

CURRICULAR POLICYMAKING PROCESS IN TÜRKİYE: PERCEPTIONS
OF TEACHERS, ACADEMICIANS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

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PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS, ACADEMICIANS AND
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

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ABSTRACT

CURRICULAR POLICYMAKING PROCESS IN TÜRKİYE: PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS, ACADEMICIANS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

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One of the prerequisites for improving the quality of school education is to have high-quality education policies. In this context, scientific information from stakeholders on curricular policies can contribute to improving the calibre of educational policies.

In line with this understanding, this study aimed to investigate the perceptions of three significant stakeholder groups – teachers, academicians and related government officials – regarding the curricular policymaking processes in Türkiye. This qualitative case study was conducted within the scope of the three stages of the “Policy Cycle” Model (problem identification, policy formulation and policy implementation), utilizing the “Single-Case Embedded Design”. Information-rich participants were selected through the “purposive/purposeful sampling method” and its “strategies of criterion sampling”, “snowball/chain sampling” and “maximum variation sampling”. The data were collected from 15 teachers, 9 academicians and 14 government officials through face-to-face in-depth interviews using semi-structured interview protocols. The transcribed voice data were converted into findings

utilising content analysis; the results were interpreted and discussed under the 12 main themes that emerged from 58 coded categories.

The findings revealed that, for more than forty years, curricular/educational policies in Türkiye had not been formulated and implemented as appropriately as expected. The main reasons for this are exposed as follows: 1) Curricular policy-making processes conducted with institutionalist and elitist approaches under the influence of cultural – mostly political – factors were not very democratic and/or scientific; 2) Proper stakeholder participation could not be (are not) insured; 3) Incongruous dissemination of new policies to practitioners (teachers), and the issues concerning teachers' negative attitudes, teacher quality and capacity-building was likely to hinder appropriate implementation.

Prominent implications are: 1) There is a need for the establishment of an uppermost (umbrella) ideology of education that can guide policies; 2) Democratic and meritocratic stakeholder participation in policy-making must be ensured; 3) Teacher quality should be improved; 4) Curricula (implementations) must be emancipated from the hegemony of LGS and YKS examinations through the abolishment of these two national antagonists, or rather foes.

Keywords: Educational/curricular problem identification, Educational/curricular policy-making/formulation, Educational/curricular policy implementation, Qualitative case study, Single-case embedded study design.

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE’DE EĞİTİM PROGRAMLARI VE ÖĞRETİM POLİTİKASI YAPIMI SÜRECİ: ÖĞRETMENLER, AKADEMİSYENLER VE DEVLET MEMURLARININ ALGILARI

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Okul eğitiminin kalitesini artırmanın ön koşullarından biri yüksek kaliteli eğitim politikalarına sahip olmaktır. Bu bağlamda, paydaşlardan elde edilecek eğitim programları ve öğretim ile ilgili politikalara yönelik bilimsel bilgi, eğitim politikalarının niteliğini artırmaya katkı sağlayabilir.

Bu anlayış doğrultusunda yapılan bu çalışmanın amacı, üç önemli paydaş grubun –öğretmenler, akademisyenler ve ilgili devlet memurları – Türkiye’deki eğitim politikaları yapımına ilişkin algılarını araştırmaktır. Bu nitel durum çalışması, “İç İçte Geçmiş Tek Durum Deseni” kullanılarak “Politika Döngüsü” modelinin üç aşaması (*problem tespiti, politika yapımı ve politika uygulaması*) kapsamında yapılmıştır. Konuyla ilgili zengin bilgi birikimine sahip katılımcılar, “amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi” ile bu yöntemin tekniklerinden “ölçüt(lü) örnekleme”, “kartopu/zincir örnekleme” ve “maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme” teknikleri kullanılarak tespit edilmiştir. Araştırma verileri; 15 öğretmen, 9 akademisyen ve 14 devlet memurundan yüz yüze, derinlemesine görüşmeler vasıtasıyla, yarı yapılandırılmış soru formatları kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Yazıya dönüştürülen konuşma kaydı verileri, içerik analizi metoduyla bulgulara

dönüştürülmüştür; sonuçlar kodlardan oluşmuş 58 kategoriden elde edilen 12 ana tema altında yorumlanmış ve tartışılmıştır.

Bulgular, Türkiye’de eğitim programları ve öğretim ile ilgili politikaların, kırk yılı aşan bir süredir beklentileri karşılayacak şekilde uygun olarak yapılmadığı ve uygulanmadığı sonuçlarını ortaya koymuştur. Bu durumun temel sebepleri olarak ise şu unsurlar belirmiştir: 1) Kültürel – çoğunlukla siyasi – faktörlerin etkisi altında, kurumsalcı ve seçkinci yaklaşımlarla yapılan eğitim politikaları yeterince demokratik ve/veya bilimsel değildir; 2) Paydaş katılımı gerektiği gibi sağlanmamaktadır; 3) Yeni politikalar ile ilgili bilgilerin uygulayıcılara (öğretmenlere) yeterli ve uygun biçimde aktarıl(ma)maması, öğretmenlerin yeni politikalara olumsuz yaklaşımları, öğretmen kalitesi ve kapasitesi ile ilgili çeşitli sorunlar uygulamaların sağlıklı biçimde yapılmasına engel olmaktadır.

Öne çıkan öneriler ise: 1) Eğitim politikalarına rehberlik edecek, bir “*en üst-düzey (şemsiye) eğitim ideolojisi*” oluşturulması gerekir; 2) Politika yapımı süreçlerine *demokratik ve hakkaniyetli* paydaş katılımı sağlanmalıdır; 3) Öğretmen kalitesinin artırılması lazımdır; 4) Adeta iki *millî hasım*, daha ziyade *millî düşman* olan LGS ve YKS sınavlarının kaldırılmaları suretiyle, müfredat uygulamalarının onların esaretinden kurtarılması elzemdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eğitim/müfredat politikası ile ilgili problem tespiti, Eğitim/müfredat politikası yapımı, Eğitim/müfredat politikası uygulaması, Nitel durum çalışması, İç içe geçmiş tek durum çalışması deseni.

*To my beloved mother **Meliha Bařtürk**
and
to my dear primary school teacher **Mr. řükriü Çamavar,***

*two great people who infused into my personality two sublime qualities, with
which I have been striving to characterize my life: **fairness** and **diligence** at all
costs!*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BDE	Board of Discipline and Education (formerly/also abbreviated as BoDE. (TTKB – Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı).
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
DEA	Düzenleyici Etki Analizi (Turkish for RIA)
EBP	Evidence-Based Policy-making
ECNL	European Center for Not-for-profit Law
ICAI	International Center for Academic Integrity
KDP	Kanıta-Dayalı Politika yapımı (Turkish for EBP)
LGS	Liselere Geçiş Sınavı - The Examination for Transition from Primary to Secondary Education
MNE	Ministry of National Education (formerly/also abbreviated as MoNE)
NEC	National Education Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ÖSS	Öğrenci Seçme Sınavı – The Student Selection Examination (for higher education)
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
QDAS	Qualitative Data Analysis Software
RIA	Regulatory Impact Analysis/Assessment
TEOG	Temel Eğitimden Ortaöğretime Geçiş (Sistemi) – (System of) Transition from Primary to Secondary Education (the former form of the LGS)
TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
YKS	Yükseköğretim Kurumları Sınavı – The University Entrance Exam

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprises the parts presenting information about the background to the study, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the research questions and the definition of the key terms.

1.1. Background to the study

Nowadays, in some part of almost any conversation among people – either on a casual occasion in a village coffeehouse or at a highly formal event in a university or a Parliament – the topic of *education* is involved, for some reason or another, in one way or another. In such interactions, the gist of the subject is often *how significant education is* for everybody in society – from a pre-school pupil to a faculty professor, from a worker in a factory to the owner of that factory. Accordingly, the issue of *education quality* becomes prominent when the roles of education are handled in terms of personal and social concepts. It might be suitable to emphasize the concept of “pedagogisation of everyday life” regarding the individualistic aspects of education and refer to the term “totally pedagogised society” (Bernstein, 2001 as cited in Lingard & Ozga, 2007, p. 2) concerning the social aspects of it. Similarly, referring to Tyack and Cuban (1995), Heck (2004) underlines the American people’s belief that “better schooling guaranteed a better society” (p. 3). In the particular context of school education, especially concerning curriculum and instruction, the significance of education is also discussed within the terrain of two opposing claims at the extremes: One might regard her/his education as “frustrating school years” as “a waste of time” spent for “just getting a job and making your parents happy” (Uopeople, n .d., Top 10 Reasons Why Is Education Important, para. 1), or one might appreciate her/his education as “the key to success in the future”

developing both herself/himself and the community he/she lives in (Al-Shuaibi, 2014) and consider that education “plays a pivotal role in all of our lives and paves the way for all of us to reach our highest potential” (Teamlverageedu, 2021, para. 1). In a country, institution, or organization, small or big, the place of education between these extremes mostly depends on its *quality*. In this sense, one of the most effective factors influencing education quality is the *policy* or *policies*, on which the structure and/or the elements of that educational system depend. In other words, it can be asserted that the quality of an educational system is directly related to the quality of its policies since “policies provide guidance, consistency, accountability, efficiency, and clarity on how an organization operates” through their “guidelines and principles” (CMHC, 2018). Furthermore, “having the right policies and procedures ... basically bring your organization's values to life” (PowerDMS, 2020, para. 4). Thus, the quality of (*policymaking*) *processes* becomes crucial for producing high-quality education policies, in line with the mindset maintaining that the outcome will be qualified provided that the process is qualified.

Especially for more than the last two decades, governments in the modern world have begun to pay special attention to policymaking processes in order to produce qualified and sustainable policies. For instance, with regard to introducing “the vision of ‘modernised’ policymaking approach of the British government,

The Modernising Government White Paper was published in March 1999. It presented a set of reforms to “create better government to make life better for people”, with **policy making at the top of the list** [emphasis added]. The rationale was that the management reforms of the 1980s and 1990s had meant “little attention was paid to the policy process”. As a result, policy making was fragmented, risk averse and focused on the short term (Hallsworth et al., 2011, p. 22).

When policymaking processes are not conducted properly, – *made with little attention*, as warned in this quotation – the deficiencies cause poor implementation, and accordingly, they cannot influence the practice of the target groups toward the planned directions; this means that the policy cannot fulfil its

mission. Thus, it can be stated that the success of a policy is evaluated by its effects on its audience:

The entire range of public policies and government programs are judged in terms of their efficiency and effectiveness. ... Effectiveness is a criterion with which to gauge whether a specific policy action is achieving the desired effects on the specific target population (Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004, p. 16-17).

Like these authors, also the OECD has been emphasizing the significance of proper, efficient and qualified policymaking for better governmental conduct for around 20 years (2001, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2020). Referring to policymaking processes, the OECD often underlines the expectancy of the citizens for high-quality services through well-made and appropriate policies while stressing the citizens' anticipation for their own *participation* in decision-making: "Increasingly well-educated, informed and critical citizens expect high-quality services, streamlined administrative procedures and a government that takes their views and knowledge into account in public decision making" (OECD, 2005, p. 3). In almost all the OECD documents concerning policymaking, similar warning notices are given and underscored, such as: "Regulators who act without first seeking input from groups affected by regulation may easily fail to identify whether or how compliance with the regulation will be achieved" (OECD, 2009, p. 16). Here, we see that the most prevailing concept involved in policy issues is *participation*. This theme is also underlined in Turkish contexts. For example, Murat Belge (2017), a renowned man of letters, interpreter, publisher, journalist, columnist, and academician, who lectured in Türkiye and Britain, emphasizes the significance of *active participation* in policy processes, indicating: "Principally, a policy is made by participating *in* the policy. Not by saying 'this issue does not interest me'. It is required to be in the field; to find a way of being in the field. And 'being in the field' means being active in the field, not staying still in the field" ("Siyaset Yapmak" Üstüne, Para. 9). ("Öncelikle, politika, politikanın *içinde* yer alarak yapılır. 'Bu sorun beni ilgilendirmiyor' diyerek değil. Alanda olmak; alanda

olmanın bir yolunu bulmak gerekir. ‘Alanda olmak‘ da alanda *direk gibi durmak* değil, alanda hareket etmek demektir.”)

The theme of participation is prominently handled in the literature on policy twofold; the first is participation in policymaking, and the second is participation in policy research. When participation is at issue, though the OECD usually promotes comprehensive and large-scale citizen participation, it might be better to limit it to the participation of stakeholders so that it can be relatively efficient and effective in policymaking, which seeks solutions to problems. Heck (2004), referring to Robinson’s (1996) suggestion, indicates that “involving stakeholders in a problem-solving discourse over problem causes, methods of inquiry, information and solutions may assist in solving long-standing problems” (p. 166). In the Turkish context, similar views are defended: Referring to Garipağaoğlu (2016), Yıldırım-Taştı (2019) indicates that “... for a decisive policy decision, all of the stakeholders should be included in the decision-making process and the public should be informed about potential problems and solutions to them” (p. 352).

One point is particularly crucial for the participation of stakeholders in both policymaking and policy research: Policymakers and policy researchers should always care for a balance among the stakeholders. In this context, Creswell (2007), referring to Lincoln and Guba (1989), stresses establishing the criteria of “fairness” (a balance of stakeholders’ views) (pp. 211-212). He also emphasizes “three new commitments that the new emerging approach to quality is based on”, one of which is “a vision of research that enables and promotes justice” (pp. 211-212).

When the issue of participation is handled regarding the educational contexts, particularly in Türkiye, the participation of three main stakeholders becomes prominent: teachers, academicians, and government officials. Teachers at schools, academicians at the faculties of education at universities, and government officials working in education departments of the state, namely the MNE, can be regarded as the *three pillars* of Turkish schooling systems, and education policies are directly operative in their professional areas. Concerning their essential functions, a teacher is usually considered a practitioner or

implementer; an academician is valued mainly as a theoretician, and a government official is generally viewed as a procedure builder and manager. Theoretically, a cohesive and democratic collaboration among them, founded upon reconciliation or consensus, should produce good education policies that can be practiced appropriately. At this point, questions might arise in Turkish contexts: Is there a proper collaboration among them? Is the policy-making process run democratically? If yes, is it a kind of democratic application based upon majority or consensus? And eventually, is the policy practiced satisfactorily? The questions vary and abound when the issues are detailed.

Among these groups, the significance of teachers' participation in policymaking is frequently stressed in the related literature. Eliot Eisner (2000), labelling his views as "*lessons for the next millennium*", indicates: "Teachers are *central* [emphasis added] to the improvement of schooling and need to have a substantial role to play in shaping the direction, content and form of the changes being proposed" (p. 347). Handling teachers' participation issues in terms of policy implementations, Cohen, Moffitt and Goldin (2007) notify that "Practitioners knew things that policymakers could not, and use the knowledge to modify policy" (p. 65). Keser-Aschenberger (2012), in her comparative case study on policy processes between Türkiye and the U.S.A., posits: "It should be ensured that education personnel, teachers and administrators as well as other school staff engage in policy making practices" (p. 300).

As for the second group, the academicians' participation in policymaking is regarded as important, especially in terms of their contribution to educational environments through their knowledge provision on the theory of education. They are also significant actors regarding the academic education of prospective teachers in faculties of education, in-service teacher training processes, and the like. However, their participation in educational policymaking is believed to remain at a low and ineffective state; thus, they are recommended to be more active. In this context, Leonardo (2010) emphasizes the specific place of academicians in knowledge production by collaborating with nonacademics, referring to Apple, who hopes to see the academicians as *scholar-as-activist*, a version of Gramsci's *organic intellectual* and Jacoby's *public intellectual* (pp.

161-162).

The third group comprising government officials, too, is considered one of the most influential stakeholder milieus in Turkish educational policymaking processes, working for and backed by the governments. It can be stated as a general assumption that their missions and functions concerning participation in educational policymaking are usually limited to procedural executions of the MNE at the bureaucratic level.

As well as in policymaking processes, it is widely noted in the literature that information about the policy actors should be obtained and evaluated in policy research and analysis:

Understanding the policy process requires the knowledge of the goals and perceptions of hundreds of actors throughout the country involving possibly very technical, scientific, and legal issues over periods of a decade or more when most of these actors are actively seeking to propagate their specific ‘spin’ on the event (Sabatier, 1999, p. 4)

As indicated by Sabatier (1999) through the quote above, the actors struggle to influence the policy process in line with their own purposes, and this process may last for a long time, covering a period longer than a decade. Accordingly, in order to comprehend the policy process, it is needed to obtain data about the goals and perceptions of the policy actors, especially of the most influential ones. Thus, in this study, the perceptions of the main actors involving the educational policy-making process were investigated in order to understand the phenomenon deeply so as to contribute to its development.

In regard to educational policy research, too, the vitality of conducting studies concerning the views, perceptions, attitudes, applications, and the like of stakeholders is commonly asserted in the related literature. It is frequently highlighted that investigating them and accordingly producing implications on educational issues shall contribute to a number of areas in the educational ecosystem. In this context, in literature, researching the group of teachers – concerning the stages both before and after policymaking processes – is again regarded as significant. In his study on curriculum evaluation, Kaya (2018) indicates that “... teachers’ perceptions of a new curriculum, their

characteristics, their will to implement a new curriculum, and their proficiency and/or capacity to implement it should be investigated in detail” (p. 7). In this context, Cohen et al. (2007) reflect through the argument of several prominent researchers indicating that “Policy should be understood from the bottom up” while they criticize the governmental authorities for “making increasing efforts to direct practice with policy, from the top down” (p. 65). Depending on a considerable number of research analyses, they also strongly emphasize that *practice shapes policy*, referring to McLaughlin (1991), who cautions that policymakers should not dictate anything to practitioners. Consequently, according to the relevant literature that accords with the views and experience of the researcher in this context, it would be a meaningful and useful research to explore and interpret teachers’ perceptions of educational policymaking processes through the data obtained from the first-hand implementers and produce implications for better educational policy practice.

On the other hand, in order to grasp the issue thoroughly in a holistic and dialectical manner, it seemed necessary to find out how the so-called counterpart (of teachers), the government officials as policymakers, – the group, who are called (another) one of the three pillars of educational policy making, – would perceive the matter. Would they admit that there are conflicts between policy makers and practitioners? Would they believe that, in Cohen, Moffitt and Goldin’s (2007) words, “implementers respond by ignoring, evading, or attempting to buffer themselves from policy” (p. 68)? Would “policies require practitioners to acquire new capabilities, and to unlearn present capabilities which sharpens the dilemma”? (p. 68). Would there be resistance to new policies from the teachers? Would they believe that teachers were actually allowed to participate in decision-making or policy-making processes? When such questions were replied to by the first-hand respondents, then the issues would seem to get clearer. In this sense, what Cohen et al. (2007) frequently point out could be presumably admitted:

Policy and practice contain opportunities for cooperation and conflict. Practitioners depend on policy makers and others in the environment for

resources to assist their work, including policy implementation, and policy makers depend on practice for success. The more policy puts practice at risk of failure, the more likely it is to damage the legitimacy and political interest of practitioners, policy makers, or both (p. 68).

Educationalists in the field value policy makers (who might basically stand for government officials in this study) and practitioners (who symbolize the teachers) as the two integral actors in the educational policy making process (Cohen & Moffitt, 2011; Fagan, 2011; Fink, 2015; Floden, 2013; Philips & Hawthorne, 1978; Stevenson, 2015; Tural & Karakütük, 1991). However, as Eisner (2000) draws attention to the balance between the theoretical and the practical, a principle required for education policymaking, especially with regard to curricular issues, it must be indicated that academicians, as the third pillar of school education, should be considered as important as those two groups (Tural & Karakütük, 1991; Yapıcı, 2006). Moreover, with a broader outlook, it might be claimed that academicians, in a sense, should be regarded as the group more crucial to the issue than the others since they (should) have capabilities and roles in both theoretical and implemental areas, whereas the other two groups do (mostly) focus solely on one area. Therefore, it is vital that the perceptions of the academicians be investigated so as to contribute to the related studies and accordingly serve the literature.

Concerning also the three groups of stakeholders of education in this study, Heck (2004), referring to Robinson (1996), states that: “For policy research conducted from a critical perspective to make a difference in changing school practices, it will be necessary for researchers to understand the values, beliefs and theories underlying how policymakers and practitioners attempt to solve problems” (p. 166).

As another dimension related to the background of the study, methodological preference for the study should be referred to here as well; a qualitative method is adopted because it would be the best one by which the perceptions of the informants would be deeply grasped and interpreted as indicated in literature:

... educational policy analysis has been dominated by positivist studies (Lather, 2006; Rist, 2000). However, as being a challenge to the dominance of positivism in educational policy research, qualitative research can be highly influential in terms of improvement of educational practice (Rist, 2000) (Keser-Aschenberger, 2012, p. 51).

The significance of the phenomenological character of qualitative tradition is often underlined: “The data is one thing. The sometimes seemingly unquantifiable experience of an educator is quite another. What are the stories behind these numbers?” (Lambert, 2020, para. 2). On the other hand, Creswell (2007) presents Lincoln’s (1995) guiding standards of interpretative or qualitative study, two of which also helped steer this study: 1) “High-quality interpretive or qualitative study involves reciprocity between the researcher and those being researched. This standard requires that intense sharing, trust, and mutuality exist” (p. 212), and 2) “Interpretive or qualitative research must give voice to participants so their voice is not silenced, disengaged or marginalized. Moreover, this standard requires that alternative or multiple voices be heard in a text” (p. 212). In this study, these principles were especially observed in order to contribute to the creation of bases for long-lasting consensus and compromise among the stakeholders in educational practice in Türkiye.

As presented in a little detail above, the problem that this study is based on is the inappropriate implementation process of education policies in Türkiye. In other words, the main concern of the study is the dissatisfaction with or failure – as often is called – of educational policy processes as they end up with poor practice. One of the most objective indicators for the failure is frequently determined as the *poor* results in international tests on education like PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS; this phenomenon has been often stressed in the media and by the unions (e. g. Eğitim Sen), referring to education policies with *striking* titles: *The baseline of the failure in education [is] ‘faulty education policies’* (Birgün, 2016, Para. 1) (Eğitimde başarısızlığın temeli ‘yanlış eğitim politikaları’); “The guaranteed way of losing the future: Bad education” (Berkan, 2011, para. 1, news title) [Geleceği kaybetmenin garantili yolu: Kötü eğitim]; “Education system and our lost future” (Ayata, 2018, para. 1, news title) (Eğitim sistemi ve kaybolan geleceğimiz), The academic milieu also dealt with such

international test results; however, most of their main themes focused on curricular issues and question types in the tests concerning certain disciplines, and the like, for instance, Sarıkaya's (2020) "Determination of accessibility levels of biology questions in PISA and TIMSS exams"; Ünal's (2019) "Investigate [comparing] the character of PISA science questions with teacher questions for exams: A model proposal for expansion of PISA culture"; Kaya's (2019) "Evaluation [of] mathematics questions of TEOG and PISA exams test within the context of teaching principles" or comparing the results of countries such as Kahraman's (2016) "The comparison of selection, training and appointment of school administrators in countries that show success in Pisa such as New Zealand, South Korea and China (Shanghai) with Türkiye"; Yeşil's (2016) "The teacher training and employment systems of the top five countries in Pisa and comparison of the similarities and differences between Türkiye's teacher training and employment system". On the other hand, investigating the impacts of PISA and TIMSS exams, some academic studies like that of Gürten, Demirkaya, and Doğan's (2019) indicated that "the results shed light on the educational systems, but not enough to judge the success of the educational systems alone and did not create a positive pressure in Turkish educational system". Similar views were also shared by the MNE in the reports of international tests such as T. C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (2019) even indicating that Türkiye's education system was improving according to the (gradual rise in) PISA results. Actually, the failure of Turkish schools in international tests might arise from unfavourable conditions at one or more of the stages of the policymaking process that impede and/or harm proper policy implementation. It is widely acknowledged that educational policies which are not practiced appropriately are mostly futile; thus, they cannot be long-lasting. This issue is quite significant and widespread in Türkiye as well as in the world. When the policies are not implemented properly and accordingly, as they do not produce the expected outcomes, they are changed, new policies are made and put into practice. This (vicious) cycle goes on in this manner recurrently.

In this context, from the first years of the Turkish Republic till today, Turkish education system has always suffered from frequent education policy

changes, especially curricular ones, which have hindered stable and consistent educational processes. In two speeches to teachers and principals in Eskişehir in 1923 and in Samsun in 1924, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk criticized that the country had not ever had stable education policies from the (last) times of the Ottoman State till that time, due to many different policies mandated by each Minister of Education (Maarif Nazırı) in the governments and this attitude caused the emergence of an *awful* (translation of Atatürk's own expression "berbat") educational system because each new Minister of Education did not like and condemned the previous policies and changed them, the next one did the same thing and it went on like that. He said "Each Minister of Education, [or] Deputy, had his respective program. The education has become *awful* due to implementation of various programs in national education" (Akyüz, 2009, pp. 337, 338). "Her Maarif Nazırının, Vekilinin birer programı vardı. Memleketin maarifinde çeşitli programların uygulanması yüzünden öğretim berbat bir hale gelmiştir". Following the reforms after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic, the educational system developed rapidly to a certain extent in a promising manner, later stabilized for around 30 years; however, after then, it moved to a rather unsatisfactory state day by day, mainly because of poor education policies and their implementation. (Akyüz, 2009). Today we still criticize the frequent changes of education policies and their practice.

