Suggested Solutions and Views of Teacher Candidates Regarding the Problems of the Turkish Education System

Sezen Tofur[1*]   Ramazan Cansoy[2]

1.Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Education, Manisa Celal Bayar University, Manisa, Turkey
2.Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Letters, Karabuk University, Karabuk, Turkey

Abstract
This study aimed to identify the suggested solutions and opinions of teacher candidates receiving pedagogical formation training on the problems of the Turkish education system. Phenomenology, a qualitative research method, was used. The participants were 30 students receiving pedagogical formation training at Karabuk University in the 2016-2017 academic year. The data were gathered in writing by means of the questions prepared by the researchers. Data analysis was executed by content analysis and descriptive analysis. According to the findings, the problems of the Turkish education system were classified under four themes: (i) Working conditions, (ii) Curriculum studies, (iii) Basic structure of the education system, (iv) Training of educators. The problems stated were the Basic structure of the education system, training of educators, working conditions and curriculum studies, respectively in order of importance. In addition, the most frequently emphasized problems were the change of the examination system, continuing instruction based on rote learning, the problems experienced in teacher – student communication, inadequacy of professional development in teachers. This study is of significance since it provides insights about the understandings and perceptions of teacher candidates regarding the Turkish education system.
Keywords: Turkish Education System, Pedagogical formation, Teacher candidates, Education problems, Suggested solutions.

1. Introduction
Practices towards identifying and solving the problems of education systems are of utmost importance for a quality educational environment. Considering the relationship between the problems of countries and the quality of education, it can be stated that the problems that pertain to the education system needs to be demonstrated and solved (Özyılmaz, 2013). In this regard, it can be inferred that it is necessary to reveal the problems determined by teachers as the primary element with a vital role in education (Şişman, 2010), or teacher candidates, and their suggestions regarding the solution of these problems. According to Kasapoğlu (2016), teacher candidates' perceptions of the Turkish education system may affect their perspectives to the profession, motivational levels and professional practices in the future. Teacher candidates' views on the education system can give clues to how well they know about the system. In other words, revealing teacher candidates' perceptions of the problems in the education system can be useful to see their perspective and develop policies accordingly.

1.1 Turkish Education System and Teacher Training
Turkish education system is a national system that is run by the state. The duration of compulsory education is 12 years, and covers 6-18 year-olds. Education is funded by public institutions, and is free. Students who want to receive university education after high school are subjected to a national examination. They are placed into programs they want to study based on their scores. Those who complete two-year programs get an associate degree, while those who finish four-year programs acquire an undergraduate degree. If they want, they can pursue postgraduate degrees afterwards.

In the Turkish education system, teachers are trained at education faculties. As of 2017, there are 183 universities, 90 education faculties, and five educational science faculties in Turkey. Among these education faculties, 17 are at a foundation university, whereas 78 are at a state university (Higher Education Information System, 2017a). Teacher candidates usually receive a four-year undergraduate education at these faculties. In the 2015-2016 academic year, 55,743 students graduated from education faculties (Higher Education Information System, 2017b). Teacher candidates who graduate from these faculties take Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS) exam. This exam takes place in three stages: (i) General proficiency and world knowledge examination, (ii) Educational Sciences Examination, and (iii) Content Knowledge Examination, to start teaching at state schools. Following these examinations, certain number of candidates are invited to interviews based on their scores. Successful candidates are qualified to be placed in teaching positions at state schools.

1.2 Pedagogical Formation Training in Teacher Education
In Turkey, practices of teacher learning are conducted through pre-service and in-service trainings. In the pre-service period, teachers are trained by education faculties and educational science faculties. However, the fact that various policies to meet the need for teachers could not help overcoming the teacher shortage led to different

practices in different periods (Eraslan & Çakıcı, 2011).

