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An Overview of Teacher Education Practices: Examples from Four Countries in Three Continents

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Abstract

Twenty-first-century has come up with skills that have mandated countries to update their teacher education systems to satisfy contemporary educational needs. Therefore, it is deemed remarkable to bring a comparative perspective on how teachers are trained and the practices in teacher education in different countries to be able to recognize how contemporary teacher competencies are satisfied and examples of improving the quality of teaching. The present study attempts to make a cross-country comparison of teacher education practices in Türkiye and to address contemporary teacher education practices in three countries with reference to those in our country. Accordingly, teacher education systems in Türkiye, the United States, Germany, and Singapore are compared in terms of pre-service teacher selection, pre-service education, and professional recruitment. The findings have yielded some implications for improving the teacher education system adopted in our country. Overall, keeping in mind that no teacher education system is perfect, although the teacher education system in our country shares some aspects with those in the mentioned countries, it has severe deficiencies that need to be addressed. It is believed that the duly implementation of the decisions in the 20th MoNE council meeting and the 2023 Education Vision would encourage a desirable teacher education system in Türkiye.

Keywords: Teacher, comparative teacher education, teacher candidate, pre-service education, professional recruitment

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Introduction

It is now accepted that education is the greatest driving force for attaining prosperity. In achieving this ideal, what is expected from an education system - established and developed considering nations' unique social, economic, cultural, and political phenomena - is hidden behind its being a locomotive power raising qualified human resources (Azar, 2011). Indeed, while educational research primarily assesses the quality of education by student achievement, it would be prudent to assert that the phenomenon assessed in the background is, in a sense, teacher qualifications and competencies since the teaching profession is both the influencer of and the affected from educational outcomes (Yenel, 2021). To put it more clearly, teachers are those raised in a particular educational system and only those leading new generations to raise in that educational system with the help of their competencies (e.g., subject-matter knowledge (SMK), critical thinking, role-modeling, motivation, lifelong learning, etc.). In this sense, the teaching profession is characterized by "raising human capital" and being the most strategic part of a school system (Bursalioglu, 2019). Therefore, it should be underlined that teaching is accepted as a "professional" job despite contradictory practices in our country (Akdemir, 2013; Akyüz, 2020).

One fundamental condition for attaining prosperity and increasing the efficiency of the education system may be to employ competent teachers. Teacher quality is directly proportional to the quality of the teacher education system. In fact, it is argued that an education system is not a variable that affects school efficiency and student achievement more than a teacher education system and, therefore, training component teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000). In this sense, it is not surprising that each country attempts to design the best teacher education system according to its own cultural, social, and economic conditions and educational goals.

In general, contemporary teacher education covers theory, practice, and professional development (Randi & Zeichner, 2004). In other words, pre-service teachers are included in a formal teacher education program, receive theory- and practice-based education covering teaching-related and SMK within formal education, and continue professional development programs following recruitment. Nevertheless, the emergence and development of modern teacher education systems can be attributed to the results of many processes and include differences in practice, particularly in our country.

Today, teacher education systems with diverse practices between countries are not immune to change, development, and being influenced by each other. While teacher education aimed to raise low-status and on-the-job-trained teachers within specific patterns in the 19th century, 21st-century skills have become the leading factor in updating education and teacher education systems to meet these competencies (Tutkun & Aksoyalp, 2010). In this regard, it may be remarkable to bring a comparative perspective on how teachers are trained in contemporary education systems, to reveal the practices in teacher education in different countries, and to review examples of increasing teacher quality and to what extent contemporary teacher competencies are satisfied. Thus, the present study attempts to make a cross-country comparison of teacher education practices and to investigate contemporary teacher education practices in Türkiye.

