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An Evaluation of the Systems of Transition to Secondary Education in Turkey

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the systems of transition to secondary education that have been practiced in Turkey to place students to secondary education institutions and to put forth to what degree these systems conform with the goals in Ministry of National Education (MoNE) 2023 Vision Document. In the study, the lessons in the systems of transition to secondary education that have been in practice so far are assessed with regard to distribution of questions, weight coefficients, the factors used in exam practices and evaluations, the grade levels of exams and years. The study employs the method of document analysis, which is a qualitative method. The data obtained were analyzed through content analysis. It was found out that though there is not a difference in the total number of questions in the transition to secondary education examinations through the years, the number of lessons that the students are responsible for increased. The numbers of questions in the Math, Science and Turkish lessons have reduced in the recent years, but their weight coefficients are still higher. The students were subjected to relative evaluation system except for the examinations of Transition from Primary to Secondary Education (TEOG). All the examinations were carried out at eighth grade Except for Placement Test (SBS). MoNE have reduced the number of questions in Social Studies lesson as well as its weight coefficient in evaluation system. MoNE included English lesson in the last three central transition systems and Education of Religion and Ethics lesson in the last two central transition systems. The questions of these two lessons were based on interpretation. This shows that MoNE tends to develop higher order thinking skills rather than knowledge level in the transition examinations. In the Entrance to High Schools Examination, put into practice in 2018 by MoNE, the obligation to participation to central examinations was abolished. The results of the study reveal that MoNE tries to increase content validity through holding students responsible for more lessons in the systems of transition to secondary education.

Key words: Transition to secondary education, Document analysis, Content analysis, Evaluation

Introduction

In every country, education institutions arise as the outputs of social needs. Education institutions need to choose their students when the demand is more than the offer. The system of transition to secondary education in Turkey is an example of this case, which is also similar to the cases across the world. It is well known that successful students are placed to distinguished schools after passing through an elimination system with other students in transition to secondary education. This elimination system is based on central examination in countries such as China, Japan, South Korea and U.S.A while it is based on school grades and teachers' opinions in such countries as Finland and Germany (Emin, 2018). A number of factors such as the country's regime, population and education culture play roles in transition to secondary education.

The practices of transition to secondary education came in sight after World War II. Following this war, the countries attached importance to science and technology, and colleges were established with secondary education in order to raise qualified populations. The successful students in primary education were placed to these colleges based on the criteria of academic achievement to cultivate them as science and technology literature individuals. The reflection of this case started in Turkey in 1955, when the high schools which were offering education in foreign languages selected their future students (Güven, 2018). Those schools, named as Education Colleges then, were renamed as Anatolian High Schools (AHS) in 1975. Later in the Seventh National Education Council, held in 5-15 February 1962, it was decided to establish Science High Schools

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(SHS). Based on this ruling, secondary education institutions started to accept students based on academic achievement criteria. The first Science High School was established in Ankara in 1964 and these schools have been accepting students since then (Gür, Çelik & Coşkun, 2013). Science High Schools accepted students through a two-phase examination until 1988 and after that date, they accepted students through a single-phase examination. After 1995, Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools (ATTHS) also started to accept students through central examinations and students were centrally placed to high schools until 1998 under the name of Science High Schools/ Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools (SHS/ATTHS) examinations.

In 1998, obligatory eight-year primary education started in Turkey, and the examinations of entrance to Anatolia High schools after the primary education were abrogated and the examinations were held after lower secondary education (upper elementary education then) for all education institutions. In that year, all examinations of transition to secondary education were combined in a single examination, named as Secondary Education Institutions Students Selection and Placement Examination (MoNE, 2002). As the name of this examination was too long, it was named as Entrance to High Schools Examination (LGS). In 2003, Social Sciences High Schools were established and accepted students through central examinations, and the system had to be renewed as the school types increased. MoNE accepted students to secondary education institutions through LGS until 2004, and in that year, it introduced Secondary Education Institutions Examination (OKS). With OKS, it was aimed to combine all transition to secondary education institutions examinations under a single examination. Thus, all examinations of Police College, private education institutions, free boarding education and scholarship were included to OKS except for military school examinations (MoNE, 2005). Acceptances to secondary education were carried out through this system until 2007-2008 academic year.

