

Full Length Research Paper

Evaluation of the new education system by social studies teachers

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It is proposed that the education system should be evaluated by relying on views of branch teachers about changes in the Turkish Education System by discussing these effects from a scientific background. In this research, a qualitative approach was adopted so that the issue can be examined thoroughly. In this research, the phenomenological pattern was employed. This study is negotiated with 6 Social Studies teachers who are working in secondary schools in the province of Sivas (Turkey). Participants are indicated by using the criteria sampling from purposeful sampling. All of the interviews were recorded on a tape recorder throughout the research. Line by line analysis was employed to describe the opinions expressed clearly and directly or those implied in an indirect manner by the participants based on the aim of the study without manipulating them. Inductive descriptive analysis, content analysis and the constant comparison technique were used in the interpretation of the interview data. As a result of the interview data analysis two basic themes emerged: 1, General findings for the new Turkish Education System and 2, The findings related to the situations/events in the area of Social Studies education with the new Turkish Education System.

Key words: New Turkish Education System, education system, Social Studies, social studies education.

INTRODUCTION

Because of the amount of different areas of study, education is the most complicated system in the world (Hu, 2012). However, humankind's pursuit of knowledge, truth and value has made education inevitable throughout history (Fallahi et al., 2010). Even though it is hard to find a common definition, education is a system that is designed to enable children and adults have education by means of school (Krivova and Myachin, 2011), encompasses the society for sustainable development and brings individuals' knowledge, ability and value (Boyadjieva et al., 2012), composes knowledge-based social policies of society (Agbemabiese, 2010), reflects countries' history, culture and values (Urooj and Ahmed, 2012) and undergoes changes in line with the needs time brings.

The need for a different education system for a changing society compels certain functions and structures of education to change (Erol, 2011). Education systems have to change due to political and economic reasons (Cetkovic et al., 2012). Therefore, countries continue to develop their own education systems, reforming and spreading innovations (Morpeth and Creed, 2012).

Planning education programs that are of a high quality is in the hands of the government for providing the continuity of this process (Krivov and Myachin, 2011). Education applications which have been performed till date show that every country structures its own system of education by acting upon its own philosophy, culture and values (Fallahi et al., 2010). However, international bodies such as UNESCO, IBRD, UNICEF and UNDP subsidize for

countries that are not able to convert their system of education with their own resources (Omwami, 2012).

A system of education is always undergoing change as a dynamic process. In terms of the research studies made, it is possible to exemplify changes, expectations of change and problems in the education system in many countries around the world. Among these examples, Cetkovic et al. (2012) used the localization of South-east Europe education systems by getting further away from the central structure. Curry (2012) used the Hong Kong Government and Hong Kong business environments realizing that the Hong Kong education system does not produce innovative and creative graduates. Baines and Stanley (2006 cited in Meyers et al., 2012), mentioned teachers are induced to focus on the average student level since the standard-based system of education which has been applied in the United States of America for twenty years takes the minimum competence of students as a goal. Mekonnen (2008) put into practice an extensive change that affects the whole stages of the education system due to troubleshooting problems that occur in Ethiopia's system of education and focuses on teacher's education. Rimashevskaja et al., (2010) focused on the population increase in old people due to the changes in the population rate in Russia, but they also emphasize that the education system of Russia is not adequately functional with the aim of bringing this old population into the economy; and the system of education in Russia needs to be built again according to a life-long learning philosophy. Kandil (2011) makes a request about designing the education system again with the attendance of non-governmental organizations, parents and teachers and the leadership of a new government in Egypt, which has been governed by an authoritarian regime for many years and where the system of education has served certain groups through-out this process. Yang (2011) opts for a new education system from a versatile contemporary teacher educating system, thereby abandoning traditional education understanding in China Wolf et al. (2011) fail to reach the necessary qualified manpower and economic initiative because essential attention is not given to vocational education in the Cuban education system, which is based on raising socialist people. Gopinathan (2012) notes that as a successfully industrialized country, Singapore has an elimination system based on a curriculum; the quality and merits which answer to the needs of the economy. Cheserek and Mugalavai (2012) state that Kenya's focus is to convert its education system to a structure that supports industrialization in 2030. Ivic and Pesikan (2012) note that Serbia's adoption of an education system strategy aims the year, 2020 and is appropriate for its conditions. Bregvadze (2012) notes Georgia is performing changes in its education system which finds strong support in the international arena. Agbemabiese (2010) viewed Ghana's willingness to build its education

