



## Investigation of Primary Teacher Training Process in Turkey and Azerbaijan \*

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### Abstract

The study aimed to examine the views of educators in Turkey and Azerbaijan on the primary teacher training process. The study was a qualitative study that aims to compare two countries. The sample of the study consisted of 24 people from Turkey and Azerbaijan, including three people in each group of experts, academicians, teachers, and teacher candidates who are selected through the criterion sampling method. The data collected through semi-structured interviews in the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years. The research data analyzed using the categorical analysis technique. The results demonstrated that similar problems occur at many points in the process of primary teacher training between Turkey and Azerbaijan. It was emphasized that personal and professional qualifications and psychological states of the candidates are required to be checked during the recruiting process in teacher training programs in both countries. Likewise, in the appointment for the profession, participants indicated that the content of the exam is inadequate; professional skills, field competencies and psychological status should be measured. In addition, the gap between theory and practice, problems faced during field experience, inadequate and outdated curriculum, proficiency problems of faculty members, unwillingly choosing the profession, lack of salary and status of teaching profession, physical and equipment shortages of teacher training institutions, and weak cooperation between schools and universities were the most highlighted headlines. In-service training was emphasized as important regarding self-development and it should be implemented in a qualified manner in cooperation with universities. The results were discussed within the framework of the related literature and suggestions for the teacher training process are developed.

### Keywords

Teacher training politics  
Teacher Training Model  
Primary teacher training  
Turkey  
Azerbaijan

### Article Info

Received: 12.01.2019

Accepted: 02.05.2021

Online Published: 02.25.2021

DOI: 10.15390/EB.2021.9246

\* This article is derived from Elmira Uzeirli's Master's thesis entitled "An investigation of classroom teacher training process in Turkey and Azerbaijan", conducted under the supervision of Gökhan Kılıçoğlu. The study was supported by the Eskişehir Osmangazi University Scientific Research Department. The project number is 2017-1357.

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## Introduction

Twentieth-century brought many radical changes to science, technology, economy, sociology, politics and industry. The radical changes in different areas shake the societies at their core and in the meantime, force them to make social changes. Schools, which are educational organizations, are at the center of social changes today as in the early days of modern times, and they play a major role in training both the new generations and the adults within the framework of new information, skills, behaviors and values by preserving the existing culture. Therefore, the countries should transform their education systems and schools for training which may be provided to a creative, innovative, unique and independent person who may survive the current and possible changes and who will prepare new periods of change for him/herself, for his/her country and the humanity.

Teachers and particularly the primary teachers serving at the primary education level where individuals gain their fundamental qualities and skills are expected to take an active role in the construction of a modern and developed society at the level of contemporary civilization toward the target pointed out by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and to adopt a modern education system. Teachers, the builders of the society, are the most important and strategic leading actors in fulfilling the expectations of the society from the education system (Bursalıoğlu, 2015).

Today, the roles, duties and missions of the teachers serving at the primary education level are changing. The ability to read and write, which was important until recently, is now replaced by literacy; information transfer or imposition by skill-building and directing to targets and contents; and knowing and understanding information is replaced by configuring and producing information by doing and experiencing at high-level cognitive scales such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. At this point, particularly the primary teachers in developing countries need to be trained by considering the individual, social and universal requirements of new generations. Thus, economically developing countries such as Turkey and Azerbaijan which have numerous social and cultural similarities should earnestly contemplate the quality training of the primary teachers who will adopt the modern education and training activities at the fundamental level, the method for selecting and the required qualifications, the content of the training, the presentation of the content, and keeping them updated within the system. This study addresses the primary teacher training process, which is a current and severe issue of the education systems in Turkey and Azerbaijan (Aksu, 2019; Arı & Akçaalan, 2018; Aylar, 2017; Ergun & Ersoy, 2014; Fatdayev, 2019; İlyasov, 2018; Şendağ & Gedik, 2015), which cooperate in many strategic areas such as military, energy, healthcare, industry, agriculture and livestock (Aydın, 2018; Tuzcuoğlu, 2019; Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı [TİKA], 2012), comparatively with a horizontal approach. The horizontal approach in comparative training studies is the studies that separately analyze the items to be compared and reveal the similarities and differences in the following stage (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2009). The theoretical framework of the research includes studies related to the primary teacher training process in Turkey and Azerbaijan, the issues addressed in this process, and the training of primary teachers.

### *Primary Teacher Training Process in Turkey and Azerbaijan*

Turkey has a long history in primary teacher training, and the operation and policies of the institutions training primary teachers are defined by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the Yükseköğretim Kurumu (YÖK), and the primary teachers are trained by faculties of education of universities. Faculties of education accept students who graduate from a high school and pass the Higher Education Institutions Exam (YKS) by the Yükseköğretim Kurumu (YÖK). The training period at the faculties of education is 4 years and the curriculum includes general knowledge, field training and professional training (MoNE, 2018) In the 4th grade, candidate primary teachers participate a 14-week internship in public schools within the scope of teaching practice course. Graduate primary teacher candidates should pass Public Personnel Selection Exam (KPSS) which is a multiple-choice exam about general culture, general competence, educational sciences and field training to be assigned to public schools affiliated to MoNE. The process of training and evaluating candidate primary teachers in Turkey continues after being assigned to MoNE, and the candidate teachers attend the "Candidate

Teacher Training Program" (654 hours). Within the scope of this program, the candidate primary teachers should actually work for at least one year and pass the performance evaluation process by evaluators such as education inspector, principal and advisor teacher as well as the written and verbal examinations by the Ministry (MoNE, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2017a, 2017b, 2018). In-service training of the primary teachers may be planned centrally and locally under the auspices of General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development, and trainings such as in-service improvement and off-the-job improvement, completing a graduate degree, getting a post-graduate degree and special field training may be provided through methods like seminars, classes and remote education.

In Azerbaijan, primary teachers are trained in colleges, pedagogic universities and education faculties. The long-established teacher training institution of Azerbaijan is Azerbaijan State Pedagogic University. The primary teacher candidates who want to be placed in teacher training institutions should pass the University Admission Exam by Student Admission State Commission (TQDK) consisting of questions mainly from Azerbaijani language, mathematics, history, literature and foreign languages (English, Russian, German, French, etc.). The education period of teacher training institutions is 4 years, and the curriculum prepared by the Ministry of Education includes general culture (25 AKTS), field training (96 AKTS) and teaching profession courses (119 AKTS) (Azərbaycan Respublikası Təhsil Nazirliyi [ARTN], 2014). Besides, primary teacher candidates in Azerbaijan also participate in a 14-week internship at public schools at the 3rd and 4th grades of their undergraduate education. For candidate primary teachers to be appointed to public schools, they must pass the central examination and interview for Teachers Admission (Müəllimlərin İşə Qəbulu, MIQ) consisting of 60 questions of vocational (Azerbaijani language and mathematics), methodical and logic questions held by the Ministry of Education (ARTN, 2017a). The primary teachers who served as teachers for 10 years and left their jobs at most 3 years ago can be appointed if they pass the interviews conducted by the ministry without entering the MIQ. Again, according to a new legal regulation made in 2017-2018, the principals of 10 schools with high academic success and who are reliable as determined by the ministry are entitled to choose their own teachers (without the obligation to pass the MIQ exam) (ARTN, 2017b). In Azerbaijan, in-service training is provided by the institutions accredited by the Ministry of Education such as Azerbaijan Teachers Development Center (Azərbaycan Muəllimləri Mərkəzi), the Institute of Professional Development of Education Personnel (Pəşəkar Development Institute of Təhsil Workers) and Innovative Technologies in Education (Təhsildə İnnovativ İnstitutları).

