

# **Analysis of the Problems Encountered in Education of Teachers and Solution Recommendations in Accordance with the Opinions of Faculty of Education Students\***

Gülsün Şahan

*Bartın University, Faculty of Education, Department of Education Management, TURKEY*

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The purpose of this study is to put forth the problems encountered in education of teachers and solution recommendations in accordance with the opinions of faculty of education students. Within this framework, the opinions of 182 first grade students from the departments of classroom, social sciences, science and mathematics teaching at Bartın University, Faculty of Education were obtained in writing through questionnaires which list open ended questions. The opinions then were sorted by their frequencies and the findings obtained were interpreted. According to the students, one year internship period for the new teachers is insufficient, the profession of teaching is held in low regard by the society, faculties of education is crowded, and applied courses are offered insufficiently and these are among the problems encountered in teacher education. On the other hand, offering hands-on (applied) education at the faculties of education, requiring oral interviews in addition to written KPSS examination (Public Personnel Selection Examination) in teacher assignments, accepting students to the faculties of education by applying aptitude, knowledge and skills tests, ensuring those who love the profession of teaching works at this field and offering courses which aim increasing school experience of the teacher candidates for longer periods are listed among the measures that need to be taken by the students.

*Keywords:* teacher education, education of teachers, faculty of education, formation.

Correspondence: Gülsün Şahan,  
Bartın University, Faculty of Education, Department of Education Management, Bartın,  
74100, TURKEY  
E-mail: gulsunsahan@hotmail.com  
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## INTRODUCTION

In this globalizing world in which we are experiencing many changes in science and technology, the importance of education is growing and it is necessary that well-equipped teachers are trained for high-quality education. In our country, Darülmüallimin-i Rüşdi (School of Teacher Education) was founded in 16 March 1848 to train teachers (Gürüz, 2008). The training and employment of teachers, a critical element of education, is one of the outstanding topics discussed in education (Üstüner, 2004, cited in Safran et al., 2014). Teacher education has experienced many changes until present day. Whilst teachers were trained at teacher education schools, institutes of education and high teacher schools in the past, in 1982 the job of training teachers for pre-school, primary and secondary schools was handed to faculties of education. In addition, teachers are also trained through pedagogical formation programmes intended for the students of faculty of sciences and literature. In many countries, this teacher education issue is seriously discussed. For example, in Japan, since the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, teacher education has been carried out by the universities and requires an undergraduate diploma for pre-school, primary and secondary school teaching and graduate diploma for high school teaching (Taşdan, 2011). Finland puts significant emphasis on teacher education. Those who want to be a teacher have to be evaluated through a set of selection systems including a written examination, followed by an aptitude test, individual interviews and group discussions. And the number, type and content of these examinations change in each university (Ekinci and Öter, 2010). Teaching is a respected profession and is the most popular profession among high school students. However, only one out of every ten candidate could be a teacher. Universities are relied on for the selection and education of high-quality teachers (Reinikainen, 2012). In addition, with a law in 1978, all teachers except pre-school teachers have to have a graduate degree (Özcan, 2013). Studies carried out in our country in recent years to increase the quality of teachers and the training of teachers from same sources instead of different ones are positive developments (Çimer, 2010). However, since innovation policies towards the needs of the country are not followed, problems have been encountered by the end of 1990 s. Many departments, without considering the fields needed, have been opened in the faculties of education, and teachers more than enough were trained in some fields and need for teachers in other fields arose (Battal, 2003. cited in. Çelikten, Şanal, Yeni, 2005). In the faculties of education that have been opened until present day, many prospective teachers have been trained through graduate education and pedagogical formation. The job guarantee of teaching profession made it an attractive profession. In our country, faculties of education have not been the only source of providing education in the field of teacher education. Faculties of Sciences and Education also trained teachers with their pedagogical formation programmes. And faculties of education supported this practice with the pedagogical formation courses they opened (Gurbetoğlu, 2010). In recent years, while there are 300 thousand pre-service teachers waiting to be assigned, this number is growing rapidly with the pedagogical formation programmes opened. In many countries, teacher education is handled with permanent methods rather than daily changing policies. The fact that Japan is still training teachers with the regulations they have made in 1950s whilst our country is continuously implementing new practices indicate that urgent measures shall be taken to find permanent solutions for these problems that increase every passing day. Lately, the Council of Higher Education announced that they cancelled the Pedagogical Formation programme yet after just one month, in 4 May 2012, they decided to continue to implement the programme. Whilst in the past the students were admitted to the programme based on their grade point average, later ALES (Academic Personnel and Postgraduate Education Entrance Exam) scores was included in the admission to the programme. Announcements were made for the pedagogical formation programme to be opened in 2013 September-October and