Teacher Education in Türkiye from the Establishment of the Council of Higher Education (CHE) to the Present: Faculties of Education

In 1982, universities undertook teacher education with Legislative Decree No. 41 within the CHE, established with Law No. 2547, but teacher recruitment remained with the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) (Azar, 2011). The law also ordered

to convert 2-year teacher institutes into education academies and 4-year higher teacher education schools into faculties of education (Akyüz, 2020). In 1992, the duration of the 2-year programs was increased to 4 years, and all programs (including classroom education) were incorporated into the faculties of education (Akyüz, 2020). However, the teacher employment gap could not be closed due to the coordination issues between MoNE and universities in the 90s. Hence, the need for teachers was attempted to be met with inappropriate methods such as employing those desiring to be a teacher among all higher education graduates or employing those receiving pedagogical formation in the subsequent years (Baskan & Aydın, 2006).

Since 1997, a series of revisions has been initiated for faculties of education and teacher education, thought to be lacking in quality and quantity. Within the scope of the “Pre-Service Teacher Education Project,” launched in 1994 with the cooperation between the CHE and the World Bank, concrete steps were taken for comprehensive changes in faculties of education as a result of the joint efforts of the MoNE, representatives from faculties of education, and the CHE officials in 1998 (Azar, 2011). The changes, thought to be the most appropriate, became as follows: (1) the programs were reconstructed to prevent faculties of education from being academic units working predominantly on “basic science,” (2) funds were allocated for many students to receive postgraduate education abroad to satisfy the need for academics in these faculties (Akdemir, 2013), (3) it was attempted to pave the way for training qualified teachers having school experience along with more pedagogical formation courses by creating a practice-oriented system based on faculty-school cooperation (Baskan, 2001), (4) within the idea of increasing compulsory education to 8 years, classroom education was included as a program within the department of elementary education to train teachers to be able to teach more than one subject-matter, (5) non-thesis master’s programs (pedagogical formation programs) were offered for those graduating from science and arts programs to satisfy the teacher gap in secondary education (Abazaoglu et al., 2016). Although such a comprehensive transformation in the 90s was criticized in many aspects (Kızılcıoğlu, 2006), the deliverables of the project mentioned above continue to be the fundamental rationale of the idea of educating qualified teachers and the functioning of faculties of education.

In 2006, the relevant institutions of the CHE and the MoNE discussed faculties of education on the grounds of contemporary teacher competencies and European Union (EU) standards and implemented the following prominent changes to the curricula taught in these faculties: (1) the curricula of the programs were restructured as to include SMK, professional teaching skills, and liberal education (with increased rate); (2) faculties were granted initiative to set 25% of the courses to be taught; (3) a new course was included in the curricula, called “community service practices” to encourage students to focus on current social problems and participate in scientific studies; (4) national teacher education was attempted to shape with an understanding of educating intellectual teachers, instead of technician teachers, to adapt to the requirements of contemporary teacher education (YÖK, 2007). However, the reduction of school experience due to department administrations’ difficulty finding a practice school can be shown as a negative outcome of these changes. In 2009, the CHE amended pedagogical formation programs within faculties of education, and, interestingly, these programs are still located as a means of teacher education. When it comes to 2020, the CHE transferred its authority to regulating and developing undergraduate teacher education programs, considering the Turkish Qualifications Framework and contemporary competencies of the teaching profession. Thus, all responsibilities and authorities were granted to universities in setting courses, credits, and course

hours for undergraduate teacher education programs on the condition of ensuring teaching SMK, professional teaching skills, and liberal issues (YÖK, 2020).

With numerous changes and efforts for development, an increasing number of faculties of education still respond to the country's teacher education domain in coordination with various organizations affiliated with the MoNE and the CHE. Besides, the curricula implemented in these faculties are often structured around SMK, professional teaching skills, and liberal education together with school experience in all undergraduate teaching programs despite varying weights of course hours, credits, and contents between programs.