system according to Ghana's social-economic and cultural conditions; and finally Lane (2012) notes the fact that the Australian government is equipping all classrooms with computer technology with the motto "digital revolution in education"; and these can all be counted as examples of studies in education.

Problems in the education system cannot be approached with a simple solution seeking process (Lupart, 2013). Therefore, we need to analyze the existing system in many aspects (Henderson et al., 2011) and obtain objective information from different resources about the system in order to make changes to education systems. At this point, while building a system, it has to be stated that organization advisers should understand and develop cultural, environmental and political conditions (Meyers, 2012). Schools and universities should notice their converting power and capacities by developing sensibility to the contemporary and global change (Kalantzis and Cope, 2012). Education leaders, teachers, politicians and curriculum masters should participate in this change (Urooj and Ahmed, 2012), because the scientific researches which are conducted in countries for realizing reforms in the education system sometimes show that the cause of failures arises from the reform studies themselves (Bredvadze, 2012).

Although the change process is risky and rough, Turkey has realized radical changes in its education system by taking on responsibility. According to this, in the 2012-2013 education system they changed to a 4+4+4 education system in the direction of decisions that were taken in 18th National Education Council. With this system, the compulsory education system which is applied for 8 years is beginning to be applied intermittently in a 4+4+4 system as 12 years, and this is schemed as primary education in the first 4 years of elementary school, in the second 4 years secondary school, and in the third 4 years high school (Güven, 2012). In accordance with the Primary Education and Training Law numbered 6287 and the Law in relation to Changes in Some Laws (2012), compulsory elementary education age is indicated between ages 6- 13 with the 4+4+4 education system, and elementary education foundations are defined as the National Education Institution that is formed with the compulsory elementary school period of four years and a compulsory secondary school period of four years. It is decided that primary schools should be founded as elementary and secondary school in the manner of independence, but according to the conditions they can be also founded with secondary, elementary and high schools. Also, changes are made in period numbers, and it is envisaged that students will be given a diploma at the end of 12-years of compulsory education, without giving diplomas to the students who finish the 4th class and 8th class (Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2012).

This change in the Turkish Education System has

caused serious debates between the public and educators. The most primary concern is that 5th class students are taken to secondary school from elementary school with the 4+4+4 education system, and this affects the education system with the new legislation that states branch teachers have started to give the lessons of science, technology, Turkish, math and social studies, which are core curriculum subjects, while the class teachers were given these lessons in the 5th class before. It is proposed that this should be evaluated by relying on the views of branch teachers about changes in the Turkish Education System by discussing these effects based on the scientific background.

METHOD

Research Design

This study has been carried out according to a qualitative research method and procedures in order to examine the concern in line with its purpose. In the research, because it is proposed to evaluate the 4+4+4 system that has brought radical changes to the Turkish Education System, based upon the social studies branch teacher's views this study is designed according to a phenomenology design that is suitable for its nature (Bernard and Ryan, 2009; Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2009).

Participants

It is suggested that the participant numbers be categorized between 6 and 12 in order to examine the concern deeply in the phenomenology research (Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2009). In this study, 6 social studies teachers who are working in secondary schools in the province of Sivas (Turkey) are included. 3 of the participant are women and 3 of them are men. Also, the participants' period of service varies between 3 and 16 years. In the research, participants are indicated by using the criteria sampling from a purposeful sampling method (Patton, 2002; Punch, 2009).