With the restructuring of education faculties in 1997, master's programs without thesis were opened in faculties of science and letters that were made qualified to train teachers for primary and high school education (Azar, 2011). By means of certification programs opened as of the 2010-2011 academic year, students of any faculty who meet necessary conditions could receive pedagogical formation training and become teachers (Kartal & Afacan, 2012). The undergraduate programs that are not included in education and educational science faculties, and whose graduates can become teachers as of 2015 were published by the High Council of Education and Morality in the Journal of Announcements (Ministry of National Education, 2014). In order to work as teachers, students of these undergraduate programs are required to successfully complete the 'Pedagogical Formation Certification Program' (Ayvaz Tuncel, 2016). The historical development of teacher training and pedagogical formation training is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Historical Development of Teacher Training and Pedagogical Formation Training

1973	Basic Law of National Education (No. 1739) Higher education requirement for teachers In the same law; The right to be qualified as teachers after receiving teaching formation for those who graduate from higher education institutions
1974	Correspondence education: 46.000 individuals were assigned as teachers
1980	Teaching formation program with 21 credits
1982	Integrating teacher training institutions to universities
1995-1996	Assigning individuals with an undergraduate degree in any area as elementary school teachers
1998-1999	Restructuring of education faculties (3.5 + 1.5 or 4 + 1.5 models)
2007	Giving the right to receive pedagogical formation to the graduates of faculty of science and letters
2010	Abolishing the MA program without thesis for the graduates of faculty of science and letters to be qualified as teachers, and replacing it with a two-semester pedagogical formation training
2012	Withdrawing the right to receive pedagogical formation from the graduates of faculty of science and letters
2013	Selection of students for pedagogical formation by OSYM (Student Selection and Placement Centre)
2014	Giving the right to receive pedagogical formation training to graduates, undergraduate students and open education students

(Yılmaz, 2015).

1.3 Problems of the Turkish Education System

Every stage of the Turkish education system has its objectives, curricula and problems (Başaran & Çınkır, 2011). The Turkish education system has a constantly changing structure (Erdem, 2009). This changing structure and adaptation process have brought a set of problems each time. To date, many studies have set out to determine the problems of the education system and offer suggestions in this respect (Kutlu Abu, Bacanak & Gökdere, 2016; Uygun, 2013; Yeşil & Şahan, 2015; Yılmaz & Altınkurt, 2011).

Studies on the education system have so far concentrated on topics related to information and communication technologies (Demiraslan & Koçak-Usluel, 2005; Gülbahar & Güven, 2008), vocational and technical education (Demirtaş & Küçük, 2008; Kabadayı, 1997), and the teacher training system (Ayas, 2009; Özoğlu, 2010). Those that examine views on the problems of the Turkish education system were mostly conducted with students of education faculties. Yet, studies that focus on the views of teacher candidates receiving pedagogical formation training on the Turkish education system have been limited. Considering the increase in the number of students who receive pedagogical training, it can thus be stated that research should also focus on this program.

Views and perceptions of teacher candidates as educators of the future on the Turkish education system are of great importance to take the system a step further. How well teacher candidates perceive and observe the education system is closely related to their readiness to teaching (Kasapoğlu, 2016). It is thought that examining views on the problems of the Turkish education system would be useful in determining the educational policies to be developed (Kösterelioğlu & Bayar, 2014). The present paper is a qualitative study that aimed to examine the views of teacher candidates who received pedagogical formation training on the problems of the Turkish education system. The research question addressed in the study was "What are the views of teacher candidates who received pedagogical formation training on the problems of the Turkish education system?".

2. Method

This study was planned as a phenolenological inquiry. Phenomenological research is aimed at revealing cognitive constructs about how individuals perceive, describe and evaluate a phenomenon (Patton, 2001). The phenomenon in this study is the problems of the Turkish Education System.

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2.1 Participants
The participants of the study were 30 students receiving pedagogical formation training at Karabuk University in the 2016-2017 academic year. This sample was selected through random sampling (Neuman, 2010). Students were senior students of math, sociology, philosopy, history and music department. The distribution of the students based on gender is as follows: Female (η=23, 77%), Male (η= 7, 33%). The average of the students is 23,8.

2.2 Data Gathering Tool
The data were gathered in writing by means of the questions prepared by the researchers. These questions included the following: i. Write down the three most important problems you see in the Turkish education system in order of importance, and explain the reasons. ii. What suggestions can you offer regarding the solution of these problems? Specify these suggestions in items.