In view of the information presented so far, in order to contribute to ensuring prolific implementation of qualified education policies that can reduce unnecessarily frequent changes, it can be asserted that the issues of policymaking process in Türkiye should be evaluated once the perceptions of the three most relevant and significant stakeholders of schooling have been analysed and interpreted; they are the teachers as practitioners, the academicians as theoreticians, and the government officials as policy making procedure managers. So, the information obtained from such studies can lead and contribute to healthier process management so as to narrow the gap between the policies and (their) practice.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers', academicians' and government officials' perceptions of curricular/educational policymaking processes so as to generate valuable implications which shall contribute to the development of high-quality and sustainable education policies and accordingly to better policy implementations in a more efficient manner.

As the two integral components of educational activities, students and teachers are usually involved in the studies on education. Called also *educatee*, *trainee* or *pupil*, students are included in the studies mostly concerning instructional and physical issues of school environment in a relatively passive manner (as receivers) while teachers, named also as *educators*, *trainers* or *tutors*, are embraced in the studies in regard to curricular, instructional and managerial issues in a relatively more leading position (as preceptors). Such studies were periodically browsed and examined prior to and throughout this study, and some of the final search (conducted on 08 December 2021) results that were obtained by various related keywords can be summarized as follows: In the METU library, the total number of studies in the *entire collection* that involve the perceptions ($n=284$), views ($n=140$), ideas ($n=308$) and opinions ($n=57$) of teachers was 789. Out of them, 337 studies were theses (123 Ph.D. and 214 MS theses). A remarkable number of studies investigating teachers' perceptions/views seemed to concentrate on three categories: 1) curricular and instructional issues pertaining to certain subjects and disciplines, such as "An investigation on the Turkish science teachers' views related to education for sustainable development" (Özsoy, 2019); "Difficulties teachers experience in 4+4+4 new education system at first grade level" (Boz, 2013); "A group of students' and teachers' perceptions with respect to biology education at high school level" (Özcan, 2003) and "Learning how to create lesson plans: first year preservice mathematics teachers' experience in university within school model" (Özkan, 2021) and the like, 2) qualities of teachers and/or teacher quality, such as, "Qualities of effective EFL teachers at higher education level: student and teacher perspectives" (Ata Kıl, 2015); "Investigating science teachers'

technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) competencies: a mixed method study” (Tanrısevdi, 2021); “Critical thinking skills of prospective teachers: foreign language education case at the Middle East Technical University” (Tufan, 2008); and 3) teacher training/education, such as “The perceptions of pre-service ELT teachers on different modes of peer feedback and its relation to teacher efficacy” (İnce, 2016); “Challenges, professional development, and professional identity: a case study on novice language teachers” (Karataş, 2015); “Effectiveness of early childhood teacher education programs perceptions of early childhood teachers” (Gülmez Dağ, 2012). On the other hand, on the CHE Thesis Center (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı, 2016) web site, under the search using the keywords “öğretmen algıları/görüşleri/fikirleri/düşünceleri” in Turkish and English, 4071 titles were found (452 Ph.D. theses and 4119 MS theses) in regard to teacher perceptions/views while in CHE Academic Search web site there were 3550 studies. Altogether in the CHE collection 7621 studies were reached (several of them might have been recurrent ones). Therefore, it is clear that teachers, the most influential stakeholder groups of education, are esteemed as valuable sources of knowledge for educational research. However, according to the results of these searches, it seems that their involvement/participation in educational policy(making) processes is not studied sufficiently. Then, this condition might imply that teachers are excluded from policymaking processes in Türkiye though they are considered as significant stakeholders of education. A similar condition is reported for the USA by Ellison et al. (2018), who indicate that “... the perspectives of practicing teachers working in urban school districts are notably absent from policy debates that define policy problems and solutions” (p. 166). “... teachers in the U.S. are largely excluded from a conversation that directly impacts them, thus positioning them as *disempowered* [emphasis added] policy actors” (p. 167). They also signify a striking ironic point reporting from Ladson-Billings (2014, p. 443): “[T]eachers are the source of the problem and teachers are the solution to the problem” (p. 167). Likewise, pointing to a *tragic* label attached to teachers as “non-elite policy actors” (p. 158) who create problems, as their most significant implication, Ellison et al. (2018) strongly stress that

teachers must be included in policy making processes in a more effective manner, but unfortunately, they are not.

On the other hand, concerning the perceptions and/or views of academicians, who can be regarded as another influential group on education, especially in regard to theoretical areas and teacher training, the search results of METU Library entire collection yielded 232 studies while CHE Thesis Center and CHE Academic Search results portrayed 250 studies. Those studies investigated similar topics as those of teachers' perceptions with the exception of covering the issues in a more theoretical manner. So, it is seen that academicians' views and perceptions on educational matters were also studied to an extent in the related literature, but not in studies regarding educational policy(making) processes.

In regard to the perceptions and views of government officials in the MNE as another significant stakeholder group of education, especially concerning procedural policymaking issues, no studies could be found in the search results in METU Library and in related CHE web site collections in terms of school education issues; – let alone education policy(making) processes – only there were studies in the fields of (business) administration, economy and law.

Consequently, it can be deduced that teachers', academicians' and government officials' perceptions/views concerning educational policy(making) processes have not been investigated sufficiently in the relevant literature, either one by one or three groups together. This point is also elaborated in the part 2. 7. 4. titled "Investigation of education policy studies in the Turkish context", having detected that there were hardly any studies that investigated the perceptions of these three groups concerning education policies and policymaking processes. Therefore, in the light of such information obtained from the related literature, it seemed necessary – thus, this study aimed – to inquire into the educational policy(making) issues by bringing together the perceptions of these three significant stakeholders in a holistic manner, and accordingly, to explore the commonalities and differences among them in a comparative manner so as to contribute to the betterment of policymaking and

more efficient implementation by providing knowledge for establishing common grounds of decision-making among policy(making) actors and stakeholders. In order to achieve these purposes, the following research questions were utilized:

1. How do the teachers, academicians and government officials perceive curricular policy (making) processes in Türkiye? What are the driving forces that shape their perceptions?

a. What are their perceptions of *identification of issues that require new policies or policy changes*?

b. What are their perceptions of *policy formulation*?

c. What are their perceptions of *implementation of policies*?

2. What are the commonalities and differences among the perceptions of these three groups of stakeholders (teachers, academicians and government officials)? How do they affect educational practice?

The research questions focused on and are delimited by the three stages of the “Policy cycle” model: 1) Problem identification, 2) Policy formulation, and 3) Policy implementation.

In connection with the main purpose of the study stated above, appreciating the relevant literature underlining the significant concept of *pragmatic validity* as a suggested principle of qualitative policy research, an expectation from this study can be presented as follows: Since the findings of the research would be the product obtained from the first-hand data from the direct premier sources, it was hoped that its implications would actually be beneficial to the field and the *real* people concerned through *intelligent action* as signified by Miles and Huberman (1994), with the label of *pragmatic validity* for research:

Even if a study’s findings are ‘valid’ and transferable, we still need to know what the study does for its participants, both researchers and researched - and for its consumers. ... Evaluation and policy studies in particular are supposed to lead to more intelligent action; whether or not they do, real people’s lives are being affected... (p. 280).

1.3. Significance of the study

It is widely admitted that the educational system in Türkiye has not been improved to the desired level for centuries (Akyüz, 2009). Actually, the causes and influences of this issue might go further back in Turkish history (Akyüz, 2009) as touched on in the literature review and other related parts. One vital factor causing this unfavourable situation is believed to be the differences and/or conflicts between policy and practice – policy formulation and its implementation processes, that might stem from the (lack of) *quality* of education policies, which cannot lead the schooling ecosystem properly. It is commonly asserted that unless practiced appropriately, education policies cannot be fruitful, no matter how perfect their theory and/or formulation is/are. Another crucial point referred to in the related literature is that policies should not be frequently changed except for occasional required modifications when needed. Thus, policies have to be perfectly planned so as to be long-lasting and policy making processes should not be hasty no matter it might take a long time (Lindblom, 1984; Raffe & Spours, 2007; Trowler, 2009). Related to this context, Philips and Hawthorne’s (1978) three observations seem to be valid for Türkiye as well: 1) “Policy formulation, function and utilization are not well-understood by schools” ... 2) “We know far too little about the politics of curriculum; political behaviour is a necessary part of curriculum decision making” ... 3) “Curriculum cannot tolerate *us-them* [emphasis added] dichotomies” (p. 366). Thus, in this context, trying to serve and contribute to the better understanding of educational policy making and minimizing *us-them dichotomies* among the three important stakeholders of education, the efforts in this research should essentially be appreciated as significant with the hope that its implications will become influential in its field. More specifically, the points that (might) indicate how significant this study is with regard to its contribution to the field can be listed as follows:

First, the study investigates the perceptions of the three most critical groups of stakeholders of education with the assumption that education policies can best be made and explained in line with their feedback and participation

together with the research about their perceptions. While this point is seriously handled in world literature as presented in the literature review part in detail, it is regarded as a requirement in Turkish contexts as well, particularly in curricular policy processes: "... teachers' perceptions of a new curriculum, their characteristics, their will to implement a new curriculum, and their proficiency and/or capacity to implement it should be investigated in detail" (Kaya, 2018, p. 7). As well as the need for stakeholder participation and its investigation prior to and during policymaking, its requirement after the formulation of policy (but before its implementation) is emphasized within the context of RIA for a number of opportunities/benefits that contribute to the quality of the policy:

Exchanging views with the related people constitutes the basis for assessing the regulatory impact. RIA method possesses the belief that probable impacts of a regulation draft cannot be measured at the desk. Consulting large masses of people is, at the same time, consistent with the principles of transparency and openness of public administration process (Güngör & Evren, 2009, p. 47-48).

Second, this study examines the themes concerning policy issue identification, policy formulation and policy implementation stages of the policy cycle; thus, its implications shall contribute to the coherence between policy and practice by filling certain gaps in the literature in regard to stakeholder perception. Similarly, concerning the school education ecosystem, the study is significant as it shall contribute to the harmonic collaboration between theory and practice, eliminating the effects of conflicting factors.

Third, since the research tries to explore stakeholder perceptions of policymaking in a holistic manner, its findings and implications can generate methods and strategies to be utilized proactively as instruments of preventive measures for probable future drawbacks, setbacks and/or failures concerning the policy cycle stages (here, the qualities of RIA are also involved again). Thus, this kind of studies can provide policymakers and decisionmakers with valuable information to make required modifications and/or amendments before policy implementation, often with pilot studies. It is regarded better to correct (probable) mistakes in advance than to strive to mend them after practice. The

significance of such proactive treatment and preventive applications for governmental practice is often underscored definitely by the OECD as well:

Tip 10 – Act now

Prevention is better than cure.

Do not wait until your government faces trouble and is forced to react. Be proactive and use existing opportunities. Try to prevent problems of poor relations with citizens emerging in the first place. Do not delay action until you have to deal with a crisis. Restoring lost trust in government is much harder than keeping it (OECD, 2001, p. 101).

Considering this sort of quality issues of policymaking, it can be indicated that such studies as this one are remarkably significant since they support the process technically by saving time and energy and they support governments politically by helping improve citizen-government relationships and enhance trust between them.

Fourth, in the related literature, it is highlighted that there is a need for researching cultural values, meaning of discourse/language and intent embedded in policies. For instance, when Heck (2004) lists “fruitful areas for future research” (p. 167) in regard to case studies on educational policy making, among them, he mentions “the cultural values embedded in policies; the deconstruction of the language and intent of existing policies, ... the micropolitical aspects of policy” (p. 167). In line with this assertive approach, this study tried to shed some light on several elements related to these points, like traditional and cultural aspects of political attitude, conducting discourse analysis, evaluating the observations on body language (during interview sessions), discovering ingredients of hidden agenda/curriculum, and so on. On the other hand, since the researcher had professional and motivational commonalities concerning educational environments with all the *three* groups of participants in the study to varying extents, the aspects mentioned above could be handled in a healthy and productive manner. So, it can be stated that this attribute significantly contributed to generating interpretations more appropriately while strengthening the trustworthiness of the research because it was rather easy for the researcher to grasp the deep meanings in the data quite accurately.

Fifth, the need for deep analyses in educational policy studies – in regard to qualitative studies – besides descriptive ones is frequently emphasized in the relevant literature (Davis, 2020; Keser-Aschenberger, 2012). This point is clarified more and the need for deep phenomenological policy studies is directly expressed through the implications of Keser-Aschenberger's (2012) study:

The values and perceptions of policy makers emerged as an influential [factor] on shaping the policy. Moving beyond the description, deeper phenomenological analysis can be conducted with key policy actors ... regarding their perceptions of educational policies, and their role in policy making (p. 304).

In exact accord with such implications, this study tried to accomplish the significant mission of conducting deep phenomenological policy research.

Last, the topic of education policy always draws particular public attention in social interactions and media; however, it is signified that there is a rather big gap in the literature concerning educational research, and in particular, educational policy research:

Yet, the quantitative and qualitative features of educational research are still open to question as there is a general consensus on the lack of empirical studies (Ball, 1990; Raab, 1994; Simons et al., 2009), and ... educational policy studies from nations and cultures other than the U.S and the U.K are also missing in the education policy literature (Bell & Stevenson, 2000; Keating, 2008). (Keser-Aschenberger, 2012, p. 4).

Similarly, in the Turkish context, according to the results of browsing through a number of keyword combinations conducted both before and during this study (the searches were conducted in 2016 and 2017, detailed in the following relevant parts), it was found that hardly any studies on educational policymaking processes were conducted. On the other hand, most educational research was carried out through quantitative methodologies, which seemed to fail to generate deep meanings and implications. So, in this context, it seemed that there was/is a remarkable gap in the literature. In line with this disclosure, it can be noted that this study is significant both because it was directly related to educational policy issues and it had the potential of engendering rather deep

meaning, interpretations and implications through a qualitative methodology. Accordingly, with high expectancy, it shall contribute to the efforts to fill the gap in the related field of the literature.

To sum up, teachers, academicians and government officials are three important groups who should conduct education policy processes harmoniously and appropriately. There might be specialization and/or division of labour among them; while teachers and academicians can mostly take part in both theory and implementation, the government officials can carry out political, procedural and executive deeds. Policy and practice should function in agreement and consistency because they are always interrelated (to each other). Therefore, if there are problems in the practice of the policy, the issue should not be attributed only to the implementation phase of the process – and accordingly to the implementers – but to all the stages of policymaking and policy actors. On the other hand, for obtaining significant scientific findings/implications as a contribution to handling the issue, the main actors of this process should be involved in any policy efforts. Therefore, evaluating the perceptions of these three groups of stakeholders is going to provide valuable information to contribute to the settlement of the issues concerning the formulation quality and the proper implementation of education policies, and accordingly to the success of the overall process. Consequently, considerable progress can be made for the betterment of the education system through long-living sustainable productive policies. In this sense, in line with the points that emphasize the significance of it, this study is expected to be regarded as significant since it is hoped that it shall contribute to the improvement of the educational system in Türkiye in terms of education policy processes through its findings and implications.

1.4. Definition of the key terms

Policy: is a system, plan, programme, mechanism, regulation or set of guidelines including procedures, instructions and statements of intent deliberately and sagaciously structured to lead actions and attitudes towards reaching the desired outcomes by determining the most rational course and/or

method from among the thought-out alternatives designated for well-grounded decision-making. Out of a number of operational areas, the term is used in this study as a form of a high-level administrative practical plan adopted and prosecuted by governments in a comprehensive manner led by managerial wisdom in order to solve issues and prevent future problems concerned. The researcher preferred to approach this term idealizing it as an *artistic* product meticulously created in an aesthetic manner.

Educational policy: is “a specification of principles and actions related to educational issues, which are followed or which should be followed and which are designed to bring about desired goals” (Trowler, 2003, p. 95).

Policy making/policy formulation: is the process of developing effective (valid, efficient and implementable solution(s) to the issue in question) and acceptable (politically feasible and likely to be accredited by decision-makers) courses of action for addressing what has been placed on the policy agenda (Hayes, 2014).

Policy implementation: is the application/execution phase of a formulated policy, passage/transition from theory to practice. Like in this study, this process is commonly accepted as one of the phases of policymaking.

Democracy: is a system and/or approach of governing based mainly on majority rule on condition that minority rights and views are observed and appreciated in both managerial and decision-making processes. Participatory and comprehensive aspects of the term are consulted more in this study together with its qualities in regard to equality, justice, shared power, legitimacy, cooperation, reconciliation, consensus, meritocracy and transparency, particularly caring for absence of their antagonist counterparts such as privilege, partisanship and nepotism and the like.

Policy actors: are participants who are involved in policy processes playing major and/or minor roles in one or more phases of policy cycle. In regard to curricular policy-making, the policy actors are the stakeholders of education in the political, academic and school environment.

National Education Council (NEC): is the highest educational advisory commission of the Ministry of National Education in Türkiye. It examines and

scrutinizes educational issues and takes advisory decisions in order to improve Turkish national education system and enhance its quality (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2014).

Meritocracy: is a social, governmental or political system in which selection, promotion and/or advancement of people in terms of status, positions, rewards and the like depend on (the degree of) demonstrated or approved achievement, talent, success, competency, education level, performance, intelligence, credentials, and so on rather than wealth, social background, political or hereditary connections, and the like without any sort of discrimination.

Accountability: “is the obligation to (i) demonstrate that work has been conducted in accordance with agreed rules and standards and (ii) report fairly and accurately on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles and/or plans” (United Nations, 2008, p. 4. based on OECD, 2002-extract and Secretary-General’s Bulletin, SGB/2007/6 dated 12 Feb 2007).

Consensus: is a kind of mechanism which assures reaching agreement among the members of a group in a process of decision-making and/or finding solutions to common issues. It requires that all views, even the harshly-opposing ones, are evaluated and concerns are considered. There should be at least clear *consent* by all the members of the group though there is not fully collective support. In consensus, the requisite principles are harmony, accord, congruence, unity, inclusion of all stakeholders in an equal manner and decisions should be made through democratic participation, collaboration and consent by free will.

Reconciliation: is finding common grounds for two or more opposing or contradictory views or beliefs. For Nordquist (2006) “Reconciliation as a general phenomenon is ... a process where harm is repaired in such a way that trust again can be established (p. 21) and “... reconciliation has a component that includes the re-establishment of broken relations” (p. 23). He also highlights that, for reconciliation, it is necessary “to combine bottom-up and top-down approaches to peace building (p. 25) and “... as part of reconciliation comes telling one’s own truth, recognizing that there is not one single truth or

interpretation of an event” (p. 30). In this study, these depictions of the term quite properly fit thematic meanings in the parts it is used.

Policy ownership: is the state of adopting a policy willingly having appreciated its quality and benefits, and accordingly assuming responsibility for its formulation and implementation (Boughton & Mourmouras, 2002). When a policy is internalized, it can be asserted that the attitude of *ownership* has reached an idealized level, which is expected by policymakers.

Capacity building: is investment in material, intellectual, and/or human resources in order to reach the ideal result, which is “people and institutions capable of implementing desirable new programs and policies” (Fowler, 2009, p. 253).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study investigated Turkish educational policy-making process analysing the perspectives of three fundamental stakeholders, “teachers, academicians and government officials”. In order to conduct the research on proper bases, related literature was reviewed in detail prior to the study, surveying the theoretical and empirical perspectives presented through expert authors and previous studies. That preparatory review constituted an appropriate background to the study especially concerning thematic examination and terminological convention, and the literature review continued during each phase of the entire study. In this part, the essence of the related literature is presented under these basic topics comprising various related sub-topics and concepts: Policy and public policy, Education policy, Educational policymaking concerning curriculum and instruction, Research and policy-making, Policy-making actors, Policy making (formulation) process, Implementation of policies, Theories of and approaches to policy-making, and National Education Council (NEC).

2.1. Policy and public policy

It is broadly admitted that defining the term *policy* in a concrete and fully comprehensible manner is very difficult since it is rather an evasive and intangible concept (Aypay, 2015; Garratt & Forrester, 2012; Hill, 2005; Keser-Aschenberger, 2012; Ozga, 2000; Saran, 1973; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997) like the commonly-accepted attitude of the people who attend to it, namely policy-makers or politicians. Still, many authors produced a variety of definitions of it from very plain ones to rather elaborated ones: “In its narrowest form, policy can be considered as a statement of intent... an expression of policy

makers' plans, objectives or policy descriptions of practice" (Garratt & Forrester, 2012, p. 2); or "Policy is a decision-making framework or course of action to achieve a desired effect or change" (Luclucan, 2015). Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) defines *policy* as "a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed to officially by a group of people, a business organization, a government, or a political party". Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines it as "a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions", connoting a stress on a kind of *power* for decision-making as preference made among from alternatives. It might also be interesting and noteworthy to state that this definition of the word is given as the second entry while the first one is "prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs" underlining some kind of "*skill and good judgement* [emphasis added] in the use of resources" through the meaning of the word 'prudence' (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

As a more comprehensive definition, policy is "the implicit or explicit specification of courses of purposive action being followed or to be followed in dealing with a recognized problem or a matter of concern and directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired set of goals" (Harman, 1984, p. 13, as cited in Bell & Stevenson, 2006, p. 15). Yerlikaya (2015), referring to the Turkish context(s), defines public policy as "an arena in which, according to an approach, *common good* is shaped, or in which, according to another viewpoint, the actors try to prioritize their own interests and benefits" (p. 7). He adds that "public policy is an interaction field which becomes a subject matter for some prioritized interests from time to time, and in other times, for a reconciliation between various interests and search for common benefits" (p. 7). In relation to this context, many sorts of policies have been exemplified in the literature and the media like public policy, economic policy, foreign policy, agricultural policy, fire policy, fiscal policy, education policy and so on.

Policies guide and facilitate decision making, which comprises identification and selection among alternatives in accordance with the values, knowledge and perceptions of the decision maker(s). Policy making is complex and complicated; not necessarily a linear or logical process, but often the

reconciliations of competing ideas and interests, compromises and trade-offs. Policy processes include struggles, contests, negotiations, compromises and so on as a quality of its nature. Policy should not be regarded as a document of an outcome; it should be considered a dynamic, ongoing, interactional and often unstable process because policies emerge from problems and problems are always moving and changing (Considine, 1994; Garratt & Forrester, 2012; Keser-Aschenberger, 2012; Ozga 2000).

Policies can be formulated in very tiny organizations as well as in worldwide gigantic organizations and countries. When a policy is conducted by a government on public affairs, it is called a public policy. “Public policy encompasses a wide range of topics (for example, health care, tax policy, defence policy, environmental policy, and more) and public policy decisions have wide range of effects” (Barrilleaux et al., 2017, p. 2). Public policies in a country must be in accordance with the Constitution and related laws and regulations of that country. Constructed within the machinery of governments, it is expected that public policies must (re)solve issues concerning the community, either for large or small groups, in an efficient, effective and fair manner. Public policies are political matters including governments’ intentions and enactments. They may be long-term or short-term policies and can consist of one or more decision making processes and involve formulation, implementation, enforcement and evaluation stages conducted by formal/governmental or informal/nongovernmental actors (Fowler, 2009; Garratt & Forrester, 2012). Barrilleaux et al. (2017), referring to Hofferbert (1974), depict public policy as “the framework of governmental formation and deliberation, the intentions of decision-makers, the formal statement of public activity, or the consequences of that activity for the public” (p. 2). They also state that “public policy may involve *doing* something or may involve *letting something (or nothing)* happen – it includes both government-in-action or government inaction” (p. 2-3), sounding like Dye’s (1975) famous depiction of the term as “whatever the governments choose to do or not to do” (p. 2; also cited in Aypay, 2015, p. 21 and 52). On the other hand, what the policymakers contemplated and planned to do (or *not to do*) by enacting their policy may turn out to be just the opposite or different: “From

formulation to implementation, being subject to different interpretations and perceptions, it is highly *unlikely* [emphasis added] that policies always operate at the ground exactly as the policy makers originally intended” (Garratt & Forrester, 2012, p. 3).