#### *Problems Encountered in Primary Teacher Training Process in Turkey and Azerbaijan*

Given the terms of the historical process, despite Turkey's long history of primary teacher training, it has many issues in training primary teachers that continue to be relevant. First of all, all teacher training institutions established to train primary teachers and the regulations made accordingly failed to satisfy the need for teachers, and it was attempted to fulfill the need for primary teachers through various methods such as reserve officer teachers (1960), substitute teachers (1961), teacher training by letter (1974), teacher training with an accelerated program (1975), those who serve in the army as teachers (1987) and unconditionally appointing anyone with university degree as teachers (1996) (Akyüz, 2018; Baskan, Aydın, & Madden, 2006). Although the education faculties of the universities were institutionally commissioned to train primary teachers under the regulations made in 1998, it stands out that the task description of MoNE and YÖK regarding primary teacher training is not clear and comprehensible; both institutions failed to make effective coordination and plan the supply-demand issue and the incorrect policies implemented today lead to a surplus number of teachers and the problem of unassigned teachers. Another important drawback is the admission of candidate primary teachers to the institutions training teachers and their acceptance to the profession without a personality test or regardless of whether they are willing to do this job or they bear the qualifications required by the profession (Ergun & Ersoy, 2014; Külekçi & Bulut, 2011). On the other hand, other problems emphasized in the body of literature are that the courses in the training program are mainly theoretical rather than practical; the internship is non-functional, ineffective and insufficient in time; candidates feel insufficient in practice (Aylar, 2017; Ergun & Ersoy, 2014; Paker, 2008; Şahin & Kartal, 2013; Uygun, Ergen, & Öztürk, 2011); the counseling of practice teachers at MoNE are insufficient

(Yılmaz, 2011); and that the institutions and education programs training primary teachers fail to develop a positive attitude toward the profession (Tok, 2011).

In addition to the problems mentioned about primary teacher training, the surplus number of candidate teachers per lecturers; the qualifications of instructors; their roles switching between making researches and being educative; excess course load; and the damage on the perception of the professionalism and the status of the profession caused by the possibility to be assigned as a teacher following a pedagogic formation training may be listed as other issues encountered (Seferoğlu, 2009; Şendağ & Gedik, 2015; Yıldırım, 2011). Therefore, it is possible to state that Turkey does not follow strong consistent policies that prioritize qualification in the primary teacher training process and employment and that there are many problems regarding the selection and employment of primary teachers arising from the training programs, universities and practice schools.

In Azerbaijan, there are similar problems in primary teacher training as in Turkey in certain aspects (Fatdayev, 2019), and the Ministry of Education pays special attention to the training and development of human resources to re-establish and to increase the quality of the national education system interrupted for many years during the Soviet period. Accordingly, the problem of training primary teachers has been emphasized further recently; researches were conducted to produce solutions to the existing problems and an action plan called "Government Strategies for the Development of Education" was prepared and implemented in 2013 (ARTN, 2015). There were also attempts to discuss the topics related to teacher training such as teacher training policies, development and professionalism of school teaching in detail by organizing many national and international conferences on these topics through government and university initiatives. These conferences elaborated on issues such as establishing a teacher training system consistent with international experiences and modern demands, professional use of new technologies in education and the work insurance of education personnel (ARTN, 2014, 2015, 2016). When the studies addressing the primary teacher training process in Azerbaijan (Aksu, 2019; Arı & Akçaalan, 2018; Fatdayev, 2019; İlyasov, 2018) are reviewed, it stands out that there are severe problems such as the failure to choose qualified teacher candidates; low status of the teaching profession and limited career development; failure to put the theoretical classes into practice; non-functional and ineffective internship; an outdated training program that does not meet the requirements; and the failure of higher education institutions, which are weak in pedagogical training, to train primary teachers.

#### *Comparative Primary Teacher Training Studies in Turkey and Azerbaijan*

There are many studies comparing the primary teacher training process in Turkey with other countries (Aytaç & Er, 2018; Ergun & Ersoy, 2014; Kilimci, 2006; Külekçi & Bulut, 2011; Senemoğlu, 1992). The United Kingdom, Germany, United States of America, France and Japan are particularly the most analyzed countries. In the comparative analysis of the structural arrangements in teacher training from 1970s to date, it is seen almost in all countries that shifting primary teacher training to higher education level, extending the education period, trying new training models and more scientific primary teacher training at an academic level significantly increased the quality in primary teacher training (Yıldırım & Türkoğlu, 2018). Besides, another point that stands out when Turkey is compared to other countries that the teacher training processes are structured under the influence of the ideological, political, sociological, economical and administrative characters of the countries, and primary teachers are trained by considering such variables (Duran, 1999). Although it is difficult to compare with Turkey in many aspects including economy, sociology, politics, geography, etc., countries such as Finland and the Netherlands that place great importance on primary teacher training, steadily maintain their success in international PISA comparisons (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2003, 2020), and that refer to the teachers as the source of their success (Simola, 2005) have been the subject matters of comparative studies on primary teacher training in Turkey (Ergun & Ersoy, 2014). These countries, unlike Turkey, effectively address practice training in teacher training processes, and the practice training starts in the first year of the process and extends over the process. In Finland, which places particular importance on primary teacher training, candidate teachers are

elected to teacher training programs through critical cognitive, emotional and behavioral evaluations by considering demand-supply balance; the practice classes are held in the practice schools under the education faculties, and teachers are generally appointed at the end of the training process after a second elimination (Aytaç & Er, 2018). In the Netherlands, students begin the program without an examination, but they are assessed in terms of the personality traits required by the profession as well as mathematics and language skill levels. In case they fail, they have to quit the primary teacher program. Thus, candidate students understand whether primary teaching is a proper profession for them during this period by both familiarizing themselves and the profession (Snoek, 2011).

When the comparative training studies regarding Azerbaijan are reviewed, it stands out that rather than Azerbaijan's teacher training processes, the education systems of other ex-Soviet Turkic countries, Caucasian countries and Eastern European countries are compared, and it has similar problems with these countries established after 1991 in many aspects. These researches (Guliyev, 2016; Silova, 2009; Silova, Johnson, & Heyneman, 2007; Steiner-Khamsi, Harris Van-Kueren, Silova, & Chachkhiani, 2008) state that Azerbaijan's educational infrastructure, education maintenance and registration ratio experience severe deterioration as in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; the budget allocated to education fall behind OECD average like Georgia and Armenia as well as these Turkic republics; reputability of teaching profession is poor; and students with low points are trained in teaching programs. Besides, it is seen that there are problems in supporting the initiatives of the youngsters in Azerbaijan as in Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine, and that the skills of the youngsters and the quality of education do not match the market needs and expectations (Ermsone, 2019). On the other hand, it is mentioned that Azerbaijani teachers don't use modern education techniques and methods, unlike Estonia, and that their training skills are poor (Shukakidze, 2013).

#### *Comparative Education Studies Between Turkey and Azerbaijan*

Turkey is one of the countries with which the education system and teacher training process in Azerbaijan is compared the most. Having a lot of similarities such as their lifestyles, cultures, values and views of education, Azerbaijan and Turkey are collaborating in politics, military, energy, healthcare, industry, agriculture and livestock, and other fields, especially starting from the period Azerbaijan gained its freedom (Aydın, 2018; TİKA, 2012; Tuzcuoğlu, 2019). After splitting from the Soviet Union after 1991 and declaring its independence, Azerbaijan went into the intention and effort to develop close corporation with Turkey, establish a modern education plan and system, and imitate Turkey to modernize its institutional structure in education as in other domains. In the first education law of Azerbaijan dated 1992, it is seen that Turkey's education law is imitated and the education systems of both countries are structured toward the same purposes (Fatdayev, 2019; Ulaş, 2007). Actually, Azerbaijan failed to allocate sufficient resources to reforms and innovations in education due to economic problems in the country during the post-Soviet transformation period and the importance laid on the petroleum-based industry (Silova, 2009). On the other hand, although the country gained its independence, the highly centralized Soviet management approach preserves itself in the management and organizational structure of the education system (Guliyev, 2016). However, the teacher training policies play a crucial role to harmonize the changing needs and the education system, and to provide a sustainable education throughout the political, economic and social changes of the post-Soviet bloc (Coolahan, 2002; Silova, 2009). For this purpose, specialists were sent to countries such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, Japan and Turkey to develop policies and processes for the education system and teacher training with the support from World Bank in 1999; the education policies in such countries were analyzed; the reforms deemed suitable were made; and integration with the education system and teacher training processes of Europe and Turkey were regarded (Aksu, 2019; Ulaş, 2007).