Acceptance to Secondary Education Institutions changed again in 2007 with the introduction of Placement Examination (SBS) (MoNE, 2007). The reason for this change was to include students' academic achievement in schools to the evaluation system in transition to secondary education. SBS involved a joint evaluation of central SBS scores and students' grade point averages. In line with this, students had a Secondary Education Placement Score (OYP), based on percentages of students' SBS central exam scores obtained in sixth, seventh ad eight grades and percentages of grade point averages the students got from their schools. The students were placed to secondary education institutions using the OYP (MoNE, 2009). Yet later on MoNE changed the system to some extent through canceling the central examinations in the sixth and seventh grades and implemented the central examination only in the eighth grade (MoNE, 2010; MoNE, 2013a).

Later on, MoNE introduced the system of Transition from Primary to Secondary Education (TEOG) in 2013 in order to lessen the need for out-of-school instruction institutions (such as private courses). TEOG brought along a number of radical reforms. The list of rationales in this change included reinforcing the link among students, teachers and parents, getting teachers to be more active in the education process, centralizing the school and thereby lessening the need for out-of-school institutions, ensuring simultaneous enactment of curricula across the country, increasing students' commitment to school, enabling evaluation of the process rather than making a single examination, monitoring students' learning outcomes objectively, and eliminating the impossibility of compensation caused by using one single examination (MoNE, 2013b). As another change, MoNE started to restrict quotas in the classes based on the types of high schools. Accordingly, the classes in Anatolia and Science High schools could not be over 30 and this figure was 34 for Vocational High Schools (MoNE, 2013c).

In 2018, MoNE abrogated TEOG system and introduced Entrance to High Schools Examination System (LGSS). With LGSS, the obligation for students to take central examination has been removed. In this system, there are two ways to place students to secondary education institutions. The first one is central placement and the second one is local placement. In central placement, students are placed to Science High Schools, Social Sciences High Schools, Project High Schools and Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools based on their scores on central examination (MoNE, 2018a). In local placement, the types and quotas of schools are determined in line with secondary education registration area, which is formed based on students' residential address. The placement of students in a registration area is planned to be carried out in accordance with the criteria of residential address, the amount of time the students had in the lower secondary schools in that area, preference priority, grade point averages, the ratio of attendance and absenteeism, and age. Placement of students to the schools that are accepting students through local placement is performed based on quotas announced by provincial or district national education directorates. Entrance to High Schools Examination (LGSS) is practiced in two sessions. The exam includes 90 questions in total. The verbal part, which is the first session, includes 50 questions and students are allocated 90 minutes. The second session is quantitative and includes 40 questions to be answered in 60 minutes. There is a 45-minute break between the two sessions. The lessons included in the verbal and quantitative parts and the distribution of questions are presented in Table 1 (MoNE, 2018b).

Table 1. Lessons in LGS and Question Distribution

Part	Lesson	Number of questions
Verbal	Turkish	20
	Turkish Revolution History and Kemalism	10
	Education of Religion and Ethics	10
	Foreign Language	10
Quantitative	Math	20
	Science	20

The experts claim that the questions in LGS, the first one held in 2018, were harder than the questions in TEOG and the students were short of time in the examination (Ekinci & Bal, 2019). The experts maintained that the questions in LGS measured higher order cognitive skills and other various skills and this increased selectiveness (Güler, Aslan & Çelik, 2019). It is seen that these expert opinions conform with the statement in the test rubric prepared by MoNE, which is: "The questions are prepared in order to measure students' skills of reading comprehension, interpretation, deduction, problem solving, analysis, critical thinking, scientific process skills and other similar skills" (MoNE, 2018c).

Regarding transition between the school levels, in the 2023 Vision Document, MoNE aims to lessen students' need to examinations based on competition and election in the medium-term plan. To realize this goal, MoNE aims to structure two main pillars. These elements and their contents are given in Table 2 (MoNE, 2019).