2.2. Theories of and approaches to policy making

Cohen (2013) indicates that “the field of policy modelling has flourished and mushroomed over the recent past to an extent that it makes it increasingly difficult to oversee the whole and deduct the cores” (p. 18). Many approaches, frameworks, theories, schemes and models have been developed to analyse policy making. The variety may have emerged from various standing points about the nature of society, the proper role of the government in pursuing policy goals and resolving conflicts, and who should be involved in policy making process (Heck, 2008). However, these approaches are not competitive, nor are they alternate to each other, as none of them can be considered as the ‘best’ theory or approach. Each one has a different focal point and a different lens for understanding public policy. In this context, the purposes or professional roles of the actors involved in the policy making process may require certain approaches to be utilized. The general idea is that it is good to let the civil interests involve in the process to enhance democratic attitude in the process. However, especially concerning the private business policy making, in which lobbying plays an important role, political scientists disagree over the extent to which organized interests help or harm the democratic process and the degree to which inequalities in the resources of competing interests bias the policy process (Godwin, Godwin & Ainsworth, 2013). In this context, these authors, basing their argument on research through “exchange theory”, warn that “interest organizations harm the democratic process because the uneven distribution of resources among interests will bias the political process in favor of resource-rich interests” (p. 25).

There are quite many theories of and approaches to policy process. The most utilized ones are included in this review. As confirmed by Keser-

Aschenberger (2012), the theories/approaches which are evaluated and cited in the relevant literature more than the rest are institutionalism, systems theory, rational (choice) theory, incrementalism, pluralism (group theory), elite theory, and the policy process/cycle model.

2.2.1. Institutionalism

This theory considers policy as a governmental output created and enforced by legislative, executive and judicial organs in a monolithic and authoritative manner. The peculiarities usually attributed to this approach are that policy processes are led by principles of legitimacy (legal obligation), universality (for all), coercion (forceful), being regularized, homogeneous, hierarchical, political and value-laden. The main focus is on institutional norms and rules rather than (or as opposed to) individuals' choices. Values and ideologies of groups are appreciated while those of individuals are almost ignored (Anderson, 2006; Dye, 2008; Heck, 2004; Hill, 2005). Utilizing this approach in policymaking and research might be useful when comparing static situations of different policies, such as similar ones in different countries; however, it may not yield satisfactory results when working on the change themes of policy because it might be difficult to depict the conditions under which change occur (Heck, 2004). In regard to this type of policy approach, organizations produce policies and apply changes in order to meet social expectations and align with external environments, not to increase their efficiency to attain professional and ideal goals: "For example, schools might adopt particular policy changes (e. g., curricular standards, modular scheduling, year-round schooling) to look innovative if this is a community expectation" (Heck, 2004, p. 150); "School-based management can be seen as an organizational response to changing environmental demands" (Heck, 2004, p. 152).

2.2.2. Systems theory

The most influential factor underlying this theory is that the environment of the political entity that is regarded as a delimited one with precise boundaries, creates demands which start the formulation of policy process by exploring problems, and it also creates supporting groups. After competing among the alternatives, the policy is formulated as a response to those demands and put into practice. The demands are also regarded as input and/or feedback from the stakeholders and/or citizens while the policy is considered as the output. If the policy functions properly in the physical and social environment, it is accepted that it has created change as “outcome”. It is a continuous cycle depending on the feedback. That is, the feedback from the policy practitioners may create newer demands (also supports) as inputs; (thus, newer policies can be made as outputs, as/in response to the demands. (Anderson, 2006; Aypay, 2015; Dye, 1975; Keser-Aschenberger, 2012; Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004). If the system goes on harmonically, then it is stable; otherwise, there is dysfunction in the social system (Easton, 1965).

“The model stresses the interrelationship of the various actors and institutions in the policy process” (Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004, p. 325) and the policy can be regarded as the product of their cooperation. In this context, integrality, interrelatedness and interdisciplinary qualities of the operations of a system’s components in a holistic manner are frequently emphasized in the related literature. Wilkinson (2011) highlights the interaction among the components of a system and the system’s relationship with other systems exploring through the concepts of open and closed systems. He indicates that closed systems are rigid and mechanical, whose policy processes operate through the interaction among only their own elements while open systems, which are more social and more flexible, interact with other systems as well.

In the context of systems theory, two common terms are also handled in the related literature. These are “systems engineering” and “systems psychology”, which are technically utilized to enhance the system’s operations:

Systems Engineering integrates other disciplines and specialty groups into a team effort, forming a structured development process that proceeds from concept to production to operation and disposal. ... Systems psychology is a branch of psychology that studies human behaviour and experience in complex systems. ... It is an approach in psychology, in which groups and individuals, are considered as systems in homeostasis (What is systems theory?, 2020).

2.2.3. Rational Choice Theory

This theory, usually depicted as a scientific and positivist perspective, basically involves the calculation of probable economic, social and political benefits and losses concerning the decision making for policies. On the whole, it is based on individualistic behaviour that is formed in line with her/his choice according to personal rational criteria for cost-benefit calculation. Concerning its instrumentalist aspect, it is an explanatory theory definitely grounded on analysis of distinguished alternatives and choosing the best one, prioritizing individual favours over collective ones (however, if/when interests overlap, they may act collectively). It is generally preferred and utilized in sociology and economics. The purpose of this approach is, while making choices for policy decisions, to evaluate alternatives so as to maximize the net value obtained after the deduction of value sacrifices from the value gains; this effort and accordingly its outcome signify the quality of a policy (choice). In regard to its methodology, various steps are utilized by many authors, the fundamental stages of which are defining problems, setting goals and criteria for selection, generating alternatives and selecting the best one having the most “net value”, implementing and evaluating the decision. This approach is highly criticized and is believed to be inapplicable for complex social policies due to its lack of appreciation for intellectual capacities and its shortcomings concerning the difficulty of calculation among diverse perceptions (Anderson, 2006; Archer & Tritter, 2000; Aypay, 2015; Dye, 1975; Dye, 2008; Heck, 2004; Hill, 2005).

Theodoulou and Kofinis (2004) underline the focus of rational choice approaches “on assumptions of rationality, the impact of context on rationality, and the consequences that result from the rational pursuits undertaken by groups or individuals” (p. 83). In order to comprehend this theory, they list a variety of

rational choice models as *institutional, public choice, game theory and expected utility* (pp. 83-87).

2.2.4. Incrementalism

The basic assumption of this approach is that “major change is most likely to occur through a series of smaller steps... public policies necessarily evolve gradually through a pluralistic and highly conflictual process that Charles Lindblom has termed ‘disjointed incrementalism’” (Hayes, 2001, p. 3). The approach advances three propositions: a) Policymaking involves bargaining and compromise among a multiplicity of actors having diverse views, b) participants typically build on past policies, focusing almost exclusively on alternatives that differ only slightly (or incrementally) from existing policies, and c) since the alternatives are confined, the compromise and choice will also be restricted and thus policy outcomes will tend to be incremental as well. Expecting the conflicts to be resolved completely at once is unrealistic, and it takes time while the policy gradually gets mature. By reducing uncertainty about the consequences of new or different policies, and diminishing the conflict and complexity through systemic simplification, the method helps create a more realistic policy phenomenon while it reduces the cost and saves time (Hayes, 2001; Lindblom, 1979). Incrementalistic approach facilitates agreement since the new policy is founded upon an existing and already-evaluated one as modifications or additions (Anderson, 2006). One of the most useful benefits of incremental approach for the quality of a policy is stated as that it provides the policy actors with chances to correct the mistakes or lessen adverse impacts through modifications: “... rather than seek the best policy, policymakers confront the political and institutional reality that policy is an ongoing process and mistakes in policy action should be mitigated where possible” (Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004, p. 90). Though, it is widely utilized, incremental model has received various criticisms as well:

First of all, as a policy-making model, it is too conservative and too much focused on the continuation of the existing order, thus can be a great barrier to innovation. Second, in terms of emergency cases and crises, it does not help and provide a guideline to handle the situation. Third, it may discourage the search for readily available policy alternatives as it depends too much on the past and existing actions (Keser-Aschenberger, 2012, p. 23).

2.2.5. Group Theory (Pluralism)

This theory mainly handles the power issues in terms of groups in the society. It asserts that for individuals, being a member of a group sharing similar values gives power to survive in the complicated structure of the society as well as to have an influence on social issues in terms of decision making. A number of interest groups interact and compete, and they share the power relatively; thus, there is no one ruling elite group. Interest groups, defending the benefits of their members, function as mediators between the individuals and the government on which they exert pressure on their own behalf. What the government does is to manage the struggle within the proper rules and create a balance among the power groups compromising them. Lobbying functions as an effective tool in the struggle, through which the more powerful groups obtain advantages and privileges (Connoley, 1997; Dye, 1995; Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004). This theory is criticized a lot as mainly it nearly excludes the minority groups which have less power; therefore, cannot be represented sufficiently in policy making. Another one is that governments may collaborate with some of the groups, either for ideological or other reasons, providing them with unfair advantages against the others; and this will cause a false or unethical equilibrium. Therefore, the power is not dispersed as opposed to what is claimed by the theory, the government is not neutral, and the society is not equal (Aypay, 2015; Barry, 2013; Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004). As an ironical and meaningful poetic criticism, this statement clarifies the weaknesses of pluralist theory: “The flaw in the pluralist *heaven* [emphasis added] is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upperclass accent” (Schattschneider, 1960, p. 35 as cited in Barry, 2013, in the slide “Critique of Pluralism”).

2.2.6. Elite Theory

The elite theory emphasizes that all societies are stratified and there is a small ruling class by whom the decisions are made. They – the members of the ruling class – monopolizing power, possessing status and prestige, are at the head of the political structure. On the other side, there is a passive large class (mass) that is ruled over and excluded from political affairs, especially concerning decision making. The social origin of the ruling elite is higher echelons of political office, the corporate sector and the military; they can be labelled as *political aristocracy*. The sources of elitism can be wealth, ideology, traditional roots, religious milieu and the like. One major aim of the system is to preserve the status quo and accordingly reproduce the society (with rare incremental change) with all its subsystems and elite values (Heck, 2008; Dye, 2008; Barry, 2013). “Change and innovation can only result from the elites’ redefinitions of their own values and preferences when events threaten the system or elites act to reform for the sake of ‘the mass’ (Keser-Aschenberger, 2012, p. 31).

According to this approach, there is competition but only among various elites/elite groups for election; participation by pressure group elites in between elections and interaction with bureaucratic elites are conducted in the manners of the democracy which operates in a liberal *democratic* capitalist society. Whichever groups compete, the decisions taken are always in favour of the middle and the upper-class interests, never minding the lower classes. That the masses have the right to vote in elections is symbolic and utilized to deceive and manipulate the masses as if they were granted with the right *to rule the country* by electing the rulers (Heck, 2008; Barry, 2013). The most common criticism of *elite theory* is that it simply presents the existence of ruling elites as ‘inevitable’ and democracy is reduced to competition among elites to rule (Anderson, 2006; Barry, 2013; Heck, 2008). This theory is referred to in the studies generally diversifying the term “elite” *for political, cultural, intellectual, academic, economic and charismatic elitisms* depending on their participants.

2.2.7. Policy cycle/process model (Stages-heuristic approach)

Howlett et al. (2016), referring to Pump (2011), clarify that analytical frameworks were created to facilitate comprehending the characteristics and dynamics of the policy process since the mid-1980s (p. 1). They express that

These frameworks ... contain contradictory elements and their use has led to many studies and scholars focusing upon or promoting one model over another in a process of dueling analytical frameworks. The longest-standing such conceptual framework is the notion of the policy process being constituted by sequential, cyclical phases, or 'stages' of governmental problem-solving (p. 1).

As indicated in the quotation, the policy cycle or process model is the approach or model which is utilized the most by the related milieu and it basically reflects a composition of successive interrelated stages of the policy process very similar to problem solving phases. The approach was originally formulated by Harold Lasswell who introduced seven stages/phases:

1. intelligence stage, in which information is collected, processed and disseminated;
2. promotion stage, in which decision makers build and promote the alternatives;
3. prescription, in which a specific course of action is prescribed;
4. invocation, in which the specified course of action is enforced;
5. application, in which the policy is implemented through governmental instruments;
6. termination, in which the implementation is completed or stopped;
7. appraisal, in which the policy process is evaluated.

For each stage he defined certain criteria, namely "dependability, comprehensiveness, selectivity, creativity, openness, rationality, integrativeness, stability of expectation, timeliness, non-provocativeness, realism, uniformity, balance, ameliorativeness, independence and continuity", which he depicted in detail; and while some of them are common for more than one stage, some of them are unique to only (a) certain stage(s). Criteria which are requisite for all stages are "money economy, technical efficiency, honesty, reputation for

honesty, loyalty and skill of official personnel, complementarity, effectiveness of impact, differentiated organ, flexibility and realism in adjusting to changed circumstances, deliberateness and responsibility in decision making and execution” (Lasswell, 1971).

The model receives several generic criticisms: Firstly, it is normative and prescriptive rather than descriptive and analytic (Jann & Wegrich, 2007). Secondly, it is presented as just a linear structure of stages; however, there are unavoidable mutual interactions back and forward among the phases in a circular manner (Howlett et al., 2013). Thirdly, using the appraisal stage after termination stage is also another weakness (Keser-Aschenberger, 2012).

Later, Brewer improved Lasswell’s model and introduced the term “policy cycle”, which emphasized that policy process continues by evolving within each stage and among the stages through the feedback obtained anytime in a circular/cyclical manner rather than a linear mode; thus, the new model acquainted the definition and understanding of policymaking process with a transition from “the mechanical to the organic” (Howlett et al. 2013, p. 5).

A considerable number of researchers construed and reformulated the phases/stages of the model with slight modifications keeping the gist of Lasswell’s approach as a core. As underlined clearly by Keser-Aschenberger (2012), some of them increased the number of the stages to as many as ten, like Jones’s (1970) “*perception, definition, aggregation/organization, representation, formulation, legitimation, application/administration, reaction, evaluation/appraisal, and resolution/termination*”, while some others handled the model reformulating it within only three stages like Rist’s (2000) “*policy formulation, policy implementation and policy accountability*” (p. 36). In the related literature, it seems more widespread to handle the model comprising 6 or 7 stages, like Fowler’s (2009) six-stage model including “*issue definition, agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adaptation, implementation and evaluation*”; Kraft and Furlong (2004) also present a six-stage model but consisting of slightly differing phases: “*agenda setting, policy formulation, policy legitimation, policy implementation, policy and program evaluation and policy change*”. (Keser-Aschenberger, 2012, pp. 36-37).

Basing on the work of Sabatier (1999) as a source, Theodoulou and Kofinis (2004) reformulated the policy cycle as a seven-stage process like Lasswell's model, making certain modifications and reinterpreting certain points:

1. problem identification,
2. agenda setting,
3. policy formulation,
4. policy adaptation,
5. policy implementation,
6. policy evaluation, and
7. policy termination or policy change (p. 83).

They advocate this model indicating that it assists in comprehending and analyzing the complex and abstract policymaking process by deconstructing it and supporting its audience with a conceptual framework for each phase. Meanwhile, as an extra view, it is also underscored by them that these stages might be separated into three further phases as “predecision, decision and postdecision” (p. 83).

It is needed to note that these theories, approaches and models in the literature are both utilized in policymaking and policy analysis/evaluation; and both policymaking and policy analysis can be regarded as policy research with respect to many common aspects of theirs. Theodoulou & Kofinis (2004), in their book, include almost all of them under both of the two chapters called “Understanding how policy is made, the policy process: Diverse models and theories” and “The art of the game, understanding choices and decisions”. Similarly, in this study, they are handled both *literarily* in policymaking contexts and *methodologically* in policy analysis contexts. In the light of such an outlook, this study has basically utilized the policy cycle model dealing with three main stages of it, “problem identification, policy formulation, and policy implementation” phases being the focus of the investigation.

On the other hand, three other theories/approaches or frameworks/models in the related literature are worth mentioning as this study also referred to and utilized them though not as directly as it did concerning policy cycle model.

These are: a) Advocacy coalition framework (Paul A. Sabatier's (1998) framework, recognized as a promising one in literature (Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004). It has certain relationships with this study since the three purposefully-selected participating groups might be regarded as "coalition groups" in some aspects. b) Critical theory (As some themes in this study are closely related to some of its assumptions, e. g. "... ruling groups maintain influence by imposing repressive structures on key organizations such as educational institutions") (Corson, 1996 as cited in Heck, 2004, p. 167), and c) Punctuated equilibrium theory. (Since this study, on certain occasions, refers to explaining the relationship between stability and/or incrementalism of policies and large-scale changes of them (Heck, 2004, p. 103). Similarly, the study has connotations to the ideas implied about the theory, such as: "the nature of change depending, in large part, on the degree of new information that can alter the image of policy problem and mobilize the various interests within the policy process"; "new information may emerge as schism, forming a discord and separation from traditional viewpoints and can lead to dramatic change" (Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004, p. 93); "A problem develops over a long period of time, largely unnoticed by the public. Then comes public discovery, usually triggered by some key event" (Heck, 2004, p. 102).

Finally, it is proper to inform that Howlett et al. (2016) also offer a combination of three policy formulation/research models connecting (1) "Multiple Stream", whose basic assumption is that policy making is "dynamic, irrational and unpredictable" and which claims that three streams "the problem stream, the policy stream, and the politics stream" join at critical moments, they might constitute a policy window to lead a proper formation of policy (Chow, 2014; Kingdon, 2003); and (2) "Advocacy Coalition Frameworks", a model which stands for a modern interpretation of pluralism as coalition of groups around common beliefs (Kaşıkçı-Kaya, 2016), (3) "Policy Cycle Model" as an eclectic one with a more comprehensive framework as well.

2.3. Policy-making actors

Policy-making actors are, in the most general manner, defined as “those actively involved in policy process and who play major and minor roles in the process of policy development” (Fowler, 2009 p. 140). They are the role players whose parts and influences vary according to their respective positions and the phases of the process. The importance of the actors depends on the degree of the power they possess to “directly shape, define and execute policy” (Theodoulou and Kofinis, 2004, p. 55). In the related literature, policy actors are mainly classified into two categories, labelled by several names, such as “governmental and non-governmental, institutional and non-institutional, official and non-official, formal and informal” (Keser-Aschenberger, 2012, p. 50), all of which signify roughly the distinction between governing body members and the civil participants as decision-makers. The general perception is that the civil influence on decision-making in policy formulation process weighs more in highly-democratized countries while governmental influence weighs more in less-democratized, authoritative and centralized systems. On the whole, varying according to the political systems of the countries, the governmental actors include the representatives or members in the parliament, the congress, the cabinet, the President and her/his offices and circles, the President’s cabinet, the courts, other bureaucratic and judicial entities, while non-governmental players consist of interest groups, lobbyists, media, think tanks and other NGOs/CSOs (Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004).

Governmental policy actors are usually categorized under three groups:

- a) The legislative branch, having law-making mechanisms of the Parliament, Congress or the like, as the main body, which functions through commissions guided by the cabinet and ministries.
- b) The executive branch, mainly composed of the cabinet or the presidential cabinet, whose ministries have (often complicated) bureaucratic offices and which is responsible to the Parliament and the President in terms of accountability.
- c) The judicial branch, whose basic duty is to interpret the policies regarding their legality, and which is effective in terms of its power of refusing bills, either for deficiencies in meeting the requirements

of the laws or the Constitution, or the demands of the stakeholders legally (Bakanlar Kurulu Kararı, 2005; Erdoğan, 2003; Keser-Aschenberger, 2012; T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2020; The Constitutional Court of the Turkish Republic, 2019).

In regard to composition and function of policy actors on the official side, the OECD Reference Checklist for Regulatory Decision-Making (2020), stresses mainly that regulators must select the proper levels of government and must provide them with appropriate environment to work in harmony, and it recommends appropriate selection and participation of policy actors as follows:

Question No. 5: What is the Appropriate Level (or Levels) of Government for this Action?

Multiple levels of government are often involved in regulatory development or implementation. In these cases, the regulator should ask: How can consultation and co-ordination be best carried out between levels of government? Problem-solving, whether regulatory or not, will often involve cooperative action between levels of government. Co-operation, in turn, may require the building of new forms of administrative partnerships and relationships. So that regulations can be implemented successfully, regulators should ensure that administrative capacities to accomplish tasks and duties are fully in place, and should carry out necessary consultation and training programmes to achieve this (p. 12).

Nongovernmental Policy Actors include interest groups at any level or degree. Theodoulou and Kofinis (2004) portray three main interest group classifications: the first one comprises “*economic groups*”, which represent corporate interests, trade unions and farmer groups; the second one includes “*professional groups*” like American Bar Association (ABA), Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği (TOBB), and so on; and the third one stand for the “*promotional groups*”, which include members who support a certain cause or interest, like animal rights, environmental sensitivity or gun control, charities, religious groups, which are mostly non-profit organizations (p. 70). Although these actors do not have legal authority over policy processes, they can be influential especially when they are supported by large groups and as long as they are able to voice themselves in the community through media. Some of them work on the basis of supporting the government while some others collaborate with the

oppositions, either political parties or other groups. During disputes and bargaining conditions, they can also use lobbying as their tactical tool or weapon as well. Unions are the most outstanding groups in this context. Though lobbying is considered a general method for the policy actors, *lobbyists*, who have specific political or economic interests may also be put into a separate category of interest groups. Similarly, *the media* can be regarded as tools for promoting the claims of all interest groups; they might be handled as a distinct interest group as well. Their great power of *access* (to people), with often *one-sided interpretation capacity* (which might be as robust as direct propaganda on the people) “to shape, define and redefine does indeed affect the policy process” (Theodoulou and Kofinis, 2004, p. 72). *Think tanks*, institutions comprising academic or nonacademic persons from universities, political affiliations, companies and the like, can also be considered effective nongovernmental policy actor groups, either ideology-driven or research-driven (Theodoulou and Kofinis, 2004, p. 72-73).

Policy network is a common term used for expressing the relationships among various policy actors, either between governmental and nongovernmental actors or among themselves. They usually prefer to collaborate when they strive for common interests, and utilize lobbying as an effective tool. Similar to this context, particularly concerning curriculum policy, Short (2007) underlines the importance of multiple perspectives both in policymaking and policy research.

Portraying an additional view, theoretically, as Theodoulou and Kofinis (2004) assert, the most influential policy-making actor group shall be the “public”, especially in the phase of identification of the issues that require a new policy or policy change and “pushing certain issues on the agenda” since they are the voters who, directly or indirectly, determine the decisionmakers. Thus, “the public can clearly affect each and every stage of the policy process. In reality, however, the potential political power of the public often fails to materialize” (p. 74).

So far in this section, literary information about governmental and nongovernmental policy actors is presented. In relation with this context, in the

following part, the theme of *participation* in policy process will be handled, especially in regard to stakeholders of education.

2.3.1. (Civil) participation in policy-making

Civil participation is mainly dealt with an overview of participation “in processes where public authorities aim to develop and adopt a policy document, strategy, law, regulation, or any process where a decision that affects the public or a segment of it is made” (ECNL, 2016. p. 4).

It is admitted that governments can rule more properly in a tranquil political atmosphere by practicing their policies efficiently when the public have a strong trust in them. In order to gain such a trust, their manner of policymaking process should be both qualified and as inclusive as possible; and thus, the governments’ capacity for accountability can be developed while the customary plague of politics (concerning imposition of political ideologies), that is, “corruption” can be overcome to a considerable extent. In this context, from 2001 till today, we witness the OECD often stressing the significance of broad participation of stakeholders and citizens in policymaking through its research reports and other documents exemplifying the related conditions from various countries, such as:

Some countries, such as Korea and Mexico, have focussed on making government more open to public scrutiny in the interest of fighting corruption and improving accountability. Others, such as Denmark, have concentrated on making government more userfriendly in order to improve service delivery, while Canada and Finland have been more interested in increasing government interaction and partnership with external stakeholders, such as civil society organisations (CSOs), to foster better quality, and more inclusive, policy making. Whatever the reasons behind them, all such measures may ultimately be regarded as contributing to the broader goal of strengthening public trust in government as a necessary precondition for effective public policy (OECD, 2005, p. 2).

Yerlikaya (2015) underlines the importance of participation of stakeholders in policy-making in the Turkish context, which was rarely put into agendas although there have been continuously public administration reform

efforts since 1950. However, signifying also the impacts of ICT he indicates that, through the improvements in the e-state (“e-devlet”) applications, the issue of participation gradually, though slowly, entered the Turkish agenda recently (p. 6). It was witnessed effectively when the draft programs (curricula) were opened to discussion and suggestions through the internet by the MNE in 2016. Thus, it can be inferred that remarkably more stakeholder participation can be realized if more policy studies on curricular and instructional issues are to be opened to public evaluation.

Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of citizen participation portrays a typology 8 levels of participation as she calls “*Types of Participation and NonParticipation* [sic] that may help in analysis of this confused issue” (p. 217), which is referred to in the relevant literature quite often:

For illustrative purposes the eight types are arranged in a ladder pattern with each rung corresponding to the extent of citizens’ power in determining the end product.