In the last 15 years, the project of opening at least one state university in every province has naturally increased the number of faculties of education, raising "quality" concerns in these faculties (Azar, 2011; Akdemir, 2013). As of 2021, there are 95 faculties of education in state and foundation universities, higher than the number of other faculties (YÖK, 2021), which also reveals significant figures in the numbers of those enrolled in and graduated from these faculties. The CHE data demonstrates that the number of new and total students enrolled in faculties of education in the 2020-2021 academic year was 46,631 and 210,912, respectively, while the number of staff per student became 23 in the same academic year. On the other hand, a total of 45,679 students graduated from faculties of education in the 2019-2020 academic year (YÖK, 2021). It can be sound to assert that, based on the said figures and the ever-decreasing recruitment rates, only current students and graduate pre-service teachers can be placed if faculties of education do not give graduates for ten years (Aydın, 2015, as cited in Yenel, 2021). Currently, these statistics reveal that the number of pre-service teachers in Türkiye is superior to that in many countries, but it is promising that these numbers tend to decrease in each passing academic year. The advisory decision adopted in the 19th MoNE Council on the need to reduce the quota for faculties of education and increase the number of teaching staff per student in these faculties (MEB, 2014) and the CHE's decision to set a certain exam ranking threshold to be able to enroll in these faculties in 2016 (YÖK, 2016) has contributed to the strategy of increasing "quality" in faculties of education. For example, while the number of graduate pre-service teachers was 53,395 in the 2018-2019 academic year, 45,679 students graduated from these faculties in the subsequent academic year. Likewise, while the number of students enrolled in faculties of education was 54,871 in the 2019-2020 academic year, it became 46,631 in the subsequent academic year. Yet, the number of academic staff per student in the three academic years between 2018-2021 was recorded as 31, 28, and 23, respectively (YÖK, 2021).

Teacher Education in Four Countries

Across the world, teacher education is often carried out in two stages: undergraduate pre-service education and post-recruitment professional development (Abazaoğlu, 2014), and these two stages are demonstrated as the most significant predictors of teacher quality (Işık et al., 2010). In addition to these two visible stages, teacher education appears to be a multidimensional process that covers selection, school experience, recruitment, performance assessment, and promotion (TED, 2009; Yenel, 2021). Therefore, the present study compares teacher education in four countries within its three aspects: pre-service teacher selection, pre-service education, and recruitment.

Pre-service Teacher Selection

In pre-service teacher selection, there is no selection process other than standard academic tests following high school graduation in Türkiye. Following high school, students can qualify for faculties of education by taking an exam that measures

verbal and numerical skills, applied since 1985 with the changes in scope and now called the Higher Education Entrance Examination. The latest changes in pre-service teacher selection mandate a particular threshold score for candidates to apply to faculties of education.

In the USA, states undertake teacher education, and recruitments are carried out by considering the supply-demand balance of the country (Wang et al., 2003). Despite differences in pre-service teacher selection between states, the government adopts a standardized pre-service teacher selection system. While students can be enrolled in teaching programs without no further requirements in some cases, they complete the first two years of liberal education and then be registered in professional teaching education in some other cases (Gültekin & Özenç-İra, 2019). Yet, there are specific requirements to be admitted to teaching programs available in almost half of all universities. Unlike Türkiye, universities in the USA are directly authorized to select students, but in a way similar to our country, students are expected to succeed in one or more of the Praxis I, Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency, SAT, ACT (University Level Academic Proficiency Tests) exams (Wichita State University, 2019). In addition, a high school cumulative GPA of 2.50/4.00 is the threshold score to be able to enter teaching programs, including exams measuring attitudes, skills, personality traits, and physical health tests and interviews. Finally, students applying for teaching programs are requested to submit three reference letters, one of which is from an academic in teacher education, and a letter of intent explaining why choosing the teaching program (Baskan & Aydın, 2006).