whilst initially a quota for 20 thousand people was announced, later the number was taken up to 30 thousand. These practices indicate that the Council of Higher Education and the Ministry of National Education do not have a serious policy on this issue (Haberahval, 2015). Teacher education which has been subject to many changes in our country, is said to include more than undergraduate education. And with content-empty pedagogical formation programmes provided in only 28 weeks downgrades the quality of education (Turan and Cemil, 2012: 79). The same issue is highlighted in a similar study and it is indicated that whilst the Ministry of National Education and the Council of Higher Education are doing studies to increase teacher qualities, on the one hand, they are opening the way to be a teacher for everyone through the pedagogical formation programmes opened (Azar, 2011). It is seen that specific standards are not set in teacher education until present day and different practices are used through daily decisions. It is necessary that Council of Higher Education and the Ministry of National Education should set standards in teacher education and use successful examples in teacher education.

The purpose of this study is to analyse the problems encountered in teacher education in our country and the solutions to these problems based on freshman pre-service teachers' opinions. To this end, answers to the following research questions are looked for:

- 1- What are the problems encountered in teacher education in our country?
- 2- What are the solution suggestions towards teacher education?

## **METHODOLOGY**

This section presents information regarding the research design, participants, data gathering tool and data analysis. This study was a case study, one of qualitative research patterns. Case study is used to reveal the existing cases as they are and enables to analyse an uncontrolled case or fact based on the questions "how" and "why" (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008).

### **Participants**

In the study, opinions of 182 freshmen students studying at the departments of primary education, social sciences, science and mathematics teaching at Bartın University, Faculty of Education were collected through semi-structured interview questions. While selecting the research group, convenient sampling method was used. Instead of working with small groups from the selected 4 departments, it was decided to include all freshman students in these programmes in order to see how they see this issue and whether they are aware of the existing problems. Students were primarily informed about the study and were asked to give their opinions in writing after the examination. Examination answer sheets were used as the data collection tool.

### **Data gathering and analysis**

The data were collected after the final examination in 2014 January. Pre-service teachers were informed about the study and asked to answer the questions prepared. They were asked to provide their answers in writing. The collected data were analyzed and similar opinions were grouped together. While preparing the questions, the relevant literature was reviewed and the draft questions were written. Questions were selected and organized based on expert opinions. The prepared questions were then examined by an assessment and evaluation expert. Pre-service teachers were asked two questions on the problems in and solutions to teacher education.

In analysing the data collected, "descriptive analysis" and "content analysis", which are among qualitative data analysis techniques, were used. With the

descriptive analysis, the frequency and per cents of the codes were given and with the content analysis, first common concepts were found from the collected data and then, based on these concepts, the data was reorganized, and themes were set (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). All the data were examined and themes were formed based on codings. The answers to the questions were analysed and the problems encountered in teacher education and possible solution suggestions were given as two separate topics and shown in tables based on their frequencies.

## RESULTS

### Problems encountered in the field of teacher education

The opinions of the pre-service teachers in the Faculty of Education on the problems encountered in teacher education were analysed, and the collected findings were analysed. The findings from the data regarding the problems are given in Table 1.

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that the problems encountered in teacher education are listed according to their frequencies and that the questions are listed under 11 topics. The first item on the top of the list is "Insufficient internship period". That the value attributed to the profession is falling, that there are high number of students in the faculties of education and there is a lack of applied education, that students are choosing the teaching profession by chance, that the course load is high and that students can not concentrate on branching out are listed among the problems by the students. In addition, the lack of technological materials in the faculties of education, the fact that teacher violence is still continuing in primary and secondary schools are also listed as factors effecting pre-service teachers negatively. Also, the fact that students, who start undergraduate education, do not have the awareness of teaching profession, that it is the result of Public Personnel Selection Examination that counts after graduation rather than students' success during the undergraduate education in the faculty, that the only criteria in teacher assignments is this Public Personnel Selection Examination results, that this Public Personnel Selection Examination is based on memorizing and tests and creates pressure on the students are listed among teacher education problems.