Similarly, Turkey made changes in its teacher training approach with the loans from the World Bank in 1998, a year before Azerbaijan. The relevant literature shows that Turkey's education system and primary teacher training processes are important for Azerbaijan, and the cooperation of the two

countries in education is gradually increasing both in primary education and higher education through the agreements signed (Ersanlı, 2015; Fatdayev, 2019; Ulaş, 2007). Academically, the comparative training studies between two countries accelerated after 2000s. Among the studies conducted, those comparing education systems (Çeltikçi, 2013; Kırcaalili, 2001; Kol, 2019; Ulaş, 2007), in-service training of the teachers (Hasanova, 2019), autonomies of primary teachers (Uğurlu & Qahramanova, 2016), professional attitudes of candidate teachers (Durmuşoğlu, Yanık, & Akkoyunlu, 2009), English teaching programs (Ersanlı, 2015) and overall teacher training processes and models (Aksu, 2019; Arı & Akçaalan, 2018) stand out. However, it is seen that these studies consist mainly of screening model and that the data set consists of document review alone (Yıldırım & Türkoğlu, 2018). On the other hand, the comparative primary teacher training studies in Turkey mainly discuss Western countries, and there are limited numbers of comparisons with Azerbaijan which has connections and collaborations in historical, cultural, socio-economical and strategic areas with Turkey (Fatdayev, 2019; Ulaş, 2007). At this point, it is understood that a comprehensive primary teacher training study between two countries is required.

The collaborations in education and teacher training areas, particularly in the training processes of the primary teachers serving in primary schools where students gain their basic skills are as important as economic cooperation and collaboration (Ersanlı, 2015). As it is also mentioned in the theoretical framework, Azerbaijan and Turkey are experiencing severe problems in different aspects of primary teacher training processes, and these processes should be reconsidered in many aspects. To improve the primary teacher training processes of both countries, to make it more qualified, to restructure in light of modern developments and to increase the cooperation of both countries in primary teacher training, the primary teacher training processes should be extensively considered; the modern qualifications expected from primary teachers, conditions for admission to the profession, and the problems encountered should be presented from different dimensions in detail; and these problems should be eliminated through policy suggestions to be developed. At this point, it is important to comprehensively analyze the primary teacher training processes of these countries by considering the views of different stakeholders. Besides, considering the views of candidate teachers, teachers, specialists (bureaucrats) and academicians in both countries on primary teacher training processes, and comparing the similarities and differences may contribute to the national and international primary teacher training literature and these may be useful to better understand the problems encountered in current primary teacher training processes, to review and evaluate primary teacher training policies, and to improve the current collaborations between two countries.

### *Purpose*

The purpose of this study is to analyze and compare the views of Turkish and Azerbaijani educators regarding primary teacher training processes. Besides, it is intended to contribute to the primary teacher training policies and the possible regulations in education and teacher training areas of both countries.

### *Sub-purposes*

- 1- What are the opinions of educators in Turkey and Azerbaijan about the expected qualifications of primary teachers?
- 2- What are the opinions of the educators in Turkey and Azerbaijan regarding the conditions to enter primary teacher training institutions and the profession?
- 3- What are the opinions of the educators in Turkey and Azerbaijan regarding the problems in the pre-service primary teacher training process?
- 4- What are the opinions of educators in Turkey and Azerbaijan about in-service training of primary teachers?

## Method

This is a qualitative research, and a comparative descriptive study as it intends to analyze and compare the opinions of the educators in Turkey and Azerbaijan regarding the primary teacher training processes. Qualitative research is defined as a research where qualitative data collection techniques such as observation, interview and document analysis are used and where a qualitative process is followed to realistically and holistically present perceptions and events in the natural environment (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). This is also a comparative study. In comparative studies, a research subject is determined, and similarities and differences between research units such as individuals, groups, organizations or countries are compared (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The studies focusing on the current status of the teacher training processes in the countries intended to be compared in comparative studies on teacher training and comparing the teacher training processes of the countries through similarities and differences are classified as descriptive studies (Afdal, 2019).

### *Sample*

The sample of the study includes 24 participants in total consisting of three academicians, three specialist bureaucrats, three teachers and three candidate teachers from Turkey and Azerbaijan chosen through criterion sampling of purposive sampling techniques (Creswell, 2013). Considering that the knowledge and experiences of the participants regarding the primary teacher training process are important in choosing the samples, the criterion of “minimum 3-year work experience in a field related to teacher training in the ministry” was determined for bureaucrats; “having publications on teacher training” for academicians; “minimum five-year teaching experience in a public school” for teachers; and “being a senior student in the department of the primary teaching of education faculty” was determined for the candidate teachers. Half of the participants are men, and the other half are women; seniority of the participants, except for the candidate teachers, varies between 5 and 30 years. The ages of the candidate teachers range between 21 and 25 years, and the ages of the participants range between 31 and 66 years. The academicians in Turkey are serving in Ankara and Eskişehir as professors, and those in Azerbaijan are serving in Baku as a professor, associate professor and doctor.

While determining the participants, those who volunteer among the academicians from the universities in Ankara and Eskişehir with multiple studies on primary teacher training were chosen due to convenience, and information was obtained from Eskişehir Provincial Directorate of National Education Research and Development unit regarding the selection of the teachers. The candidate teachers were chosen among those with grade point averages above 3 in state universities in Eskişehir and Baku. Based on the criterion determined for the selection of ministry bureaucrats, the volunteers among the bureaucrats serving in General Directorates of Teacher Training of Turkish and Azerbaijani Ministries of National Education. In the selection of the academicians in Azerbaijan, one of the central universities training primary teachers in Baku was chosen, and the volunteer academicians with studies on primary teacher training were selected. In the selection of candidate teachers, the volunteers from these universities with grade point averages above 3 were selected. Regarding the determination of the primary teachers in Baku, information was obtained from a principal serving in a central school in Baku, two schools were determined, and three teachers fulfilling the criteria were interviewed.

To maintain the confidentiality of the participants in direct citations in study findings, anonymous names Ali, Okan, Teoman, Demir, Mert, Fatma, Derya, Bilge, Neva, Ebru and Mustafa Kemal are used for the participants from Turkey, and Altay, Gıyas, Akşin, Azer, Firuz, Zarife, Amina, Günel, Nezzrin, Ayten, Mehri are used for the participants from Azerbaijan. While presenting the citations of the participants in findings sections, the abbreviation T is used for teachers, CT for candidate teachers, A for academicians, and MB for ministry bureaucrats.

### *Data collection tool*

The study data was collected through a semi-structured interview form consisting of 17 questions were used, and the participants were interviewed face-to-face. Depending on the accessibility of the resources and the attributes of the data intended to be collected in the research, the interviews are

classified as structured interviews, unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews, ethnographic interviews and focus interviews (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2014). In semi-structured interview, the questions are prepared by the researcher in advance; new questions may be asked based on the developments during the interview; and it allows the questions to be re-arranged and discussed by providing partial flexibility to the participants (Karasar, 2009).

The questions in the semi-structured interview form were created by considering the primary teacher training literature and the opinions of two specialists on primary teacher training. In the beginning, the interview form consisted of 10 questions. However, the specialists stated that those questions would be inadequate, they were not sufficiently descriptive, they needed to be elaborated, and they did not fully cover the purpose and the sub-purpose of the research. According to the specialist views and approvals, 7 questions were added to the interview form and the total number of questions increased to 17. Before the interviews, trial interviews were made with two candidate teachers to test whether the questions in the interview form were clear, comprehensible and valid. The interview form was finalized by changing the content of a question due to a clarity problem as a result of the interviews. The questions of the semi-structured interview form questions to be used for the interviews in Azerbaijan were translated into Azerbaijani Turkish by one of the researchers, and a specialist assisted to check the correctness of the translation. Two mistranslated words were replaced with correct words with the help of the specialist.