Singapore, which has achieved remarkable achievement in the PISA tests in recent years, has adopted a novel teacher education model thanks to the comprehensive reforms in education in 2009. In this model, only exceptional students with 21st-century competencies (e.g., critical thinking, technology literacy, collaboration, etc.) are admitted to teaching programs (Tan et al., 2017). At the same time, the government makes projections of teacher needs each year and announces how many pre-service teachers would be admitted to the programs for that year. Pre-service teachers, on the other hand, begin the process of becoming a teacher by taking tough exams. Despite varying requirements between programs, students must exhibit exceptional achievement in a higher education entrance exam, called Cambridge Advanced Level Examination, to be able to apply to undergraduate teaching programs (Aksoy, 2013). Candidates passing this stage are interviewed by a board of academics, school principals, and experienced teachers. In the interview, candidates' interests, desires and dispositions in teaching are tested (Goodwin, 2012). Following the exam and interview, about 10% of the applicants are admitted to teaching programs (Tan et al., 2017).

Students in Germany have to take final exams at the end of secondary education to be able to enter higher education programs (Baskan & Aydın, 2006). Those successfully passing the exams are granted a kind of high school diploma, "Abitur," and can obtain a "Hochschulreife" certificate to enroll in undergraduate teaching programs (Keçici, 2011). A standard selection and placement test does not exist in the German education system; candidates can apply individually to the universities of their choice. There are no other requirements for receiving teaching education in Germany other than the procedure mentioned above.

Pre-service Education

Two models stand out in pre-service teacher education in Türkiye. The first requires an undergraduate degree, as mentioned above. The other is that the candidates graduating from a faculty of arts and sciences are included in a pedagogical

formation certificate program that covers courses on professional teaching skills. Candidates admitted to faculties of education generally take courses on SMK (40-45%), professional teaching skills (30-35%), and liberal arts (15-20%) for four years, with partial changes between programs. In 2020, universities were authorized to designate their curriculum in faculties of education, keeping the above rates (YÖK, 2020). Besides, pre-service teachers attend classes in public or private schools within school experience in their last year and take part in various social responsibility projects within the Community Service course. Under the coordination of the relevant instructor and master teacher, they follow the lessons in the first semester and teach the lesson in the second semester. The instructor and master teacher are responsible for tracking and reporting the progress of pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers who successfully complete their programs are entitled to a lifetime diploma in teaching.

Despite varying between the states and universities, pre-service teachers in the USA start with courses on professional teaching skills to last 2-3 years following a 2-year program on SMK. While pre-service teachers to teach at primary and secondary schools are required to have a bachelor's degree, those to teach at high schools must hold a master's degree in teaching (Baskan & Aydın, 2006). In this journey, the pre-service teachers attend courses on professional teaching skills and intense practice teaching in K-12 schools affiliated with universities or local education committees during the last two years. The first three terms are held with school experience (practicum), and the final term of the mentioned two years is internship (student teaching). In the first three semesters, pre-service teachers engaging in activities, such as observation, data collection, assistant teaching, and material preparation, move on to teaching and leading students in the last semester. With great importance for pre-service teachers, these activities are performed, monitored, evaluated, and reported under the supervision of master teachers and instructors. Apart from this model, there is also an alternative certification program for those with a bachelor's degree from other programs. At the end of the 6-8 weeks of education at universities or accredited educational institutions, candidates are recruited and are expected to fulfill the relevant professional requirements in the next 2-year period. In most states, pre-service teachers satisfying the relevant requirements of the program graduate with a bachelor's degree and a two-year Initial Teaching Certificate (Baskan & Aydın, 2006).