The bottom rungs of the ladder are (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy. These two rungs describe levels of “non-participation” that have been contrived by some to substitute for genuine participation. Their real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable powerholders to “educate” or “cure” the participants.

Rungs 3 and 4 progress to levels of “tokenism” that allow the have-nots to hear and to have a voice: (3) Informing and (4) Consultation. When they are proffered by powerholders as the total extent of participation, citizens may indeed hear and be heard. But under these conditions they lack the power to insure that their views will be *heeded* by the powerful. When participation is restricted to these levels, there is no follow-through, no “muscle,” hence no assurance of changing the status quo.

Rung (5) Placation, is simply a higher-level tokenism because the ground-rules allow have-nots to advise, but retain for the powerholders the continued right to decide. Further up the ladder are levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making clout.

Citizens can enter into a (6) Partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional powerholders.

At the topmost rungs, (7) Delegated Power and (8) Citizen Control, have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217).

It is significant that Arnstein regards “citizen participation” as “citizen power”, whose degree changes from nonparticipation to citizen control in accordance with the level(s) of democratic nature of the policymaking process.

Her famous ladder has survived and been influential in literature and practice in political arenas for over 50 years and interpreted by authors in various manners, like that of David Wilcox (1998):

1. Manipulation.

2. Therapy.

Both are non-participative. The aim is to cure or educate the participants. The proposed plan is best and the job of participation is to achieve public support through public relations.

3. Informing. A most important first step to legitimate participation. But too frequently the emphasis is on a one-way flow of information. No channel for feedback.

4. Consultation. Again, a legitimate step attitude surveys, neighbourhood meetings and public enquiries. But Arnstein still feels this is just *a window dressing* [emphasis added] ritual.

5. Placation. For example, co-option of hand-picked ‘worthies’ onto committees. It allows citizens to advise or plan ad infinitum but retains for power holders the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice.

6. Partnership. Power is in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens and power holders. Planning and decision-making responsibilities are shared e.g. through joint committees.

7. Delegation. Citizens holding a clear majority of seats on committees with delegated powers to make decisions. Public now has the power to assure accountability of the programme to them.

8. Citizen Control. Have-nots handle the entire job of planning, policy making and managing a programme e.g. neighbourhood corporation with no intermediaries between it and the source of funds (Para. 2).

Smith (2005) reports six categories of participation as “innovations”, which might be considered as methods of participation:

1. Electoral innovations – aim to increase electoral turnout. Examples include postal ballots, electronic voting, positive abstention, compulsory voting, reducing voting age, universal citizenship.

2. Consultative innovations – aim to inform decision-makers of citizens’ views. Examples include public meetings, focus groups, planning for real, community visioning, standing forums, standing citizens’ panels.

3. Deliberative innovations – aim to bring citizens together to deliberate on policy issues, the outcomes of which may influence decision-makers. Examples include citizens’ juries, consensus conferences, deliberative opinion polling, America Speaks, national issues forums, study circles, deliberation days.

4. Co-governance innovations – aim to give citizens significant influence during the process of decision-making. Examples include Chicago community policing, youth councils, participatory appraisal, participatory budgeting, Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform, British Columbia.

5. Direct democracy innovations – aim to give citizens final decision-making power on key issues. Examples include New England town meetings, referendum, initiative, recall, citizens’ assemblies selected by sortition.

6. E-democracy innovations – aim to use ICT to engage citizens in the decisionmaking process. Examples include e-voting, e-consultation, e-representatives, online deliberative polling, e-petitions, e-referendum, Minnesota E-Democracy, BBCiCan, HeadsUp.

These categories are not necessarily exclusive – some innovations may well fit in more than one category (p. 15).

The first five categories follow a level of participation power, from the weaker ones to stronger ones, while the sixth one should be dealt with as a separate product of ICT, as suggested by Smith. All of them can be utilized in any decision-making mechanism in any policymaking process, including educational ones.

In applications of policy-making process, bureaucratic culture plays an important role: it may lead to a closed system consisting of merely the government actors as formal agents (consulting only the civil milieu who share their political and ideological views) or it may guide to a more open system comprising diverse actors in a pluralistic and democratic manner. In this context, Moffitt (2014) developed the concept of ‘participatory bureaucracy’: “a systematic process of public engagement that brings diverse expertise to bear on interdependent task implementations that exceed the scope of conventional bureaucratic hierarchy” (p. xi-xii). She clearly depicts the distinction between open and closed bureaucracy through these words:

When participation is bureaucratic, it advances competent policy implementation consistent with the core elements of bureaucratic reputation: unique agency expertise and diverse support. When bureaucracy is participatory, the scope of participation and policy decisions is fluid, not perfunctory means of rubber-stamping an agency of decision or manipulating the masses (p. xi)

Moffitt’s (2014) findings from the analyses in her study on federal-level public participation for pharmaceutical regulation and for educational assessments, suggest that since participatory bureaucracy fosters multidirectional flow of knowledge instead of just one-way or two-way closed information

exchanges, it is more than a way for bureaucrats to learn from public, it also is a way to support learning in public. She asserts that

in these conditions of task interdependence, diverse expertise, and knowledge flow, her analyses suggest that public participation has the potential to support both bureaucratic administration and democratic governance in two respects: implementation quality and legitimacy. Instead of bureaucracy's opposite or alternative, public participation can complement bureaucracy (p. xi-xiii).

As noted by Moffitt (2014) too, legitimation of policies is another significant issue and it is also related to the concept of participation. In this context, Yerlikaya (2015) states that policymaking process must be completely opened to the influence and contribution of all related actors in a transparent manner so as to handle the claims/criticisms that the policy process is the tool for carrying the interests and dominance of certain social and economic groups to the political field; moreover, with a "multi-lateral" and "multi-disciplined" approach, there should be close collaboration among public institutions, and experience and expectations of the groups affected by those policies must be considered (p. 15). He also signifies that participation helps determine the shortcomings of a policy "before it is put into practice"; thus, changes and/or modifications can be made easily as well as it contributes to better implementation of the policies since the alternatives selected will, most probably, be possessed by the public as they themselves participated in their selection (p. 18). On the other hand, some handicaps of multi-level stakeholder participation in policymaking process are mentioned in the literature: The slow-moving process at present, though a limited number of participants attended, would be much clumsier if more participation were to be encouraged, causing loss of time, energy and unproductive use of human resources. Moreover, it might diminish the public trust in the government as people may regard that the government's cadre is not sufficient to make policies without others' participation. It might also damage political determination of the government through unending debates while prompting a lack of feeling of responsibility among the officials since others are also involved. On the other hand, it might

create a suitable atmosphere for the opposing groups and the like to fabricate disinformation (Yerlikaya, 2015).

Amending participation of citizens or stakeholders in policymaking/decision-making process has been a popular subject matter in the world; however, it is doubtful that it can be really accomplished, as asserted by Smith (2005):

Enhancing citizen participation has become an official priority in many countries, even if the rhetoric is rarely fully realized. The language of policy documents is full of references to, for example, active citizenship, partnership, collaboration and capacity building. The UK government has even made citizen participation compulsory in certain areas of policy, such as Best Value in local government, urban regeneration funding and community representation on Primary Care Trusts and local strategic partnerships (p. 13).

However, even though it is quite difficult to realize, participation of stakeholders in policymaking is vital, especially in Türkiye, as indicated by Yerlikaya (2015):

Participation is an inevitable component of public policymaking. ... It has become an integral part of public policy by itself as a precious merit; therefore, participation is a unique policy field which should be handled in a way that its contribution should be increased to the highest level while its risks should be extenuated to the lowest level (p. 26).

One other crucial point concerning public participation in policymaking is discussed in literature and political media: In this context, can the situation be like *participatory democracy* versus *representative democracy*? Might Representatives be negatively affected by this practice; might their political power and prestige be damaged or lessened? Can it be a source of worry for political systems concerned? as indicated in these lines:

Will the inclusion of a wider range of actors in open decision-making undermine representative institutions? Or will elected officials simply have to invest more time and energy in explaining their proposals, seeking citizens' views and providing reasons for their decisions? (OECD, 2005, p. 7).

It is broadly admitted that, as noted in OECD Handbook (2001), the approach of public participation in policymaking does not replace traditional

institution of democracy, but rather “complement these institutions and strengthen the democratic process” (p. 9). Governments that have comprehended the merits of this approach, “realize more and more that citizens’ input can be a vast resource for policy-making – especially in an increasingly complex world” (p. 8), and accordingly “many governments have started first initiatives to *inform*, *consult* and *actively engage* citizens in policy-making” (p. 8). On the other hand, it is noteworthy to indicate that the principles explained below “are part of the criteria for membership in the OECD”:

1) Information: Government disseminates information on policy-making on its own initiative – or citizens access information upon their demand. In both cases, information flows essentially in one direction, from the government to citizens in a one-way relationship. Examples are access to public records, official gazettes, and government web sites.

2) Consultation: Government asks for and receives citizens’ feedback on policymaking. In order to receive feedback, government defines whose views are sought on what issue during policy-making. Receiving citizens’ feedback also requires government to provide information to citizens beforehand. Consultation thus creates a limited two-way relationship between government and citizens. Examples are comments on draft legislation, and public opinion surveys

3) Active participation: Citizens actively engage in decision-making and policy-making. Active participation means that citizens themselves take a role in the exchange on policy-making, for instance by proposing policy-options. At the same time, the responsibility for policy formulation and final decision rests with the government. Engaging citizens in policy-making is an advanced two-way relation between government and citizens based on the principle of partnership. Examples are open working groups, laymen’s panels and dialogue processes. (OECD, 2001, pp. 15-16).

The application of these principles is believed to strengthen government-citizen relations and thus, “provide the government with a better basis for policy-making enabling it to become a learning organization”. Moreover, showing openness in that way makes government more trustworthy to the citizens and ameliorate its legitimacy while leading to a stronger democracy (OECD, 2001, p. 18). Meanwhile, in the Turkish case, publicizing draft K-12 curricula on the internet by the MNE in 2016 can be an example of OECD’s principle of *consultation* led by its principle of *information*. Such applications can provide valuable knowledge for improving the related areas of curriculum and instruction

while enhancing the trust toward governments in terms of transparency; such conditions are almost always expected by the OECD.

The question of how to organize and conduct public participation professionally, properly and successfully is crucial. To decide on who will participate in a certain policymaking process, is, perhaps, one of the most significant phases of this organization issue. “Sometimes, government will want to involve the public at large. At other times, it might want to concentrate on specific groups for specific input or maintain reserves on certain restricted types of information (OECD, 2001, p. 24). It seems to be a plain and good principle to select the participants among the stakeholders whom the policy will affect the most. There are a number of tools for informing the public about the policy process, that is, for information stage, such as interfaces for citizens’ access to official documents; catalogues, registers and indexes; question-answer tools; presenting preparatory policy and legal papers; handbooks, guides, brochures, and so on, utilizing telephone and media and press services, advertising, exhibitions, cooperation with CSOs and NGOs, and the like. The methods of collecting information, feedback and suggestions from the stakeholders, that is, concerning the consultation phase, might differ according to the nature of the policy; individual or collective, unsolicited (letterboxes, software packages, reports and the like) or solicited (questioning, listening and reporting; comment periods and actions; focus groups; surveys and public opinion polls), written or verbal, long-term or short-term, direct (in person or boards) or indirect (surveys and the like), ad hoc (inclusion of experts/key people in consultative bodies; workshops, seminars, conferences; public hearings/panels; non-binding referenda) or ongoing consultation (open hours, citizen panels, advisory committees), face-to-face or electronic participation and the like. Advisory bodies, commissions and councils can help governments to consult and receive in-depth information from civil society organizations (CSOs) on policy options in specific areas. Methods or tools to utilize for active participation, especially for setting the agenda phase, might be consensus conferences and citizen juries; for concrete policy proposals and/policy-making and implementation phases, evaluation by stakeholders, commissions and joint working groups, open

working groups, participatory vision and scenario-development, citizens' fora, dialogue processes, and so on. Governments can also establish permanent or ad hoc bodies (OECD, 2001, p. 34). Concerning the involvement of the stakeholders in policymaking process, this institution's clear definition and directive are significant:

When citizens have a direct interest in the issue at stake, they are called stakeholders. Because of their direct interest, they usually are very important publics to address in policy-making. At the same time, governments may find it very important to balance this with involving the general public, or all citizens concerned (OECD, 2001, p. 41).

By the government itself or by some other competent bodies like independent experts, participation activities are to be evaluated whether they were useful or not: "They check how far these activities are efficient, effective and adequate in terms of reaching the objectives established beforehand" (OECD, 2001, p. 65). In this way, required amendments and variations can be made as "this (evaluation) can reveal important and deep insights into how target groups have perceived government's efforts" and accordingly, "governments can learn from the evaluation and modify their activities or policies" (OECD, 2001, p. 66). Tools for evaluation can be 1) "informal reviews", which provide information from the contacts with citizens, stakeholders, NGOs, CSOs whose comments reflect how the public perceive the activities. Such documents like these reviews should "be formalised and extended into workshops". 2) Utilizing quantitative data, like the number of requests, complaints, proposals, attendance of activities together with their implications and so on, 3) surveys and opinion polls among the people concerned, and 4) reviews providing in-depth analyses about the participation process (OECD, 2001, pp. 64-65). In this context, utilizing qualitative research shall be best source of evaluative information because, as it is elaborated in the Method part, it is broadly admitted in literature that qualitative data analysis offers more meaningful and detailed interpretative implications in regard to policy process studies.

Presenting the most recent recommendations on improving the quality of government regulation, in the context of participation, the OECD (2020) signifies the following points in its reference checklist:

Question No. 9: Have All Interested Parties had the Opportunity to Present Their Views?

Regulations should be developed in an open and transparent fashion, with appropriate procedures for effective and timely input from interested parties ...

Consultation and public participation in regulatory decision-making have been found to contribute to regulatory quality by

(i) bringing into the discussion the expertise, perspectives, and ideas for alternative actions of those directly affected;

(ii) helping regulators to balance opposing interests;

...

Consultation processes can also enhance voluntary compliance, reducing reliance on enforcement and sanctions... (p. 10).

Consequently, it can be said that, with the turn of 21st century, the quality and legitimacy of policies have become more dependent on public participation, especially of the stakeholders concerned, in their formulation processes including their decision-making mechanisms. Therefore, governments which can develop practice tools and active effort suitable to this approach shall be regarded as more trustable by the public so as to govern more efficiently. Similar points are indicated in the following lines:

Public consultation for law and rule-making was once rare. Today, it is increasingly accepted as a valuable means of improving the quality of public policy while strengthening its legitimacy. Further efforts to improve tools, mainstream procedures and integrate the results of public consultation in established decision-making processes will be needed if governments are to become more responsive and adaptive in the future (OECD, 2005, P 5).

As final words in this part, in light of the second principle in the OECD Handbook on information, consultation and public participation in policy-making that signifies “citizens’ rights to access information, provide feedback, be consulted and actively participate in policy-making must be firmly grounded in law or policy” (2001, p. 84), it can be said that democratic countries should pay special attention to citizen (especially stakeholder) participation in policy-making both in theory and practice in order to govern more efficiently in a more

legitimate (and trusted) manner. In this context, Short (2007) emphasizes the importance of “getting the silent stakeholders to the table along with the more powerful and vocal ones” (p. 422). Actually, encouraging citizen (stakeholder) participation in policy-making is *itself* a strong policy, which gains many benefits to the government. This view is supported by the OECD Handbook statements: “Remember: strengthening government-citizen relations is itself a policy – not more and not less. It is a useful support for government decision-making and for the process of democracy (2001, p. 100).

2.3.2. National Education Council (NEC)

NECs, officially established in 1939, have been functioning (though not regularly in the first decades of the republic) since 1921 under various names, as an *advisory committee* for the governments, meeting every 3-5 years depending on the governmental timing. Every NEC meets with a certain agenda consisting of basic themes/topics determined by the government to be discussed. The participants are composed of governmental officials (both elected and appointed), academicians, teachers and administrators, union members and other nongovernmental persons. They are selected and invited personally by the governmental authorities (Akyüz, 2009). General expectation of the educational milieu – the academia – is that the NEC should be an efficient and influential policy-making actor working in line with the principles of educational science and profession of teaching, free from the political ideologies; however, its actual position has been quite away from such an ideal place for years. The decisions made by the NECs are not guaranteed to be applied by the government; actually, it is believed that the governments take into consideration only the decisions which are already on their agenda, ignoring the others if any (Kaya-Kaşıkcı, 2016).

2.4. Policy making (formulation) process and procedures

Policy formulation process starts with ideas concerning an issue. Initial ideas can originate from research and academia, governmental environments, civil services, think tanks, pressure or interest groups or individuals eager to affect change. Sabatier (1999) sketches the process of public policymaking as it “includes the manner in which problems get conceptualized and brought to government for solution; governmental institutions formulate alternatives and select policy solutions; and those solutions get implemented, evaluated, and revised” (p. 3). Stressing the complicated and human-led structure of policymaking, Geurts (2011) defines the process as

Public policy making can be characterized as a complex, dynamic, constantly evolving interactive and adaptive system. The process is stakeholder-driven. Actors are engaged in a goal-driven decision-making process and have a great deal of autonomy in the way they organize their work. The process is people driven, requires flexibility to respond ad hoc to events in a way that is appropriate to the specific known context at that moment in time (para. 3).

There are many factors that affect the formulation of a policy, which might vary depending on the context, time and the people who affect and are affected by its practice. Within the context of EBP, Davies (2004) portrays basic factors influencing policymaking in government as “experience, expertise and judgement (of the decisionmakers); resources (economic and political documents and the like); values (including political beliefs and ideologies); lobbyists, pressure groups and consultants (think tanks, opinion leaders and the media, etc.); pragmatics and contingencies (procedures, programs and unanticipated events, and so on) (Davies, 2004, p. 5). These factors usually interact with each other during the process in an evolving manner till final decisions are made prior to implementation; actually, it is quite possible that the evolution of the policy goes on during the practice and also after it, when/if evaluations require modifications, variations and the like. Davies (2004) portrays these factors in the figure below; he situates the factor “evidence” just in the middle, signifying most

probably that evidence should be collected from the factors for policy formulation:

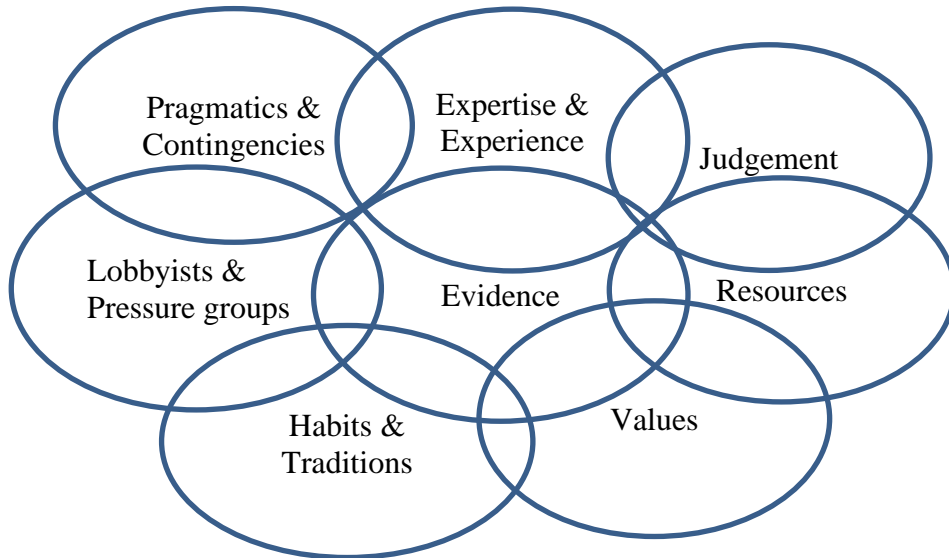


Figure 2. 1.
Factors Influencing Policy Making in Government

Note. Source: Davies, 2004, p. 7.

Sutcliffe and Court (2005) present Weiss's (1977) alternative way of categorizing the factors that policy-making process and its practice depend on. Weiss posits the *four I's*; information, interests, ideologies and institutions, which, over time, interact with each other in a dynamic manner:

1. Information – ‘the range of knowledge and ideas that help people make sense of the current state of affairs, why things happen as they do, and which new initiatives will help or hinder’
2. Interests – i.e. ‘self-interests’, [political interests]
3. Ideologies – ‘philosophies, principles, values and political orientation’
4. Institutions – ‘first the institutional environment shapes the way in which participants interpret their own interests, ideologies, and information. [...] Second, organizational arrangements affect the decision process itself, such as who is empowered to make decisions’ (p. 12).

On the other hand, in regard to procedures, though there might be slight variations, similar processes are conducted in modern democracies. As of law making – top-level policy-making – for instance, in the UK governmental

policymaking system, there are “green papers”, which are tentative government documents/reports concerning policy proposals to stimulate discussion and they are presented to the related organs as an *exploratory consultative exercise*. They include points that the government wants the public (stakeholders concerned) to consider and make comments on. There might be severe discussions among the interest groups and the government members. Certain commissions evaluate the draft policy and the reactions/resistance in detail to decide whether new legislation, amendments or modifications are needed. Then, “white papers” are issued by the government as a statement of policy in a more detailed manner. This stage is still open to discussion; however, it includes a “much bolder statement intent or precursor to a Bill, which is a draft law” (Garratt and Forrester, 2012, p. 7). Then, either voted in the Parliament (for laws) or not required (for less significant regulatory policies), the policy is processed for bureaucratic requirements to be put into practice (Garratt and Forrester, 2012). Some procedures might differ from one country to another, such as the conducts in the House of Commons and the House of Lords in the British parliament, or in the House of representatives and the Senate in the US Congress, or the approval of the presidential, monarchical, or constitutional bodies and others.

As Trowler (2003) suggests, the policy making process begins with the identification of a problem wherever it is made, in schools, in local entities or at the national level (p. 97), and usually goes on with formulation and is finalized with implementation, as the three main stages. Rein (1983) suggests that there are three basic steps in policy making at the national level: 1. Problem (or issue) setting, 2. The mobilization of fine structure of government action, and 3. The achievement of settlements (compromises which establish a framework for policy and practice) in the face of dilemmas and trade-offs among values (p. 211 as cited in Trowler, 2003). Considering the two sides of policy interaction, that is, policy-maker and policy-receiver, Kogan et al. (2000) introduce the terms “policy encoding” and “policy decoding” and define policy formulation (encoding) as:

The process of encoding policy is a complex one in which policy texts are developed as a process of negotiation, compromise and the exercise of power. As a result, these policy texts are usually laden with multiple agendas, attitudes, values and sets of meaning. Policy encoding thus involves complex practices of interpreting, negotiating and refining proposals (p. 30).

The following table informs about the process in terms of the policy maker and the implementer pointing out a significant concern, *loss of information* in the transition/transmission, in a sense, supporting the well-known saying in regard to communication; *what you can tell/convey is limited to the extent of what the receiver can grasp*:

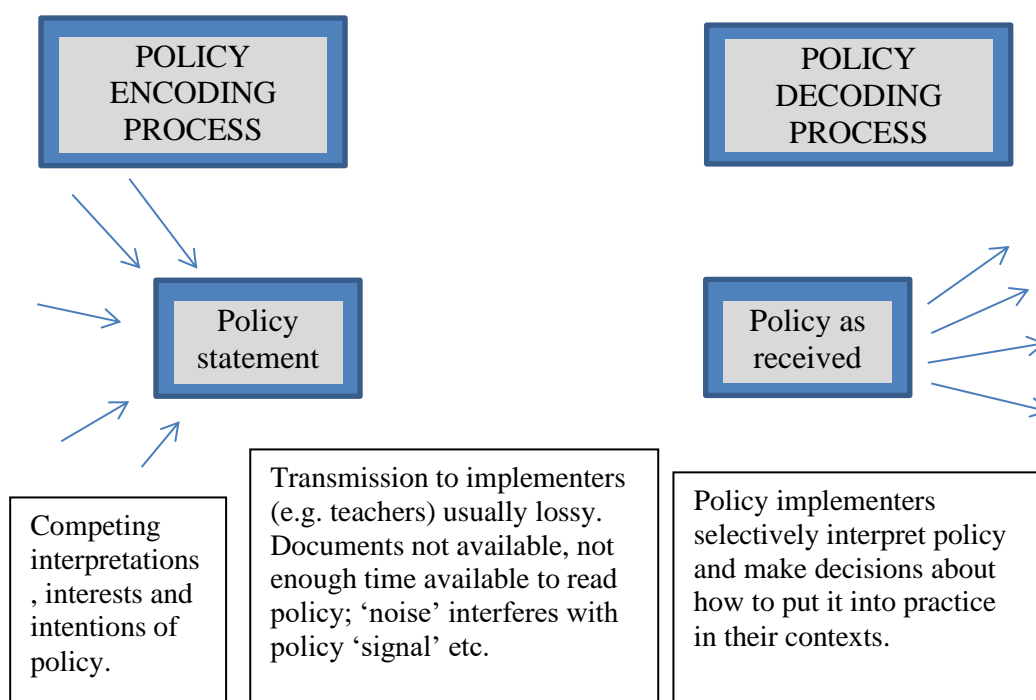


Figure 2. 2.