#### ***Data Collection***

The data of this research was collected during the spring semester of the 2016-2017 academic year and the fall semester of the 2017-2018 academic year. The data collection was started in Turkey in the spring semester of the 2016-2017 academic year and the data was collected in Azerbaijan during the fall semester of 2017-2018 academic year after the summer vacation period. The data was collected through interviews. The participants were informed about the content of the interview and the questions to be asked before the interview. Interviews were recorded with a recorder and an informed consent form was used regarding the confidentiality of the interview and the voluntary participation of the participants. As one participant did not consent to voice recording during the interviews, the answers were recorded with notes taken by a researcher. The interviews were conducted face-to-face on the dates set following an appointment request via phone calls and e-mails. The academicians were interviewed at the universities, specialists in the Ministries of National Education, teachers in the schools they worked, students at the universities or in the dormitories they stayed in. Within the scope of the research, a participant from Turkey gave short answers to the questions asked, and the interview lasted 25 minutes. The length of other interviews varied between 43 and 55 minutes.

#### ***Data Analysis***

Within the scope of the research, semi-structured interviews with the participants were redacted and 96 pages of raw data text were achieved in total. Data obtained from open-ended questions were analyzed using the categorical analysis technique from content analysis types. The basic procedure in content analysis is gathering similar codes within the framework of certain concepts and themes, organizing and interpreting them in a manner comprehensible by the reader (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The categorical analysis generally requires separating data obtained into units and then grouping these units in categories per their common aspects. In this process, (i) data coding, (ii) theme creation, (iii) theme editing (iv) interpretation of the findings steps were followed (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). In the research, first, the answers given by the participants were coded by considering the main purpose and sub-purposes of the research. Following the coding process, the codes obtained were gathered and their common aspects were determined and classified, and categories (sub-themes) were set. This step was followed by the creation of the theme constituting the outline of the research, and 4 main themes were determined. In the final stage of data analysis, the findings achieved were interpreted with direct citations to add meaning to the data and to explain the relations between the findings (Corbin & Strauss, 2007).



### ***Validity and reliability***

The procedures conducted to ensure plausibility, confirmability, transferability and internal consistency to provide validity and reliability are given below in detail.

***Plausibility:*** The research process and results should be clear, consistent and confirmable by other researchers. To ensure plausibility, strategies such as long-term interaction, deep focus data collection, data triangulation, peer-review and participant affirmation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this research, it was attempted to form a long-term interaction with the participants and collect thorough data by extending the time of face-to-face interviews and asking questions in depth. In the qualitative research, the code, category, themes achieved, and the research process were reviewed and confirmed by an expert academician, and corrections were made based on the recommendations. Finally, confirmation of the participants was requested to determine to what extent the results achieved represent reality.

***Transferability:*** In qualitative researches, detailed reporting of the data collected and the explanation of the method used by the researcher to achieve the results are among the important criteria of validity (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2016; Merriam, 2015; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). A substantial definition of how the research was conducted, choosing the sampling with purposive sampling technique and ensuring maximum diversity, the definition of the environment and participants by considering their confidentiality, supporting and proving the findings with participant opinions, research notes and citations from documents strengthen the transferability (Merriam, 2015; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this research, the procedures in the sample, data collection tool, data collection and analysis processes are elaborated and reported in the Method section. Besides, it was attempted to provide information about the participants without identifying them and to choose a rich participant group consisting of candidate teachers, teachers, academicians and bureaucrats from both countries upon determining the criteria. Again, a detailed description is provided in the Findings section by presenting the participant opinions through direct citations.

***Consistency (reliability):*** To ensure internal consistency of the findings in qualitative researches, the consistency of the opinions, consensus and agreement between the researchers regarding the codes and themes achieved from the research data are important (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994). It was attempted to ensure a consensus among the coders through the comparison and multiple analyses of the codes and themes achieved by the researchers to provide internal consistency (reliability) in the research. Reliability of the research was calculated with the reliability formulation of Miles and Huberman (1994) (Percentage of Agreement =  $\text{Consensus} / (\text{Consensus} + \text{Dissent}) \times 100$ ). In the interviews made in Turkey, the researchers reached a consensus of  $(44/57) \times 100 = 77,19\%$ ; and in the interviews conducted in Azerbaijan, the consensus rate was  $(45/46) \times 100 = 97,82\%$ . As the percentages of the agreement were above 70%, the results obtained are considered acceptable (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

***Confirmability:*** In a qualitative research, the researchers are expected to confirm the results achieved through data and to present a reasonable explanation to the reader (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The raw data of the research was saved, and it was attempted to ensure confirmability by clearly associating the results with the data exhibited through the detailed explanation of research phases.

### ***Limitations***

In Turkey, pursuant to the protocols by MoNE and YÖK in June in 2018-2019 academic year spring semester, the "Directive on Teaching Practice of Practice Students in Educational Institutions Affiliated to the Ministry of National Education" numbered 2729 was updated. This new directive intends to plan the teaching practice more effectively within the framework of cooperation and active communication between the parties, to establish solid collaborations between practice schools and faculties, to obligate the observation of the candidate teachers minimum 4 times through the active participation of the lecturers, and to extend and to increase the practice period over time. The new legal arrangements are excluded from the research as the data collection was performed before the legal

arrangement was made. Besides, primary teacher training has multiple aspects; and the research addresses the qualification of primary teacher, conditions to enter the primary teacher training institutions and the profession, problems encountered in pre-service primary teacher training process, and in-service training aspects.

## Results

This section of the research includes the findings obtained upon analyzing the data from the interviews. The findings are discussed under 4 themes; *qualifications of primary teacher, conditions to enter the primary teacher training institutions and the profession, problems encountered in pre-service primary teacher training process, and in-service training.*

### *The qualifications expected from primary teachers*

The theme “Qualification of Primary Teacher” is reviewed in two categories which are “Professional Qualifications” and “Personal Qualifications.” The distribution regarding the subcategories determined under the categories “Professional Qualifications” and “Personal Qualifications” are given in Table 1 with frequencies. The frequency number indicates the number of participants mentioning the subcategory achieved.

**Table 1.** Participant opinions about the qualifications expected from primary teachers

		Türkiye		Azerbaycan		
Categories		Subcategories	f	Subcategories	f	
Qualifications of primary teachers	Professional qualifications	Subject Matter Knowledge	9	Subject Matter Knowledge	11	
		Proper communication with children	5	Proper communication with children	8	
		Similarity	Love for the profession	4	Love for the profession	2
			Being open to self-development and innovation	3	Being open to self-development and innovation	3
		Class management skill	1	Class management skill	1	
	Difference	Cooperation with families	1	Good command in child psychology	7	
		Motivation	2	Good command of both universal and national values and culture	1	
		Patient	3	Patient	3	
	Personal Qualifications	Similarity	Cheerful, compassionate, tolerant	2	Cheerful, compassionate and tolerant	1
			Respectful	1	Respectful	1
Difference		Self-confidence	2			
	Responsible	1				

Good command of subject matter knowledge is a professional qualification of a primary teacher highlighted the most by the participants from Turkey and Azerbaijan. The participants think that the primary teachers need to have good subject matter knowledge and they should train themselves to be able to answer all the questions of the children during the early days of their education. Teoman (T) from Turkey expresses his opinion regarding this finding saying, “A qualified primary teacher should have improved him/herself in every subject. I mean, he/she should have a good command of and improved him/herself on every course from life sciences to the Turkish language, from mathematics to culture and free activities,” while Leyla (CT) from Azerbaijan expresses her opinion saying, “A teacher should have an extensive knowledge and skills on his/her subject matter; the more he/she masters in his/her subject matter, the more self-confident he/she would be.” Another finding of the research similarly emphasized in both countries is “good communication with the children.” The participants think that teachers should be able to lower themselves to the children’s level, they need to listen to the children with patience and they may not do this job unless they love children. Neva (T) from Turkey expresses her opinion on this finding, “We can

say that the most important thing is that the teacher should be able to lower him/herself to the child's level, to listen to and understand the child, and to love the child. I think primary teaching is different from any other major area course or any other field, and it is very important to lower oneself to the child's level;" and Altay (MB) from Azerbaijan reflects the importance of communication with children and loving children saying, "The primary teachers should love the children more. He/she should know how to communicate with them. Because the children before him/her will learn everything from him/her, and they will pattern themselves after him/her. Children should be loved by the adults so that they show love when they get old."