The only authorized institution for teacher education in Singapore is the National Education Institute (NEI) within the Nanyang Technological University. Pre-service teachers, supported with satisfying scholarships, attended courses on educational sciences (45%), SMK (50%), and liberal arts (5%) during 4-year undergraduate teaching programs (Göçen-Kabaran & Görden, 2016). All courses in this program consist of stages, called academic units or modules, and the curriculum is determined by the Ministry of Education and the NIE (Yenel, 2021). All academic studies are shaped around educational sciences, program courses, SMK, principles of education, practice, language acquisition and academic speaking/writing skills, group work, research, and elective courses (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2018, as cited in Göçen- Kabaran & Görden, 2016). The curriculum also includes a Multiculturalism course to improve pre-service teachers' ability to respect and adapt to different cultures, and they have the opportunity to study abroad for an academic term within the country's own international exchange program (Saracaloğlu & Ceylan, 2016). In addition, all pre-service teachers have to do internships in practice schools for 1-10 weeks (Gültekin & Özenç-İra, 2019). Besides this type of undergraduate teaching program, there are two other types of pre-service education. The first is a 2-year program designed to raise a kind of technical teacher. Candidates to be enrolled in this program are required to have an

A (Advanced) score from Cambridge General Certificate of Education (GCE) or a certificate from a polytechnic college. Those admitted to the program must take all teaching skills and practice courses, courses on SMK courses, as in the undergraduate programs. The second program is the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) program for those with an undergraduate degree from other programs. This program, offering a model dedicated to educational sciences and practice, lasts one year. Any certificate from these three models is deemed sufficient for permanent recruitment and has lifelong validity (Gültekin & Özenç-İra, 2019).

In Germany, one needs to receive education for 7-9 semesters to teach in lower/upper secondary schools (Viebahn, 2003). In the Bologna process leading to standardization, it can be asserted that the first group of teachers receives undergraduate education, and the second group receives graduate education (Cortina & Thames, 2013). Germany applies a two-stage teacher education model. At the first stage, pre-service teachers take courses on SMK, emphasized in the German education system, and professional teaching skills, the intensities of which vary between programs. For this reason, the share of educational sciences and school experience in this first stage does not exceed 5% (Cortina & Thames, 2013). While pre-service teachers to be recruited for academic high schools (Gymnasium) attended more courses on SMK and are expected to complete more credits, while courses on professional teaching skills are more included in the curriculum for those to teach in lower level schools (Cortina & Thames, 2013). To complete the first stage, pre-service teachers have to take the First State Examination (Erste Staatsexamen), which assesses students' knowledge of educational sciences and SMK. Those who succeed in this exam move on to the second stage, where they will practice teaching intensely for 18-24 months (Maandag et al., 2007). At this stage, the state is obligated to place pre-service teachers in a school where they can do paid internships (Referendariat). A mentor teacher is assigned to each pre-service teacher to monitor and report their progress. At this stage, much more intense than the first stage, pre-service teachers are included in all school processes, from observing classes to teaching. The contents and methods to be applied at this stage are strictly followed by a state institute (Studienseminar) (Ostinelli, 2009).

Recruitment

While the major recruiter of pre-service teachers in Türkiye is the MoNE, they may be employed by private schools. The MoNE carries out the recruitment of pre-service teachers according to the pre-determined quotas every year. While recruiting pre-service teachers, the MoNE considers the scores of the candidates on a nationwide test, called the Public Personnel Selection Examination (PPSE), which measures knowledge of liberal arts, teaching skills, and SMK, and their results from an oral examination that has been implemented since 2016. Starting from the one getting the highest score on the PPSE, the pre-service teachers three times as much as the quota opened are invited to the oral exam where they are assessed in reasoning ability, communication skills, knowledge of current developments, and representation ability. Those successful in the oral exam are deployed in a 24-week paid "Pre-service Teacher Orientation" process covering in-service training with in- and out-of-school work accompanied by an experienced mentor teacher. The orientation ends with a performance evaluation of the candidates' school activities. At the end of the second year of recruitment, the candidates need to take the "In-Service Teacher Qualification Exam," which covers mostly legislation and professional teaching skills. Regardless of their exam results, all candidates are invited to an oral exam covering similar topics in the first oral exam. Candidates

with an arithmetic average of 60 points in the written and oral exams are then qualified as in-service teachers with a civil servant status (Yılmaz, 2017).