**Table 1.** Problems encountered in teacher education based on student opinions

Problems	f
Insufficient internship period	27
Value attributed to the profession,	14
High number of students,	12
Lack of applied education in the faculties of education,	11
The way students choose the teaching profession,	7
The fact that students do not concentrate on branching out,	7
The lack of materials in the faculties of education,	7
The fact that teacher violence is still continuing	6
The fact that students do not have the teacher awareness,	5
The fact that teacher assignments are only based on Public Personnel Selection Examination results,	5
The pressure of Public Personnel Selection Examination and the fact that examination make candidates to focus o memorizing and tests	3

Among student opinions, that one-year internship period for the teachers who start the profession is insufficient and that the value attributed to teaching profession is low are listed among teacher education problems. The findings indicate that the number of students in the faculties of education are high and the applied courses are insufficient. Students indicate that university selections are made consciously, and the students who are accidentally admitted to a teaching department do not have interest towards the profession and do not have the necessary awareness of the profession. That students can not concentrate on the branches they choose and the lack of materials cause to problems in teacher education. It is seen that students think that the teacher assignments based on Public Personnel Selection Examination makes them concentrate on memorizing and theoretical information.

When the findings on the problems encountered in teacher education are evaluated, it is seen that students think that the number of students in the faculties of education are high, that the course materials are insufficient and the applied courses and the internship periods are not sufficient. That the status of teaching as a profession is low, that there are students who are admitted to the faculties of education by chance, the course loads of the lecturers are high and students can not concentrate on branching out are listed among the problems. It is seen that such factors as pre-service teachers' not having the necessary awareness of teaching profession, and the teacher violence that is still continuing in primary and secondary schools effect students negatively. In teacher assignments, the fact that Public Personnel Selection Examination is what counts important and that it is mainly based on memorizing and tests create pressure on students and all these factors effect teacher education negatively.

### **Suggestions towards teacher education**

Secondly, the opinions of the students in the faculty of education towards the measures to be taken in teacher education are examined and the relevant findings are presented in Table 2.

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that students' suggestions are grouped under 17 topics. Applied education should be provided in the faculties of education, an oral examination should be made after Public Personnel Selection Examination in teacher assignments, a talent, knowledge and competence examination should be made while admitting students to the faculties of education, only those who love teaching as a profession should be in this profession, there should be 2-3 years of internship period after the teachers are assigned to the profession, school experience should last 2-3 years are among the suggestions students made. Apart from these suggestions, there are others such as there should be sufficient technological equipment in the faculties of education, at certain intervals, teachers should be subject to certain examinations after they are assigned to the profession, there should be more frequent supervisions for teachers after they are assigned, there should be classes towards body language and elocution and towards world knowledge in the faculties of education, different activities should be carried out in the faculties of Education, there should be a close relationship between Faculties of Education and the schools where pre-service teachers practice, retired and experienced teachers should train interns, there should be courses and seminars for teaching outside the class hours, the entrance scores to the faculties of education should be higher, master's degree should be compulsory.

**Table 2.** Students' suggestions on teacher education

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>f</b>
Applied education should be provided in the faculties of education,	47
An oral examination should be made after Public Personnel Selection Examination in teacher assignments,	43
A talent, knowledge and competence examination should be made while admitting students to the faculties of education	28
Only those who love teaching as a profession should be in this profession	21
There should be 2-3 years of internship period after the teachers are assigned to the profession,	20
School experience should last 2-3 years,	20
Teachers should be subject to certain examinations after they are assigned to the profession	16
There should be more frequent supervisions,	15
There should be classes towards body language and elocution,	12
There should be courses for world knowledge,	9
The number of admitted students to the Faculties of Education should be less,	9
Different activities should be carried out in the faculties of Education,	8
There should be a close relationship between Faculties of Education and the schools where pre-service teachers practice	8
Rretired and experienced teachers should train interns	7
There should be courses and seminars for teaching,	7
The entrance scores to the faculties of education should be higher,	6
Master's degree should be compulsory	4

The suggestion on the top of the list is that applied education, involving experiments, observations and research, should be provided in the faculties of education which train teachers whilst the second one on the list is that an oral examination should be made after Public Personnel Selection Examination in teacher assignments. The third suggestion is that a talent, knowledge and competence examination should be made while admitting students to the faculties of education. It is indicated that it is not possible to understand students' skills, talents, elocution or whether they could do this profession with only with a selection that is based on test and that teacher selection is important. According to another opinion, only those who love this profession should do it. After one is assigned as a teacher, s/he serves as an intern for one year. Some of the students think that this one year internship period is not enough and this internship period should be 2-3 years after one is assigned to this profession. Some of the students, on the other hand, indicate that the school experience classes during the undergraduate education should be 2-3 years long.