While the participants are determined, some criteria have been considered such as being a social studies teacher, conducting 5th class social studies lessons and having at least a 3-year period of service in order to evaluate the past and future in a health way. Also, while the participants are determined it is also considered that they should be willing to explain their views and suggestions, and we need to declare the maximum time that can be needed for interviews. In the frame of research ethics, participants' names are not used. Therefore, they are referred to with nicknames from T1 to T6. Detailed information about the participants is given in Table 1.

Data collection procedures

In the research, a "Semi-structured Interview Form" was used to determine the views related to the new education system of the Social Studies branch teachers who work in secondary schools. The form is made up of qualitative research and data collection methods and open-ended questions. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher prepares interview questions beforehand and he/she can organize questions again during the interview, thereby providing flexibility to the interviewed person or persons (Creswell, 2003; Gay and Airasian, 2000; Patton, 2002).

Before interview questions are prepared, the decisions that are taken in the 18th National Education Council are investigated in relation to the changes about some laws in accordance with the Primary and Education Law numbered 6287, and the studies that are placed in the body of literature are compared in detail within the frames of subtopics which are determined. As a result of these comparisons, draft interview form questions are evaluated in line with the research purpose by an expert professor. Moreover, open ended questions are subjected to an investigation by a professor who is an expert in qualitative research methods. Interview questions are figured in line with the feedback which is coming from the related experts. After this, questions that can be considered difficult to understand or incoherent are evaluated and re-written by two Turkish Language teachers.

Pilot schemes are made with two Social Studies teachers who are not among the study attendees in order to determine the quality and efficiency of the questions in interview form. Teachers who are subjected to the pilot scheme are not taken into account in the evaluation. Questions that teachers have difficulty in understanding are prepared again as a result of the pilot scheme.

Interview questions that take their final form by benefitting from information after these applications are directed to the attendees who are a part of the research. It is possible to sum up the questions directed to teachers in this way: 1, General questions about the 4+4+4 education system and 2, The private questions for determining situations which are met in the social studies area with the second new education system. In the study, the attendees are asked all the questions in the interview form. However, different questions (follow-up questions) are directed to attendees by taking different answers as a reference with the purpose of examining the subject and answers in details.

Data related to the research are obtained in a silent environment where the interview was not affected in any negative way in the schools of the participants. Interviews were continued throughout March of 2013. Interviews lasting for 180 min and 32 s are realized as a part of research. In face to face interviews with the attendees, detailed explanations are made to the teachers about the privacy of the personal information by explaining the purpose of the research, and detailed information is also given about the questions.

Data analysis

Interview documents: All interviews which were realized face to face with attendees were recorded with a recorder after receiving approval from attendees. Data were converted into text after the interviews using the Microsoft Word writing operating system as raw data. These data were presented to the attendees and approval was received concerning the fact that the texts contained their own views.

Coding Data: Before coding the data, transcriptions which were arranged into clumps of the data by two researchers are read line by line. With this, important dimensions were determined in the frame of research purpose, and we tried to define what makes sense in every dimension. Words and concepts stated by the attendees were used as much as possible in the coding. However, where the words and concepts used by the participants became insufficient during the coding process, the researchers determined other concepts as codes which might fit the status or thought as the best. In the study, a line by line analysis approach was used by Patton (2002). A word, word mass or a sentence constituted a unit for data analysis.

Techniques of interpretation: During the interpretation of the interview data, inductive analysis, content analysis and constant

Table 1. Detailed information about participants.

Nickname	Gender	Graduated department	Their branches	Period of service
T1	M	Faculty of Sciences and Letters History Department	Social Studies	10
T2	M	Faculty of Sciences and Letters Geography Department	Social Studies	16
T3	F	Faculty of Education Social Studies Teaching	Social Studies	5
T4	F	Faculty of Education Social Studies Teaching	Social Studies	7
T5	M	Faculty of Education Social Studies Teaching	Social Studies	3
T6	F	Faculty of Education Social Studies Teaching	Social Studies	5

comparison were used (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Miles and Huberman 1994). In inductive analysis, quotations were placed to reflect an individual's opinions in a striking way. In content analysis, the data were first divided into sections, and these sections were then compared with the investigation. After this process, codes that evoked the same concepts were united under a common category by composing understandable concepts from these sections. In the final stage, interpretation of the data was sought while providing content integrity from the themes aroused from data.

Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability in research

Credibility (internal validity): In order to increase the research's internal validity (persuasiveness), a conceptual frame was composed which was related to the subject by investigating the body of literature while developing the interview form. After the interviews, by converting their speech into writing the attendees were asked to control the texts and to confirm if they are their own views or not.

In the study, the themes obtained in the content analysis were specified on a large scale including related concepts and in a narrow-scale excluding unrelated concepts. This aimed to provide integrity between the findings by checking the relationship between these themes and the categories composing them and the relationship between the themes with each other. During the application process of the research, all interviews were recorded with a recorder. Researchers were attentive in being objective on all levels of the research. During the research period, two researchers coded all of the data independently and a consensus was obtained for all of the codes used in the research.

Transferability (external validity): All levels of the research period were presented to the reader in detail in order to increase the transmissibility of the research. Researchers made a point of writing a research report and they tried to make a detailed description in the findings section. The main purpose of the deep and detailed description on the report level was to visualize the research period for the readers. Therefore, the researchers gave a place for direct quotations in the findings and comments section. In this way, the researchers claimed that the descriptive data could be transferred into working groups. It is important that the results of this research should be understandable for all readers in the same way. In this context, transmissions were summed up plainly by the researchers in order to enable the process and the environment of the research to be visualized in the readers' minds.

Dependability (Internal Reliability): All of the findings were presented to the reader without making any generalizations and

comments in order to increase consistency. All of the data taken during the research period was evaluated and coded by a researcher other than the researcher himself/herself, and a general consensus was obtained for all coding. Consistency of these different independent codes was specified by being marked as

"Agreement" or "Disagreement". In this research, for the reliability calculation, the reliability formula (reliability = Agreement/Agreement + Disagreement), suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), is used. In the reliability calculation, a result between 88 and 96% was obtained for every problem.

Confirmability/objectivity (Internal Reliability): In order to provide the external reliability (conformity) of the research, the raw data and codes were kept by researchers to be submitted for investigation by the related persons.

RESULTS

As a result of the interview data analysis, two basic themes emerged: 1, General findings for the new 4+4+4 Turkish Education System and 2, The findings related to the situations/events in the area of social studies education with the new Turkish Education System. Findings related to these themes and categories under these themes are presented below in details.

General findings for the new (4+4+4) Turkish Education System

In the research, two categories are attained under the theme of "general findings for the new 4+4+4 Turkish Education System". These categories can be described as, a) findings for the fact that the education in Turkey has to be compulsory for 12 years (4+4+4), and b) findings for the branch change for teachers by the Ministry of National Education of Turkey.

Findings for the fact that education in Turkey has to be compulsory for 12 years (4+4+4)

In this study, all attendees have declared their opinions in the direction of the necessity for compulsory education in

increasing literate people, canalizing students into education more rapidly, and in increasing the girls' schooling rate in the countryside. However, there are also problems with it becoming a difficult system to apply because of the existing substructure problems, and since the required quality in the education level could not be met due to its being applied without conducting a field research and pilot scheme. With regard to this subject, the interviewee nicknamed T5 made a statement that this system cannot reach its aim without solving problems in schools by saying *"While we have problems to make lesson in a 50-person class, while educating with dual education in the schools; it is hard for this education system to be successful"*. Other attendees also emphasized substructure inefficiency in a similar way with T5.

While supporting 12 years of compulsory education, the attendees also reported a common point of view about the fact that this radical change in the Turkish Education System was put into practice without being discussed in public and with the education community, and also the opinions and the points of view of the teachers, parents, students, the scientific community and in short all partners related to education were not received.

Attendee T4 expressed that it was good for education to be compulsory, but he/she did not rely on the approach of compulsory education in the government's schedules, and he/she also had doubts that there had been ideological reasons under the curriculum which had been changed many times.