Policy Encoding and Decoding

Note. Source: Trowler, 2003, p. 97.

During the policy formulation process, there are diverse points within the alternatives that should be clarified, evaluated, and compromised at the beginning. But still, there will be losses during the conveyance of the essence and details of policies to the practitioners, and some other losses or variances occur while the policies are being implemented in the way as they are

understood by the receiver, not exactly as they have been originally designated. Thus, in order to help minimize this difference between the policy making and the implementation in advance, that is to say, for securing the effective implementation of initial purposes/objectives of the policies in practice, it is vitally required that citizens (stakeholders) should directly and inclusively participate in the policymaking process as early as possible, and the information obtained from that participation should be utilized as a preventive measure, considering the saying “prevention is better than cure”, as (recurrently) indicated in the OECD Handbook (2001):

Direct effects of engaging citizens depend very much on when citizens become involved. If this is at a later stage in the policy-cycle – close or even after decision-making – then citizens can have little real impact on policy-making. Involving citizens too late can have negative effects. In contrast, when involving citizens early in the policy cycle – as during the preparatory and explorative stages – governments can achieve much higher effects (p. 95).

In this context, in terms of reinforcing proper implementation of a regulation or policy without much loss or change, as detailed in section 2. 4., *RIA* within the context of *EBP* is a commonly considered method in the relevant literature; it is an appreciated process of policy (pre)evaluation conducted beforehand, in order to have a chance to make required modifications and changes preceding its implementation, that is, *before it is too late*.

Policy-making procedures in Türkiye: a general overview

As an effort for the transition from absolute monarchy to more participative governmental system, two attempts at representative democracy through parliamentary-constitutional practice of governmental system were made in 1876 and 1908 – in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. Then, as a bicameral parliamentary body, the General Assembly (Meclis-i Umumî) included a lower house, the Chamber of Deputies (Meclis-Mubusân) and an upper house, the Senate, (Meclis-i Âyân). The first legislative institution (1876) lasted around 14 months while the second one (1908) served for nearly 12 years,

most of which passed in a war atmosphere in the country. After the First World War, in 1920, within the first year of the Turkish War of Independence era, the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), or Grand National Assembly of Türkiye “Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (TBMM)” was established. 3 years later, with the proclamation of the Republic of Türkiye in 1923, together with the replacement of the Constitution in 1924, the movement towards democratic parliamentary system was clinched. Türkiye had a unicameral system between 1920 and 1960, it was governed by a bicameral system labeled as “Nation’s Parliament (Millet Meclisi)” and “Republic Senate (Cumhuriyet Senatosu)” between 1961-1980 – the period between the two military coup d’états (1960 and 1980) – since then it has possessed unicameral system again. (Gözler, 2019). Like Türkiye, many other countries passed from bicameral to unicameral system lately: Unicameral systems became more popular during the 20th century, and some countries, including Greece, New Zealand, and Peru, switched systems from bicameral to unicameral (Kenton, 2021). Either unicameral or bicameral, since its establishment in 1920, the Turkish Parliament, TGNA has been the fundamental authority of law-making as the highest form of governmental policy-making.

The governmental system of Türkiye basically depends on the principle of separation of powers; the legislation is vested in the Turkish Parliament, TGNA, while execution is conducted by the presidential cabinet (council of ministers) and the president as the head, the judiciary is independent of the legislation and the execution. Until the constitutional referendum in 2017, through which the position of the prime minister was abolished, the executive power had belonged to the prime minister and the cabinet. At present, the President possesses a wide range of executive power. Though it seems that she/he does not (or should not) hold much power on legislative exercises due to the principles of separation of powers, her/his influence is inevitable since she/he is the head of the governing political party, having the voting majority in the parliament. The president’s duties, fields and scopes of authority, qualifications and other related issues are defined in the 8th, 101st, 103rd, 104th, 105th and 106th articles of the constitution. Basic points related to policy-making in them

concerning this study can be summarized as follows: In Article 103, concerning oath-taking, it is stated that the president swears to work with an understanding of the supremacy of justice, democracy and neutrality. According to Article 104, the president ensures the operation of state agencies in harmony properly. She/he publishes the laws, sends some laws back to the parliament for re-evaluation, starts action of nullity for some regulations in the Supreme (Constitution) Court. She/he determines national security policies. She/he can issue decrees (kararname) for the matters within her/his authority. She/he can issue ordinances, instructions, guides for better implementation of laws. She/he appoints and dismisses vice president and ministers; selects and appoints the high-ranking officers, and all are accountable to the president. Establishment, designation, functions and abolishment of the ministries are determined by the presidential decrees and regulations (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı, n. d.).

As defined in Presidential Decree No. 1 about Presidential Organization (Cumhurbaşkanlığı teşkilatı hakkında Cumhurbaşkanlığı Kararnamesi, 2018), the president has the following institutions/offices under the name of “Presidency Policy Committees” to inform, enlighten, assist and serve her/him in any aspect of policy decisions and conduct required procedures:

- High Consultation Board, which is composed of experts with advanced knowledge in their respective areas, either from business life or universities to provide high-quality information (Article no: 4/A)
- Directorate of Administrative Affairs to conduct relations with the parliament and set coordination among the public institutions; to follow and evaluate the impacts of policies implemented; to handle legal issues, follow procedure in information system, prepare draft presidential decrees and regulations, publish Official Gazette and so on, through its department of general Directorate of Legal and Procedural Issues; to conduct research, investigation and evaluation to determine policies for the improvement of public administration, and personnel management in its department named General Directorate of Personnel and Principles (Articles No: 5, 6, 7);
- Presidential Boards for Policies. There are 9 policy boards encompassing the domains of the ministries:
 1. Board of Science, Technology and Innovation Policies
 2. Board of Education and Instruction Policies
 3. Board of Economy Policies
 4. Board of Security and Foreign Policies
 5. Board of Social Policies
 6. Board of Policies of Law

7. Board of Culture and Arts Policies
8. Board of Health and Nutrition Policies
9. Board of Local Administration Policies

The President is the head of each board. Tasks of the boards concerning policy-making in general are:

- to develop suggestions regarding the policies and decisions that are to be made by the president.
- to conduct the formulation procedures of the draft policies and strategies determined by the president.
- to produce suggestions for strategies and policies in accordance with the changes caused by global competition.
- to present views to the public institutions about the issues in their fields.
- to follow the implementation of the policies applied in accordance with the views of the related institutions and organizations, representatives of civil society organizations, NGOs, and civil sectors, the field experts and other related stakeholders and to report to the president about them.
- to track the applications of the policies by the ministries, institutions and organizations so as to report to the president of their congruence with the presidential programs.
- to conduct large-scale committee meetings by inviting field experts, peers, representatives and stakeholders from related ministries, institutions, organizations, civil society and civil sectors.
- to conduct and/or get conducted demand, needs and impact analysis of the policy topics within their purviews (Articles No: 20, 21, 22).

The committees can demand any information and document from the related ministries, public institutions and organizations as top priority. They can invite experts and representatives from domestic or foreign state institutions, universities and private sectors. They can designate working groups or sub-committees on the topics in their fields. The issues concerning more than one committee are to be dealt with in extended committee meetings through proper coordination, and accordingly, the views are generated collectively. As the committees are authorized to demand any information from any public institution, they are liable for providing the information demanded by any public institution (with the exception of trade secrets and individual privacy) (Article 33).

Apart from these institutions and offices, the ministries also have certain departments, of which main task is to manage policy-making processes. They

produce policy knowledge and conduct policy procedures for supporting upper layers of decision-making authorities, reaching finally to the president when required.

In terms of basic procedures, the highest form of policy-making, that is, the process of law-making in Türkiye, is conducted in four phases in the main legislative institution of the country, the Parliament, Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (TGNA):

1. “Motion”. This phase stands for proposing a law, called as a bill till it becomes a law, presented to the legislature, the parliament. Before the changes introduced by 2017 constitutional referendum, which transformed the system to Executive Presidential Republic, the cabinet and the MPs were both authorized to propose a bill according to Turkish Constitution Article no: 88; but after the abolishment of Prime Ministry due to those changes, only the MPs have had the right to propose a law since then, not the cabinet any more. As the president has become the head of the government, the executive power, the cabinet has become a presidential cabinet, which is composed of the ministers out of the Parliament that cannot make law proposals.
2. “Deliberation” stage is discussing and considering the suggestion. The minimum number of MPs required to conduct the sessions in this phase is one third of the total number of MPs (200 MPs and over). Firstly, the proposed law is evaluated as a whole, then, the articles/items of the draft are handled one by one. Next, the suggestions for changes are considered. Eventually, the bill is voted.
3. “Adoption” phase is for acknowledging and accepting the proposed (draft) law, the bill. For the acceptance of a bill as law, absolute majority of the attending MP votes is required. This number cannot be lower than the one-fourth of the total number of MPs in the Parliament, that is, 151. (Constitution, Article no: 96).
4. “Promulgation” step represents enacting the bill as a law and publicizing it. It is required for a law to be publicized in the Official Gazette by the President, prior to its implementation (Türk Anayasa Hukuku, n.d.)

Once the law is publicized by the President, it can be implemented. The beginning of practice time of each law is specified in its regulation format; some may start with its publication while others may start later depending on its nature and purpose. Meanwhile, it is necessary to indicate that the bill is legitimized as a law once it passes the Parliament voting even though it is not publicized by the President for some time. The President can send back the law to the Parliament if she/he does not acknowledge the law, or suggest certain changes together with

their rationales. If the Parliament accepts the law verbatim, (but this time, with the approval of the absolute majority of the total number of MPs – 301), the President shall publicize the law (Constitution Article no: 89). Changed or amended laws go through the same procedure as that of a bill, a draft law. On the other hand, the decisions which consist of issues concerning the inner structure or work design of the legislative body (parliament) and the ones concerning its relations with the executive and/or judicial bodies are called parliamentary decrees/resolutions, and they are also legitimized by the parliamentary procedures; however, it is not required for them to be publicized by the President. A significant point is that parliamentary decrees cannot enforce legal responsibilities for the citizens, and fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens cannot be designed by them either (Em, 2018; Türk Anayasa Hukuku, n.d.).

The bureaucratic framework or outline of the process can be summarized as: 1. One or more MPs present a law proposal (a bill) to the Parliament, TGNA. 2. The Chairmanship of TGNA transfers the bill to the parliament commission concerned (There are 18 commissions comprising MPs from each political party in the parliament). The commission evaluates the bill for its propriety in terms of rules and regulations, rhetoric and the like, and makes required changes with the participation of its owners within 45 days, at the most.) 3. The commission sends it to the Head of TGNA back. 4. TGNA votes on the bill; upon approval, it is sent to the President as a law. 5. The President publishes the law in the Official Gazette once she/he accredits it.

To present some significant details in the context of bureaucratic participation in policy-making, it can be noted that, according to the Directive for Preparing Bills (Kanun Teklifi Taslağı Hazırlama Yönergesi) (Date of Presidential approval: 25.11.2019 No: 570290), the office responsible for processing the demands for preparing bills is The Department of Laws and Resolutions Demands – under the command of Deputy Secretary supervising Legislation and Inspection Service (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, 2019). These demands are processed by the legislation specialists in The Bureau of Demand Support, and, when required, together with the specialists assigned in the

expertise commissions (Article 3 – (1), (2)). According to the instructions for preparing regulations (Bakanlar Kurulu Kararı, 2005), while the draft regulations are being prepared, views and suggestions from all related ministries including their sub-institutions must be taken and evaluated. And if the regulation does not belong to the judiciary, feedback and consultations from the legal advisors are needed. Views of European Union General Secretary must be considered when the regulation is within the scope of adaptation to the EU regulatory systems. Draft regulations concerning public policies can be publicized in the media, and once the views of the public about the draft are considered, it is proposed officially (Articles 5-6, p. 4822). The ministerial offices (governmental organizations) whose feedback is asked must reply within 30 days; they cannot avoid or reject feedback provision. Public professional organizations and non-governmental organizations should present their views within 30 days as well; however, they will be regarded as supporting the draft, if they do not give any feedback (Article 7, p. 4823).

Concerning educational policies, the Ministry of National Education (MNE) is primarily responsible for and influential on the issues functioning mostly through certain commissions. The MNE is organized as having four main parts: central organization, provincial organization, overseas organization, and affiliated organizations. The central organization includes the Ministerial Office, the Board of Education and Discipline (BED), main service units, advisory and supervisory units, auxiliary units and the Project Coordination Centre. All main units have general directorates, each of which has specific departments such as “Headship of Educational Policies” assigned for managing issues on educational policies. Local governmental entities that can be considered within this category are also influential policy actors functioning as the agents of the governments in policy processes, especially in the implementation of the policies.

2.5. Policy implementation

Implementation of policies is as important as their overall formulation. Ball (1994) points out that “Policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is

what is enacted as well as what is intended. Policies are always incomplete insofar as they relate to or map on to the ‘wild profusion’ of local **practice**” (p. 10). In terms of all policy process in regard to implementation, according to Trowler (2003) the sources which make a policy dynamic rather than static are:

- There is usually **conflict** among those who make policy, as well as those who put it into **practice**, about what the important issues or problems for policy are and about the desired goals.
- Interpreting policy is an active process: policy statements are almost always subject to **multiple interpretations** depending upon the standpoints of the people doing the interpretative “work”.
- The practice of policy on the ground is extremely complex ... the implementation of policy in **practice** almost always means outcomes differ from policy-makers’ intentions (which were, anyway, always multiple and often contradictory) (p. 96).

He also asserts that “the implementation is actually part of the policy making process itself, rather than being merely a second stage of putting it into practice (p. 130).

Considering the views above and the related literature, it can be inferred that without proper implementation, the policy is fruitless how perfect it seems as a document. Often there emerge complex situations in policy practice, and the difficulty mainly arises from the difference between the intentions and the application. Therefore, minimizing this difference shall facilitate the conduct of the policy as a whole, that is, both as a theory and in practice. Accordingly, in order to minimize the differences through negotiations for consensus, certain precautions should be taken at the very beginning; some of the paths to follow concerning such precautions might be obtained by exploring the perceptions of main stakeholders of education – similar to RIA – so that a “proactive” tradition of policy making can be supported.

Two types of approach to policy implementation are introduced by Trowler (2003): The first one is “managerial approach to policy implementation”, which is also called as “top-down” approach. In its conduct, the leaders identify and designate the policy problem, set the required goals, formulize and disseminate the policy, and then secure and ensure the implementers’ commitment to it. “Cultural manipulation is central to this kind of

approach” (p. 124) to shape attitudes, values and expectations of the organization. Change is carried through recruitment, myths, rituals, persuasion, rewards, threats, coercion and the like. An influential organizational culture should be constituted, imposed and utilized as an agent to implement the policy successfully according to this approach. The second approach is “phenomenological approach to policy implementation”, also called as “bottom-up” approach, which acknowledges that “the values, attitudes and perceptions of those lower down, who were doing the *donkey work* [emphasis added] of putting policy into practice, had been ignored” (p. 128). It is also believed that “policy becomes refracted, as it is implemented, that is, it becomes distorted and less coherent as it is interpreted and put into practice by ground level actors, such as teachers” (p. 128); therefore, the final implementers’ views perceptions and judgements must be evaluated and appreciated in the process. This approach comprises the postmodern viewpoint, which stresses the existence of different life worlds, small communities within the larger society with their own understandings of the nature of reality, and “unpredictability of human behaviour in policy implementation and so the unpredictability of policy outcomes as against policy intentions” (p. 128). Briefly, it can be concluded that the original form and nature of a policy mostly change during its travel from the highest (national and/or governmental) level – of formulation – to the lowest (classroom and/or student) level – of implementation. (Trowler, 2003, pp. 123-137). As highlighted by Trowler (2003), “phenomenological perspective has come to be increasingly acknowledged in the study of education policy” (p. 129).

As an advantage of phenomenological approach on the side of management it is signified that this sort of understanding can be used as “a guide for managers” because “its central message is that the pre-existing values and attitudes of an organization’s staff need to be understood and addressed when considering change (Trowler, 2003, p. 134). This is also helpful for handling the resistance to the policy as the culture of the implementers will be known beforehand, and accordingly it will support “ownership of change” (Trowler, 2003, p. 135).

As an eclectic approach, employing certain principles of both approaches to a moderate level might lead to better applications leading “researchers to move beyond the top-down/bottom-up polarity, as a synthesis of them as a third perspective, and to focus, instead, on ‘directed collegiality’, the ideal policymaking/implementation approach” (Trowler, 2003, p. 136). In this manner, the collaboration among the stakeholders of a policy concerning its formulation and implementation is promoted for its success.

On the other hand, in the related literature, there is a meaningful and useful concept concerning (especially educational) policy making called “policy learning” defined by Raffe and Spours (2007) as:

By policy learning we mean the ability of governments, or systems of governance, to inform policy development by *drawing lessons* [emphasis added] from available evidence and experience. Policy learning includes “experiential learning” from history (Olsen and Peters 1996), learning from other countries (Alexander et al., 2000) and learning from local innovations and experiments (Strategy Unit 2003). Effective policy learning increases the effectiveness of the policies that result (p. 1).

They also point to the interaction among the participants and/or actors of policy-making in terms of this concept: “Policy learning is based on a variety of policy learning relationships between policy-makers, practitioners and researchers (p. 17). With the establishment of such a policymaking tradition, and with the approach of *collegiality* mentioned just above, the field can be improved. Thus, with the expectation of contributing to the solution to policy implementation problems and to the literature accordingly, useful implications of policy learning can be obtained from *this* study as well.

2.6. Education policy

Trowler (2003) defines education policy as “a specification of principles and actions related to educational issues, which are followed or which should be followed and which are designed to bring about desired goals” (p. 95). Lingard and Ozga (2007) indicate that “education policy includes all sectors of

education” (p. 2). In this context, Garratt and Forrester (2012) underline various impacts on education policies from a large scope of interrelated fields: “Education policy making is subject to a range of competing influences, which can be broadly categorized under the umbrella of social, political, economic, technological, religious or cultural factors” (p. 1). Similarly, policymaking activities can take place in several settings: “Education policies are formulated in a variety of locales: in central government, in national bodies associated with government, in local authorities or in educational institutions” (Trowler, 2003, p. 123). Thus, it can be asserted that from the desks in a classroom to the desks in a parliament a variety of ideas on educational issues can be produced and accordingly, education policies developed can affect both the student in a village classroom and the President at the head of the cabinet of a government in the capital of a country. Firestone (1989) indicates similar views describing education policy as “chain of decisions stretching from the statehouse to the classroom” (p. 23 as cited in Heck, 2004, p. 7). Levin (2007) focuses on the political aspects of education policy issues: “Every education policy decision can be seen as being, in some sense, a political decision” (p. 8). He further elaborates that “Policies govern just about every aspect of education – what schooling is provided, how, to whom, in what form, by whom, with what resources, and so on.” (p. 8). As emphasized above, most of the time, various views on educational issues and their influences on policymaking are competing and/or controversial ones. In this context, in proper practice, the issue of education policy is usually handled with multi-perspective approaches to different ideas, beliefs and values, which, according to Fowler (2009), “shape the way people define policy problems ... and constrain peoples’ ability to perceive possible solutions to policy problems” (p. 106). While stressing the ideological dimensions of these concepts, Fowler (2009) emphasizes their significance in school education and recommends school leaders as follows:

As a result of the importance of ideas in the development and implementation of education policy, no policy or policy proposal can be fully understood without considering the values and ideological system that undergird it. In thinking about education policy, therefore, school leaders must ask questions as: What

values led people to propose this policy? Are any value conflicts inherent in it? What assumptions about society, government, and economics lie behind it? With what broader ideological position is this policy consistent? (p. 106).

The scholarly aspect of education policy studies is commented on in similar manners as Adams' (2014) in the relevant literature:

Education policy as an academic area of study has found its niche in the last 30 or so years. An appreciation of the need to analyse the work of government and the ways and means by which policy and legislation interact to influence the educational agenda is now considered to be de-rigueur on any education studies course (p. 23).

Basic values that (may) shape education policy understanding can be listed in a summarized form as follows (These are presented by Fowler (2009) referring to the U.S. education politics; however, they stand for many modern countries as well):

1. Self-interest values.
 - a. Economic interests (which began to heavily dominate the social policy approaches due to utilitarian and pragmatic accords. "Who benefits economically from this policy? / Who is penalized economically by it?")
 - b. Power ("Who gains/loses power as a result of this policy?")
2. General social values.
 - a. Order (a major education policy concern – orderly schools where there is no crime, violence, bullying and the like are high value)
 - b. Individualism (and its relation to self-reliance. Considering single person's education needs before those of the group. Utilitarian individualism and expressive individualism).
3. Democratic values.
 - a. Liberty (freedoms of speech, choice, access to knowledge, religion, selecting one's lifestyle, privacy rights and so on for teachers and students. "How does this policy affect the freedom of ...?")
 - b. Equality (social justice. Political equality and economic equality. Equality of opportunity and equality of results.)

- c. Fraternity (brotherhood and solidarity.)
- 4. Economic values (Cost-effectiveness, output maximization, performance and accountability. “An education system is efficient when it achieves high levels of student learning with relatively low expenditures”).
 - a. Economic growth (underlying assumption of capitalistic economy; increasing production, stimulating domestic consumption, and expanding foreign trade. Schools as enterprises – privatization.)
 - b. Quality (High standards and excellence. The factor *quality* can also be considered under each of the values separately.) (pp. 105-118).

These values affecting education policy processes can interact with each other and there may be shifts in dominant values depending on the contexts. On the other hand, it is common and natural that these values may conflict in policymaking/decision-making. What should be done is to search for a balance by exploring common grounds, consensus or reconciliation among different values and ideas:

The political problem of mankind is to combine three things: Economic Efficiency, Social Justice and Individual Liberty” wrote British economist John Maynard Keynes in 1925 (as cited in Kuttner, 1984, p. 1). Although many policy scholars would argue that more than three things should be combined in public policy, most would agree with Keynes that the art of developing good policy involves finding a good equilibrium among competing values (Fowler, 2009, pp. 118-119).

2.6.1. Educational policymaking concerning curriculum and instruction

“*Curriculum and instruction* refers to one of the largest and most diverse activities within the field of education” (Connelly, 2008, p. ix). To handle the issues of educational policymaking concerning this broad field of curriculum and instruction, firstly, it might be suitable to advert to the term *curriculum policy* as commonly used in the related literature by including the policy domains of instruction as well, “recognizing that curriculum policy is nested within larger educational policies, which themselves are often nested within broad social

policies” (Short, 2007, p. 422). Although most scholars prefer to study or address curriculum policy as a separate topic from the other dimensions of curriculum, such as the ones related to programming issues, student engagement, assessment, and so on, policy should always be considered as closely linked to and interrelated with them and inform each other in strategic manners as Short (2007) emphasizes: “Curriculum policy must be kept in mind when studying any curriculum question” (p. 420). Thus, it can be stated that curriculum policy issues are connected with all curricular dimensions at the micro-level and also function within broader areas of educational policy and social policy – embedded in public policy – at the macro level. However, due to the “unique nature of policy” (Short, 2007, p. 420), the term *curriculum policy* is handled in the following part of its own!

2.6.1.1. Curriculum policy

The term *curriculum policy*, in a broad sense, is defined by the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (2013) as “formal decisions made by government or education authorities that have a direct or significant effect on the curriculum, its development and implementation. These decisions are normally recorded in a range of official documents” (p. 20-21). Coşkun Yaşar and Arslan (2021) regard that “The curriculum is the *constitution* [emphasis added] of education that directs an education system” (p. 237). Considering, as well, one of the most common definitions of curriculum, as “a course of study”, (Jung&Pinar, 2016, p. 30; Lambert, 2016, p. 395; Rosiek & Clandinin, 2016, p. 293), while formulating curricular policies, the approaches/perspectives of the policymakers determine the *route* of the related activities. In terms of educational science, such approaches and/or perspectives are usually examined and evaluated in the frame of curriculum theories that lead the curricular and instructional studies and policymaking processes. Through curricular policies that can be made out of the knowledge from *it* “Theory can provide information that can *trigger insights* [emphasis added] that will, indeed, improve the practical everyday management and implementation of the curriculum” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004, p. 170).

After presenting concise information about curriculum theory below, the points related to curriculum policy issue will be returned progressing with the approaches that influence policymaking.