Other matters similarly emphasized by the participants from both countries are continuous self-development of the primary teacher, being open to innovations, to love teaching and to have class management skills. Regarding the personal qualifications of primary teachers, the participants of both countries similarly indicate that a primary teacher should be "patient, cheerful, compassionate, tolerant and respectful." Mert (A) from Turkey attracts attention to the given personal qualifications with his opinion, "Given the personal qualifications, a primary teacher needs to be compassionate, patient, tolerant, respectful. A primary teacher should bear all the good qualifications of a person."

The opinions of the participants from the two countries differ at certain points. The bureaucrats from Turkey, unlike Azerbaijan, accented that primary teachers should motivate the students and cooperate with families while almost half of the participants of all statuses from Azerbaijan emphasized that a primary teacher should have sound knowledge on child psychology. In this direction, Zarife (A) highlights knowing the child's psychology and choosing an approach accordingly saying, "One should have good knowledge of psychology; because they are educating students without being aware of anything. Every child has different psychology. This is why a teacher should know psychology very well... He/she should understand the children's psychology and act accordingly." Besides, some participants from Turkey, unlike those from Azerbaijan, indicate that a primary teacher should have personal qualifications such as self-confidence and responsibility, and Nezrin (T) from Azerbaijan emphasizes that a primary teacher should pass on the national values and culture to the students from a universal perspective, "There should be the national spirit. I mean, he/she should be able to teach our national values and the particulars of our culture to the students. He/she should have a broad world view."

#### *Opinions regarding the conditions to enter the primary teacher training institutions and the profession*

The distribution reflecting the opinions of the participants from Turkey and Azerbaijan regarding the conditions to enter the primary teacher training institutions and the profession are given in Table 2 with frequencies.

**Table 2.** Participant opinions regarding the conditions to enter the teacher training institutions and the profession

		Turkey		Azerbaijan	
Categories	Subcategories	f	Subcategories	f	f
Admission to teacher training institutions	Similarity	Personal qualifications	10	Personal qualifications	11
		Professional qualifications	8	Professional qualifications	9
		Psychological state	4	Psychological state	7
		Professional skills and field competences	6	Professional skills and field competences	6
Entry to the profession	Similarity	Content of the interview test	4	Content of the interview test	1
		Psychological state	3	Psychological state	3
		Insufficiency of exam content	2	Insufficiency of exam content	3
		Appointment without examination	2	Appointment without examination	1
	Difference	School-based selection	1	Unwillingness to be appointed to schools outside Baku	2

Participants from both countries similarly emphasize that the personal and professional qualifications need to be measured in conditions to enter the teacher training institutions. Regarding this finding, Azer (A) from Azerbaijan has a similar opinion with his counterparts in Turkey, expressing *“If a student enters the department of music, his/her ability of music is evaluated; if he/she enters the department of painting, his/her ability to draw is evaluated; and if he/she enters the department of physical education, then his/her abilities in this field are evaluated. So, the pedagogic skills of the students entering faculties of education should be considered. The verbal skills, attitudes of the students and regarding primary teachers communication with children, behaviors, psychological state, etc. should be tested. There are, for example, tests to measure the expediency to the profession; I think they may be used for measurement,”* and he attracts attention to the need of measuring the qualifications required to be a teacher while choosing candidate primary teachers. Another point similarly emphasized by the participants from both countries is the requirement to perform *psychological tests* in choosing the candidate primary teachers. Bilge (CT) from Turkey expresses her opinion on the matter saying, *“I think, it should be first considered whether the student is psychologically suitable to be a teacher. Because we have many friends with psychological disorders. We may even have a disorder, but we don’t know. For this reason, they need to test the psychological statuses of people before exams, success, or knowledge.”*

The participants from both countries similarly express that professional skills, field competencies and psychological states of the candidate primary teachers need to be measured, and that the content of the test does not suit the teacher training program. Besides, some participants, despite the difference in frequency, similarly point out that in primary teacher appointments, the primary teachers should not only be elected through test-based central examinations such as KPSS or MIQ, and that the content of the oral examinations should be well prepared. Ali (MB) from Turkey emphasizes that primary teachers should not only be elected through KPSS and that there should be a performance-based measurement process by expressing, *“The teachers should not be appointed only by KPSS point. We need to choose people who may be called qualified teachers through perfectly developed scales for field competencies or performance evaluation scales.”* The statement of Fatma (A) indicating, *“Teachers are appointed with KPSS examination. I don’t think that this exam measures the qualifications of a candidate teacher. This is rather an elimination exam. This is not an exam to measure the class management skill, approach or other qualifications of a primary teacher,”* supports this opinion. Likewise, there is the same problem in Azerbaijan, and Akşin (MB) from Azerbaijan presents this problem saying, *“Primary teachers are taking a test consisting of 60 questions covering Azerbaijani language, mathematics, logic and curriculum (program). Knowledge of the primary teacher on other lessons may not be measured by this test. I think test questions to cover all classes which the primary teachers passed should be prepared. Of course, only testing is not enough to appoint a teacher. There should be an interview and the candidate teacher should prepare and present a lesson.”* Another similar point emphasized by one participant from each country is a recruitment process without examination. The participants point out that the candidate primary teachers should be chosen by a serious measurement-evaluation process before starting the undergraduate education, and they should start working without examination once the training process is over.

There are differences between the two countries at certain points regarding the appointment. A teacher from Turkey states that the school and the principal of the school should be entitled to choose a teacher with whom they want to work, and thus, the candidate teachers should be entitled to be chosen for the job. Some participants from Azerbaijan, unlike Turkey, indicate that the candidate primary teachers scoring high from the exams do not want to work in cities other than Baku and therefore, other cities lack qualified teachers, and this problem needs to be resolved through the incentives. Filiz (A) explains this situation as follows:

*“There is a criterion among the current appointment criteria that I disagree, which is the teachers with high scores are accepted by and choose to go to schools in Baku. There is an injustice here. The best teachers gather in Baku, others go to different cities, and thus, other cities fall behind Baku in terms of education. As an educator, this situation disturbs me.”*

***Problems encountered in pre-service primary teacher training process***

The categories created based on the opinions of the participants from Turkey and Azerbaijan regarding the problems encountered in pre-service primary teacher training process are given in Table 3 with frequencies.

**Table 3.** Participant opinions about the problems encountered in pre-service primary teacher training process

<b>Turkey</b>		<b>Azerbaijan</b>	
Categories	f	Categories	f
Failures in practice and internship	12	Failures in practice and internship	12
Incompetency between theory and practice	7	Incompetency between theory and practice	9
Outdated and inadequate training program	6	Outdated and inadequate training program	6
Similarity Reluctant choice of profession	3	Reluctant choice of profession	7
Incompetence of lecturers	4	Incompetence of lecturers	9
Wage and status issues	4	Wage and status issues	5
Physical insufficiency of the institutions	2	Physical insufficiency of the institution	2
Insufficient cooperation between school and university	4	Insufficient cooperation between school and university	1
Training surplus teachers	4	Student admission with low points	4
Difference Inconsistent training policy	1	Insufficiency in the implementation of candidate teacher	5
High dependence to procedures	1		

Although the opinions of participants from both countries regarding the problems encountered in pre-service primary teacher training process have different frequencies, they exhibit similarities in many aspects. First of all, the primary problem pointed by the participant stands out to be the problems encountered in practice and internship. The participants from both countries accented that the internship schools should be properly selected, and they emphasized the need to do internships with socio-economic and cultural differences. Besides, incompetence of some practice teachers, length and insufficient content of internship, and the lack of practice schools of teacher training institutions are similar points indicated in both countries. Derya (MB) from Turkey expresses the insufficient length of internship saying, *“Two semesters of an internship is definitely not enough. Maybe, 1 hour, 2 hours per each semester. I mean, the student should be aware that he/she is studying in education faculty and he/she will be working at a school in the future. Until the last year, unfortunately, a student does not even imagine that he/she will be working in a school before attending a practice course... Therefore, the internship should start at the beginning of education and training, and from simple to complex.”* Mehri (CT) from Azerbaijan attracts attention to the qualifications of practice teachers during the internship, *“There is a quality issue about the practice teachers. Practice teachers may sometimes fail to do their jobs properly. They may even alienate a student from the school during this period.”* The participants in Turkey similarly state that there are problems in selecting qualified practice teachers, sometimes it is not possible to experience a good practice process, and even some students go to schools just to sign the papers. Mustafa (T) from Turkey makes the following statements regarding the internship schools and practice teachers:

*“The teachers in the internship schools should be selected very properly; because many teachers do not teach anything to the intern student, and they don’t mind whether the interns come or go as long as they are paid. Or they are incapable of teaching anything. There are also problems in practice schools. Namely, students may be appointed to a school in a village, a school in a region with a different culture, or a school where a turf fire is lit or where the roof leaks. But the internship schools are ordinary schools with required physical qualifications. Then, very severe*

*problems may also arise. Therefore, the internship conditions should match the conditions of the schools they will be appointed."*

As it is seen, the participants from both countries mention that there are issues about practice and internship, and they similarly point out that "theory may not be put into practice" in the primary teacher training process. The participants emphasize that the classes in the primary teacher training process are rather theoretical and are not supported with practice. Kemal (CT) from Turkey explains this situation as follows.