In the United States, states and school districts are directly involved in recruiting teachers. Pre-service teachers receiving the initial teaching certificate apply to schools with vacancies with a portfolio containing reports of their activities during their undergraduate education and reference letters. A board consisting of school administrators, teachers, and school stakeholders decides on the recruitment as a result of a series of interviews and evaluations of the portfolios. Recruited teachers start teaching with a one-year contract, and their activities in the relevant academic year are closely monitored (Fidan, 2021; Yenel, 2021). Teachers completing this process are granted a permanent teaching certificate in some states, while some states mandate teachers to attain other standard teaching certificates. For example, some states expect teachers to earn a master's degree within ten years, while others require teachers to take the Teacher Licensing Exam (TLE) for permanent recruitment after their initial certification expires. The TLE consists of Praxis I (academic skills exam), Praxis II (SMK exam), and Praxis III (in-class performance exam) stages administered by the Educational Testing Service, which is one of the most accredited assessment institutions in the world (Gültekin & Özenç-İra, 2019).

Singapore follows a “scrutiny” policy in teacher recruitment as well as in selection. At the first stage, only the applications of pre-service teachers in the first 30% by academic achievement are accepted. In the second stage, candidates are taken for an examination testing their liberal knowledge. Candidates who pass this stage are included in a series of interviews before a board of school principals, education experts, and experienced teachers. The interviews are aimed at testing the personality, intelligence, attitudes, and behavior styles of the candidates, as well as their teaching skills. In the last stage, pre-service teachers are deployed to paid in-service training within the NIE for professional development. Teachers completing the in-service training are recruited to schools to serve for four years compulsorily (Wang et al., 2003; Göçen Kabaran & Görgeç, 2016).

In Germany, pre-service teachers passing the first stage take the Second State Examination (Zweites Staatsexamen) which tests their teaching skills. In fact, this is not a one-stage exam but is based on their average scores during their internships (pre-service teachers collect scores from the evaluation of the mentor teacher and other education experts, from a thesis prepared on the subject matter, from an exam including questions on legislation, pedagogy, and methodology, and from two sample lectures and lesson plans evaluated by a committee) (Baskan & Aydın, 2006). Those successfully passing the exam are duly certified and recruited as civil servants (Beamte auf Probe) to vacancies by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Cortina & Thames, 2013).

Discussion and Conclusion

Today, countries shape their expectations of future generations according to their own economic, social, and cultural structures through education policies. It is inevitable that one end of these expectations concerns teachers and teacher qualifications because what kind of education system will lead to raising individuals with 21st-century skills is deemed directly proportional to what kind of teacher education system raises teachers (Abazoğlu et al., 2016). Yet, it is not prudent to assert that the teacher education system of any country is perfect because the political, environmental, and technological transformations/difficulties of the countries inevitably force the teacher education systems to be reformed, be influenced by other countries, or be completely changed (Yenel, 2021). However, as summarized above, it is essential to make a cross-country comparison and draw

conclusions for our country to make a reasonable evaluation of the transformations and current status of our 150-year-old teacher education journey. Therefore, this study discusses teacher education in Türkiye by comparing current practices with those in the USA, Singapore, and Germany. The practices employed in the countries and discussed in this paper are limited only to those as of 2021.