Curriculum theory

Pinar (2004) asks and answers himself: “What is curriculum theory? The short answer is that *curriculum theory is the interdisciplinary study of educational experience*. ... Curriculum theory is a distinctive field of study, with a unique history, a complex present, an uncertain future” (p. 2). Coşkun Yaşar and Aslan state that “In the literature, the concept of curriculum theory has been used synonymously with the concepts of curriculum beliefs, educational value orientations, curriculum ideologies, and curriculum orientations” (p. 237). Another definition is that “a curriculum theory is a set of related statements that gives meaning to a school’s curriculum by pointing up the relationships among its elements and by directing its development, its use, and its evaluation” (Beauchamp, 1975, p. 58). The issues or subject matters that this theory deals with are mostly the decisions about the curriculum, its design, its development, its implementation, its evaluation, and so on (Beauchamp, 1975); it can be stated that it helps provide technical and regulatory bases for curricular policies. On the other hand, as Coşkun Yaşar and Aslan (2021), in their comprehensive (literature) review study on curriculum theory in the USA and Türkiye, contend that there are views that the area of curriculum theory is regarded to be left aside for years, and there are a limited number of studies on curriculum theories, and they lack variety. Thus, it can be asserted that the use of theory in curriculum policymaking stays limited, particularly in Türkiye.

Beauchamp (1975) conceptualizes the curricular elements and their relationship and interaction with each other as “a curriculum system” that should be managed through “human engineering” (p. 60). On the other hand, Pinar (2004) posits that this field is in interaction with educational psychology and sociology as well as humanities and arts. In this context, Beauchamp (1975) shares similar views indicating that all theories – and curriculum theories in

particular – are interdisciplinary, and borrow and utilize knowledge from *the humanities, the natural sciences* and *social sciences*. Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) present scientific theory together with philosophical and humanistic theory as the classic bases of curriculum theorizing, underlining their “descriptive, predictive, explanatory and guiding” functions that influence theory building (pp. 174-176).

There are a number of curriculum theories and/or categories that have been formulated and developed since the times of the first historical curricularists – curriculum theorists or curriculum scholars – Bobbitt, Tyler, Taba, Dewey, and their colleagues. The contributions to the field have continued after (and/or together with) them, including the domains related to learning and teaching – actually the domains of “instruction” are usually regarded within the term/concept “curriculum” – with other educationalists like Vygotsky, Bloom, Maslow, Piaget, Gagne, Gardner and so on while other diverse visionary provisions to curriculum theory – mostly regarding social, cultural and political areas of education – have come from scholars like Greene, Freire, Apple and other philosophers (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). Naturally, nowadays, curriculum theorizing is still in progress; the difference between its development in the past and today is that the focus of its sources has remarkably shifted towards technological areas.

Pinar (2007) mentions basic properties of curriculum (theory) concerning time, which include broad meanings: “Through the curriculum and our experience of it, we choose what to remember about the past, what to believe about the present, what to hope for and fear about the future” (p. 493). He also presents a number of aspects of academic studies to comprehend curriculum and its theory such as handling the curricular issues “historically, politically, racially, autobiographically or biographically, aesthetically, theologically, institutionally, and internationally, as well as in terms of gender, phenomenology, postmodernism, and poststructuralism” (p. 493). In addition, he specially touches on theological curriculum studies and political curriculum theory together with reconceptualist and reconstructionist approaches to curriculum. He further diversifies curriculum theory as *autobiographical curriculum theory* (involving

the self in curricular experience – subjectivity), *aesthetic curriculum theory* (integrating artistic dimensions), *theological curriculum theory* (utilizing ethical and moral visions). Moreover, studies of curriculum theory might cover more specific fields such as cross-cultural theory, psychoanalytic theory, ecological theory, women’s (gender) studies, pedagogical practices and studies of place, etc. (Pinar, 2007).

In terms of the perspectives/approaches that affect and are affected by the curriculum theories utilized in policymaking, Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) divided curriculum approaches into two basic categories; a) technical or scientific approaches, which are regarded within the positivist and/or modern curriculum tradition, including such sub-categories as behavioural approach, managerial approach and systems approach, which are linear and prescriptive, and which concentrate on predetermined student needs – also called as “machine theory”, and b) Nontechnical or nonscientific approaches, which can be considered within the postpositivist and/or postmodernist camp, including such sub-categories as academic approach, humanistic approach and reconceptualist approach. More specific perspectives such as those of critical theory and conflict theory can also be added to the list of approaches that influence curriculum approaches. On the other hand, the general philosophies “idealism, realism, pragmatism, existentialism” and educational philosophies “perennialism, essentialism, progressivism and reconstructionism” that are portrayed by Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) among the *philosophical foundations of curriculum* influence curriculum theory and policy. These are also briefly referred to in the part titled “Ideology affecting education policy process”.

In regard to both the overall nature of the curriculum and its design, various approaches, interacting with other elements, influence and guide curriculum policies. Among them, the most utilized ones are subject-centred, learner/student/child-centred and society-centred approaches. Technically, these are usually formulated in line with the sources of curricular decisions, such as science as a source, society as a source, knowledge as a source, learner as a source and divine and eternal sources. The approach(es) selected, also lead(s) the decisions concerning the main curricular components; “aims, goals and

objectives” together with “content, learning experiences, and evaluation” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004, pp. 235-240). In terms of curricular policymaking, it can be asserted that the selections of approaches and philosophies influence the determination of policy issues, policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation.

As a succinct overview of the historical progress of the curriculum theory, Pinar’s (2007) chronological categorization of contemporary U. S. curriculum theory into three periods is worth presenting since its progress has experienced similar conceptual order in the world as well:

- (1) the field’s inauguration and paradigmatic stabilization as curriculum development, 1918–1969;
- (2) the field’s reconceptualization, 1969–1980, from curriculum development to curriculum studies, an interdisciplinary academic field paradigmatically organized around understanding curriculum, 1980 to current; and
- (3), most recently, the field’s internationalization, 2000 to current (p. 491).

The appearance of Tyler’s “Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction” in 1949 is defined by Pinar (2007) as the “culminating event of the first paradigmatic moment” (p. 491) and this book was labelled and mostly admitted as “the Bible of curriculum making” (Jackson, 1992) although there has been a considerable amount of criticism about the book and its gist known as *the Tyler Rationale* (Pinar, 2007).

Since the second half of the 20th century, curriculum theory has been deeply influenced by various social, political and international events such as the launching of the Soviet satellite *Sputnik* in 1957, which “launched a persisting curricular obsession with science and technology” (Pinar, 2007, p. 492). During the 3-4 decades, curriculum theory has been under the influence of political environments and cultural diversities as presented by Pinar (2007) under the titles of “Political curriculum theory” and “multicultural curriculum theory”. As for examples of influence of political movements and approaches on curriculum theories and policies, these can be listed for the U. S.: A Nation at Risk – The Imperative for Educational Reform – Report (1983) of the United States National Commission on Excellence in Education; The No Child Left Behind

Act of 2001 (NCLB), The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), etc. For Türkiye, the passage to 8-year-uninterrupted primary education reform (1997); the transition to the 4+4+4 system (2012); the addition of certain selective courses into curriculum (2012) can be some recent examples for *political (or rather politicized) curriculum theory* and application. These points are referred to on remarkable number of occasions in the related parts of the study.

As mostly confirmed and handled by the curriculum scholars after him, like Ornstein and Hunkins (2004), *curriculum theory-building activities* were outlined by Beauchamp (1975) in the following order: (1) Establishment of descriptive and prescriptive definitions for technical terms, (2) Classification of existing and new knowledge, (3) Inferential and predictive research, (4) Sub-theory development and use of models (p. 61). In curriculum theory-building, the matters concerning curriculum designs – scope, sequence, continuity, integration, articulation, and balance together with their conceptual framework of horizontal and/or vertical organizations – should be premeditated as well as the taxonomic levels (cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains) of curricular and instructional planning (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). Though, in their comprehensive book these topics are handled in separate sections apart from “curriculum theory”, it can be stated that they are intertwined with curriculum theory in essence as implied by Beauchamp (1975), who also prescribes clarifying its “*accepted values*” (p. 82). Furthermore, the affairs of implementation and evaluation stages of curricular events, including the actors in them as stakeholders, should all be presumed in the theoretical efforts. As concluding remarks for this part, it can be underlined that, beyond all dimensions and activities related to this topic, either some theorists prefer to study curriculum from a macro perspective and others from a micro perspective, concerning the future of *curriculum theory* studies, two points should be highlighted: a) There must always be a “balance” based on mutual understanding through dialogue among the approaches, actors and institutions related to the field (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004, p. 191). b) “Any curriculum theory should provide for continuous regeneration of curriculum decisions” (Beauchamp, 1975, p, 82).

Within the context of curriculum theory and accordingly curriculum policy, participation/involvement in curricular decision-making is an important issue that should be handled.

2.6.1.2. Participation/involvement in curricular decision-making

Decision-making mechanisms and dynamics functioning at the micro level of curricular activities affect the decisions and policies at the macro levels of educational policymaking. Thus, issues of participation and functions of curriculum actors as decisionmakers are significant in terms of curriculum theory and policy. Beauchamp (1975) lists four, actually five, categories of persons involved in curriculum decision-making, who can be called the basic actors today too:

They are: (1) specialized personnel [curriculum specialists/workers from among teachers, supervisors, subject specialists], (2) representative groups composed of specialized personnel [in a discipline and/or interested in related research], and some [representative] classroom teachers, (3) all professional personnel [“all classroom teachers, supervisors, special teachers, and administrators in a school or school district” (p. 149)], and (4) all professional personnel [outside schooling milieu] plus lay citizens. In recent years, a *fifth* [emphasis added] group has been added, namely, the students (p. 148).

Within the context of this study, in regard to Beauchamp’s categorization above, teachers should be primarily the integral participant group in curricular and instructional decision-making and policymaking processes. Again, Beauchamp (1975) underlines this significant point: “In reality, the only person who actually can participate in all three systems [instructional system, appraisal system and curriculum system] is the teacher; ... Teachers in elementary and secondary schools spend almost the entire day in a classroom with pupils” (pp. 149-150). The second group of curricular decision-making actors in the list concerning this study is the group of academicians who are specialized in certain subjects, disciplines and/or curricular/instructional fields and who conduct research in the related fields. They basically provide the curricular studies with qualified theoretical knowledge. And the third group comprises the

governmental officials who mainly lead and conduct the processes concerning formal procedures.

Curriculum implementation is the stage that conveys the curriculum planning, which is prepared according to the determined principles of the curriculum theory and policy, from *statements* into *action* – meaning “putting the curriculum to work” (Beauchamp, 1975, p. 164). In accordance with the curriculum, teachers organize their instructional strategies and learning-teaching activity environments. Teacher “commitment” to curriculum, which can be enhanced by their participation in previous phases of its preparation, is the most significant prerequisite for curriculum implementation (Beauchamp, 1975, p. 166). In the context of curriculum implementation, again, teacher participation in all curriculum studies plays an important role; the lack of it may bear significant risks such as rejection by the teacher and damaging her/his instructional creativity:

A curriculum that is planned remotely from the classroom teacher who must implement it is considered by the teacher who implements it to be a mandate from elsewhere. The teacher is less familiar with the content and implication of the curriculum. Both of these considerations contribute to the rejection of the curriculum ... A remotely planned curriculum tends to make a follower of the classroom teacher rather than a creative professional person (Beauchamp, 1975, pp. 207-208).

The last point that should be handled in the context of curriculum theory and curriculum policy is the phase of curriculum evaluation. Basically, four dimensions of this stage are dealt with in the related literature: “(1) evaluation of teacher use of curriculum, (2) evaluation of the design, (3) evaluation of pupil outcomes, and (4) evaluation of curriculum system” (Beauchamp, 1975, p. 170). This stage is utilized in curricular policymaking (and in reviewing curricular theories) to improve/amend policies implemented in a *circular* manner through both formative and summative evaluation methods while benefited in the formulation of related new policies by providing evidence and knowledge.

Beauchamp’s (1975) proposition underlining that “A curriculum should be constantly under appraisal and revision. It must be written to be so used and

treated.” (p. 199) can be interpreted as an important recommendation for curricular theory utilization and policymaking too: Curriculum policies should be evaluated periodically and revised, amended modified or changed when necessary, according to the results of the evaluation documented in written forms. Furthermore, this point should be kept in mind: “To some extent, it should be expected that curriculum will be changed each year, that is, each time it is implemented” (Beauchamp, 1975, p. 208). However, such frequent changes should be needed and applied mostly concerning the aspects of techniques and methods not concerning curriculum or educational policies, which should not change so frequently.

Levin (2007) draws attention to the political aspects of curriculum policy; he claims that curricular decisions are influenced by the views of voters rather than the stakeholder views stating that “Voter interests drive everything. Everything occurs in the shadow of elections” (p. 9). He broadens the scope of curriculum:

Although curriculum is a fundamental part of the framework of schooling, curriculum decisions and choices are shaped in large measure by other considerations - ideology, personal values, issues in the public domain, and interests. Curriculum decisions are often part of a much larger public debate that often extends beyond education to larger questions of public goods (Levin, 2007, p. 16).

To conclude, in the light of the knowledge from the relevant literature (Kridel, 2010; Wahlström, 2018), and in particular, out of the interpretation of Levin’s statements above, such an inference can be made: Curriculum theory is embedded in and leads curriculum policy, which is embedded in and leads education policy, which is embedded in and leads public policy.

2.6.2. Ideology affecting education policy process

In regard to education policymaking, the concept or factor of ideology should be considered separately by paying special attention since its effects mostly become deep and long-lasting on the entire education system and society.

In this context, education cannot be regarded as a neutral concept; it is significant, when investigating educational issues, to examine the relationship between education and ideology. But the term ideology can be handled both in good connotations like the one defined as *science of ideas* by the Ideologues (a group of French intellectuals) operating at the heart of French Enlightenment, or it can be evaluated in a pejorative manner as reflected through a Marxist viewpoint that ideology creates an illusion, a *false consciousness* in the mind of the working class imposed by the ruling, or as Apple (2006) indicates in a similar manner that ideology can be utilized for exerting the hidden aims of the ruling power to keep the status quo most of the time (as also cited in Garratt & Forrester, 2012). Therefore, it is vitally important to distinguish whether educational policy internalizes the ideology as *science of ideas* or strategy of a *hidden agenda*.

Different ideologies may serve decision-making (usefully) by reflecting views from various perspectives because they do contain realities for certain groups in the society; however, it should always be kept in mind that “no ideology is completely consistent with reality ... In modern societies, ideologies are widely disseminated through the school system, the mass media, and advertising; therefore, most people’s thinking is at least partially ideological” (Fowler, 2009, p. 122). In the particular context of curriculum policy, Short (2007) also underlines the popularity of such a manipulative political and ideological approach: “Struggles for dominance in educational policy by one or another of these partisan reform agendas were seen as inevitable in the effort to establish control over the curriculum” (p. 422). Although it is widely accepted that followers of ideologies tend to stick to their basic doctrines unquestioningly and they are inclined to counteract emotionally when challenged, people who have intellectual maturity concerning ideological approach, may well accept some arguments of the different or opposing ideologies (Fowler, 2009, p. 122). This kind of attitude of policy actors can be the expected one for conducting a healthy education policymaking process by reaching a *balance* among competing ideas. In this context, Ball’s (1994) statement “policies are always the

product of compromises between multiple agendas and influences” (p. 16) should be noted too.

As Fowler (2009) does, some of the major ideologies influencing modern education policies can be listed as follows: 1) Conservatism; a) Business conservatism – based on self-interest and economic interest. Higher standards, accountability, merit pay, proficiency testing in schools advocating policies that will improve the economy and turn education into a competitive market. b) Religious conservatism – fundamentalism to set social order and lifestyle in traditional manners through school education). 2) Liberalism (Education policies should advocate equal access to quality education for all children, regardless of race, gender, handicap or other differences, favouring brotherhood and solidarity. 3) Extremist ideologies (Stakeholders of education are warned against the possible negative influence of these on education policy); a) Left-wing extremism (Its followers are “likely to blame social ills on large corporations, the military, modern technology, or the institution of private property” (Fowler, 2009, p. 126). They are mostly pacifists, rarely violent. They advocate equality and brotherhood fervently. They are inclined to condemn public education as the tool of governmental propaganda to utilize to maintain the status quo). b) Right-wing extremism (They tend to “blame social problems on racial, religious or ethnic minority groups, often believing that these groups are conspiring to destroy the way of life they hold dear” (Fowler, 2009, p. 127). 4) Other ideologies; a) Social democracy (Social democrats generally believe that the cause of most contemporary social problems is capitalism. They favour public education, advocate education policies such as extending compulsory education, abolishing tracking and ability grouping, and providing students with free books and materials and the like. They value equality, fraternity and solidarity while favouring economic growth. This ideology is influential in most Scandinavian and European countries and Canada.) b) Christian democracy. (“a “third way”: a political program that would be progressive but not socialist, and modern, but not procapitalist. ... They advocate full political democracy, a mixed economy, a moderate welfare state, and participative governance structures in both private and public sectors” (Fowler, 2009, p. 128). c) Islamic/Muslim Democracy. (“...

models that integrate religious values, religious identity, and politics [of Islam]” (Khan, 2015).

On the other hand, similar to the impact of (political) ideologies, a number of philosophies and approaches can influence educational policymaking, depending on the time and the environment of the process. In this context, major philosophies can be listed as idealism, realism, pragmatism, existentialism, while educational philosophies can be labelled as perennialism, essentialism, progressivism and reconstructionism. Basic educational approaches might be named as behavioural approach, managerial approach, the systems approach, academic approach, humanistic approach and reconceptualist approach (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). Although the authors presented these philosophies and approaches as factors that can influence curriculum development and practice, we can refer to them, in a broader sense, as the ones that may affect overall education policymaking.

A less frequently-used factor influential on education policymaking can be that some politicians involve their very personal views and very individual experiences in the process (together with ideological enforcement). An example is portrayed by John MacBeath (2014) about Michael Gove’s involvement, who was the Education Secretary in the United Kingdom government cabinet:

Policy watchers have commented on a sea change in decision making that has occurred over the last two decades, manifested in the direct, and highly personal, intervention in curriculum and pedagogy by party politicians. The force of ideology is nowhere more powerfully expressed than in Secretary of State Michael Gove’s personal crusade to shape the curriculum in the mould of his own childhood experience (p. 11).

He gave another specific example for showing the influence of personal views on education policy, rather than scientific factors. He depicts those views sarcastically as “bright ideas” mentioning the introduction of a class hour named “literacy hour” inserted in the daily schedule: “... The literacy hour would follow a prescribed formula, informed less by research than by bright ideas, as would become the nature of policy making through the four years I was to spend in largely futile counsel” (MacBeath, 2014, p. 16). Similar ironical reaction –

“gut instinct” – to a similar application is portrayed by Exley and Ball (2011) in regard to U. K. government: “New Labour Party’s policy making, has seemingly shifted more towards ‘gut instinct’, ‘non-academic and even anecdotal evidence’ which is ‘very limited and selective’ in nature” (as cited in Garratt & Forrester, 2012, p. 19).

Related to the issue of the influence of political ideologies/interests, the theme of abuse and/or deception by politicians through education policy process is also handled in literature. In their case study concerning the role of impression management, or what has become known as ‘spin’ in the education policy process in the U. K., Gewirtz et al. (2004) conclude on the existence of “a long-standing concern about the politicization of the civil service” (p. 194) and emphasize that “there is an increasing blurring of the boundaries between party political interests and the interests of ‘effective’ government” (pp. 194-195). They also underline the undemocratic and unethical attitude of the political government toward the public in the practice of education policies: “There is a concern that public debate is being stifled because the public are *being lied to* or at least *denied* the accurate information needed to inform judgements about the value of particular policies or courses of action” (p. 195). In the Turkish case, the related literature explores the influence of political ideologies of governments, mostly in critical manners: Arar et al. (2019) underline that “Governments also dictate and enforce education to further political goals or the survival of a particular ideology or social system” (p. 296). Against such unfavourable conditions, there are certain warnings in literature for the education stakeholders: “Today’s school leaders must have a general understanding of the political ideas that swirl around them in order to think intelligently about education policy” (Fowler, 2009, p. 106).

Consequently, it can be stated that the theme of education policy is studied in literature with its various dimensions being appreciated as a significant issue in regard to its interaction with social, political, economic, technological, religious, cultural and other areas. Accordingly, the relevant literature concludes by emphasizing that the higher the quality of education (led by qualified policies), the more its contribution to the progress of other fields in

society will be. In this context, by an outstanding institution in the USA, the topic of *improving education* is placed among the “10 most important US public policy issues”, (probably) in an order of significance and priority: 1. Making stronger economy, 2. Improving job situations, 3. Reducing budget deficit, 4. Defending against terrorism, 5. Financially sound social security, 6. Improving education, 7. Financially sound medicare, 8. Reducing health costs, 9. Helping poor and needy, 10. Reducing crime (Norwich University, 2020). Similar categories and orders are formed in many countries including Türkiye; but it can be asserted as a significant and meaningful point that, even in the most capitalist countries, making qualified educational policies must be the first and over all the other policy issues since education encompasses all the others, directly or indirectly.

2.7. Research and policy-making

Concerning the function of research in policymaking process in a general manner, Deshpande (1981) indicates that “in order to make a decision or develop a policy, certain information was desired; this information was collected, analyzed, and a set of recommendations proposed. The corpus of these recommendations then formed the basis for the decision policy” (p. 317), portraying the process as follows:

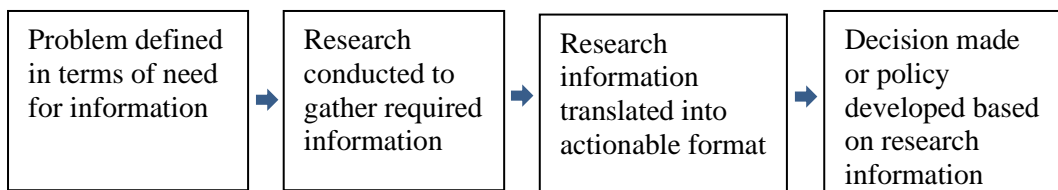


Figure 2. 3.

A Decision-driven Model of Research Use

Note. Source: Deshpande, 1981, p. 318.

In regard to purposes of utilizing research in policymaking Weiss (1979) defines seven models, calling them “meanings that have associated with the

concept” and depicting the case as an “extraordinarily complicated phenomenon”:

Model 1 is named *Knowledge-driven model*. In this classical model, research is conducted following this sequence of events: basic research ▶ applied research ▶ development ▶ application. While the model is remarkably appreciated in natural sciences, it is not considered much in social sciences in regard to policymaking. The main reason for this can be that policy makers do not ever value the knowledge obtained from social science research concerning a social problem if they do not expect/gain a political benefit out of it as clarified by Weiss (1979) “Unless the problem is fully politicized and debated, there is little likelihood that policy-making bodies will be receptive to the results of social science research” (p. 427). Thus, it can be concluded that social science research knowledge acquired by this model is not worth utilizing in the mindset of policymakers unless it creates much *voice* and *noise* in political arena.

Model 2, labelled as *Problem-solving model*, basically involves applying the implications of a specific social science study to a decision or policy which is not yet legitimized due to lack of rational grounds. The linear sequence of the process in this model is: definition of pending problem ▶ identification of missing knowledge ▶ acquisition of social science research ▶ interpretation of the research for the decision context ▶ policy choice. The research precedes or antedates the policy problem; that is, it has already been conducted and yielded its results and implications, staying aside. On the other side, there is the decision or policy made; but missing founding evidence. Then, when the policymakers need, they utilize them to fit the decisions, alternatives and/or their goals that are already determined. Their main expectation or desire is that the research should provide empirical evidence to fill the gap in the process immediately. Since, in this context, it is rather difficult to find out studies that suit the conditions which the policymakers seek, this model is not frequently utilized; therefore, concerning this model, “occasional studies have direct effect on decisions, but usually on relatively low-level, narrow-gauge decisions” (p. 428).

Model 3, *Interactive Model*, as another means of involving social science research in policy/decision arena, comprises an interactive search for knowledge,

in which policy makers “seek information not only from scientists but from a variety of sources – administrators, politicians, planners, journalists, clients, interest groups, aides, and friends”, using “experience, political insights, pressure, social technologies, and judgement”. Scientific research is accepted as only one part of a complicated process. The participants “pool their talents, beliefs and understandings in an effort to make sense of a problem” (p. 428). It is rather rare to find common conclusions and convergent evidence through the circular routes of this model; but still it can be utilized for supporting decisionmakers with knowledge and opinion in the policy area they are concerned with.

Model 4 is *Political model*. In this model, the policy makers have already constructed their opinions around their interests, ideologies or intellects, and opinions are hardened. They are not likely to be receptive or appreciative to new evidence from social science research, even from any other sources; thus, research cannot shake their stand. In terms of premeditated approach to decision-making, this model resembles problem-solving model. However, for especially political purposes, research can still be utilized when policymakers catch some useful aspects or conclusions in a piece of research:

It becomes ammunition for the side that finds its conclusions congenial and supportive. Partisans flourish the evidence to neutralize opponents, convince waverers, and bolster supporters. Even if conclusions have to be ripped out of context ..., research becomes grist to the mill (Weiss, 1979, p. 429).