Students think that the technological equipment in the school should be sufficient. As for the students, at certain intervals, teachers should be subject to certain examinations after they are assigned to the profession, there should be more frequent supervisions for teachers after they are assigned, there should be classes towards body language and elocution and towards world knowledge in the faculties of education. Another suggestion is that the number of students in the faculties of education should be decreased. It is believed that in classrooms with 40-50 students,

it is not possible for each student to make practice, to express his/her opinion and make his study in a 3-hour course in a week.

There are also suggestions about carrying out various activities in the faculties of education. That there should be a close relationship between Faculties of Education and the schools where pre-service teachers practice, that retired and experienced teachers should train interns, there should be courses and seminars for teaching are outstanding thoughts. In addition, courses and seminars for teaching are opportunities that could help both assigned and pre-service teachers to develop themselves. The idea that the entrance scores to the faculties of education should be higher is among the suggestions for educating teachers with higher intellect and level of knowledge. This could help to prevent the idea of "if you can not be anything else, you can be a teacher" among students with low entrance examination scores. Finally, the suggestions of the pre-service teachers on master's education is striking. When students' suggestions on teacher education are evaluated in general, it is seen that there are such suggestions as the entrance scores to the faculties of education should be higher, a talent, knowledge and competence examination should be made while admitting students to the faculties of education, only those who love teaching as a profession should be in this profession, there should be more opportunities for applied education, school experience should last 2-3 years, sufficient technological equipment should be provided in the universities, there should be classes towards body language and elocution, there should be courses for world knowledge, different activities should be carried out in the faculties of Education, there should be courses and seminars for teachers outside the class hours and master's degree should be compulsory. Such measures as carrying out an oral examination after Public Personnel Selection Examination in teacher assignments and 2-3 years of internship period after the teachers are assigned to the profession should be taken. Apart from all these suggestions, other suggestions are at certain intervals, teachers should be subject to certain examinations after they are assigned to the profession, there should be more frequent teacher supervisions, there should be a close relationship between Faculties of Education and the schools where pre-service teachers practice, retired and experienced teachers should train interns.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The foundations of teacher education in Turkey was laid in 1848 and after a series of changes, today, it is the Faculties of Education that educate teachers. Today, there are 75 faculties of education educating teachers. Besides, graduates of the faculty of sciences and literature can have the right to be a teacher after they have the pedagogical formation education from the faculties of education. The Council of Higher Education opened many faculties of education and whether there is sufficient number of lecturers or not is not taken into account. The student quotas are increased, evening education programmes are allowed and thus, we have been inadequate to educate high-quality teachers (Bilir, 2011). In this study, it is understood that the number of students in the faculties of education is high. In a different study, it is indicated that that there is not a cooperation between the Council of Higher Education and the Ministry of National Education in accepting students to the faculties of education and that the necessary number of teachers should be determined by the Ministry of National Education and accordingly, the number of students to be accepted to the Faculties of Education should be determined by the Council of Higher Education (Baysan et al., 2011). It is understood that the teacher assignments are made based on the results from Public Personnel Selection Examination and that this Public Personnel Selection Examination is based on memorizing and tests and this creates pressure on the students. Other studies also support these results.

According to this study, whilst it is the faculties of education that educate the teachers to respond to the needs of the present day, the quality of these teachers is tried to be measured with the Public Personnel Selection Examination which is the examination before the assignment to the profession. Various factors in the faculties of education such as the financial resources, materials and equipment, social and cultural activities, and career development opportunities effect the quality (Yüksel, 2013). In Göktaş et al.'s study they conducted in 2005, it was found that among 51 Faculty of Education, there were no computer labs in 4 four of them, in 25 Faculty of Education the number of students per each computer was over 40 and in 7 Faculty of Education, this number is over 100 per computer. It is indicated that this case is not much different today, and that the physical conditions and materials and equipment used in education are below the desired level (Özoğlu, 2010). Students believe that the practice and internship periods are insufficient. In one of Kavcar's (2002) studies, he mentioned the problems in application and indicated that school experience classes were good practices because they focus on practice yet because the number of students to attend to these classes is high, this practice could not be carried out in a healthy way, and particularly in big cities, high number of pre-service teachers going to school cause to troubles both in administrative and educational functioning (Özoğlu, 2010). It is understood that these studies support the collected findings.