Table 2. Pillars of Transition between School Levels in MoNE 2023 Education Vision

1st pillar	Reducing the disparities between schools and regions
	Monitoring all students' learning outcomes
	Forming the structures and processes to monitor student achievements
	Structing school development as the primary axis
	Reinforcing vocational and technical education and thereby reducing the demand for examinations
	Supporting schools with unfavorable conditions
2nd pillar	Developing flexible models for exam-free placement
	using central exams only for specific purposes and for certain children and schools with specific orientations in the medium term.

Within the pillars provided in Table 2, it is aimed to revise the aims, contents, question types of all exams in the education system as well as aims to enhance learning. MoNE aims to prioritize questions to measure reasoning, critical thinking, interpretation, forecasting, and other similar skills through the future arrangements. Accordingly, MoNE shares example questions every month with stakeholders before examinations in order to eliminate the uncertainties about existing practices in the new examination system, introduced in 2018. Besides, grade point averages are also included in the calculation of placement score in order to increase students' commitment to school. MoNE thinks that the need to private teaching courses and private instruction intuitions (which were closed) stem from multiple choice examination system and argues that the results obtained from the central examination were not good enough when the private teaching courses were open and common, namely the presence of private teaching courses does not increase quality of education. Due to these reasons, in the medium term, MoNE plans to reduce the need to central examinations and increase the students' access to learning support services. To realize these goals, it is needed to centralize students in education, enrich learning environments with various mediums such as home, school, digital and social media, and form an integrated learning ecosystem (MoNE, 2019).

Purpose and Significance

İn terms of student potential, Turkey corresponding to the total population of many countries, has a high number of students reaching approximately 18 million (MoNE, 2019b). Approximately 5 million of these students are at secondary level. What's more, over one and a half million students transition from primary to secondary education every year. Moreover, with the increase of compulsory education to 12 years together with 4 + 4 + 4 in 2012, almost all of the primary school graduates were enrolled in secondary schools. Therefore, the need for

the elimination system is inevitable in transition to secondary schools with the number of students growing every year without wasting. From a broad perspective, it is obvious that the problems in the transition to secondary education will affect the large masses negatively. This situation reveals the importance of the research.

The above is the main reason for this line of research mentioned in the transition to secondary education system implemented in Turkey to identify the positive and negative practices and to note the new system will be implemented and measures should be taken to uncover. This study aims to evaluate the systems of transition to secondary education that have been practiced in Turkey to place students to secondary education institutions and to put forth to what degree these systems conform with the goals in MoNE 2023 Vision Document. In the study, the lessons in the systems of transition to secondary education that have been in practice so far are assessed with regard to distribution of questions, weight coefficients, the factors used in exam practices and evaluations, the grade levels of exams and years. The results of the study are expected to facilitate the general evaluation of the researchers by revealing a general perspective of the Transition to Secondary Education Systems. The limitation of the study is the transition system to five secondary schools which have been implemented since 1998.

Method

Research Model

The study employs document analysis, which is a qualitative method. Document analysis includes the analysis of written materials involving data as to phenomena of research. It is carried out in five steps, which are explained below based on Yıldırım and Şimşek (2005).

1. *Accessing the documents:* The study involves comparison of the systems of transition to secondary education that were employed in Turkey. To this end, it was decided to examine application, preference and placement guidelines of the systems of transition to secondary education (LGS, OKS, SBS, TEOG and LGSS). The guidelines of LGSS, TEOG, SBS and OKS were accessed on the website of MoNE. As the guideline of LGS was not accessible, the data obtained from MoNE Journal of Notifications Guideline for Central Examination system were used.

2. *Checking originality:* The application guidelines obtained online are the guidelines available on the official website of MoNE. The data for LGS was obtained from official website of MoNE Journal of Notifications. Therefore, the documents are original documents of the institution which has been performing the transition to secondary education.