Model 5 is *Tactical model*. Concerning the use of research in policy processes through this model, according to Weiss (1979), it should be notified that in governmental bureaucracy and/or political arena, social science research may be used, or rather abused or misused by officials and/or politicians for purposes different from obtaining knowledge for regular policymaking process; that is, sometimes, they might exploit it for manoeuvres to delay decisions or actions saying “we are doing research on it right now” or “we are waiting until the research is completed”, at other times, government agencies may “use research to deflect criticism. By claiming that their actions were based on the

implications and recommendations of social science research studies, they may try to avoid responsibility for unpopular policy outcomes” (p. 429). And moreover, sometimes the profession of *scientism* or *scholarship* might be abused: “Or support for a research program can become a tactic for enhancing the prestige of the (government) agency by allying it with social scientists of high repute” (p. 429).

Model 6, *Enlightenment model*, a qualified way of utilizing research, is mainly based on the idea that the results of scientific studies do not directly influence the policy process; but the viewpoints, concepts and theoretical perspectives emerged from the research indirectly and rather slowly infiltrate into policy-makers’ mindset, and accordingly shape the policy-making process. Research implications reach the related public through various channels like “professional journals, the mass media, conversations with colleagues” (p. 429); and informed by these, and equipped with the research generalizations and perspectives, decisionmakers can have the chance and the capacity to perform policy activities through their *intellectually-fed* and/or *scientifically-fed* visions. Furthermore, “Research sensitizes decisionmakers to new issues and helps turn what were non-problems into policy problems” and “Conversely, research may convert existing problems into non-problems. ... It helps to change the parameters within which policy solutions are sought. In the long run, along with other influences, it often redefines policy agenda” (p. 430). It also helps create an official consciousness of policy-making. One point should be highlighted as well: In regard to this model, there is no requirement that the evidence or implications obtained from the research findings should accord with the goals and values of the policymakers as expected in the problem-solving model. However, it may have some deficiencies depending on the context and actors: From time to time, research results which are untrue, incomplete, overstated or exaggerated, insufficiently supported by data or evidence, may be popularized in a sensational manner. Such implications, as might be labelled as “bad science”, may mislead policymakers and other stakeholders. Another deficiency of this model might be that vital implications of research, on many occasions, never reach decision-making centres, the audience concerned, or arrive too late, being

obsolete. Then, in this context, the function of the research may turn into “endarkenment” rather than *enlightenment* (p. 430).

The seventh and final view of research utilization as a model is *Research as part of the intellectual enterprise of the society*. In this approach, social science research is regarded as one of the “intellectual pursuits of a society”, a dependent variable functioning (collaterally) together with others, such as

Policy, philosophy, journalism, history, law and criticism. Like policy, social science research responds to the currents of thought, the fads and fancies, of the period. Social science and policy interact, influencing each other and being influenced by the larger fashions of social thought (p. 430).

In this view, “research is one part of the interconnected intellectual enterprise” (p. 430); different from the research studies that are inspired and led by funds or official interest, while social science research mentality widens its horizons, it can support – though indirectly – policymaking processes with intellectual capacities, thus, guiding the policymakers towards reconceptualization of the policy issues. In so doing, apart from assisting the policy processes only in problem-solving contexts, research can serve policymaking culture through intellectual manners with a broader, far-seeing and sustainable wisdom. Moreover, this sort of capacity-building can attend to the betterment of society in terms of improving the individuals’ deep wisdom and conscience, through which they will demand qualified governing capacities and cultivated political character from the officials and elected rulers.

Though these models, which identified a valuable and functional understanding of the diversity of perspectives on research utilization, were introduced to the literature by Weiss quite a long time ago (43 years), they are still meaningful to a great extent concerning policymaking process at present. When evaluated and interpreted in detail, it becomes rather obvious that any decision making or policy-making process that we come across today, was already portrayed within one or more categories determined by Weiss four decades earlier.

Concerning the policy makers' (government officials and politicians) approach to research and knowledge, meaningful implications from three authors – one of them is Weiss, again – are pointed out by Deshpande (1981). The first one is: “Karin Knorr (1977), in her study of government officials and social researchers in Austria, found that *research was used more as background for policy rather than for making decisions*” (p. 317). The second one is: “Rich (1975) found evidence in his study that *policy makers are more interested in knowledge for the sake of understanding than for the sake of action*” (p. 319). And the third one is: “Weiss (1980) concludes that *the conscious use of research to guide specific choices is a relatively uncommon event*” (p. 319).

Regarding the use of research in policy-making, specifically in the field of education, an example would be the Norwegian government's establishment of the Knowledge Centre for Education, which is tasked ‘to produce, gather, synthesise and disseminate knowledge from research on issues of relevance to the education sector’. The Centre states that it “adheres to internationally recognised standards on how to synthesise research on education, and to show how research can be practically applied by practitioners and policy-makers” (Knowledge Centre for Education 2015; Parkhurst, 2016, p. 150).

Evaluating Weiss's (1979) models and other authors' (Caplan, 1980; Sharpe, 2004; Natow, 2020) interpretations of research utilization by policy makers, it can be concluded that policy makers do not utilize research in order to make conscious decisions and take *informed* action, but mostly in order to prepare background for their premeditated decisions in their agendas as tools for political tactics; therefore, rather than expecting policy makers' use of research in a scientific and objective manner appropriately in policymaking, it is more logical and realistic to hope them utilize research to be enlightened through informed perspectives as Deshpande (1981) indicates: “The focus of studying the utilization of social research should accordingly be on the conceptual or enlightenment function rather than on an instrumental or action function” (p. 319). In this context, Levin (2007) highlights that politicians tend “to see [research and/or] evidence as being largely the *handmaiden* [emphasis added] of political ideology ... and do use it to legitimate and support their own theoretical

positions” (p. 19). In spite of such widespread attitudes of typical policymakers, states have always been in search of research utilization in a scientific manner, by which sustainable policies proper to public need with a universal quality can be produced. With this mindset, evidence-based policymaking has been a preferred approach together with regulatory impact analysis, which could be regarded as an independent approach as well as a method of evidence-based policymaking in the related literature.

2.7.1. Evidence-based policymaking (EBP)

Evidence-based policymaking is a method favouring that decisions and/or policies are made by systematically evaluating the information provided by accurate uses of objective, rigorous and scientific evidence. Many governments have possessed EBP as an important part of their approach to policy-making in governmental mechanisms. Though EBP is said to have been used for more than 40 years especially in medical policymaking, its popularity started to rise, gaining political currency with the approach of the UK government in the late 1990s claiming to be “committed to replacing ideologically-driven politics with rational decision making” (Sutcliffe and Court, 2005, p. iii), and, since then, it has been widely appreciated that the more the policy-makers are [scientifically] informed, the better policies are produced (Davies, 2004; Sutcliffe and Court, 2005; Parkhurst, 2016). Pragmatic benefits of EBP are commonly expressed with similar views like: “More rigorous or more widespread use of evidence could avoid unnecessary harms and help achieve important social policy goals. Evidence tells us ‘what works’” (Parkhurst, 2016, p. 4). On the other hand, Sutcliffe and Court (2005) depict EBP as

a discourse or set of methods which informs the policy process, rather than aiming to directly affect the eventual goals of the policy. It advocates a more rational, rigorous and systematic approach. The pursuit of EBP is based on the premise that policy decisions should be better informed by available evidence and should include rational analysis. This is because policy which is based on systematic evidence is seen to produce better outcomes (p. iii).

According to Davies (2004) “evidence-based policy has been defined as an approach that ‘helps people make well-informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation’” (p. 3). Contrasting the policymaking process based on opinions and the one based on evidence, he also highlights an exceptionally significant point:

This approach stands in contrast to opinion-based policy, which relies heavily on either the selective use of evidence (e.g. on single studies irrespective of quality) or on the untested views of individuals or groups, often inspired by ideological standpoints, prejudices, or speculative conjecture (p. 3).

Claiming that “evidence tends to be portrayed as an a-political, neutral and objective policy tool” (p. 8) and referring to the UK Cabinet Office’s understanding of evidence in its 1999 White Paper *Modernising Government*, Sutcliffe and Court (2005) present different types of evidence as “expert knowledge, published research, existing research, stakeholder consultations, previous policy evaluation, the Internet, outcomes from consultations, costings of policy options, output from economic and statistical modelling” (p. 8). According to them, some of the required peculiarities in regard to the good quality of evidence can be its “accuracy, objectivity, credibility, relevance and practicality” (p. 10).

Parkhurst (2016) mentions *evidence advisory systems* which gather, produce and utilize evidentiary advice for the governments:

Lying in a series of concentric circles around the government – with ‘government organisations’ (such as official research institutions and advisory bodies) being most central, followed by ‘government-supported organisations’ (think tanks, consultants, sponsored academics, etc.) and finally ‘independent organisations’ (e.g. non-government organisations, international donors and independent academics) being most distant (p. 148).

Referring to Shaxson (2014, p. vii), Parkhurst (2016) specifies a set of key principles of evidence-based (evidence-informed) decision-making, which, according to him, overlap several elements of “good governance of evidence”:

1. A need for evidence that specifically responded to policy goals and priorities (recognising the importance of evidence challenging these goals as well).
2. Policymakers to recognise a range of different types of evidence as relevant (statistical data, stakeholder perspectives, evidence from monitoring and evaluation, etc.).
3. A balance to be struck between short-term needs and long-term priorities.
4. A commitment to re-analysis of older evidence as well as commissioning new evidence.

A fifth principle, seen as underlying all the others, was that of ‘transparency in the evidence base’ – specifically embraced due to a recognition of a need for ‘good governance of the evidence base’ so as to ensure that stakeholders were well represented and brought into the evidence-utilisation process (p. 166).

Parkhurst (2016) also points to several limitations of EBP: “It might stay only as an *empty rhetoric* failing to address the realities of policymaking” (referring to Hammersley 2005, 2013), it might “be abused to serve only to political goals, or be exposed to ‘evidentiary bias’”. In order to avoid these and to “serve as a critical voice against the misuse of evidence in policy debates” (p. 152), he presents sources of evidence and their function indicating that

professional associations of scientists and national academies, academic bodies, civil society organisations, and the media can all make up a broader institutional landscape influencing evidence use, and many of these can work in ways that serve to reduce or counter various forms of evidentiary bias (pp. 151-152).

2.7.2. Regulatory Impact Analysis/Assessment (RIA) and its context in Türkiye

RIA, in general sense, is known to have introduced a methodological approach to decision-making and policymaking mechanisms for choosing the best option(s) among the proposed alternatives, based on the data obtained from the comparison of their analyses, mainly regarding the speculations of their future impacts on the affected parties, so as to save time, energy and money. It has been strongly recommended by the OECD to all member countries, actually in rather a forceful manner, since it was first utilized by some member countries in 1974; and today, as a robust tool for decision-making, almost all member countries require several forms of RIA in their regulatory management systems prior to finalizing new regulations and policies. RIA is regarded as a powerful

method/mechanism to improve the quality of regulations (Güngör and Evren, 2009; OECD, 2008; OECD, 2009). From 2005 onwards, 26 OECD member countries out of 30, have enacted the application of IRA as a mandatory process for making regulations (Güngör and Evren, 2009, p. 2). It has quite a similar approach to that of evidence-based policymaking (EBP) – in fact, it might be considered as a strategy of EBP (Sutcliffe and Court, 2005, p. 15).

In the OECD Introductory Handbook for Undertaking Regulatory Impact Analysis (2008) RIA is defined as

RIA is a process of systematically identifying and assessing the expected effects of regulatory proposals, using a consistent analytical method, such as benefit/cost analysis... “feasible alternatives” must all be assessed, using the same method to inform decision makers about the effectiveness and efficiency of different options and enable the effective and efficient options to be systematically chosen (p. 3).

RIA is usually needed because a new or modified regulation will have impacts on the people concerned and such effects are frequently hard to predict properly when there is no scientific information, especially obtained from the perceptions of affected parties. Among the needs for and purposes of RIA are signified its two important features, as well: a) the improvement of transparency together with promotion of inclusive participation in policy-making, and b) the enhancement of accountability attitude of the governments in regard to policy processes (Güngör and Evren, 2009, p. 7). In the OECD Reviews of Regulatory Reform, Regulatory Impact Analysis, a Tool for Policy Coherence (2009) the significance of EBP and accordingly RIA is stressed as follows: “In the context of increasing policy complexity, robust evidence-based policy mechanisms that are integrated in governance processes are important for maximizing the welfare benefits of regulatory policy and minimizing costs” (p. 9). The document emphasizes the significance of research-based/evidence-based decision-making for improving the quality of policies:

In principle better decision-making processes should lead better policy decisions. Policy decisions are by nature challenging, requiring a careful balance of the public interest which is not easy to determine. ... If governments

are going to produce coherent and effective policies, it is increasingly important that political decisionmakers have the best advice and evidence available. The quality of the advice provided depends largely on having robust analytical processes that are integrated with the policy making apparatus and capable of communicating information to decision makers at the time when it can have a positive influence (p. 12).

The document also signifies the prominence of the studies that should estimate the probable impacts of decisions or policies upon their stakeholders in an informed manner in democratic regimes: “In political systems which rely on the exercise of delegated powers it is reasonable for citizens to expect that policy decisions take into account a prior consideration of the anticipated impacts, and are informed by the views of stakeholders that are likely to be affected by these decisions (p. 12). The main purpose of RIA studies is to communicate knowledge to decision/policy makers about the potential effects of alternative approaches evaluating their advantages and disadvantages, cost-benefit balances, pros and cons, so as to assist them to select the best choice and accordingly to regulate their policies in a well-examined manner; and thus, to supervise for better implementation (Güngör & Evren, 2009; OECD, 2008; OECD, 2009). Operating on this mission, methodologically RIA is regarded both as an instrument and a process and its functional peculiarity of providing evaluative information in advance is usually focused:

As a decision process, RIA is integrated with systems for consultation, policy development and rule making within governments in order to communicate information *ex ante* about the expected effects of regulatory proposals at a time and in a form that can be used by decision makers, and also *ex post* to assist governments to evaluate existing regulations (OECD, 2009, p. 12).

Sources of knowledge in RIA studies are usually determined as indicated by the OECD: “As an evidence-based method, RIA can be distinguished from other policy methods for reaching decisions based on the advice of trusted experts, consensus among stakeholders, partisan political position or the adoption of regulatory approaches in place in other jurisdictions” (p. 13). One of the most outstanding benefits of it that can be considered as vital since it interests the policy process as a whole, is that “RIA improves the use of evidence

in policy making and reduces the incidence of regulatory failure arising from regulating where there is no case for doing so, or failing to regulate when there is a clear need (2009, p. 14).

As a sign of putting special emphasis on RIA, OECD (2008) details its process in Introductory Handbook for Undertaking Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA). That RIA has a proactive and preventive characteristic is insistently stressed in this document as well: “RIA ... gives affected parties the opportunity to identify and correct faulty assumptions and reasoning” (p. 3). In regard to the stages of its process, at first,

RIA requires you to ask

- What, in general terms, is the problem to be addressed?
- What is the specific policy objective to be achieved? And
- What are the different ways of achieving it? (p. 4).

Once you answer these questions properly, you can produce alternatives, by RIA approach you compare them considering their advantages and disadvantages to explore the likely impacts of the options, then, “you can analyze each to provide information about which is likely to be most effective and efficient” (p. 4). To answer the question of what information is required to make a judgement about the regulation or policy to proceed or terminate:

you should focus on assessing the nature and the size of the policy problem that is intended to be solved by the regulation or policy action. This involves identifying:

- What groups in society are being affected;
- What is the size of each group;
- What is the nature of the impact on each group;
- How large are these effects; and
- How long will these effects persist? (OECD 2008, p. 5).

Main operations in RIA mostly depend on comparing and contrasting the benefits and costs, the units of which may be quantitative, qualitative or both. In policy processes concerning economy, finance, most branches of medicine, demographic issue fields and the like, it is comparatively simple to obtain and analyze quantitative data while in processes related to psychology, sociology,

education, and the like, in which qualitative data of phenomena and/or perceptions are needed and relatively hard to obtain and analyze. However, qualitative interpretations can yield valuable implications for RIA as well.

While utilizing RIA, “decision-makers must assess requests for new regulation by asking whether they are confident that the total benefits of the regulation are larger than the costs. If it is not clear that this is the case, regulation should usually not be used” (OECD, 2008, p. 10). The most utilized RIA techniques and strategies are cost/benefit analysis (CBA), cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA), multi-criteria analysis (MCA) and competition analysis. Data collection strategies can be surveys, business test panels, review of experience in other countries, other government agencies, literature reviews, and consultation (OECD, 2008). Because consultation technique is closely related to this study, brief information on its usage in RIA will be provided below:

Consultation with stakeholder groups is one of the most cost-effective ways of obtaining data to support RIA. In addition, consultation helps to establish the legitimacy of regulation, by allowing people to raise concerns and participate in the regulatory process before regulation is implemented. This, in turn, can improve the extent of voluntary compliance with regulation (OECD, 2008, p. 19).

Major consultation tools are: a) Notice and comment (publishing a notice, e.g. in newspapers, informing people of the intention to regulate and inviting their comments, b) Circulation for comment (sending requests to a selected group of stakeholders for comments. Several rounds of comment can be requested while the regulatory proposal and the impact analysis are being “fine-tuned”. c) Public hearings (that allow for dialogue and discussion with the participants, and issues can be clarified through follow-up questions so as to have a better understanding of stakeholder views. d) Advisory bodies (along with permanent bodies, ad hoc or temporary bodies to provide advice on a particular piece of legislation. They should be composed of sufficient number of stakeholders and/or experts “to obtain as much relevant information as possible to assist you in conducting RIA” and “... to have a better understanding of the

views of all groups and avoid the risk that regulation is poorly accepted by major stakeholders” (OECD, 2008, pp. 19-20).

Timing is a significant factor that should be paid special attention to in conducting consultation strategies, especially in regard to two aspects: Firstly, it is vital to begin consultations on the earliest occasion in each stage of the process. Secondly, there should never be a hurry during consultations; that is, sufficient time must be allocated to the participants. These principles help avoid missing any valuable information and contribute to the effectiveness of the consultation findings in RIA (OECD, 2008, p. 20).

Some significant points, which might determine the quality of RIA, regarding the conveyance of RIA results to the related actors, namely, the decision-makers and the stakeholders, are underlined in (OECD, 2008) as follows: If the results and implications of an RIA study cannot be transmitted efficiently to the policymakers/decisionmakers in a distinct and easily comprehensible manner, it is remarkably of little value. Accordingly, they must be communicated to those actors at the proper time to secure their actual impact on final decisions together with their rationales so as to facilitate acceptance (p. 22).

It is generally admitted that the most consequential beneficence of RIA for regulatory quality is its substantial influence on policy-makers who began to adopt more rational approaches to policy through systematic RIA applications (OECD, 2008, p. 23). On the other hand, it should also be noted that one of the most important contributions of RIA is that it provides opportunities for making regulatory changes, modifications, variations and the like in the policy, including even its cancellation when required, before its implementation, that is, before it is too late. Thus, it is right to assert that RIA supports the quality of policy process through another fine approach: taking preventive measures for probable failures in advance, prior to implementation.

There are issues and criticism concerning the uses of RIA; however, the OECD generally attributes them mostly to the incomplete application of the system. (Related to the significant themes of this study as well) OECD (2008) also ascribes the problems with RIA implementation to insufficient degree of

stakeholder participation: "... it may fail to assess the relationship of tradeoffs in policy or to genuinely increase the participation of stakeholders in the overall policy process (p. 19).

One significant point to stress is that most RIA applications refer to policymaking in economic, financial and generally quantitative areas/sectors, and thus, there seems to be little use of it in other fields; but, since analytic approach, based on quantitative assessments as well as qualitative ones, is also needed in social, educational and other non-economic policymaking fields, and, on the other hand, RIA studies include findings of qualitative analysis together with implications of interpretative methods, RIA decision making systems can be utilized in any form of policymaking, as a developing beneficial culture as asserted by OECD (2008) again: "Clearly, integrating RIA with the policy development process is as dependent on securing cultural change as it is on having a procedurally integrated system for assessing the effects of regulation" (p. 20). At least, two basic principles of RIA, a) vitality of inclusive stakeholder participation in decision-making/policy-making, and b) preventive approach to the probable issues of the policy practice through ex ante tools, contribute much to the quality of overall policymaking culture. This statement from the OECD (2002), also signifies the contribution of RIA to the quality of decisionmaking/policymaking "...RIA's most important contribution to the quality of decisions is not the precision of the calculations used, but the action of analyzing – questioning, understanding real-world impacts and exploring assumptions" (p. 47).

RIA in Türkiye

RIA entered into Turkish governmental system with the Regulation for Procedure and Principles of Designing Directives (Cabinet decree no: 2005/9986. 19 Dec. 2005) published in the official gazette (no: 26083) dated 17. Feb. 2006. Item (c) of the 3rd Article of this regulation defines RIA as "Regulatory impact analysis: stands for the preliminary evaluation conducted to expose the probable impacts of a draft regulation on the budget, legislation,

social, economic and business life, the environment and the related groups ...” (Bakanlar Kurulu Kararı, 2005, p. 4821). [Düzenleyici etki analizi (DEA): Taslağın bütçeye, mevzuata, sosyal, ekonomik ve ticarî hayata, çevreye ve ilgili kesimlere etkilerinin ne olacağını göstermek üzere hazırlanan ön değerlendirmeyi, ... ifade eder]. It is *compulsory* to employ RIA for the draft regulations of which financial impacts are estimated to cost over a certain amount of money (the amount is revised according to the economic conditions with regulations as it was done by the regulation – Resmi Gazete (2016) – which increased the amount from 10 million TL to 30 million TL). The ministry or the governmental institution that proposes the regulation is liable for processing the RIA. Meanwhile, the compulsory application of RIA was excluded for the proposals concerning national security, budget and final account laws with the circular of the Prime Ministry (no: 2007/6) dated 2 Apr. 2007 (Güngör and Evren, 2009, p. 37). The ministries and institutions are to assign a unit within their respective organizations to create administrative capacity concerning RIA and to coordinate with the Prime Ministerial Better Regulatory Group to improve quality and they operate in line with the Guide for Regulatory Impact Analysis. According to this guide, the RIA processes in Türkiye are to include the following phases and properties:

1. Identification of the issue. (defining the issue, determining the sides (groups, stakeholders, sector and the like, pinpointing existing governmental policies and regulations related to the issue, revealing the rationale, justification for the necessity of the regulation).
2. Determination of the objectives.
3. Determination of alternative solutions (specifying all choices and elimination of the most incompatible ones).
4. Analysis of the impacts (evaluating the social and environmental impacts without limiting the analyses within solely economic fields; identifying the groups and areas to be affected by the regulation; evaluation of the benefits and costs of regulation (benefit/cost analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, multi-criteria analysis; economic impacts, social impacts, environmental impacts)).
5. Comparison of the alternative solutions.
6. Consultation and participation (determining the persons and groups for consultation; methods of consultation; final overall consultation).
7. Implementation, monitoring and assessment.
8. Reporting the RIA (Güngör & Evren, 2009, p. 39-50).

The format of the report and other procedures of the RIA are explained in the guide in detail. It is indicated that RIA process is an improving and evolving one in Türkiye, evaluating the models and amendments in other countries, especially the USA, Canada and the UK, which are rather experienced in this field. There is not one right model for the application of RIA systems; the model can vary according to the political, cultural and social characteristics of the country involved. Therefore, the system should be operated in accordance with Türkiye's peculiarities (Güngör & Evren, 2009, pp. 7 and 72).

2.7.3. Research on education policy and EBP in education

As in all policymaking processes, research is significant for producing qualified and long-lasting governmental policies of education; the intellectual resources that can be obtained from education research support educational policies in a considerably important manner as education has become a globally weighty policy area (Lingard & Ozga, 2007b). Drawing parallels between education research and learning, Lingard and Ozga (2007b) emphasize its benefits: "Education research is important because it informs, enables and sustains learning. In so doing, it may produce knowledge that is useful to and supportive of government policy" (p. 78). In this context, Heck (2004) reminds that "in policy fields, such as education, ... there is currently heightened demand for more research" (p. ix), "Research has the capacity to be very persuasive in policy discourses" (p. xxi). As Beauchamp (1975) calls for the requirement of research to support theoretical propositions concerning curriculum – one of the basic fields of school education ecosystem – educational studies including policymaking require research in a comprehensive manner to obtain empirical knowledge so as to compare and contrast related educational phenomena:

Obviously, research is needed to extend our knowledge of relationships among observed phenomena within the domain of curriculum and to extend our knowledge of relationships among curriculum phenomena and phenomena in other systems of schooling (p. 209).