It is determined that there is no mutual agreement among attendees concerning the compulsory education period. According to this, T1 and T3 presented an opinion for education to be permanent for 12 years (4+4+4), while T4 and T5 thought it to be permanent for 11 years (4+4+3) and T2 and T6 thought it to be intermittent for 13 years (1+5+3+4).

Findings for the branch change for teachers realized by the Ministry of National Education of Turkey

All attendees stated that teachers who have to teach 5th grades and are in a position of excess due to the fact that 5th grades are now included in the secondary school should have the right to pass to another branch. As teaching is a career that is achieved mostly by experience, education quality is getting lower due to the teachers' passing to other branches. Students are affected in a negative way because of this situation, and teachers regret changing their branch.

The attendee T1 sums up this problem that occurs with the new system as a "disaster," and he/she tries to state his/her disapproval because of this event. T1 stated his/her disagreement with the branch change with his/her statement *"Certainly, it is a wrong application. It is wrong for a former teacher to become a Social Studies teacher, and also it is wrong for a Social Studies teacher to*

become a former or other branch teacher".

Attendees stated that teaching is a profession learnt by living more than a theory, and they emphasized that this knowledge and experience cannot be used for another branch in a healthy way. The attendee T3 stated, *"a former teacher who has been a teacher for 20 years decreases the education quality in the event that he/she becomes a math or social studies teacher"*; while attendee T2 said *"when a former teacher who has 30 years experience passes to another branch, the educational activities he/she will make during the period in which he/she passes to another branch will not be effective"*, and again attendee T3 stated *"this is a blow hit to the education"*.

Attendees stated that students were affected most because of a harmony problem experienced by the teachers, and teachers who changed their branches regretted this and therefore teachers had to go back to their ex-branches and annul this application. In this subject, attendee T1 stated *"Ministry has to review this situation because there are suffered students and it has to send them back to their ex-branches"*; while attendee T3 stated *"Teachers have preferred to work in center instead of working in village in order to work at school that they want or teachers who work at high school want to turn back to former teaching"*.

In the previous years, the Ministry of National Education assigned many graduates from the departments such as management, economics or agriculture engineering as teachers. This situation has made many teachers suffer. The thought that the Ministry of National Education will make teachers suffer again by its branch change application has caused trouble among attendees. On this subject, attendee T5 stated his/her inconvenience about the situation by saying *"it is inconvenient that people who teach for 30 years in former teaching are assigned to other branches. This situation blocks new graduated people's future who are in this branch"*; while attendee T4 says *"In Turkey, they assigned nurses and agriculture engineers as teachers in the past; now they assign former teachers who do not know anything about a branch as a branch teacher."*

Findings related to the situation/events met in Social Studies Education Area with the New Turkish Education System

In the research, two categories under the theme of "Findings related to Situation/Events met in Social Studies Education Area with the New Turkish Education System" have been found. These categories are stated as; a) findings related to reflections about social studies teachers' giving social studies lessons to the 5th grades, and b) findings related to in-service education activities that are given to Social Studies teachers according to the

new Turkish education system.

Findings related to reflections about social studies teachers giving the social studies lesson to the 5th grades

All attendees stated that fifth class students have problems in understanding abstract concepts due to the fact that they are in a frame of concrete transactions, and teachers have problems with teaching and reaching the level of students in social studies lessons. Attendees are not shy of stating their fear of being inefficient due to not receiving the required education for the social studies teaching required at this level. For instance, attendee T1 has stated problems related to the new education system in the following sentence:

“As a teacher, who became used to the sixth, seventh and eighth grades, students have problems when I give the lessons with the methods and techniques I know. Actually I am not able to teach it in a good way. Because I know neither the program nor how I can teach to the student at this age...for now we are trying to get used to it.”

The attendees T2, T4 and T6 all stated that it was a problem for them to teach the social studies branch at the fifth class level, and they accepted that they were inefficient in the point of knowledge, talent and efficiency for this class level by making self-evaluation.