2.3 Data Analysis
The analysis of the data was carried out with qualitative content analysis and descriptive analysis methods. Content analysis was used for the analysis of the issues that the teacher candidates perceived as problems, while their suggestions for these problems were analysed through the descriptive analysis. (i). The primary purpose of qualitative content analysis is to systematically analyse texts, or oral materials that are transcribed (Mayring, 2011). In this study, the data were also systematically analysed in terms of constant variables to reach the themes. (ii) Codes and themes were formed by considering internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity. As a result of the coding process, four main themes including working conditions, curriculum studies, the basic structure of the education system, and training of educators were focused. (iii) The consistency between the codes and themes were repeatedly reviewed. Three academics who are experts in the field were asked to contribute to this process considering that this consistency was open to a potential influence by the researchers. (iv) Code frequencies and distributions of the themes were calculated. (v) The suggestions offered for the problems were analysed through descriptive analysis, and were grouped under themes in the findings section. (vi) Due to ethical concerns, the teacher candidates' names were not mentioned in the study. They were represented with letters and numbers (S-1, S-2, …).

2.4 Validity and Reliability of the Study
In qualitative research, internal validity is the consistency of the study (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In this study, internal consistency was ensured by forming four different themes based on the internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity characteristics of the problems identified with regard to the Turkish education system. The fact that the shortening of the problems the teacher candidates wrote conceptually in a clear way was conducted by three experts also strengthened the internal validity of the study. In qualitative research, external validity is about generalising the results obtained to outside events (Neuman, 2010). For this purpose, the data gathering instruments and data analysis steps were presented in detail.

In qualitative research, internal validity pertains to yielding findings by different researchers in the same way (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In this regard, the suggestions for the cases that were indicated as problems were clearly presented in the findings section. The results of the study overlapped with the research question. All these aspects strengthened the internal reliability of the study. As for external reliability in qualitative research, it refers to findings and results not changing over time (Şencan, 2005). In order to ensure external reliability in this study, the steps followed were explained in detail. In this way, it was aimed to guide similar studies to be conducted in the future.

3. Findings
In this section, the findings are presented under three headings that are percentage distribution of the themes formed related to the Turkish Education System, findings related to the problems emphasised related to the Turkish Education System, and findings related to the solution of the problems emphasised related to the Turkish Education System. The findings with regard to the themes working conditions, curriculum studies, the basic structure of the education system, and training of educators for each heading were presented under sub-headings.

3.1 Percentage Distribution of the Themes Formed Related to the Turkish Education System
As a result of the coding process, four themes were formed by grouping the views on the Turkish education system. The sub-headings related to the findings were identified based on these themes.
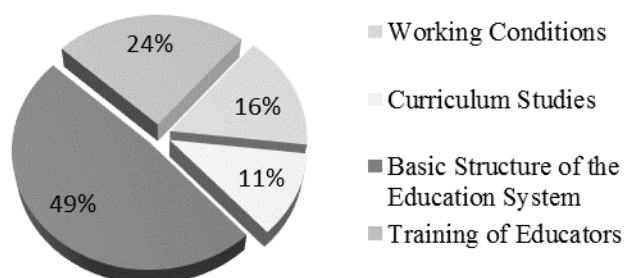
Figure 1. Percentage distribution of the themes related to the problems of the Turkish Education System

Accordingly, the problems that the students receiving pedagogical formation training saw in the Turkish education system were grouped under the themes "the basic structure of the education system" (49%), "training of educators" (24%), "working conditions" (16%), and "curriculum studies" (11%), respectively (Figure 1). The theme in which most of the problems were observed was the basic structure of the education system, while the one with the least problems was curriculum studies.

3.2 Findings Related to the Problems Emphasised Related to the Turkish Education System
The problems the teacher candidates offered for the Turkish education system they observed were presented under four themes.

3.2.1   Findings Related to the Theme "Working Conditions" As A Problem of the Turkish Education System
The frequency of the problems due to working conditions in education was found to be 11 (Table 1). The problems related to working conditions were mentioned by the teacher candidates as a problem of the Turkish education system 11 times in total.

