and practices for the training of school administrators in Türkiye and Poland.

Determining education policies in Türkiye is the responsibility of central authorities. In addition to EU education policies, development plans, laws, and regulations on education, there are strategic documents to develop policies in education and ensure that activities are carried out within the scope of plans and programs. These are: The Presidential Annual Program, development plans, 2023 Education Vision, strategic plans, and National Education Councils.

The management of the education system in Poland is the responsibility of the central and local authorities. National education policy is developed centrally, education policy is formulated at all levels of management of regional units, in particular national and local. The documents shaping education policies in Poland are based on strategic documents for development. It is stated that investments in human capital, as a key element of economic development in determining policies, should be considered not only in terms of financial or quantitative but also in terms of students, adults, teachers, educational institutions and teaching materials [Rada Ministrów, 2017]. In addition, in the process of determining policies, the policies determined by the European Union are adopted and strategies and programs for reforms are created. Developmental changes in Poland are largely realized through EU funds. The National Strategic Reference Framework 2007–2013, which defines the priorities and areas of use of EU funds, and the operational programs to implement them have formed the general framework of policies [Drogosz-Zabłocka, Minkiewicz, 2007]. The strategic changes toward development were achieved mainly thanks to the funds of the Operational Program for Human Capital (PO KL) [Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, 2018; Zgliczyński, 2010]. Another strategic document guiding education policies is the “Responsible Development Strategy to 2020 (with a perspective to 2030) (SOR)”. Adopted in 2017 by the Council of Ministers, the SOR is an updated version of the country’s medium-term development strategy (National Development Strategy 2020). It is a binding, key document in the field of medium and long-term economic policy of the Polish government [Ministerstwo Funduszy i Polityki Regionalnej, 2019]. Poland has committed to develop a skills strategy by the provisions of the chapter of the Association Agreement with the European Union entitled “Thematic Objective 10: Investing in education, training and vocational education for skills and lifelong learning”. In line with this commitment, an “Integrated Skills Strategy” has been developed. The Integrated Skills Strategy (Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności 2030, ZSU 2030) was developed based on 8 strategic documents, including the Responsible Development Strategy to 2020 (with a perspective until 2030) [MEN, 2019].

The quality of teacher training programs is related to the fact that teachers can have characteristics that affect the quality of education. In recent years, the inadequacy of the education system in many countries has been associated with teacher training. For this reason, it is seen that reform studies have been carried

out for teacher training. One of the most important processes of teacher training is a teaching practice. There are many different practices in teacher training and teaching practice in the world. In Türkiye, starting with the restructuring of faculties of education, the teacher training has undergone and continues to change. With the latest regulations, the balance between theory and practice has been tried to be achieved.

All stakeholders in the process have important responsibilities to ensure and effectively carry out faculty-school cooperation in teaching practice. Research shows that there are many problems in the cooperation process and practices. Some of the problems are that school administrators and practice teachers regard this process as a formality and that the necessary sensitivity is not shown to practice activities. Teaching practice processes in Poland and Türkiye are similar. In the teaching practice, there are activities such as visiting schools, observing the lessons, teaching, planning, and exchanging information with their peers. Although the most effective task in the teaching practice seems to be the practice teachers, school administrators also have important duties and responsibilities. School administrators have duties such as meeting with preservice teachers, informing them of their duties and responsibilities, and providing the necessary educational environment for the effective and efficient implementation of practice studies, in addition to the duties of determining the practice teacher for the preservice teachers. For this reason, both practice teachers and school administrators must have the qualifications to effectively carry out the teaching practice.

The general purpose of the study is to compare the education of school administrators in Türkiye with the education of school administrators in Poland by examining the educational policies and curriculum programs for teaching practice activities in the teacher training system in Poland. For this purpose, it is aimed to find answers to the following questions:

- What are the policies regarding the teacher training system in Poland and Türkiye?
- How is school administrator training in education programs in Poland and Türkiye?
- What are the duties and responsibilities of school administrators regarding teaching practices in the teacher training process in Poland and Türkiye?

In addition to the laws and regulations on education in Poland and Türkiye, it is important to examine and compare the documents used in educational policy-making such as strategic plans, development plans, EU Education Reports and OECD Education Reports, and the curriculum programs in universities. Also examining the educational policies, curriculum programs, duties, and responsibilities of school administrators regarding teaching practice activities in the teacher training system in Poland and Türkiye, and comparing similar and different aspects in practice draws attention as another important process in terms of research.

The case study method, one of the qualitative research designs, was used in the research. In the research, first, a document review was conducted for the education policies for teaching practice activities in Türkiye and Poland and how the mentoring system for preservice teachers in Poland was included in the school administrators training programs. Within the scope of the research, the duties and responsibilities of school administrators in the teaching practice process were determined.