*"I think, knowledge remains a theory. There is nothing related to practice. I mean, there is always a mode based on memorizing. I saw this in the first 3 years I received this education. During the internship, we only tried to learn something through observation. Failure to put into practice and to only memorize them are among the major problems."*

Demir (A) also from Turkey says, *"The problem here is that the courses are not intended for practice. We are giving too many theoretical lessons. We are uploading too much information to a candidate teacher. The student fails to associate the information acquired with each other. He/she has no idea about how to teach the information acquired to a child. We are only giving theoretical information, but we want the students to practice this information once they become a teacher. We forget that we are not teaching a student how to teach. This is the biggest problem here. Practice hours are very short. This is one of the biggest problems,"* and he points out that the lessons in the education faculty are based on theory and far from practice; on the other hand, Altay (MB) from Azerbaijan attracts attention to a similar problem with his opinion, *"We should aim to be successful in lessons which the student benefit in his/her career and which will train a student to be a qualified teacher rather than being successful in many lessons. There should be practical lessons. In addition to this, it should be considered to teach the theoretical lessons by putting them into practice."*

In both countries and especially in Azerbaijan, an important problem similarly highlighted is the incompetence of educators. While Giyas (MB) from Azerbaijan emphasizes the incompetency of lecturers in education faculties in Azerbaijan expressing, *"Another important issue is the lack of competence of some lecturers in their fields, the use of old methods in their classes, their failure to use computers or refuse to accept the new system and to approach this neglectfully,"* Mert (A) refers that the situation in Turkey is not different from Azerbaijan with this opinion saying, *"We do not have too much qualified teachers. We are still short in the number of instructors and lecturers. The instructors and lecturers are a problem both in terms of numbers and quality."*

The insufficient and outdated education program with regards to social, cultural, artistic, and sportive aspects is one of the similar issues in the primary teacher training process in both countries. Regarding this issue, Derya (MB) emphasizes the deficiencies in the primary teacher training program in Turkey saying, *"We have lots of deficiencies in the curriculum for a person to develop domains, sportive, artistic, cultural or different skills where he/she can exhibit his/her richness;"* and Altay (MB) expresses his opinion and mentions about the insufficiency of the education program and materials in Azerbaijan, and the inconsistency of the education programs implemented in the schools and offered to primary teachers with each other saying, *"Above all, the training materials used are very old. Everything is changing, there are innovations, new methods and applications are launched. We are still training teachers with the materials and old course books inherited from the Soviets. We are implementing a new method curriculum, but we are training the teachers who will work with this method using old books."*

Other similar problems encountered in the primary teacher training process as mentioned by the participants from both countries are the low wages and statuses of teachers, the idea that anyone can be a teacher, and the "at least I can be a teacher" approach adopted by those who do not love the profession, physical insufficiency of the institutions, lack of cooperation between the schools and the

universities, and surplus teacher training. Derya (MB) from Turkey points out the problem in the cooperation between the schools and universities as follows:

*“Education faculties should cooperate with the schools. This is our greatest effort as the General Directorate of Teacher Training. Not only the students but also the academicians have very weak bonds with schools. I mean, they are lecturing, but in another world. He/she might not have lectured for 20 years, but became a professor. Yet, he/she mentions that you are his/her student. The youngest student he/she has ever seen is 19 years old and you will perhaps solve the problem of pre-school 6-year group. Not only the students but also the academicians should be involved in the cooperation with the school and in the practice.”*

There are differences in problems mentioned by the participants from Turkey and Azerbaijan at certain points. While some participants in Turkey, unlike those in Azerbaijan, emphasize that there is no consistent policy in primary teacher training and that this process depends too much on the procedures; a significant part of the participants in Azerbaijan highlight that the candidate teacher process which will last one year after starting to work remained as legal arrangements on paper, and never put into practice; and that this internship period is important for teachers' adaptation to the profession and to see their deficiencies. Some participants from Azerbaijan also point out differently that candidate primary teachers are accepted to education faculties with low points, and that this negatively affects the quality of the primary teacher and the quality of the education.

#### ***In-service training***

The distribution of the categories determined based on the opinions of the participants from Turkey and Azerbaijan on “in-service training” are given in Table 4 with frequencies.

**Table 4.** Participant opinions about the in-service training of primary teachers

	<b>Turkey</b>		<b>Azerbaijan</b>	
	Categories	<i>f</i>	Categories	<i>f</i>
Similarity	Self-development and information exchange	9	Self-development and information exchange	9
	Unqualified practices and needs analysis problem	6	Unqualified practices and needs analysis problem	4
Difference	School-based professional development	3	Problem of getting service from private institutions	2
	Cooperation with universities	1		

The participants from both countries similarly think that the in-service training help primary teachers to stay up-to-date and contribute in their self-development as well as information exchange between colleagues. Mustafa (T) from Turkey declares that in-service training help teachers to develop themselves and create an environment of professional cooperation, discussion and solidarity among them, “A teacher may forget certain things in time as a matter of course, and he/she becomes distanced from some recent information. During in-service training, teachers working in different schools get together. Along with the teachings, they exchange ideas, methods, experiences, etc. with each other during the training and develop themselves by listening to those shared.” Günel (T) from Azerbaijan shares the same opinion with his colleague in Turkey, “You know what they say, it is not possible to do anything under your own steam. A teacher should definitely develop him/herself. When we participate an in-service training, there is an exchange of ideas among the teachers. We learn about what we do not know as well as new things.” Likewise, in terms of similar opinions, the participants of both countries highlight the quality and the needs analysis problems in in-service training, and they think that this training should be provided within the framework of the needs of the teachers to increase their importance and to make them attractive to primary teachers. Ali (MB) from Turkey expresses his opinion on the matter as follows:

*“Why is a teacher taken to in-service training? What is his/her need? What are the criteria to determine this need? Are there any training programs to which these criteria will serve? Is there a research about the practicality of this program? There are no answers to these questions. In this case, the quality of the in-service training conducted is unclear.”*

In terms of differences, some participants from Turkey, unlike those from Azerbaijan, highlight that the in-service training and professional development activities should be school-based, and in this process, there should also be cooperation with the universities through permanent policies. Some Azerbaijani participants emphasize that in-service training is offered by private education institutions instead of the ministry, however, these institutions are concerned about the financial aspects rather than improving the quality of primary teachers, and that this harms the quality of the training and the primary teachers.

### Conclusion and Discussion

In this research where the opinions of the educators in Turkey and Azerbaijan regarding primary teacher training are analyzed and compared, opinions of the majority of participants show similarities in many aspects although some participants have different opinions in the given themes. Regarding the first theme, the participants from both countries emphasized that the primary teachers should have professional qualifications such as field competencies, communication skills, self-development, class management and love for the profession as well as personal qualifications such as being patient, cheerful, compassionate, tolerant and respectful. When the relevant national literature is reviewed (Kıldan et al., 2013; Kozikoğlu, 2017; Mardanov, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c; MoNE, 2017a; Yetim & Göktaş, 2004), it stands out that the professional and personal qualifications accented by the participants from both countries coincide with the qualifications expected from primary teachers. However, the qualities required from the primary teachers of the 21st century are not limited to those emphasized by the participants, because the roles of the teachers in and out of the class are changing. The teachers are expected to have shared qualifications such as working with their colleagues regarding the training program, method and techniques with a team spirit, to guide them and to learn from them, to be open to their feedback as well as personal qualifications such as constant professional self-development, ability to use technology and digital resources, being research-oriented rather than being information-oriented, creativity, entrepreneurship and leadership (Fransson, Holmberg, Lindberg, & Olofsson, 2019; Ho, Lee, & Teng, 2016). Additionally, other qualifications that the new generation primary teachers should bear may be listed as designing cooperative learning environments for the students, being sensitive about multi-cultural education and social justice, creating democratic processes, conflict resolution, focusing on the feelings, motivation and out-of-class lives of the students, creating green consciousness in students (Arnon & Reichel, 2007; Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; Liakopoulou, 2011; Schleicher, 2012).

