

Personnel Development Practices in Turkish Education System

Tuncay Yavuz Ozdemir

Faculty of Education, Firat University, Department of Educational Sciences, Turkey

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Abstract

Nowadays everything develops and changes very quickly and sustainability of organizational goals will be possible only when personnel can keep up with these changes. From administrative aspect it is important to enhance personnel's potential and prompt them to achieve organizational goals. Personnel development is a process which influences and develops personnel skills, attitude and knowledge level and it is highly important in educational organizations as well as in other organizations. The objective of this study is to analyse policies of Ministry of National Education for personnel development since the foundation of Turkish Republic and provide concrete proposals for the people and institutions who direct educational policies and creating scheme of education. Findings yielded from literature review have been reported. The findings indicate that the objective in I. Maarif Congress in 1921, Maarif Council or National Education Councils since 1923 and Development Plans is to enhance quality of education. In service trainings have been held by Ministry of National Education with the aim of improving personnel. With the help of National Education Councils and Development Plans, decisions will become more effective and universities will provide cooperation during in service trainings, thereby developing personnel.

Keywords: human resources, personnel development, in service training

1. Introduction

Organization need to keep up with changes around them so as to survive. Input and output of educational organizations is people and therefore, it is very crucial for them to keep pace with change. Rapid changes in science and technology, improvements in educational programmes and change of expectations due to social needs made it necessary for educational organizations and decision makers to take action. In this regard it is important that educational organizations should keep up with changes and developments in all fields and personnel should sustain their personal and professional development.

In this study activities with the aim of preparing personnel for the changes in the history of Turkish education system have been analysed. Activities that Ministry of National Education (MEB) has carried out from the proclamation of the republic up to now and its effectiveness has been studied to this end.

Education has been the first and most significant issue for Republic of Turkey that was struggling to cope with devastating effects of WWI and the war of independence. Therefore, in 1924 John Dewey (Ata, 2001) and in 1925 Alfred Kuhne (Akdag, 2008) were invited to Turkey to analyse vocational and technical education. Dewey and Kuhne examined Turkish education system and submitted a report to Ministry of National Education. Heyet-i Ilmiye meetings were held between 1921 and 1926 so as to improve education in terms of quality and quantity. In these meetings, it was acknowledged that education is the most crucial factor in founding an independent and national state and creating a dynamic and modern society (Cetin, 2003). For these purposes, periodical development plans and National Education Councils were held. Some of the radical changes in Turkish education system are as follows:

The Law 430 on "the Unification of Education" (Tevhid-i Tedrisat) in 1924 started the period of change in Turkish education system. This law has two characteristics: It democratizes education system and puts secularism into action. Maarif Institution (Maarif Teskilati) was founded with Law 789 enacted on 22 March 1926.

During republican period educational meetings were held under the name of Heyet-i Ilmiye and Egitim Sûrasi (Council of Education) in order to improve education. Some educational issues were discussed and basic principles were laid down in these meetings. Four Heyet-i Ilmiye meetings were held. First one was in 1921, the second was in July 1923, the third was in April 1924 and the fourth was in December 1925-January 1926. However, after the Head Council of Education and Morality was founded in 1926, meetings began to be held under the name of National Education Councils under this council's responsibility. Since the first National Education Council in 1939, 19 Councils have been held up to now. Various issues, including educational programmes, teacher training, structural arrangement of education and functional arrangement have been discussed and resolved. Their influence on education has been observed.

In the first years of republic, Latin alphabet was adopted in 1928 so as to extend education in larger areas, increase literacy, make education easier and turn Turkish into a common language. Thus, with the

adoption of new alphabet, literacy rate suddenly decreased from 10% (in terms of Ottoman Turkish) to zero (Binbasioglu, 2005). Therefore, Ministry of National Education struggled to improve education since the first years of republic. In this regard, besides increasing literacy rate, building schools and providing schools with necessary equipment, training teachers has also been important.

2. Teacher Training

In the first years of republic the priority was to train teachers who are competent enough to lead education according to the needs of society and the time. When we look at the history of Turkish education system, we see that teachers are trained in primary teacher training schools, village institutes, higher teacher training schools, training institutes, training institutes lasting two years and finally faculties of education lasting four years. Primary teacher training schools inherited from Ottoman period were revised according to the needs of Turkish national education system and trained teachers during first 50 years of republic. In these primary teacher training schools, focus of education was on field knowledge, general knowledge and vocational education. In 1940 village institutes were founded with Law 3803 (Dursunoglu, 2003; Akyuz, 2013; Papadopoulou & Yirci, 2013; Aydogan, 2000).

With the foundation of village institutes, training of teachers and primary school inspectors officially started. Theories of pedagogy were combined with practice in village institutes. Therefore, teachers here learned theories through experience. In 1954 village institutes were united with primary teacher training schools (Arslan, 2012).

Whereas teachers that would work in primary schools were trained in village institutes and primary teacher training schools, teachers that would work in high schools were trained in Istanbul higher teacher training school until 1959. Due to the increase in population, there was a plan to open other schools similar to Istanbul higher teacher training school. However, since these schools failed to achieve their goal, they were closed at the end of 1970s (Binbasioglu, 2005).