Table 1. Findings related to the problems due to working conditions

Views on the Problems Regarding "Working Conditions"	Frequency	Theme	Theme Frequency
Inadequacy of the physical conditions in classrooms	5	Working conditions	11
Socio-economic differences across individuals and regions	3		
School shortage	1		
Buildings being old	1		
Insufficiency of school equipment	1		

The inadequacy of the physical conditions of classrooms and socio-economic differences between individuals and regions were the most frequently emphasised problems under this theme. The lack of sufficient schools, the building being old and the insufficiency of school equipment were other problems mentioned.

3.2.2   Findings Related to the Theme "Curriculum Studies" As A Problem of the Turkish Education System
The frequency of the problems due to curriculum studies in education was found to be 8 (Table 2). The problems related to curriculum studies were mentioned by the teacher candidates as a problem of the Turkish education system 8 times in total.

Table 2. Findings related to the problems due to curriculum studies

Views on the Problems Regarding "Curriculum Studies"	Frequency	Theme	Theme Frequency
Quality of instruction (educating individuals with necessary skills)	2	Curriculum studies	8
Weakness of coursebook contents	2		
Curriculum contents being intense	1		
Elective courses in schools	1		
Class hours being long	1		
Insufficient use of technology in instruction	1		

The quality of instruction and the weakness of the coursebook contents were the most commonly emphasised problems under this theme. The curriculum being too loaded, elective courses in schools, class hours being long, and insufficient use of technology in classes were other problems mentioned.

3.2.3 Findings Related to the Theme "The Basic Structure of the Education System" As A Problem of the Turkish Education System
The frequency of the problems due to the basic structure of the education system was found to be 33 (Table 3). The problems related to the basic structure of the education system were mentioned by the teacher candidates as a problem of the Turkish education system 33 times in total.

Table 3. Findings related to the problems due to the basic structure of the education system

Views on the Problems Regarding "the Basic Structure of the Education System"	Frequency	Theme	Theme Frequency
Irregularity in the testing system	8	The basic structure of the education system	33
Rote learning	6		
High quality education	3		
Teacher employment	3		
Constant test anxiety	2		
The number of students in universities exceeding the supply and demand equilibrium	2		
Differentiation between state-private schools	2		
Frequent changes in the education system	2		
Increasing number of universities	1		
Lowering the high school age	1		
Prioritising instruction rather than education	1		
Inadequacy of talent management	1		
Students' lack of confidence	1		

The testing system was the most emphasised problem under this theme, which was followed by the understanding of rote learning. Other problems mentioned under this theme included quality education, teacher employment, constant test anxiety, demand and supply gap in the number of students in universities, differentiation between state school and private school, frequent changes in the education system, increase in the number of universities, inadequacy of talent management, high school education age being lowered, mixed-sex education, prioritising instruction rather than education, and the lack of confidence in students.

3.2.4 Findings Related to the Theme "Training of Educators" As A Problem of the Turkish Education System

The frequency of the problems due to the training of educators in education was found to be 17 (Table 4). The problems related to the training of educators were mentioned by the teacher candidates as a problem of the Turkish education system 17 times in total.

Table 4. Findings related to the problems due to the training of educators

Views on the Problems Regarding "the Training of Educators"	Frequency	Theme	Theme Frequency
Teacher-student communication	4	Training of educators	17
Professional development of teachers	4		
Teachers not having sufficient pedagogical content knowledge	3		
Graduates of any university departments wanting to be teachers by receiving pedagogical formation training	2		
Teacher-parent communication	1		
Education of academics	1		
Teacher candidates' psychological competence to be teachers	1		
Instruction of teachers	1		

Teacher-student communication and teachers' professional development were the most frequently emphasised problems. These were followed by teachers' not having sufficient pedagogical content knowledge. Other problems mentioned under this theme included university graduates being able to practice teaching by getting pedagogical certification, communication between teachers and parents, education of academics, psychological competency of teacher candidates for teaching, and teachers' instruction.