The low status of teaching profession and the fact that there are students who accidentally choose teaching profession effect the profession in a negative way. It is indicated that there should be students who love children, value them, who are happy to work with children and help them and who consciously choose this profession should be admitted to the faculties of education (Özcan, 2012). As for Safran et al. (2014) such things as the rapid increase in the number of students as of 1950s made it a necessity to meet the teacher need through different sources and this effected the status and quality of the profession negatively. It is seen that similar results are found in these studies and it is believed that those who do not have interest in the profession and do not love the profession can not do it. Measures shall be taken towards improving the quality of teaching profession. For example, if the standards while entering the profession are increased, it can be said that the society will rely more on teachers and their opinions regarding teachers' right to higher salaries will improve. If the teachers are not improved, the educational policies in other fields will fail as well (Carnegie Forum on Education and Economy, 1986, cited in. Mustan, 2002: 125). The higher course loads of the lecturers effect the student quality negatively. This study focused on this issue and found that whilst it was 20 students per each lecturer in many other faculties according to the 2008-2009 academic year Student Selection and Placement Center's data, the same number in the faculties of education was around 32 (Özoğlu, 2010).

It is also understood that the fact that pre-service teachers do not concentrate on branching out, that they do not have the awareness of the profession and the teacher violence they encounter at school effects students negatively. It is indicated that the applied courses should be more in the faculties of education, and that school experience should at least be 2-3 years. In a different study, it is stated that all kinds of education and instruction activities in teacher education should be applied teaching and the teaching environments should be organized accordingly (Özcan, 2012). It is obvious that classes towards elocution and using body language as well as world knowledge in the faculties of education and various activities to be carried out for the students will effect student quality positively. In a different study, it is indicated that there is a need for activities that will improve pre-service teachers' World knowledge and showcase their skills in different areas however, because students are stuck with courses, homework and examinations, not many alternative are offered for the students. It is also indicated that rather than improving the

quality of teacher education system, the works of the Council of Higher Education is towards opening the doors of teaching, which has comparably higher employment opportunities, to other unfunctional faculties (Gurbetoğlu, 2010). Students in the faculties of education should be provided with world knowledge which will help them understand and interpret the cultural, social, political issues around the world, comprehend democracy and develop appropriate behaviors, have an environmental awareness and adapt the global world's conditions (Özcan, 2012).

It is necessary to make an oral examination after Public Personnel Selection Examination. In a different study supporting this result, it is indicated that the student selection to faculties of education and teacher education system should be revised and that world culture, professional knowledge and school experience should be focused on more in teacher education classes, and at the end of the process, students should have applied examinations where they can make a live performance (Başkan, Aydın, Madden, 2006). In a different study, it is indicated that considering the number of candidates, infrastructure and ethical issues, pre-service teachers thought Public Personnel Selection Examination was fairer and the need for an evaluation arises with this examination (Safran et al., 2014). In another study, the negative effects of Public Personnel Selection Examination is indicated and it is stated that after graduation, the most important condition for assignment in teaching is the Public Personnel Selection Examination and the content of this examination prevents educating generations that think, question, produce and criticize; and therefore, students start preparing for this Public Personnel Selection Examination as of their first year in university, improve their test solving skills but do not have time to develop their teacher identity (Taşdan, 2011).

It is indicated in this study that 2-3 years of internship period after the teachers are assigned to the profession, making certain examinations after teachers are assigned to the profession, more frequent teacher supervisions, close relationship between Faculties of Education and the schools where pre-service teachers practice, training of interns by retired and experienced teachers will be useful. And the idea in another study which states that the Ministry of National Education and faculties of education should be in communication in teacher education, the criteria for teacher education and lecturer education should be revised and intern teacher education should be reorganized and in doing so, the academic staff should be used (Türer, 2006) support the results in this study. Prospective teachers should also complete a master's education. This practice, which was implemented before and stopped later, will improve teacher quality. In 1997, Secondary School Teaching non-thesis master's programme was put into practice in teacher education. The period of this education was planned as 3 years and students who completed their major area education in the faculties of science and literature and other relevant faculties were accepted to the programme. However, in 2010 this programme was abolished and instead pedagogical formation practice was put into practice (Ünal, 2014). Master's education, which is compulsory in teacher education in Germany, will be an important step in the development of teachers in our country as well (Sözen and Çabuk, 2013).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Courses in the faculties of education should be carried out in theory and practice.
2. School experience classes should be extended to a longer period and a close relationship should be established with the schools where pre-service teachers practice.
3. The number of admitted student to the faculties of education should be decreased and a special selection examination should be made.
4. The technological infrastructure in the faculties of education should be improved.

5. The content of the Public Personnel Selection Examination should be changed and an additional oral examination should be made.
6. The number of courses, conferences and seminars in the faculties of education should increased.

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