Results and discussion

Teacher training policies are interventions in a range of areas that shape the composition of the teaching workforce and the work of teachers. They include recruitment processes, pre-service teacher training, and induction policies, career and compensation structures, professional learning opportunities and requirements, and teacher evaluation policies [OECD, 2018]. In Asian countries, which have come to the fore with their success in recent years, great importance is attached to the selection of preservice teachers, teacher training, providing collaborative and sharing working environments among teachers, and investing in teacher quality [Durman, 2017]. In this respect, trying to determine the knowledge and skills that teachers should have is an indispensable part of teacher training policies in today's knowledge society. Teacher training policies are intended to shape the work of the teaching workforce and teachers [ETUCE, 2008; OECD, 2018].

Therefore, teacher training policies should not only succeed in attracting successful prospective teachers to the system, but also provide environments that foster continuous professional development. Attracting and developing new teachers is important to maintain the quality of the education system. The preparation and selection of candidates to enter the teaching profession affect the supply of qualified teachers, both in terms of quantity and quality [OECD, 2015; 2022]. Teacher quality requires more attention to both pre-service teacher education and employment selection criteria, as well as the resources and support that teachers need [OECD, 2005].

In the teacher training process, which is divided into three periods: pre-service, induction, and in-service, the development of teachers' professional skills should be continuous starting from pre-service. Especially considering that they will be teaching for many years, it is not possible for them to continue their profession with the knowledge and skills they received from their undergraduate education. Considering the importance attached to the continuous Professional development of teachers in many developed countries, it can be said that the current teacher education systems should be reviewed, especially starting from pre-service education [MEB, 2017b; Mizerek, 2018].

Pre-service education is the period in which teachers are expected to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by their profession. Three important components of pre-service teacher education are the teacher's content knowledge,

teaching skills, and practical activities. Quality teacher education is expected to integrate these three components effectively [European Commission/Eurydice, 2015]. In the pre-service teacher training process, it is necessary to train pre-service teachers to equip them with the professional knowledge and skills they need. In this respect, it is important to provide a balanced system in which they can combine the knowledge they learn in theory with practice [ETUCE, 2008]. It is possible to say that one of the most important stages of the pre-service teacher training process is teaching practice activities.

In Poland, which is aware of the importance of the teaching practice process in teacher training and where many reform studies have been carried out in this direction, it is difficult to say that today's teaching practice is carried out effectively. In addition to the absence of a legal document for teaching practice, another problem is that higher education institutions only deal with the organization of practice activities and carry out the process through agreements with school administrations. Maintaining everything through procedures prevents effective communication between institutions and negatively affects the faculty-school cooperation process. In this context, it is possible to say that there are similar problems in terms of faculty-school cooperation in the teaching practice process in Türkiye and Poland.

The faculty-school cooperation process is important not only for the training of preservice teachers, but also for the professional development of teachers and administrators in practice schools. Because the effects of teacher education depend not only on the potential of the preservice teacher and his development in the university, which creates the most suitable learning conditions for him, but also on the quality of the schools of practice. For this reason, it is necessary to provide a collaborative environment where preservice teachers can learn from the best, and to ensure the continuous professional development of school administrators and practice teachers. In general, being educated in the field of educational administration draws attention as one of the most sought-after criteria for school administration. As a result, education systems have developed different types of training and courses to increase the management competencies of school administrators and to train and prepare school administrators [Dorczak, Mazurkiewicz, 2013]. Pre-service education is an important step in the preparation of school administrators for the profession. Many countries offer pre-service education management preparation programs that often lead to a university degree or specialized qualification. Some countries have established national institutions to serve this purpose, while in other countries universities play this role [OECD, 2009].

The content and duration of pre-service management training may vary from country to country. In-service programs are important in terms of providing opportunities for school administrators to develop themselves. In-service programs are very necessary for the development of school administrators, especially in cases where the training received before and after starting the profession is

insufficient. For this reason, in-service training should be provided periodically for school administrators to update their professional knowledge and skills and to keep up with new developments. In-service training is expected to be at a level that can meet the needs of school administrators. The leadership roles expected from school administrators require them to act as guides and mentors. It is a well-known fact that school administrators act as mentors to contribute to the professional development of the teachers in their institutions. On the other hand, school administrators are also expected to mentor school administrators with less experience.

Changes in the roles and responsibilities expected from school administrators necessitate changes in the educational policies of countries. Considering that school administrator selection and training policies are determined in line with the educational policies of countries, it is noteworthy that there are different policies and practices for the training of school administrators in Türkiye and Poland. Although there are no undergraduate programs for training school administrators in Türkiye today, many universities have master's programs with and without a thesis for educational administration. Postgraduate education is not an obligation for school administrators, but only provides additional points in the application process. Candidates who will apply to school administrators in Türkiye take 6 additional points for non-thesis master's degree, 8 for master's with thesis and 15 for doctorate in the field of educational administration [MEB, 2021].