Findings related to in-service education activities given to social studies teachers according to the new Turkish Education System.

All attendees emphasized that education seminars did not reach their purpose with regard to teachers' orientation. As the duration of the seminars was not long enough, the seminar contents were not well-planned. People who gave seminars did not have a comprehensive knowledge of the subject. They could not get in touch with the people who gave seminars as the seminars were given like a teleconference, and tools such as the sound equipment in the hall that they were gathered in for the seminar were insufficient. The attendee T6 emphasized that the in-service education given by the Ministry of National Education was inefficient and stated that *“The in-service educations were generally inadequate”*.

The attendees explained that in-service education was always necessary for them in accordance with their development, but they could not benefit from these seminars since they had trouble throughout the in-service education and the people who gave the seminars were inefficient. At this point, attendee T4 made a statement.

“It was just a seminar that is made up boring hours. I didn't like the people's teaching style and efficiency on subject”; while attendee T1 said *“I don't think that it is made up of superficial subjects with gathering teachers in a certain territory or in a class like lecture hall”*.

The attendees T3 and T5 plainly explained the fact that the time given for the in-service education seminar was not enough with their statements *“We experienced this period as a waste of time”* by T3, and *“It is not possible to give education in a short time. Teacher has to get prepared for this before this education system was brought in a certain stage”* by T5.

Attendees added to their statements that they had suggestions at this point, while they were stating their displeasure related to the in-service education activities. In this subject, the attendees presented their solutions and suggestions related to failure of in-service education with the statements *“it will be good if we think like a student and give education”* by attendee T1; *“We have no chance to forward anything to the person who gives the conference like he/she doesn't understand us either. Therefore, giving these educations locally will be more productive instead of giving a distant education.”* by attendee T2, *“Unfortunately when we don't have enforcement, there is misuse. If there had been enforcement, it would have been better. If it had been like a reward, attendance would be more”* by attendee T3; and *“this education should have been given to a teacher during university years”* by attendee T5.

It is determined that the attendees who serve as social studies teachers reported a consensus about the fact that the in-service training related to the new education system is inadequate and unqualified with respect to the introduction of the Fifth Grade Social Studies Curriculum and the application of the program.

Conclusion

As a result of analysis of the findings, two basic themes emerged. These were: 1, General findings for the new 4+4+4 Turkish Education System and 2, Findings related to the situation/events met in the field of social studies education with the new Turkish Education System.

In the first theme, all attendees stated that the literacy rate was increasing with this compulsory education, students were canalized to education more rapidly, and there is a need to increase the schooling rate of girls in the countryside. However, it has been indicated that there is no common agreement between the attendees. According to this study, the attendees T1 and T3 stated the education system to be suitable as permanent for 12 years (4+4+4), while the attendees T4 and T5 stated it to be suitable as permanent for 11 years (4+4+3) and the attendees T2 and T6 stated it to be suitable as

intermittent for 13 years (1+5+3+4). According to Eurydice (2007), compulsory full time education lasts for at most nine or ten years in the European Union countries and continues until the age of 15 or 16. But it is 11 years in Luxembourg, Malta, the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Scotland), and 12 years in the Netherlands and Northern Ireland, while it is 13 years in Hungary. These statistics show that the 12-year compulsory education in the Turkish Education System is in accordance with European Union education policies. With this system of change, Turkey, a nominee for the European Union, is taking a big step to being a member of the European Union. However, the fact that according to the educational research studies conducted until now, Fallahi et al. (2010) state that every country structures its own education system by acting according to its own philosophy, culture and values, which makes us think about the question of whether this change is suitable for the Turkish culture and values or not. The answer to this question will come up during the application period of the new education system.

