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Nikos P. Terzis (ed.)

European unification and educational challenges in the Balkans

Education
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Chapter 4

Innovation in Higher Education and Vocational Education

Evaluation of the Practice Level of Quality Assurance Standards at Vocational and Technical Education in Turkey

Yavuz Erisen
Mehmet Sahin

This paper aims to evaluate the practice level, the effectiveness and significance of the standards currently in use for teacher training process by ECIS, EU and USA, under 15 dimensions and 135 articles adapted to teacher training system in Turkey. The research has been carried out using survey method at the teacher training faculties in Turkey. It is based on the views obtained from 285 lecturers and 318 prospective teachers. The results show that teacher training programs fall severely short of the standards related to student admission, the philosophy, objective and content of the teaching program, teaching-learning strategies, equality and diversity of the program, coordination of the program, safety and health care service, personal educational needs, counselling and psychological support service, human resources, library and technology centre, facilities and equipment, financing, curriculum assessment and development, faculty administration, and "effective teaching competence" that the lecturers should bear and transfer to the prospective teachers.

Keywords: Quality assurance, Standards, Educational quality, teacher training

Introduction

It is known that current institutions for vocational and technical education in Turkey "are faced with such problems as not being able to follow up change and development needed by globalization and new world order, not being able to keep up with technology, lack of tool and material, personnel and resource, scarcity of activities of scientific researches, some personnel within the system deprived of required qualifications and inadequate educational programs in order to realize the required objectives (Dağlı 1996, 23; Mahiroğlu, 1996). The studies of improving quality that exhibit such positive impacts as increase in the importance of quality given by the personnel as a result of applications, and decrease in costs in spite of benefits obtained provide people with an access into a permanent environment of working in order to serve the idea of quality improvement (Özcan 1997), 35). The institutions of education not being able to catch quality will lose their effectiveness in both scientific and in the development of the country. The basis of forming a system of quality consists of determining the standards concerning the components of the system and evaluating the system depending on the determined standards. In this study, an evaluation was conducted according to the current status of the standards determined (Erişen, 2001) at the faculties training teachers for vocational and technical education in Turkey.

1. MATERIAL AND METHOD

1.1. The aim of the study

This study aims to evaluate the level of the realization of quality standards at the faculties concerning training teachers for vocational and technical education. In this study, the level of the standards determined at faculties were studied considering the dimensions of student admission to the faculty; the philosophy, objective and content of the teaching program; teaching-learning strategies; equality and diversity of the program; coordination of the program; safety and health care service; special educational needs; counselling and psychological support service; human resources; library and technology centre; facilities and equipment; financing; faculty administration; "effective teaching competence" that the lecturers should bear and transfer to the prospective teachers; and curriculum assessment and development.

1.2. The design of the study

In this study, general survey model was used. The data required for this model were obtained from the subjects in the population of the study using different tools. The present status was depicted as it is without any intervention.

1.3. The population of the study

The research is based on ideas obtained from 285 lectures and 318 prospective teachers at the Technical Education Faculties in Turkey.

1.4. Data Collection Tool

The scale of "Quality Standards Concerning the Programs of Teacher Training for Vocational and Technical Education" developed, and the studies of validity and reliability of which were carried out by

Erişen (2001) was used. The scale consisted of 15 dimensions and 135 items. First of all, in order to found the study on a sound ground, the present quality standards related to teacher training programs were determined focusing on the national and international literature. As a result of this research, we had contact, to get more information, with many private and state organisations related to this field mainly in UK and USA. The standards formed with the help of the information obtained from the data found in the national and international literature were grouped according to the dimensions mentioned above, and the standards of the same or similar traits were combined. Then, two types of questionnaires to collect the data were formed. They were the questionnaire for the lecturers; and the questionnaire for the prospective teachers.

2. DATA ANALYSIS

SPSS was used in statistical solution, and depending on the ideas of lecturers and prospective teachers, arithmetical mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of the realization of standards. Variance analysis and Scheffe Test were used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the ideas of lecturers and prospective teachers in terms of the level of the realization of standards.

3. FINDINGS

1. While there was a significant difference statistically between the ideas of the groups at some items over the level of the realization of standards concerning accepting students, it was clear that standards were realized very little in general. The standards concerning the philosophy, objective and content of the educational program were partly realized. Prospective teachers found the current status inadequate in general.

2. The standards concerning "the strategies of teaching/learning" were partly realized although the ideas of some groups were significantly different.
3. For the standards "equality and diversity at teaching program", there were significant differences. Mostly prospective teachers considered the current status more inadequate.
4. It was found that the standards determined at the item 3 at the dimension of "the coordination of educational program" were realized little in general, and that there was no significant difference between the ideas.
5. The standards for "Safety and health care services" were not realized at faculties mostly. But there were significant differences between the ideas of groups in general. Mostly pre-school teachers considered the level of the realization of the mentioned standards negatively.
6. It was obvious that the standards for "the needs of special education" hardly took place at faculties.
7. The level of the realization of the standards for "services of guidance and consultancy" was found inadequate mostly and all the groups shared the same idea. Services to guide academic, individual and vocational needs of students and to support them are quite
8. limited.

   There is rather terribly inadequate in the level of the realization of the standards for the dimension of "human resources".

   All the groups shared the idea that there is important inadequacy at the level of the realization of the standards for "centre of library and technology".
10. It was found that the standards for "facilities" were partly adequate. But some differences were found at the ideas of groups in this matter. Working environment and facilities assigned for the assistants, in particular, did not meet the needs.
11. Some serious problems were found at the realization of the standards for "financing" and no difference between the ideas was found.

12. Some other significant problems were found at the realization of the standards for "administration". Administrators were mostly short of the implementation of the features of leadership such as developing common objectives aiming both today and future, and realizing these objectives, determining and solving the problems preventing the realization of the objectives, giving opportunities for cooperation and team work, being open for innovations, taking the issues society considers important into consideration, determining institutional priorities, reflecting changes and developments to the institution, developing a positive culture, using human force and sources out of human force where it is needed, effectively and efficiently, supplying a good communication.
13. It was found that lecturer consider themselves quite adequate for the realization of the most of the standards for "effective teaching competence". They considered themselves adequate especially in the field to be taught. Assistant lecturers thought that they were adequate at most of the standards and that they were inadequate compared to lecturers. Prospective teachers found themselves adequate partly at almost all the standards.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Elimination of all the serious shortages determined as a result of the study at almost each of the dimensions at the faculties of technical education depends mostly on the application of these standards effectively.
2. Each of the 15 dimensions made up of standards, which are said to affect the quality in the system of teacher training, can be searched in detail.
3. Different research designs can be used.
4. The availability of the other faculties of technical education, especially the new ones, can be evaluated.

5. Quality standards concerning other fields training teachers can be determined and the availability of related faculties to the standards can be evaluated.

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