In Türkiye, being a teacher is a basic requirement for school administrators and currently, the process of selecting administrators for educational institutions is carried out according to the "Regulation on the Selection and Assignment of Administrators to Educational Institutions Affiliated to the Ministry of National Education" published in 2018 and revised in 2021. In this context, although the certificate program for educational administration is an important step toward the pre-service training of school administrators, it is difficult to say that the regulation meets expectations. In Poland, it is compulsory to have a master's degree and a certificate in educational administration to become a school administrator. Therefore, there are pre-service educational administrator training programs as well as educational administration programs at the postgraduate level to train school administrators. Future school administrators are provided with two opportunities to receive the necessary management training: special training courses in educational management conducted by Teacher Training Centers and other Training Centers, or postgraduate studies at universities and other types of colleges [Dorczak, Mazurkiewicz, 2013].

Graduate training programs for school administrators are not uniform and universities have much more freedom to decide on the curriculum of graduate courses. The only regulation on course content is that they must last at least one academic year and require more than 210 hours of teaching [Dorczak, Mazurkiewicz, 2013; Centrum Edukacji Artystycznej, 2022]. In Poland, educational administration certificate programs for school administrators are provided through

many different sources, including universities, county and municipal education departments, Professional associations, and for-profit and non-profit organizations [Kontautiene, Melnikova, 2008]. However, the fact that these training programs for education managers are organized by different institutions can cause some operational disruptions. Usually, the teaching staff of such training courses includes university experts, school inspectors from local education authorities, and experienced school administrators. This means that there are no strict rules about who can teach in the courses. This can affect the quality of the training provided. Moreover, due to the freedom in designing the curricula of postgraduate studies, there can be great variation between the programs offered in terms of content, teaching methods, and distribution of hours [Dorczak, Mazurkiewicz, 2013]. In the report prepared by ORE [2013], the lack of a support and assistance system for newly appointed school administrators is another problem in Poland. Therefore, the report states that for school administrators, at least in the first year (and better in the first two or three years) of running a school, separate training should be developed, the forms, content, and methods of which must be specially adapted [ORE, 2013].

The importance of increasing the qualifications of teachers, who are one of the most important components of education systems, by supporting them both before and during the service is indisputable. In this process, qualified school administrators are needed to support the development of teachers. Research reveals that school administrators play an important role in improving teachers' professional development. Today, it is a fact that the roles and responsibilities of school administrators have changed.

When the duties and responsibilities of school administrators in Poland and Türkiye are compared; it has been observed that the duties and responsibilities for the professional development of teachers take place in both countries. The duties of school administrators in Türkiye for the development of teachers are included in the regulations as taking the necessary measures for the training and development of personnel, and carrying out the works and procedures related to candidacy and in-service training activities. In Poland, on the other hand, the duty of the school administrator is included in the Education Law as cooperating with universities to organize teaching practices at school [Kolomycew, Kotarba, 2018]. In this context, it can be said that the school administrator has duties and responsibilities for the development of both new teachers and preservice teachers who come to the school for teaching practice.

It is an indisputable fact that practice teachers have the most responsibility in the teaching practice. Although it is said that practice teachers are chosen from experienced teachers in schools, research shows that teachers who will mentor preservice teachers should undergo qualified mentoring training [OECD, 2011]. For this reason, school administrators working in practice schools should make plans for the professional development of practice teachers and organize training. On the other hand, school administrators are expected to work on the

development of preservice teachers during the teaching practice process. This is reflected in the regulations on teaching practice in both Poland and Türkiye. However, despite this, it is not possible to say that school administrators have sufficient information about their duties and responsibilities regarding teaching practice and that they maintain the cooperation process effectively.

In general, it can be said that school administrators tend to appoint the practice teacher, make an agreement with the university, and supervise the teaching practice activities in the teaching practice. This situation can be interpreted as school administrators expecting teaching practice activities from the practice teacher and they are only interested in the procedural part. School administrators are expected to work on the development of teacher candidates during the teaching practice process. This is reflected in the regulations on teaching practice in both Poland and Türkiye. However, despite this, it is not possible to say that school administrators have sufficient information about their duties and responsibilities and that they maintain the cooperation process effectively.

As a result, although there is no defect in the process of creating policies for the training of teachers and school administrators in both countries, it has been observed that there are problems in the implementation of these policies. However, an education policy that is not put into practice has no real-life counterpart. In particular, it should be taken into account that education policies affect school administrators and all policies to train school administrators affect the teacher training system. For this reason, it is necessary to analyze school administrator training systems correctly and to establish a systematic structure for certificate programs in both Türkiye and Poland. Thus, regardless of the institution they are educated in, they can receive a quality education, and by increasing their knowledge and skills, more qualified school administrators can be trained. Among the duties and responsibilities of school administrators are to work on the Professional development of teachers and to cooperate with universities in the process of teaching practice. In this context, it is very important for school administrators to cooperate with universities and organize training in line with the needs of mentors. This can be achieved through effective cooperation between schools and universities in the teaching practice process. From the point of view of Türkiye and Poland, it is seen that there is a similar situation in both countries, and the cooperation between the university and the school is carried out by individual efforts. However, it is not possible to carry out an effective cooperation process without a systematic structure.

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and to establish a systematic structure for certificate programs in both Türkiye and Poland. Thus, regardless of the institution where they are educated, it can be ensured that they receive a quality education, and that more qualified school administrators can be trained by increasing their knowledge and skills.

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