While standardized tests are administered in pre-service selection in the mentioned countries, the USA and Singapore also make verbal/psychological evaluations to measure pre-service teacher candidates' disposition toward the profession, attitudes, and behaviors. A similar practice is carried out in our country after pre-service teachers graduate from the undergraduate program. Practices in the said countries can prevent undesirable situations in the following years (e.g., dropping out of the education/profession), as well as favoring those with a greater disposition to the profession and a higher readiness to fulfill relevant requirements. The substantial part of the criticisms on this subject in our country is related to the fact that pre-service teachers are selected only based on their scores on academic tests and not considering their any other characteristics (e.g., personality traits, attitudes, interests, and physical characteristics) (Işık et al., 2010; Akdemir, 2013). Another disadvantageous aspect of outdated selection may be that it disrupts the supply-demand balance and leads to yielding too many pre-service teachers to be recruited. Despite following a decreasing tendency with the council decisions of CHE and the MoNE, the number of undergraduate students in teaching programs in our country is far above the current policy demand. Current statistics show that about 5-10% of pre-service teachers are recruited by the MoNE every year (MEB, 2018), indicating that Türkiye hosts an army of teachers who are unemployed or employed in other jobs. Finally, such a selection system still encourages the understanding that "If somebody cannot find a job, they will be a teacher!"

In the mentioned countries, the curricula of the programs are determined by different institutions and practiced in different ways in pre-service teacher education. Yet, it can confidently be stated that pre-service teachers in all countries compared need to take undergraduate courses on SMK, professional teaching skills, and liberal arts. The major difference between the countries stems from school experience practices that pre-service teachers participate in during undergraduate education. In the USA and Singapore, school experience practices are considered key, and pre-service teachers carry out practices in a way to participate in all school processes under tight supervision throughout their education. Even in Germany, the dual system of teacher education obliges pre-service teachers to spend the last two years in schools. Yet, school experience in the curriculum, within the scope of faculty-school cooperation introduced with the 1998 reform in Türkiye, does not go beyond being a practice performed a few hours once or twice a week. The programs in faculties of education sometimes have difficulty finding schools due to the lack of coordination between the CHE and the MoNE. Moreover, the poor interests and shortcomings of the mentor teachers and program instructors in the schools may cause pre-service teachers to ignore the school experience and start their in-service career inexperienced (Işık et al., 2010; Akdemir, 2013). Even teachers certified with the pedagogical formation certificate programs do not even participate in this inadequate practice. The thought of complementing the school experience through the pre-service teacher orientation program after the recruitment may bring adverse pedagogical consequences.

The government is authorized to recruit teachers in public schools (central appointment), but pre-service teachers apply directly to schools for recruitment in the USA. Similarly, pre-service teachers need to take a standardized written exam for recruitment in these countries, except the USA. In our country, relevant

statistics demonstrate that, varying by program, pre-service teachers had an average of 29-54 correct answers in the SMK test of the mentioned examination (ÖABT), which consists of 75 multiple-choice questions, in 2019 (ÖSYM, 2021). This finding raises concerns about the quality of teacher education in Türkiye. On the other hand, pre-service teachers are taken for one or a series of oral examinations following the written tests in the countries compared. At this stage, pre-service teachers' attitudes, skills, professional knowledge, and representation abilities, as well as their portfolios within pre-service education and school experience and assessments of their practice teaching by their mentors and instructors, are also evaluated by education experts in the USA, Singapore, and Germany. Although it is claimed that pre-service teachers are assessed in reasoning ability, communication skills, knowledge of current developments, and representation ability in the oral exam in Türkiye, it is a matter of debate how these assessments are made in the interviews with the candidates that do not exceed five minutes in practice.

Overall, keeping in mind that no teacher education system is perfect, although the teacher education system in our country shares some aspects with those in the mentioned countries, it has severe deficiencies that need to be addressed. It should be noted training competent teachers starts with selecting pre-service teachers considering their physical, psychological, and socio-cultural characteristics eligible for the teaching profession. Moreover, redesigning the selection processes for pre-service education and recruitment considering contemporary teacher competencies and the needs of the country seems to be one of the urgent reforms for teacher education in Türkiye. Finally, teaching practices and school experience that are often complemented during the orientation stage may have adverse consequences for in-service teachers. It is believed that the duly implementation of the decisions in the 20th MoNE council meeting and the 2023 Education Vision would alleviate the mentioned limitations and encourage a desirable teacher education system in Türkiye.

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