3. *Understanding the documents:* Based on the data obtained from the documents, the question distribution in the examinations, weight coefficients of the lessons, categories related to the practice and evaluation of the examinations, grade level and years of the examinations, number of sessions in the examinations, the types of secondary education institutions accepting students with central examinations were compared.

4. *Analyzing the data:* The documents were subjected to content analysis in line with the aims of the study.

5. *Using the data:* The data obtained from the documents are accessible on the official website of MoNE. Besides, the data do not include information to identify any person, groups or institutions.

Instrument

The application, preference and placement guidelines of the systems of transition to secondary education (OKS, SBS, TEOG and LGSS) were used as data sources in the study. In educational research, textbook OKS, curriculum instructions, lesson units and other official documents can be used in document analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). As the guideline of LGS was not accessible, the data obtained from MoNE Journal of Notifications (2002) were used.

Data Analysis

A content analysis was carried out on the data. In the research studies with documents as the single data source, the data is analyzed comprehensively. Content analysis is carried out in these studies as follows (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005):

1. Selecting a sample from the data of analysis: As the guidelines could be analyzed as a whole, no sample was selected in the current study.

2. Forming categories: Categories reflecting the aim of the study were formed, which are secondary education institutions accepting students through central examination, question distribution in the examinations, weight coefficients of lessons in the examinations, factors in the implementation and evaluation of the examinations, grade level and years of the examinations and the number of sessions in the examinations.

3. Identifying analysis unit: The characters of analysis unit in the study are secondary education institutions accepting students through central examinations, name of the system, name of the lesson, question distribution, weight coefficient, duration of the examination, number of sessions, number of exam days, evaluation type, grade point average, and absenteeism.

4. Quantification: The data were not quantified in the current study. The numbers used in the findings are descriptive.

Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, the competence, credibility and accuracy of the results are taken into consideration instead of validity and reliability (Krefting, 1991). In terms of the competence of the researchers, the researchers have sufficient competence on the subject and have already worked on the subject. In terms of credibility, document review studies go through expert review (Creswell, 2003). The study was reviewed by four field experts. The themes and categories of the study were reorganized in line with the opinions of the experts. For the accuracy of the results, the data obtained from the study were taken from the original sources of the subject.

Findings

The findings obtained from application guidelines of the systems of transition to secondary education are presented in the form of tables below. Admission of students to high schools through central examinations in Turkey has been in practice for nearly 20 years.

Central examinations implemented by MoNE in the last 20 years, their dates and the types of secondary education institutions accepting students through these examinations are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Central Examinations implemented by MoNE in the last 20 years and types of schools accepting students through central examinations

Types of Schools / Examination Name	LGS	OKS	SBS	TEOG	LGSS
Science High Schools	X	X	X	X	X
Anatolian High Schools	X	X	X	X	-
Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools	X	X	X	-	-
Social Sciences High Schools	-	X	X	X	X
Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools	X	X	X	X	-
Police College	-	X	X	-	-
Anatolian Religious High Schools	X	X	X	X	-
Private High Schools	X	X	X	X	-
Multi-program Anatolian High Schools	-	-	-	X	-
Project High Schools (All High School Types)	-	-	-	-	X

As evident in Table 3, the high schools that are accepting students through central examinations are nearly the same in every transition system. With OKS, Police College accepted students through central examination but it ended with TEOG. In the last system, MoNE labels schools that are accepting students through central examinations as project schools. With the system of TEOG, which started in 2013, Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools are closed. With TEOG, MoNE combined all vocational and technical high schools (Anatolian Technical High Schools, Anatolian Vocational High Schools, Anatolian Land Registry and Cadastre Vocational High School, Anatolian Agriculture Vocational High School, Anatolian Meteorology Vocational High School, Anatolian Hotel Management and Tourism Vocational High School, Anatolian Communication Vocational High School, Vocational High School of Justice, Anatolian High School of Business, Anatolian Health Vocational High School and Health Vocational High School) under the name of Vocational and Technical

Anatolian High School. With TEOG, Anatolian Religious High Schools were removed from Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education and transferred to Directorate General for Religious Education in MoNE.