Regarding different opinions, some participants in Turkey indicate that professional qualifications such as motivating and cooperation with families as well as personal qualifications such as self-confidence and responsibility in primary teachers are important. Some studies in Turkey (Akbaşlı & Kavak 2008; Argon & Kıyıcı, 2012; Seferoğlu, 2004) state that the communication between the school and the family is not at the desired level and efficiency. Besides, it is mentioned that the candidate primary teachers are not sufficiently trained on how to cooperate with the families and the environment, and how to solve the problems that may arise, and this may cause severe problems in the relations with the families (Aktaş, 2016; Bruine et al., 2014; Evans, 2013; Kroeger & Lash, 2011). On the other hand, primary school is the period when the families are most sensitive and have the most involvement with the school, so the primary teachers are expected to manage the cooperation with the families and their involvement with the school to be effective and efficient in the development of the student in every aspect. Again, regarding motivation, the students at the age of primary school may be distracted immediately. At this point, it is important that the primary teachers make the classes more attractive and fun, gather the students' attention on the content of the course and motivate them. As mentioned in TEDMEM 2018 Education Evaluation Report, within the scope of the Program on Training in Primary



Schools conducted with the cooperation of General Directorate of Primary Education and UNICEF, teachers are expected to gain efficient working habits for their students and to make exercise to increase motivation (such as mind and strategy games, exercises to improve attention) (TEDMEM, 2019). In Azerbaijan, it may have an impact on emphasizing the transfer of national values and culture to the students, establishing a national identity and culture policy for Azerbaijan after 1991 when the country gained independence instead of maintaining the identity and culture policies during the Soviet Union period, and growing new generations within the framework of this national identity (Ersanlı, 2015; Fatdayev, 2019; Samadova, 2016; Tuzcuoğlu, 2019). The professional qualification emphasized different than Turkey is to know about child psychology. The majority of the teachers in Azerbaijan were trained with the traditional teacher training approach during the Soviet era, and they consist of teachers who do not exhibit modern practices in terms of education method and technique, who provide teacher-oriented education, and who fail to lower themselves to the students' level (Durmuşoğlu et al., 2009; Hasanova, 2019; Samadova, 2016). Therefore, it is possible to say that the training styles of the teachers may lead to a deficiency in considering the child psychology and valuing them, and the new-generation teachers are expected to be trained by regarding this situation.

Regarding the second theme of the study, the participants of both countries have similar opinions regarding the entry of candidate primary teachers to teacher training institutions, and they think that the primary teaching students should be elected by considering personal and professional qualifications and by conducting psychological tests. Regarding the appointment of the candidates, the participants from both countries similarly accent the inadequacy of professional qualification, field competencies, psychological state measurements and oral examinations as well as appointments without examination. In both countries, the candidate teachers enter the teacher training institutions and the profession through the scores from central examinations with a multiple-choice test approach. Similarly, there are short interviews in the entry to the profession. However, the central examinations in both countries are multiple-choice tests which are far from measuring the personal qualifications, their motivations and potentials about being a teacher, and their health. The national (Aydın, Sarier, Uysal, Özoğlu, & Özer, 2014; Elmacı, 2015; Karaca, 2011; Polat & Arabacı, 2012; Sezgin & Duran, 2011; Yılmaz & Yaşar, 2016) and international (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hobson, Lucido, Barnes-Green, & Grant, 2018; Looney, Cumming, Der Kleij, & Harris, 2018; Ronfeldt, Reininger, & Kwok, 2013; Van Overschelde & Lopez, 2018) studies conducted on this matter criticize the test score oriented approach both in the entrance to higher education institution and during the recruitment of candidate teachers.

The candidate teachers in Turkey state that KPSS is not a valid, reliable and qualified measuring tool (Elmacı, 2015; Yıldırım, 2013); it unfavorably affects their communication with the environment, their social relations, and their participation in artistic, cultural and sportive activities (Sezgin & Duran, 2011); it does not cover current developments in education; it forces teachers to memorize and impairs their mental health (Gökçe, 2013; Yılmaz & Yaşar, 2016). Besides, as the teaching practices of candidate primary teachers coincide with KPSS preparation process, the practice process fails to be efficient (Ergun & Ersoy, 2014). The candidate teachers in Azerbaijan also find MIQ, the central appointment examination, inadequate as this exam may not measure the personal and professional qualification. The candidate teachers attend preparation courses and easily pass the exam, and thus, primary teachers are appointed by only measuring their theoretical knowledge (Hüseynova, 2019). While the school-oriented appointment in Turkey is highlighted with regards to different opinions, some Azerbaijani participants emphasized that primary teachers are not willing to be assigned to cities other than Baku, and there should be incentives to encourage teachers to work outside the capital and in rural areas. In support of this finding, it is stated in the literature that the most qualified teachers and the most elite public schools are located in Baku (Guliyev, 2016); and there is a severe teacher deficiency in cities other than Baku and in rural areas (Silova, 2009).

Regarding the problems encountered in training primary teachers, the participants of both countries have similar opinions in many aspects. It is seen that the most accentuated problems in both countries are primarily arising from the lack of practice-oriented training. In terms of the time allocated

to teaching practice, while many OECD countries allocate more than 100 days to teaching practice, Turkey and Azerbaijan are two countries allocating the least time among OECD countries with 30 days (Çelik & Bozgeyikli, 2019; OECD, 2014a, 2018a). Besides, it is understood that both countries provide non-modern theory-based training both in teaching and in education programs and that there are problems in the guidance of the practice teacher, the content and the length of internship training. These findings are supported with other studies in both countries and the international literature (Aliyeva, 2016; Bruine et al., 2014; Flores, Santos, Fernandes, & Pereira, 2014; Guliyev, 2016; Samadova, 2016; Şahin & Kartal, 2013; Şendağ & Gedik, 2015; Senemoğlu, 2011; Tok, 2011; Yıldırım, 2011). These researches emphasize that primary teacher programs are non-modern theory-based programs far from practice; candidate teachers deem themselves incompetent in terms of practice; and that they want to make more teaching practices. The candidate primary teachers also express that the instructors and the practice teachers in the schools do not provide sufficient guidance to them; there is a coordination problem between them (Arı & Akçaalan, 2018); the practice teachers are academically incompetent and that the practice teachers do not treat them as teachers (Yılmaz, 2011).

The instructor quality and quantity issue is a problem similarly highlighted in both countries. This finding is supported by the studies conducted in Turkey (Azar, 2011; Korkmaz, 2013; Seferoğlu, 2009; Şahin & Kartal, 2013). It is seen from these studies that the majority of the instructors have specialties other than teaching; they are caught in the middle of making researches and being educative; they may experience problems in matters such as professional development and busy course load; and that this might affect their professionalism and teaching qualifications. On the other hand, there are 9585 instructors and 291,454 students in faculties of education in Turkey. The number of candidate teachers per instructor is 33, and this is a relatively high number when compared to the students in other faculties. Besides, there are no professors in 7 education faculties and there is 1 professor in 8 education faculties; and again, the number of students per instructor may go beyond 100 in many education faculties due to the lack of instructors (YÖK, 2019). The situation in Azerbaijan is not different. The majority of the instructors were trained during the Soviet era, and they want to maintain the education approach during the Soviet era. Accordingly, they are training candidate primary teachers by employing non-modern education methods and techniques which are not student oriented, but teacher oriented (Hasanova, 2019; Hüseyinova, 2019; Samadova, 2016). Therefore, it is understood that this affects the quality of education.