3.3 Findings Related to the Solution of the Problems Emphasised Related to the Turkish Education System

The suggestions the teacher candidates offered for the problems they observed in the Turkish education system were presented under four themes.

3.3.1 Suggestions of the Teacher Candidates Receiving Pedagogical Formation Training For the Problems Under the Theme "Working Conditions"

The suggestions presented in this section are limited to increasing the number of schools by making use of the vacant land. There were other suggestions as well, but they did not communicate any information regarding a solution. In this respect, one of the teacher candidates said :

Vacant lands can be used for building schools in order both to increase the education rate in Turkey and to support education.' (S-3)

3.3.2 Suggestions of the Teacher Candidates Receiving Pedagogical Formation Training For the Problems Under

the Theme "Training Of Educators"

The suggestions regarding the training of educators can be listed as considering teaching as a profession that requires ability, putting more emphasis on pedagogical content knowledge, figuring out how the teacher-student relationship can be established successfully, not selecting teachers merely based on knowledge, making examinations and assessments in terms of multiple aspects in the selection of teachers, strengthening the teacher-parent relationship, not measuring teacher competence only through tests, attaching importance to pedagogical formation training, ensuring constant professional development of teachers, and making teaching an appealing profession. The teacher candidates stated the following on this issue:

'I think teacher candidates should keep being anxious even after they start teaching, should produce new methods considering that how they can teach students in new classes, and constantly develop themselves. They should also learn new pieces of information after they start teaching.' (S-6)

'We should focus more on the lack of content knowledge. Teaching should not only be about a choice, but also a talent.' (S-30)

'Symposiums should be organised for teachers. Teachers should be informed and their awareness be raised.' (S-15)

'Students should think carefully before choosing a profession. They should devote themselves to their job. They shouldn't be working in a job that they don't like, and hinder students' motivation to learn.' (S-15)

S-12, S13 and S-25 suggested that teachers should be trained with regard to successful communication with students. Besides, S-19 said the teacher-parent communication should be strengthened. Other teacher candidates stated the following regarding this issue:

'Employing young teachers in schools. Teachers' competency not being able to be measure through a single test.' (S-18)

'Teacher competency should be ensured.' (S-27)

'I think every teacher candidate should be subject to a psychological test. It should be observed whether he/she has a psychological well-being suitable for being a teacher.' (S-9)

3.3.3 Suggestions of the Teacher Candidates Receiving Pedagogical Formation Training For the Problems Under the Theme "The Basic Structure of the Education System"

The suggestions in this sections mostly included providing vocational guidance to students based on students' abilities, adopting student-centred instruction, increasing the amount of investment in education, abolishing private education, supervising teachers, eliminating exams at elementary schools, and selecting teachers not based on general ability tests, but a pedagogical content knowledge test. The teacher candidates stated the following on this issue:

'A council should be formed for the education system and constantly develop itself. The number of buildings should be increased, and moreover, there should be girls' schools and boys' schools.. Education should be student-centred, not teacher-centred. Formula that can be remembered easily should be used instead of rote learning. (S-26)

'I support removing tests from elementary school level. I think that individuals shouldn't learn by making them learn, but because they want to learn. The only thing that makes school nice and fun shouldn't be friends, certain materials should be determined and contents should be taught objectively.' (S-8)

'Teacher candidates should be tested only in their area of study, their KPSS score shouldn't be taken into consideration, but their score in the subject area test and their grade point average in the formation training.' (S-14)

Another teacher candidates (S-23) asserted that education should be delivered to all sections of the society, and in this respect, the state should make more investment in education, and there should be financial aid particularly for university students. One of the teacher candidates, S-9, stated the following on this issue:

'People shouldn't be educated based on their financial well-being. The education that every individual receives at school should be no different than others. Private or state, all schools should be combined under a single roof.' (S-9)

S-4 suggested that students should be provided education based on their abilities starting from high school, this education should be preparatory to their university education, and the university entrance examination should be structured according to the area students will study. S-30 emphasised that students' abilities should be determined in elementary school years, and they should be guided accordingly. Other teacher candidates who also argued that students should be guided based on their abilities said the following:

'Everybody is created as equal. But we do have different characteristics and talents. Let me give an example from myself, I have been a musician for 10 years, we don't take courses like history, geography, mathematics and chemistry. However, even if we don't take them, these courses pose an obstacle ahead of us. We can fail. The solution is students' receiving more education in the areas of their talents and skills. Well, everybody should also know about other courses as much as they need.' (S-20)

'People should be evaluated based on their talent and level of intelligence, in other words they should be

directed to areas in which they are successful. They should be tested in a single test. It should have multiple steps.' (S-17)

3.3.4 Suggestions of the Teacher Candidates Receiving Pedagogical Formation Training For the Problems Under the Theme "Curriculum Studies"

The suggestions related to curriculum studies mostly included putting more emphasis on visual instruction in education, organising the contents of coursebooks in a more clear and comprehensible way, simplifying the curriculum, enhancing the material equipment in schools, and distributing extra class resources. The teacher candidates stated the following on this issue:

'If there is a presentation being prepared, text fonts should be large and rare. Visuals should be included more since human memory mostly use the visual memory' (S-13)

'Coursebooks should be high quality and contents be more orderly, questions according to grade levels should be prepared, information should be presented in a way that is clear to children' (S-18)

'Curricula should be more planned, clear and the importance of courses should be according to their intensity.' (S-25)

'Schools should be equipped with materials.' (S-27)

'In addition to coursebooks, resources in the form of magazines that have more contents, and evaluate and measure students' skills should be provided every month or semester.' (S-29)

4. Discussion, Results and Suggestions

The primary aim of this study was to examine the views of the teacher candidates receiving pedagogical formation training on the problems of the Turkish education system. In the findings, the teacher candidates' views on the problems of the Turkish education system represented four themes. Additionally, the teacher candidates were informed of the problems in the Turkish education system, and could produce suggestions accordingly, but their suggestions related to the themes were quite limited. Their awareness of the problems can be explained by their competence of following the developments related to both the profession and the content area. This finding is supported by Şişman (2010) in his statement that the mastery of the content knowledge is not the only condition for quality instruction. Besides, it is also consistent with Bakioğlu's (1996) argument that teachers are not fully competent when they finish higher education, and their professional development is a process that starts when they start teaching and continues afterwards.

The problems of the Turkish education system according to the teacher candidates' responses were grouped under four themes in the present study. The order of themes from the most problematic to the least were the basic structure of the education system, training of educators, working conditions and curriculum studies. The problems that the teacher candidates thought were the most important within the Turkish education system were the testing system, instruction based on rote learning, teacher-student communication, and teachers' lack of pedagogical content knowledge.

The theme with the most frequent problems the teacher candidates observed were the basic structure of the education system. Among these problems, those that were emphasised the most were irregularity in the testing system and understanding of rote learning. Frequent changes in the high school and university entrance examinations were described as a distortion in the examination system. However, no suggestions were provided with regard to this issue. On the other hand, rote-learning based education represented learning without any thinking and comprehension. In the literature, there are studies that criticise rote learning (Taşdelen, 2012, Turan, 2006). Sekin (2008) points out that rote learning is a problem caused by improper instruction. According to this view, rote learning arises from aspects such as the objectives of the curriculum, coursebooks and teachers' in-class instruction method. Unlike this type of instruction, Dilek (2005) suggests an instruction that is based on students' abilities. Similarly, in the present study, an education system that features students abilities is presented as a suggestion in place of rote-learning based education, which seems to overlap with the findings of other studies. In the present study, other suggestions within this theme included reducing the class hours in schools, students' being tested progressively, abolishing private education, supervising teachers, and selecting teachers not through general ability tests, but pedagogical content tests.