The question distributions in the examinations are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The distribution of questions in the examinations within the transition to secondary education

Exam	Turkish	Math	Science	Social Science	English	Religious Ed.	TOTAL
LGSS	20	20	20	10	10	10	90
TEOG	20	20	20	20	20	20	120
SBS	23	20	20	20	17	-	100
OKS	25	25	25	25	-	-	100
LGS	25	25	25	25	-	-	100

MoNE has reduced the number of questions of Turkish, Math, Science and Social Sciences by time. Instead of those reduced questions, questions of English and Education of Religion and Ethics were included. There are not significant differences in the number of total questions. Yet, MoNE tends to increase the number of lessons to be included in central examinations. In the last three systems, MoNE placed students to secondary education institutions based on a single score type.

Table 5 shows weight coefficients of lessons in the systems of transition to secondary education.

Table 5. Weight Coefficients of Lessons

Exam	Score Type	Turkish	Math	Science	Social Sciences	English	Religious Ed.
LGSS		4	4	4	1	1	1
TEOG	YEP	4	4	4	2	2	2
SBS	OYP	4	4	3	3	1	-
OKS	MF	3	4	4	1	-	-
	TM	3,5	3,5	2,5	2,5	-	-
LGS	MF	3	4	4	1	-	-
	TM	3,5	3,5	2,5	2,5	-	-

*Placement Score (YEP), Math Science (MF), Turkish Math (TM), Secondary Education Placement (OYP)

MoNE has reduced the number of questions of Turkish, Math and Science in central examination (Table 4). Despite this, MoNE has kept the weight coefficients of these lessons high. In central examinations, both the number of questions and weight coefficients of Social Sciences have reduced. In the last two systems, number of questions and weight coefficients of Social Sciences, English and Education of Religion and Ethics are the same.

The factors related to examination practices in the transition to secondary education are given in Table 6.

Table 6. The factors related to examination practices

Exam	Taking Exam	Number of Exam days	Number of sessions	Duration (mins)
LGSS	Optional	1	2	155
TEOG	Compulsory	2	6	240
SBS	Compulsory	1	1	120
OKS	Optional	1	1	120
LGS	Optional	1	1	120

With changes on central examinations, MoNE has increased the number of exam days and sessions. The time allocated to each question has also increased by time. In the system in which schools that are accepting students through central examination are limited, MoNE made taking the central exam optional. However, in the systems in which all high schools are accepting students through central examination (SBS and TEOG), taking the central examination was compulsory.

Implementation dates and grade levels of examinations in the transition to secondary education are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Dates and grade levels of central examinations

Exam	Year	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade
LGSS	2018-	-	-	X
TEOG	2013-2017	-	-	X
SBS	2010-2012	-	-	X
	2008-2009	X	X	X
OKS	2004-2007	-	-	X
LGS	1998-2003	-	-	X

As given in Table 7, MoNE generally places students to secondary education institutions through central examination held in eighth grade. The only exception to this was SBS system, implemented in 2008-2009 academic year. In these years, central examinations were held at 6th, 7th and 8th grades. As a result of these examinations, placement scores were calculated based on certain percentages.

The factors related to evaluation of examinations in the transition to secondary education are given in Table 8.

Table 8.The factors related to evaluation of examinations

Exam	Evaluation type	Grade Point Average	Behavior scores	Absenteesim
LGSS	Relative	-	-	Effective
TEOG	Absolute	%30	-	Effective
SBS	Relative	%25	%5	Effective
OKS	Relative	-	-	-
LGS	Relative	-	-	-

MoNE has brought along different practices in each system in the evaluation of central examinations. In the recent years, school grades have also paid role in the calculation of placement scores. However, MoNE takes school grades into account in the system in which students are obliged to take central examinations. MoNE generally prefers relative evaluation in calculation of exam scores. As seen in Table 8, absolute evaluation was used only in TEOG. Students absenteeism has also been considered in the last three transition systems.