In 1926-1927 secondary teachers training school (Orta Muallim Mektebi) was founded with the aim of training teachers that would serve as teachers of Turkish language in high schools. These schools set ground for training institutes and students here graduated after two years of education to become a teacher. Following year, namely in 1928, courses of pedagogy were added and the school was moved to Ankara. Period of education in training institutes were gradually increased up to three years and then four years. Other disciplines in addition to Turkish language were opened and teachers that Turkish education system need trained here. After 1982, this institution was bound to universities.

To train teachers of primary school in 1974-1975 within primary teacher training schools two-year training institutes were opened (Ozturk, 2005). In 1982, they were turned into college of education and bound to faculties of education.

Since 1982, task of training teachers has been on faculties of education (Duman, 1988). Students who prefer faculty of education in their first ten choices while applying for university are granted scholarship by Ministry of National Education, thereby enhancing quality of teachers (MEB, 1989).

Since 1977 faculties of education in Turkey have been restructured and quality has been important in training teachers. After a change in the system, graduates from faculty of arts and sciences with non-thesis master's programme began to work in high schools (Azar, 2011). In 2009-2010 Board of Higher Education (YOK) decided to close non-thesis master's programmes and started pedagogical formation certificate programmes (Ozoglu, 2010). Since then teachers that would work in primary schools have been trained in faculties of education while teachers in high schools have been trained in pedagogical formation certificate trainings.

3. National Education Councils

These are broad meetings in which Turkish education system is discussed and crucial decisions are made. Decisions are mostly academic and suprapolitical decision which are related to education system. Since they are not legally binding, political power is free to practise these decisions or not. Actually these vital decisions in meetings became ineffective as they are only proposal and not legally binding. In 1921, these meeting were held by Heyet-i Ilmiye under the name of Maarif Congress. Till 1939, they were held three times (MEB, 1995). Up to now nineteen meetings have been held.

When we analyse the decisions made by Heyet-i Ilmiye, we see an effort to set occupational standards in the first years of republic so as to train enough teachers with an increase in quantity and quality of teacher training schools (Eraslan, 2004). In the six National Education Councils between 1939-1957 there were such proposals as improving Istanbul higher teacher training school to enhance quality of education, opening another higher teacher training school in Ankara, arranging training institutes and higher teacher training school according to the needs and planning training of technical personnel beforehand. In National Education Councils in following years the goal was to extend education across society and standardise and enhance the quality of

teachers.

4. Reflections of Educational Policies on the System

In Turkish education system professional development of school administrators, inspectors and teachers have been centralised since 1960. (Eurydice, 2010). In service trainings are held by governorships in provincial organizations whereas they are held by MEB department of in service training central organization (Sisman, 1999). Since 2006 with the help of video conference, etc. in service trainings have been held in electronic media (Bumen, Ates, Cakar, Ural ve Acar, 2012). Objective of in service training is to develop personnel in a long time in an environment putting personnel in the centre (Guskey 2000, 16). It was stated that these trainings were held without considering the needs of teachers according to the foresights of MEB (Gokdere and Cepni, 2004).

Ministry of National Education initiated School Based Professional Development (OTMG) project in 2002. This project provides a road map for the teachers who wish to develop themselves and create their own development model (MEB, 2008). In 2007-2008 240 teachers participated in pilot scheme of the project and it proved to be successful. However, the project could not be extended across country (Bumen et al. 2012).

There are also non-governmental organizations which are influential in developing quality and competency of teachers in Turkish national education system. For instance, Teachers Academy targeted 100000 teachers for its five-year project under the name of “Ogretmenin siniri yok” (There is no limit to teach). In this project teachers are provided with trainings on the subjects such as, communication skills, classroom management and assessment and evaluation (OSY, 2014). After MEB and Teachers Academy signed a cooperation protocol in 2012, it was decided that 1000 administrators participate in an in service education seminar which takes place in three stages and 130 hours.

“Head council of education and morality teachers’ portal” provides teachers with activity and plan examples, material sharing and up-to-date information about education programmes, thereby enabling them to achieve professional development (TTKB, 2010).

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study has been carried out as a literature review and it has aimed to analyse personnel development activities in Turkish education system and effectiveness of these activities. At first, how teachers were trained and met needs in Turkish education system has been indicated. We see that there has been a constant change in training teachers according to the needs since republican era. Today teachers are trained in faculties of education and pedagogical formation certificate programmes. However, we cannot say that teachers are trained with an analysis of current needs in Turkish education system. It is necessary that teachers are trained competent enough to meet the needs of the time after the need of country is revised. Thus, teacher training activities must be revised in Turkish education system.

National Education Councils are held with broad participation of internal and stakeholders of education but decisions taken in these meetings are not binding. This may be the result of process that makes these meetings ineffective. Therefore, it is crucial that both Ministry of National Education and Government should take these decisions into account and swiftly put them into action.

In Turkey Ministry of National Education adopts central administration and therefore, it is responsible for the development of educational personnel. We see that the priority is to train educational personnel competent enough to keep up with the time since the 20th century. As a result of central administration of Ministry of National Education, in service activities cannot achieve the expected quality (Pehlivan, 1997; Ozdemir & Yirci, 2015; Seferoglu, 2001; Kaya et al., 2004).

Models from other countries should be integrated and connected to the culture. Without this cultural integration, effective practices imported from other countries will only be imitations. Therefore, they will not help personnel in the education system. Last but not least efforts to train and employ personnel and develop them through in service training should be revised considering the needs of the time.

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