Attendees declared that quality could not be increased in education due to the passing of this application without conducting a field research study and a pilot scheme, and because the application of compulsory education has turned into a difficult system due to the substructure problems. While Hu (2012) indicates that an answer should be found for the questions such as “what is the aim of the education system?” “how is the education systems’ situation?” and “how can the education system be brought to a better situation?” in filling the content of the education phenomenon and creating a new education system. Henderson et al. (2011) state that it should be focused on perceiving education areas as a complicated system in the research studies which are successful, and vice versa in categories. Urooj and Ahmed (2012) also state that the education leaders, teachers, politicians and curriculum experts should participate in the changes in the field of education. While changing to the 12 year compulsory education system in Turkey, it is understood from the declarations given that the criteria of Hu (2012) are not met, and the statement about the education system by Henderson et al. (2011) “educational environments must be seen as a complex system during the process of change” was not taken into consideration. From the statements concerning the fact that a “*pilot scheme and field study were not carried out,*” the education partners mentioned by Urooj and Ahmed (2012) were not allowed to participate in the change period.

All attendees stated that teachers who have to teach 5th grades and are in a position of excess due to the fact that 5th grade classes are included in the secondary school have the right to pass to another branch. Since teaching is a career that is achieved mostly by experience, education quality is getting lower due to the teachers passing to

other branches. Students are affected in a negative way because of this situation, and teachers are facing regrets due to changing their branch. Attendees stated that teaching is a profession learnt by living more than a theory, and they emphasized that this knowledge and experience cannot be used for another branch in a healthy way. In the previous years, the Ministry of National Education assigned many graduates from departments such as management, economics or agriculture engineering as teachers. This situation has made many teachers suffer. The idea that the Ministry of National Education will make the teachers suffer again with its branch change application has caused trouble among attendees. Among OECD countries, Finland generally has the top rate in PISA exams made for the purpose of measuring success in education. However, in the Turkish Education System, teachers have fallen into the position of norm surplus. Where they are passed on to the science, technology, math, Turkish language and social studies branches requiring expertise, and this has been the most negative side-effect of the 12 year compulsory education system. Before this change of system, Turkey was in last place in the PISA exams. With the teachers who change their branches, Turkey is not expected to show a great success in PISA exams any time soon.

In the second theme, all of the attendees stated that fifth class students have problems in understanding abstract concepts due to the fact that they are in a frame of concrete transactions, and teachers have problems with teaching with reaching the level of students in social studies lessons. Attendees are not shy of stating that they are working inefficiently due to not receiving the required education for social studies teaching concerning this level. Bregvadze (2012) pointed out that, especially in the qualitative study carried out according to the phenomenological pattern, there are the reforms on education programs among the failures in the schools on a vast geography from European countries to the countries which emerged after the Soviet Union broke up. In the conception of this research, the statement by the social studies teachers, “*being a stranger to the education program and subjects of the fifth grades*”, matches up with Bregvadze’ statements (2012) to some extent.

According to attendees’ opinions, the most important reason for orientation problems that occurred during the lessons of the fifth grades is that the in-service education activities given to the teachers while passing on into the 12 year compulsory education system are inadequate. At this point, all attendees stated that the in-service education seminars made with the purpose of orientation to the new education system did not achieve their purpose, because the duration of seminars was insufficient. Seminars’ contents were not planned in a good way. People who gave seminars did not have a comprehensive

knowledge of the subject. They could not make contact with the people who gave the seminars since the conferences were given as a teleconference, and tools such as the sound system were inefficient in the hall where they were gathered. Based on these opinions, it can be said that efficient investment was not made to human resources while changing to the 12 year compulsory education system. Nicaise (2010 cited in Boyadjieva et al., 2012) emphasized the importance of human resources by stating that the mutual agreement in the Europe Union is based on whether the Europe Union members will make an investment on human capital or not. When it is thought that the teachers, who are the practitioners of the 12-year compulsory education of the Turkish educational system, are the human resources people responsible for the functioning of the new system, and the fact that adequate investments for the functioning of the new system were not made to ensure these human resource members can act in accordance with the opinion of the attendees. It can be stated that some strategies should be developed about training the teachers, primarily in accordance with the characteristics of the new system in order to bring the new Turkish Education System to a healthy level.

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