Results and Discussion

MoNE tends to not change the schools that accept students through central examinations in the transition to secondary education. However, it is tried to reduce the number of these school types and gather them under a single roof. For instance, a number of different vocational and technical high schools were combined under the name of vocational and technical high school (Table 3). Furthermore, with the LGSS examination, in practice since 2018, vocational and technical schools are described as project schools and it is aimed to increase the quality of vocational education. With this practice, it is thought that the students would be encouraged towards vocational education. This change can be regarded as a step towards raising the quality standards in vocational and technical schools and encouraging capable students towards vocational education, which is one of the goals stated in MoNE 2023 Vision Document (MoNE, 2019). The significance attached to vocational education conform with the goals in National Education Quality Framework and 10-year development plan (MoNE, 2014, Ministry of Development, 2013).

MoNE increased the number of lessons that the students are responsible in the central examinations for the transition to secondary education in the course of time. This means that the students are evaluated through more lessons in the selection for placement to secondary education institutions (Table 4). It can be argued that this case is positive with regard to content validity of examinations. Herewith increasing the number of the lessons that students are responsible for in the central examinations, students' commitment to school would also increase (Taşkın, 2016). In this regard, asking questions within the scope of the 8th grade achievements in LGSS reduces both the students' commitment and coverage validity. Besides, in accordance with the constructivist curricula, which have been enacted since 2005, the number of lessons is increased in the examination so as to take students' individual differences into account with respect to multiple intelligences (Balcı, 2007). Despite the increase in the number of lessons in the examinations, the numbers of questions in total have not changed to a great extent. In TEOG, the number of lessons the students were responsible for increased to six and the number of total questions increased to 120. Yet in the current system, LGSS, the

number of lessons the students are responsible for remains as six while the number of total questions reduced to 90 (Table 1). The studies on the difficulty level of the examinations suggest that as MoNE reduced the number of questions, the questions are more about measuring higher order cognitive skills (Ekinci & Bal, 2019; Güler et al., 2019; Taşkın, 2016). In line with this, while the questions are easier in the compulsory central examinations, the optional examinations include more questions measuring higher order cognitive skills and therefore they are harder (Eş, 2005; Güler, 2010). Particularly in TEOG, a number of students ranked first in the examinations, base points of the schools increased extremely, point differences lessened to a great extent among many schools, which put forth that easier questions reduce validity and cannot distinguish between successful and unsuccessful students (Atila & Özeken, 2015; Görmez & Coşkun, 2015). This case necessitates higher order questions to be asked in the central examinations.

MoNE has reduced the number of questions of Turkish, Math and Science in central examination for transition to secondary education; however, it has increased the weight coefficients of these lessons (Table 5). The reason for higher weight coefficients of particularly Math and Science may be related to the low scores the Turkish students got from international assessment examinations such as PISA and TIMMS. The scores the Turkish students got from math lesson, in particular, were lower than the mean score of all participating countries (MoNE, 2007; Taş, Arıcı, Ozarkan & Özgürlük, 2016). As for social sciences lesson, MoNE not only reduced the number of its questions in the central examinations but also reduced its weight coefficients. In addition, MoNE included English lesson in the examinations in the last three transition systems and Education of Religion and Ethics in the last two ones. In TEOG, the weight coefficients of Social Sciences, English and Education of Religion and Ethics were half of the weight coefficients of Turkish, Math and Science lesson; however, in LGSS, the sum of the weight coefficients of the three lessons do not equal to Turkish, Math or Science lessons. It is thought that this strategy is a result of the failure in the international examinations, particularly with higher order questions (MoNE, 2016, Taş et al., 2016). In addition, this situation makes students insensitive to courses with low coefficient of weight (Özdaş, 2019). Besides, the transition from traditional education system based on learning system to constructive strategies based on research and questioning enabled through the changes in curricula as of 2004 is in parallel with this case (Çepni & Çil, 2009). This shows that MoNE tends to develop students' higher order cognitive skills as opposed to comprehension level knowledge. The questions based on interpretation in Social Sciences, Education of Religion and Ethics and English lessons confirm this tendency (Taşkın & Aksoy, 2018a). The main reason why students find the questions in the examination in which the quota is limited (particularly in LGSS examinations) may be the necessity for higher average difficulty and distinctive level (Güler et al., 2019). Because these exams aim to identify students who have top-end proficiency.