In terms of wage and status issues, Turkey is one of the OECD countries where the teachers paid the lowest salaries and where the career-salary increase is the lowest; the primary teachers are annually paid 25,955 USD which is approximately 7,000 USD below the OECD average (OECD, 2019). In the researches in Turkey, the candidate primary teachers also find the status of primary teaching low and they think that it is not respected among the society (Aydoğmuş & Yıldız, 2016; Erdem & Gözel, 2014; Eret Orhan & Ok, 2014). The teacher wages in Azerbaijan and the career-salary range is even lower than these countries, and the teachers do not have health insurance. Thus, the personal benefits, wage and status issues of the teachers are one of the issues complained the most in Azerbaijan (Aliyeva, 2016; Arı & Akçaalan, 2018; Guliyev, 2016; Hasanova, 2019; Silova, 2009; Steiner-Khamsi et al., 2008) like in other post-Soviet block countries (Johnson, 2008; Silova, 2009). It is seen that the countries like Azerbaijan which were established after the collapse of Soviet Union experience severe economic problems, and having an economy based on petroleum industry, Azerbaijan allocates a small share to education expenditures. The teaching profession has lost its charm and the students with low scores choose primary teaching (Silova, 2009). Besides, similarly, in both countries, it stands out that some candidates have chosen the primary teaching involuntarily or by the forcing of their families, and the researches conducted in Turkey (Aydoğmuş & Yıldız, 2016; Çermik, Doğan, & Şahin, 2010) and in Azerbaijan (Ulaş, 2007) support this finding. This situation is even called "the disease of diploma" in post-Soviet countries including Azerbaijan where the individuals are seeking to receive education for a diploma and a job regardless of their self-competence or interests (Guliyev, 2016).

Under the problem title, the other points to be mentioned as similar for both countries are the lack of school-university cooperation and the physical incapability of the teacher training institutions. Regarding this finding, Tok (2011) indicates that the candidate primary teachers, teachers and the instructors should establish strong cooperation between the faculty and the school, and this allows the candidate teachers to feel better at the school. Under the problems title, the different points emphasized in Turkey are the surplus primary teacher training, inconsistent teacher training policy, and over-dependence to procedures. Especially regarding the surplus teachers, the teacher training and recruitment model of Turkey is not a model observing the demand-supply balance at the entrance to teacher training institutions as in Finland, Singapore and South Korea. In Turkey, this balance is observed at the point of recruitment (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Özoğlu, 2011), and there is a problem regarding the gradually increasing number of unassigned teachers. As of 2019, there are 221,530 undergraduate students in 93 education faculties (YÖK, 2019). However, the need in MoNE in all fields of study is approximately 129,000 people, and 80,000 individuals in total are graduating from education and science and letters faculties each year. Each year, 40,000 teachers are added to approximately 400,000 teachers currently unassigned. When it is considered that the annual recruitments may be done to replace the retired or deceased teachers, which equals to only 10,000 on average per year, there is a chaotic situation regarding the employment of existing candidate teachers (Çelik & Bozgeyikli, 2019; Safran, 2014).

Regarding the in-service training theme, the participants in both countries similarly deem the in-service training activities important to keep the primary teachers up-to-date, to develop themselves and to exchange information among themselves. However, on the other hand, it is stated that this training is provided without analyzing the needs of the teachers and there is a quality issue. According to Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) reports (OECD, 2014b, 2018b), the participation of the teacher in Turkey in professional development activities increased up to 86% throughout the year, and the teachers found this training positive in terms of their self-competence and job satisfaction. Yet, 72% of the teachers are satisfied with this training and this ratio is below the average (82%). According to TIMMS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) report, 5% of the primary teachers specifically participated in professional experiences in mathematics and 3% in science and technology. These values are far below the ratios of teachers participating in the training related to both mathematics (43%) and science and technology (32%) (MoNE, 2016c).

In the researches conducted in Turkey regarding in-service training (Bümen, Ateş, Çakar, Ural, & Acar, 2012; Demirkaya & Yağcı, 2014; Gök & Yıldırım, 2016; Kavak et al., 2012; Özen, Kılıçoğlu, & Yılmaz, 2019), the professional development training is considered as a centralist, downward theoretical training rather than practical training. Timing, neglecting the needs and willingness of the teachers, competencies and communication skills of the trainers are the points criticized in such training. In Azerbaijan (Samadova, 2016), the problems of in-service training of the teachers are indicated as the reasons for the failures in PISA results and the poor teacher quality. In the study by Fatdayev (2019), it is mentioned that there are similar serious problems regarding the in-service training of the primary teachers in Turkey and Azerbaijan; the in-service training programs are not practice-oriented or up-to-date; the needs of the teachers are neglected; and these are unqualified training with limited time. The participants in Turkey, different than Azerbaijan, emphasize the lack of cooperation with universities and the need for school-oriented in-service training. In the study of Özoğlu (2010) on this matter, it is stated that there is weak cooperation and the universities do not play an active role in this training, and it is highlighted that there is a need for strong cooperation. Differently, some participants from Azerbaijan complain that the in-service training is provided by private institutions, and this training is unqualified and focus on money.

Finally, educators in Turkey and Azerbaijan substantially share similar opinions and accent similar topics although they have different opinions in certain aspects regarding the qualifications expected from primary teachers in primary teacher training processes, conditions for entering primary

teacher training institutions and the profession, and pre-service and in-service training. At this point, it stands out that both countries have similar problems in primary teacher training processes.

### Suggestions

1- In the acceptance of candidate primary teacher to teacher training institutions in Turkey and Azerbaijan, a valid and reliable measurement process addressing their personal and professional qualifications as well as their psychological states in addition to the results of multiple-choice exams may be put into practice. Besides, it may be attempted to be selective in choosing candidate primary teachers and to bring students successful in a percentile, and all primary teaching students may be supported with scholarships to increase its appeal and reputation. On the other hand, the candidates may start to work without a central examination after being subjected to a valid and reliable evaluation based on the psychological states, personal and professional qualifications, and field competencies of the instructors.

2- Regarding the recruitment of teachers, the ministries of education of both countries may plan the number of teachers through a consistent and stable recruitment policy based on the demand-supply balance and the areas of need; and they may cooperate with the higher board (YÖK) and the institutions (universities) training teachers.

3- Both countries may carry out a practice-based current education program which is based on the primary teacher qualifications of the 21st century rather than theory-based education, and which focuses on the cognitive analysis, synthesis and evaluation skills of the candidates. This education program may focus on the critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving skills, researching capacities, awareness of nature, artistic, musical and physical development of the candidate primary teachers. The teacher training institutions may be improved in terms of physical, technological and equipment capacities to put this education program into practice.

4- The internship periods of candidate primary teachers may be extended over the entire education processes, and practice schools may be established for the teacher training institutions. A process where both the instructors and the practice teachers closely deal with and monitor the candidate teachers may be carried out. The practice teachers to be assigned to internship training may be provided with obligatory mentoring training in education faculties to perform this duty. Besides, the candidate teachers may work as teaching assistant of expert mentoring teachers throughout their university education.

5- In terms of status, the personal rights and financial conditions of the teachers in both countries should be improved; and the implementations such as appointments through pedagogic formation should be abolished. The teaching should be transformed into a profession which may only be performed by the graduates of teacher training institutions and which require specialty; its reputation in the society should be improved.

6- In terms of the competence of lecturers, the lecturers who are specialized in training, who are theoretically and practically well equipped, who know the schools and the education system well, who have strong research and teaching capacities may be assigned to education faculties. Legal arrangements may be made in post-graduate education to increase the number and the quality of lecturers. Besides, lecturers may constantly develop themselves in terms of specialty training, education, and methods by their efforts and through the opportunities provided by the universities. In this direction, the faculties of education may prepare professional development programs that improve the quality of the lecturers.

7- A professional development program based on continuity, personal and professional development and the needs of the teacher for the professional development of both the beginners and the experienced teachers may be prepared in both countries. This program may be put into practice based on schools and school regions, in a planned manner and cooperation with universities, in small groups and with the support of the experts.

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