The second theme with the most frequent problems observed by the teacher candidates was training of educators. The problems that were emphasised the most in this theme were the deficiencies in teacher-student communication, and teachers' lack of sufficient content knowledge. Darling – Hammond (2005) states that teachers should be prepared to and have certain skills for teaching students at high standards. Şişman (2010) points out that a teacher who has a command of his/her content area has self-confidence in the classroom since he/she knows what to teach. In this study conducted with the teacher candidates receiving pedagogical formation training, the fact that the lack of content knowledge being seen as a problem of the Turkish education system might be due to the confidence or the lack of confidence that the candidates felt about themselves. In this sense, further studies can focus on how pedagogical content knowledge can be improved. In her study focusing on the period between 1980-2014, Tofur (2015) reports that the decisions made related to teacher learning are the least

frequent theme in the Journal of Announcements. The headings that were focused most with regard to teacher learning are pedagogical formation, training practicum students and in-service training topics. Increasing the practices of teacher learning and improving teacher qualities constantly are of significance in terms of keeping teachers' professional and content knowledge up to date. In this regard, it can be argued that the competencies of the teacher candidates should be improved in a way that they can follow their subject area and the teaching profession. In the study, other suggestions provided within this theme included items such as emphasising the competency of pedagogical content knowledge, selecting individuals for the teaching profession more carefully, revising the testing system for teacher employment, giving courses that touch upon teacher-student and teacher-parent relationships, and ensuring teacher competency.

The third theme that consisted of the problems the teacher candidates observed in the education system was the working conditions. The problem that was emphasised the most within this theme was the physical conditions of the classroom environment. In a study with teacher candidates, Yılmaz and Altınkurt (2011) listed physical deficiencies and lack of necessary equipment among the significant problems of the education system. Eret Orhan (2017) stated that teacher candidates need to be more knowledgeable about working in different conditions such as village schools and multi-grade classes particularly. The suggestions in her study included contacting teachers, visiting schools with student groups in different conditions (e.g. regional primary boarding schools and village schools), and inviting teachers who work these conditions to education faculties. This is because teacher candidates who start the profession without knowing about working conditions may want to quit their job, or do not want to work in schools they are assigned to. Tofur, Aypay and Yücel (2016) report that working conditions are the most frequently focused item in the meetings of the national Education Council, while it is the second most frequent item in the indexes of the Journal of Announcements. The fact that this issue is commonly studied in the meetings of the National Education Council can be interpreted as that it is regarded as a problem. In the present study, the teacher candidates' suggestions within this theme were limited to increasing the number of schools by making use of the vacant land. In this respect, it can be said that the teacher candidates could not provide sufficient amount of suggestions related to this issue.

Curriculum studies is a set of practices and regulations related to what students gain from school during instructional activities (Tofur, 2015). The findings of this study showed that the theme the teacher candidates least perceived as a problem was curriculum studies. The problems related to curriculum studies were mostly about the inadequacy of coursebook contents, and teachers' not being able to equip individuals with necessary skills due to low quality instruction. In the studies examining the Journal of Announcements (Akalın, 2011; Cihan, 2010; Tofur, 2015), results are reported which show that practices regarding coursebooks are among the most frequently studied issues on curriculum. This picture is thought-provoking for the results obtained in the present study. The teacher candidates offered suggestions for this theme such as designing the coursebook contents more carefully, preparing magazines including activities to develop students' skills, and improving schools in terms of class materials.

In this study, the findings on the problems of the Turkish education system are limited to the perceptions of teacher candidates receiving pedagogical formation training. It is of significance in terms of providing insights about the understandings and perceptions of teacher candidates regarding the Turkish education system. As a result, the teacher candidates' views on the problems in the Turkish education system revealed four themes. The theme in which they thought most of the problems were observed was the basic structure of the education system, while the one with the least problems was curriculum studies. Moreover, the teacher candidates were observed to be informed of the problems of the education system. However, the suggestions they provided for all themes were quite limited. Suggestions that can be offered based on this study are as follows: (i) The study can be replicated with a larger sample including the views of students studying in the undergraduate programs of education faculties. (ii) Activities can be done to make teacher candidates think more about the problems of the Turkish education system, (iii) In pre-service training, teacher candidates' awareness can be raised by emphasising the necessity and importance of their professional development. (iv) Curricula can be planned in a way to develop students' talents and skills. Coursebooks can be enriched in terms of activities in this respect.

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