MoNE tends to prolong the duration and days of the examination with every change in the transition systems (Table 6). This strategy aims to lessen students' exam anxiety and excitement (Buldur & Acar, 2019; Görmez & Coşkun, 2015; Taşkın, 2016). In the last examination system, LGSS, the exams were held in two sessions and there were breaks between the sessions (MoNE, 2018b). Yet, despite all these arrangements, there are studies in the literature which argue that even the presence of exams is a source of stress for students (Demir & Yılmaz, 2019; Öztürk & Aksoy, 2014; Taşkın & Aksoy, 2018b; Zorlu & Zorlu, 2015). Accordingly, with LGSS system, MoNE made taking central examination optional for students by introducing secondary education placement system based on student's place of residence as well as getting scores from central examinations.

In the systems of transition to secondary education in which taking central examinations was compulsory (TEOG and SBS), the achievement in the previous education level was included in the evaluation as all the schools accepted students through exam scores. As seen in Table 5, students' grade point averages and behavior grades were taken into consideration in SBS system. However, in LGS, OKS and LGSS the students were not obliged to take central examination and the grades they got in primary education were not included in the evaluation. Through making central examination optional and reducing the number of high schools that accept students with the scores from central examinations in LGSS, MoNE aims to eliminate the quality discrepancy among the schools (MoNE, 2019; Table 1).

In most of the systems of transition to secondary education, the central examinations were held only in eight grade (Table 7). Only in SBS system, all the students in the middle school (lower secondary school) took central examinations at 6th, 7th and 8th grades. However, SBS was in practice only for two years. It was abrogated because the children experienced exam anxiety in their very early ages, the children of those ages could not comprehend the examinations, they caused negative pressure on students, the need for private teaching course was increasing every year (MoNE, 2019; Öztürk & Aksoy, 2014). However, the summative evaluation held only in the graduation year is contrary to the view in constructivism that process oriented evaluation is more

important that summative evaluation. In addition, it is inevitable that system changes made in a short time will cause unrest among the stakeholders (Eroğlu & Özbek, 2017).

The systems of transition to secondary education mostly made use of relative evaluation (Table 8). Only TEOG system evaluated students through absolute evaluation. In addition, correction factor (wrong answers subtract correct answers) was not implemented in TEOG (Taşkın, 2016; Taşkın & Aksoy, 2018a; Taşkın & Aksoy, 2018b). In the studies in the literature, not applying the correction factor in the examinations is criticized because it reduces the reliability of the exams and increases the chance factor (Gür et al., 2013; Şad & Şahiner, 2016). This may be the reason why correction factors are put back in practice in LGSS system.

Recommendations

It is recommended that, in the future systems of transition to secondary education, MoNE should consider the opinions of students, teachers, administrators, parents and academics who are stakeholders of the education system and form the central placement practices which are stable. The examinations should be of high reliability and students, parents and teachers should clearly know about the content and form the examinations. The central examinations should not be in a state of constant changes and the stakeholders of education should not experience negative cases due to surprise changes every now and then. The Directorate General for Measurement, Assessment and Examination Services, which is affiliated to MoNE, should take more active roles and prepare immediate action plans to eliminate the problems experienced in central placement practices without delay to prevent bigger problems. It is advised that the reforms practiced in vocational and technical schools to encourage students towards these schools should be reconsidered given the number of students preferring these schools. Besides, in order for MoNE to troubleshoot the problems in the transition to secondary education, it should put the targeted pillars of transition between school levels, as stated in 2020 Vision Document, into practice swiftly. It is also advised that the evaluation system in the examinations should be based on formative rather than summative evaluation. Similar research studies can be carried out on the transition to higher education and stable arrangements can be put into practice based on those research results.

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