As elaborated in section 2. 7., the applications of EBP together with RIA and policy evaluation have great importance in education research as well since they provide policymakers with valuable information both before (and after) the policies are made and implemented. Heck (2004) informs about the essence of education research, including analysis and evaluation dimensions as follows:

In education, policy analysis (which is aimed at the analysis and evaluation of particular policies) and the politics of education (which focuses largely on political dynamics associated with educational policy activity) form subsets of the larger field of educational policy research. The goal of policy research is to conduct research on, or provide an analysis of, fundamental social problems to provide policymakers with technical information and pragmatic, action-oriented recommendations for alternative ways of alleviating the problem. Broadly speaking, policy research includes those efforts to produce knowledge about fundamental social problems that have implications for policymakers, educators, and others seeking to utilize the research in future policy activity to alleviate those problems (p. 11).

Concerning educational policy research, there should be strong interaction and collaboration among the stakeholders of education, especially the academicians as theoreticians (and teacher trainers) and the teachers as practitioners. Otherwise, policies produced might not be as useful as expected because of the gap between those two groups. This is a common problem referred to in the related literature: “Practitioners lament the irrelevance of university research to the training and practice of education” (Heck, 2004, p. 13). Accordingly, academicians might accuse teachers in regard to several competencies, such as lack of theoretical knowledge of education, poor intellectual capacity and so on. This kind of attitude may become habitual in time as a “cycle of blame” (Heck, 2004, p. xix) involving other stakeholders like school administrators, officials, students and parents, and so on.

Heck (2004) regards qualified policy studies as *art* and highlights that they should enlighten the stakeholders providing them with valuable information obtained through dedicated effort: “The art of crafting a quality policy study is to take a problem of personal concern and commitment and frame it in such a way that its results will be important to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers” (p. xxiii).

Kaya-Kaşıkçı (2016) indicates that the history of educational policy studies dates back to the 1950s and 1960s, and since then, various studies concerning this topic have been conducted with themes such as educational policy-making, education policy formulation / implementation / evaluation, educational policy and practice, school effectiveness and educational policy, decentralization, localization of educational decision making, and specific studies on specific policies like “No Child Left Behind (2001)” or “Race to the Top (2010)” in the USA; and “4+4+4 Reform” or “Fatih Project” in Türkiye, and so on. Heck (2004) states that “only since the mid-1960s has research related to educational politics and policy been identified and discussed as an approach for understanding the dynamics of educational decision making” (p. 15). While early studies covered the conflicts in education world and their influence on changes, by the mid-1970s, four concepts were dealt with as the main themes: government, conflict, power, and policy. These were mostly studies of policy analysis. Later, in the 1970s, evaluation studies began in order to assess the impacts of planned and applied programs made for educational change, especially for accountability check purposes. With the 1980s, research on educational policies became more multidisciplinary concerning the interaction among stakeholders of education, and “bridging the gap among practitioners, policymakers and researchers” (Heck, 2004, p, 17). Later, education policy research began to cover broader areas also focusing on “how politics influences the development, enactment, and implementation process for a given policy” (Heck, 2004, p, 17). The influence of research on policymaking practice has always been dubious because political entities have had the tendency to selectively present and misuse research results in line with their ideological agendas.

In order to understand the complex phenomena and processes of education by analysing and/or evaluating through scholarly manners, various scientific theories, frameworks, and models are utilized with various methodological approaches. Broadly speaking, they are studied under cultural, structural and rational themes concerning all disciplines related to education (Heck, 2004). In this sense, the information presented in the previous section can

be applied to this context to a great extent. The theories and approaches are elaborated in section 2. 8.

The actual impact of educational (policy) research on the system, in a sense, the challenges against it, can be evaluated under four headings: 1. To what extent do policies [made in line with educational research] penetrate the system? 2. How does research reinforce and shape our [the educational stakeholders'] thinking? 3. What methods are used? [and how appropriate are they]? 4. Whose voices are heard? [Has proper participation been ensured?] These are listed in the light of Heck's (2004) views (pp. 26-33).

In terms of methodology, as will be detailed in the Method section, the studies concerning educational policies are mostly qualitative rather than quantitative. In this context, in literature, there is a rising tendency towards qualitative studies. However, Trowler (2003) warns that the relationship between educational research and education policy should not solely be regarded as depending on the methods of data collection and analysis used; it will be a sort of oversimplifying the situation. It is admitted that he has improved this view a little further to distinguish between the (social) "engineering" and the "enlightenment" models of the relationship between education policy and education research (Trowler, 2003, p. 176). That is, in addition to the methodological dimension, Trowler adds the dimensions of ontological and epistemological positions together with the practical use of the research type as presented in the table:

Table 2. 1.*The Engineering and Enlightenment Models of Research*

	Engineering Model	Enlightenment Model
Type of data collected and analysis method	Bias towards quantitative	Bias towards qualitative
Ontological position (i.e. view of the nature of reality)	Foundationalist: considers there to be objective reality which can be apprehended by research. Research results have a foundation in reality.	Relativist: considers social reality to be socially constructed (to a greater or lesser extent). Research results are true for particular social groups only. They are themselves constructed in nature: stories.
Epistemological position (i.e. view of the status of “knowledge” created by research).	Absolute/positivist: true knowledge which correctly describes reality can be achieved given sufficient effort and rigor and effort in research.	Relative/interpretive: knowledge is conditional upon its social context. Absolute truths at least in the social world, are not achievable. Insight and informed judgment are among the important goals of research.
Relationship to policy.	Informing policy makers about the “facts”. Proposing solutions to problems.	Giving policy makers enlightenment or challenging the accepted definitions of “educational problems” and reframing what is problematic in education.

Note. Source: Trowler, 2003, p. 177.

Trowler (2003) asserts that

The engineering model adopts a scientific standpoint and a belief that proper, rigorous educational research can give policy makers hard data and results on which to base their policy decisions. It also implies that it is possible to

formulate a rational, top-down prescription for action on the basis of these decisions. It is linked, in other words, to the managerial approach to policy implementation (p. 178).

However, this peculiarity of the “engineering model” and accordingly the quantitative methods may not be so appropriate to educational policy studies. Rather, the qualities of the “enlightenment model” in line with qualitative tradition seem to better fit the aims of such researches:

The aim of this approach is to illuminate educational issues, giving policy-makers a good grounding in the context within which they seek to make policy including well formulated concepts which can make it more explicable to them. There is no attempt to deliver the “truth” because that is seen as a fundamentally problematic concept. However, it is important that policy makers should be aware of the different versions of the truth that are relevant in the policy field they are considering, because these have important implications for policy outcomes. In this sense, the enlightenment model is closely allied to the phenomenological perspective on the implementation of change (Trowler, 2003, p. 184).

An important point to be noted is that educational research can be mistreated by certain actors, particularly by the politicians. This potential is often emphasized in related literature. Comparing research to “a political ping-pong ball” (p. 20) used in political debates, Heck (2004) draws attention to this risk:

This political context results in both the use and misuse of policy research. Research is often selectively presented to further a political agenda. The phrase “based on research” is very influential in many policymaker and practitioner circles. We can wonder about whose research is represented as well; because the policymakers do not have the expertise or time to evaluate the quality of research studies, peers, subordinates, and political ideology can exercise a great deal of control over what gets on the political agenda. The potential is always there to affect future policy, funding, and alter educational programs (p. 19).

There are seemingly discouraging comments in the literature about the lack of (shared) direction concerning educational policymaking and research such as Heck’s (2004): “There seems to be no real agreement among educators, policymakers and researchers on what the pressing policy problems are facing education, the appropriate method to study them, and who should conduct the

research” (p. 80); however, it is better to appreciate these differences as richness of multiplicity of ideas rather than loss of direction.

To finish with a commonly accepted literary recommendation, it can be remarked that educational policy research should cooperate with the policy actors and stakeholders with an eclectic and critical approach in a scientific and democratic manner as Heck (2004) suggests seeing

greater flexibility, experimentation, and eclecticism in terms of philosophical stances and methodologies used to study educational policy. These new orientations will require considerable demonstration, application, and further discussion among policymakers, researchers and practitioners (p. 173).

It is also noted in the related literature that policy analysis should be regarded as important, “particularly in raising awareness and encouraging a critical research habitus” (Lingard and Ozga, 2007a, p. 6). Thus, it can be concluded that a culture, or at least a tradition, of enlightenment and critical approach on the side of both the researcher and the audience, should be settled in the educational research ecosystem. As the final words, it can be stated that with the support of well-grounded research and *emancipated* theoretical knowledge, educational practice “may be guided by rational explanation rather than trial-and-error or bandwagon approaches” (Beauchamp, 1975, p. 210). (He used the statement for curriculum studies in particular).

2.7.4. Investigation of education policy studies in the Turkish context

In order to portray how other (relevant) studies have informed this study and to distinguish this study’s place in the related literature by exploring the gap(s) there, concise information about the scientific and empirical studies conducted in Türkiye in regard to education policy should be presented. This was done by, firstly, portraying the situation until 2016, when this study began, and then, demonstrating the literary phenomenon in November 2021, when the final draft of this study was completed.

In 2016

During the proposal period of this dissertation, a large-scale inquiry and examination of the related literature were conducted in 2016. In line with their search results, the MS theses, Ph.D. theses, articles, and other related documents were listed in tables with information about their authors, titles, publication years, institutions, sources, purposes, gist of the result, themes, and methods. In line with the comments and suggestions about them by area experts, peers, colleagues, and committees, they were examined thoroughly. The summary of those evaluations is as follows:

When you search by the keyword “education policy” in the METUnique search engine in the library you obtain over 425.000 results; in OECD library 2412 results, in EBSCOhost 536 results, etc. Concerning theses on “policy” the results also abound; however, they get narrowed when the keywords are limited to the concerns of the proposed study. Depending upon a detailed search in the literature, it was explored that theses written in Turkish mostly cover the “education policy” issues in a historical perspective, usually handling a certain period, e.g. 18 theses out of 29 which were browsed with the keyword “eđitim politikası” through YÖK Ulusal Tez Merkezi; and 7 of them deal with the matter in the context of European Union issues; only one of them covered the matter in the context of “policy formation” through a comparative study – Türkiye and a state (Wisconsin) in the U.S. – belonging to Filiz Keser-Aschenberger written in 2012.

When browsed under the keywords “education policy”, 23 theses were obtained, 2 of them deal with the evaluation of education policies, (Özdem, 2007; Tofur, 2015) while one of them investigated the views of school administrators on musical education policy (Ülke, 2011), and one thesis studied on the MNE experts’ views on children’s rights on education policy (Tunç, 2008). Again, a substantial number of the studies searched with this keyword deal with historical perspectives of education policies in Türkiye while several of them handle the related issues in the contexts of the European Union. On the other hand, around 10 % of them in both searches cover the issues of foreign language policies. In none of these studies, the perspectives or participation of teachers, academicians, and government officials concerning policymaking process are dealt with comprehensively; only one group e.g. teachers’ perceptions were studied, not even two groups let alone all three groups together as handled in the proposed study (YÖK, 2016). So, it can be asserted that there is a gap in the literature in this context, that is, no studies in the related literature examined the educational policy process in Türkiye through the perceptions of these three integral stakeholders; thus, studying such a topic will contribute to the developments in the field especially concerning the concepts of participation, reconciliation, consensus among the stakeholders of education within the

contexts of democratic approaches to strategic educational policy making in Türkiye.

On the other hand, browsing with the keyword in Turkish “katılımcı demokrasi” 7 theses; with the key-word “participatory democracy” 8 theses were reached, none of which were concerned with educational policy, but with local governance. Searching with the key-word “decision making”, 644 theses were obtained out of which 47 (7 %) deal with decision making theme in education concerning the educationalists whereas around 2 % cover the students’ decision-making issues. Most of the rest 91 % deal with economic and engineering concerns. Out of 47 theses on educational decision making, 11 are related to the themes/subthemes of my study concerning “participation in decision making, the relationship between participation and implementation, e.g. commitment, job satisfaction”, etc.; however, all of these theses cover the environment of solely the schools. In a broader sense, 7 of them are indirectly related to my themes; and only 3 of all the theses seem to have stronger relations to my themes concerning decision making related to educational policy making (Erten, 2004; Öztürk, 2009; Korkmaz, 2009). Searching with the key words “policy making”, out of 31 thesis only one is concerned with education, e.g. examining “lifelong learning policy” (Seçkin, 2015) whereas only one investigated decentralization.

Surveying the related literature in Türkiye, it can be commented that there are so many studies on Atatürk’s approaches to and perspectives of education. Another outstanding finding is that there are quite a number of studies comparing the educational systems of Türkiye with other countries, especially in Europe and in relation to EU concepts and projects. There are many studies concerning vocational education. Teacher perceptions have been researched on many topics but not on educational policies; teacher education and teacher employment policies have been studied to a certain extent. Studies on the relation between economic concerns and educational policies have been published to an extent. The relation between globalization and educational policies has also been studied. Studies on historical developments of educational policies have been studied at a satisfactory number. Trends in educational policies in the world have been studied. Some studies related to policy change in particular disciplines, e.g. transition from positivist to constructionist science curriculum (Öztürk, 2015), have been conducted. Studies concerning educational policy analysis on certain type of schools, e.g. of technical secondary schools (Aksoy, 2013) have been frequently studied. Some studies which investigate policies through student perceptions (Zayimoğlu Öztürk & Aksoy, 2014) are included in the literature as well. Nearly all studies closely connected with the themes of this study are conducted with participants at the local or school level.

With various other key words, apart from the abovementioned ones, such as the following words and their derivations, “educational decision making, curricular policy making, curricular decision making, educational politics, curricular politics, policy and practice in education, curriculum building policy, curriculum-making policy, participatory decision making, collaborative decision making, shared decision making, teacher perceptions, academician/scholar perception, etc.” in English and “eğitimde karar verme/alma, eğitimde politikacılar/siyasiler, eğitim sürecine katılım, eğitimde karar vericiler, eğitim politikası yapmak, katılımcı eğitim politikaları, eğitim politikası aktörleri, eğitimde karar verici roller, öğretmen algıları, akademisyen algıları, eğitim bürokratları” vb. in Turkish hundreds of searches were conducted; however, no

significant results and findings except for the ones presented above were obtained.

In 2021

Around five years after the proposal, when studies were searched with the keyword “education policy” on METU Library website on 26th November 2021, 32 results were found as Ph.D. E-Thesis sorted *by relevance*. Among them, out of 3 *very relevant title entries*, the first one (Yılık, 2018) investigated “what characterizes Turkish Technology Development Zones’ (TDZ) structures and functions, and how these structures and functions impact Türkiye’s knowledge and technology production policy and higher education policy from the point of view of a neo-institutional conceptual framework”. Its data sources included rich data informants from TDZs and universities and strategic plans, activity reports, and policy documents. It utilized a semi-structured interview form as the data collection instrument, conducted content analysis and document analysis methods qualitatively. The study used a code list and content analysis technique to analyse data. Among its findings, we see that “in search of legitimacy and efficiency in their organizational fields, universities and their TDZs yield to pressures from neoliberal and new managerial ideologies...” and that “TDZs experience several conflicts regarding ... managerial conflict, and legal gaps and political conflict. ... they are likely to influence knowledge and technology production policy and implementation more than higher education policy making and implementation”. So, it can be indicated that there are similarities between that thesis and the present study concerning mostly methodology rather than content and context except for dealing with “education policy” as the main theme. Concerning the results, political and ideological influences on education policies can be regarded as common issues in both studies.

The second dissertation (Öztürk, 2017) “consists of two empirical papers that explore the causal relationship between education and labor market outcomes in Türkiye based on quasi-experimental methods”. It has hardly any resemblances to the present study in regard to content and methodology.

The third dissertation (Şahinkaya, 2008) aimed “to compare Türkiye and the European Union (EU) regarding aspects (use, self-confidence and attitude) of students’ information and communication technologies (ICT), the relationships between ICT aspects and mathematical and problem-solving literacy performances, and to understand education policy makers’ perceptions on ICT in Türkiye”. It had a multimethod (mixed method) research design. Two primary foci of the study do not have many common aspects with the present study while its third focus has since it aimed “to investigate education policy makers’ perceptions of the ICT policy making and implementation process in Türkiye, and their evaluations of the findings of the quantitative phase of this study. The participants of this focus consisted of seven education policymakers from the Ministry of National Education and universities in Türkiye. The data, collected with interviews, were content-analyzed by coding data, identifying, and relating the categories and sub-categories, that is, open, axial, and selective coding were conducted respectively. In the third focus of the study, participants specified the primary issues of ICT policy making and the implementing process in Türkiye and made suggestions on these issues. Participants frequently related the findings of the quantitative phase of this study to the economic, social and cultural status of students”. Thus, it can be stated that the third focus of that dissertation has similarities to the present study in terms of its thematic content including aspects of learning, curriculum and instruction and in terms of its methodology in regard to the qualitative part.

One *relevant title entry* (Küçükakın Mercan, 2017) examined (1) policy discourses on gender policy in education in the last decade in Türkiye, (2) media discourses on gender policy in education in the last decade in Türkiye, and (3) teachers’ views of gender policy in education in the last decade in Türkiye. Related educational policy documents and materials from the print media were processed through discourse analysis and also, the perceptions of 13 teachers in regard to those policies were evaluated by analysing their interview data. “Results indicated that there were indicators of gender inequalities at each stage of policy making, from policy formulation to implementation. ... structure of the curriculum, sexist practices and gender discrimination at schools created

gender inequalities in education.” On the whole, this dissertation and the present study share similar aspects as both deal with educational policy making, (policy formulation and policy implementation) with the exception that Küçükakın Mercan’s dissertation specifically focuses on gender issues while the present study handles the educational policy matter in a broader and holistic manner, also delving into ideological sides. The methods of both studies are similar as well. On the other hand, results in both studies have parallel prospects because they have implications that reflect the educational policies in question respectively influence curriculum and instruction to a considerable extent.

28 *other relevant title entries* either have similar subject matters or methodological approaches corresponding to those of the present study; however, they do not have much in common.

When MS theses were searched with the same key words “education policy”, 71 results for MS E-Thesis were sorted *by relevance*. The first of the 2 *most relevant title entries* portrayed by the library inquiry system, (Vatansever, 2020), explored public-private partnerships in nutrition education examining the policy and evidence from Türkiye and the European Union. Concerning both the subject matter and method, this study cannot actually be located in comparable places. The second *most relevant title entry* (Kaya Kaşıkçı, 2016) examined “how the National Education Council’s (NEC) participants experience the role of the NEC in the process of educational policy-making”. It was a qualitative study that analysed the semi-structured interview data obtained from 15 participants including academicians, principals, teachers, unions, and policy analysts who have attended defined councils together with related documents. Both content analysis and descriptive analysis were conducted. The findings of the study were presented as follows:

The results indicated that NECs did not have an efficient role in the policy-making process and the role of these NECs evolved from the policy formulation to issue definition and agenda-setting tool which was used by the MoNE in order to strengthen and legitimize their agenda. Moreover, the results of the research demonstrated that MoNE chose the participants of these councils from an ideological perspective. To conclude, although NECs provide a participatory

environment for the policy-making process, they were not used with the aim of policy-making (Kaya Kaşıkçı, 2016).

In regard to both thematic content and methodology, that study resembles the present study to a remarkable extent; however, the present study treats the topic of education policy in a comprehensive way with more participants, while Kaya Kaşıkçı's thesis concentrates on the matter by limiting the research to the issues of NEC with relatively fewer informants. The political and ideological approach of the governing authority to educational policy affairs can be considered as the most significant implication obtained from both studies commonly.

The search sorted out 7 *very relevant title entries*: first of them (Cüre, 2021), as a phenomenological case study qualitatively carried out with 16 academician participants through interviews studied on the topic of “structuring research universities”; its results pointed to an important issue signified in this present study as well, *participation of stakeholders in policy making*, revealing that “the research university process should be considered as a whole with the interaction of the higher education policymakers, government, industry and university stakeholders”. The second one (Adıkutlu, 2019) investigated the policy landscape in Türkiye on school bullying, indicating that Turkish policy standards and implementations are not sufficient concerning the prevention of violence in educational environments. The third one (Özdil, 2015) handled the topic “Teacher identity formation in the early era of the Republic of Türkiye” through a history research study, thematically analysing policy documents, selected newspapers and parliamentary discussions. The fourth MS thesis (Çetintürk, 2013) was “a case study on how public primary schools promote health”, which utilized semi-structured interviews with 9 classroom teachers, 2 school administrators, 2 parents that are parent-teacher association members and 2 canteen operators, together with a classroom activity was done with 252 primary school students to collect data for understanding their nutrition habits. The study found out that both policy and practice which promote health were inadequate. It also produced “implications that can assist social policy makers to

develop and implement new policies and programs required to promote health in urban public primary schools”. This study has certain similarities to the present study regarding method, the main subject matter “education policy” and implications. The fifth one (Boz, 2013) was titled “Difficulties teachers experience in 4+4+4 new education system at first-grade level”. Through a self-administered questionnaire, data were collected from 301 first-grade teachers working in public and private schools and analysed quantitatively. Handling the issues of a new education policy investigating the implementation stage, parallels can be drawn between that research and the present study. The sixth thesis was named “Exploring the beliefs of teacher educators, students, and administrators: a case study of the English language teacher education program in Yemen” by Muthanna (2011). Though not in Türkiye, this MS thesis has parallels with the present study in terms of its method and in particular its participants; through interviews, it explored the beliefs of teacher educators, teacher candidates, and administrators together with bureaucrats from the Ministry of National Education, who were critical stakeholders of education. There are also similar points in regard to the findings, which disclosed shortcomings in policy makers’ performance: “The findings, furthermore, revealed that the education policy-makers paid little attention to the program improvement and the application of the strategies they had planned”. The seventh and final *very relevant* MS thesis (Kahraman, 2006) conducted a needs analysis study concerning “Astronomy education in the national science education policy”, together with its curricular and instructional dimensions, by evaluating opinions of teachers and students.

As the first of the three *relevant title entries*, the thesis (Yağmurlu, 2013) examined “How education and training policy of the European Union operates on education in Türkiye”. Though she concluded that the contributions gained from the EU’s education and training policy did not reach the desired level in Turkish educational settings, she expressed that Türkiye would gain more in regard to improving the quality of education, personal and professional development of educators, institutional cooperation and capacity building. The second *relevant* MS thesis (Selek-Meydanlı, 2013) focused on educational policy

transfer from the EU, qualitatively evaluating two cases: basic education and vocational education. Interviewing MNE experts was crucial methodologically. The results indicated significant criticism directed to governmental practice: ... the impact of the European Union financial assistance on the policymaking process of Ministry of National Education is limited due to the inert structure of the Ministry, the attitude of the actors and resistance for change”. The third and last *relevant* thesis (Şerefoğlu Henkoğlu, 2009) aimed “to investigate the current status of computer education in Turkish basic education schools by exploring the perceptions of computer teachers in terms of the policy of new computer education curriculum, which was prepared in 2006, and its actual implementations in schools”. In this mixed-method research, gaps between policy and practice were explored and the problems in implementation were revealed; in this sense, it has a resemblance to the present study.

Among 59 *other relevant title entries* portrayed in the METU library search engine, there were policy (analysis) studies on various topics, such as Karabilgin, 2020; Kosif, 2020; Kulakoğlu, 2019 – policy borrowing; Aladağ (2019) – policy change; Kenanoğlu (2019) – policy design; Atalay Tuna (2019) – child policy; Seçgin (2019) – immigrant education policies; Burhanlı (2017) – curricular policy; Öylü (2016) – educational equality policies; Ilgaz (2014); Özcan (2014); Tekayak (2013) – EU educational policies; Çelik (2007) – policy proposal. Participation in policy/decision-making was also studied in theses like in Avcıoğlu, 2012; Erten, 2004; Günal, 2005; Kahraman, 2011; Öktem, 2102; Özdemir, 2010.

When the entire collection was searched, 3106 results were obtained; however, among them, out of 81 *most relevant title entries*, only two studies (“Public-private partnerships in nutrition education: policy and evidence from Türkiye and the European Union”, (Vatansever, 2020) and “Experiences of education policy actors in relation to the role of the national education council in the process of policy-making”, (Kaya Kaşıkçı, 2016) were Turkish documents – MS theses. Furthermore, out of 17 *highly relevant title entries* between the lines 82-98, none of the works belonged to the Turkish milieu (Middle East Technical University Library, 2021).

When the keyword “education policy” was searched in regard to the title on the Thesis Center website of the Council of Higher Education-CHE (Yükseköğretim Kurulu-YÖK) on 28-29 November 2021, 32 records were found. Excluding the ones detected on the METU Library search, it was noticed that most of the Ph.D. and MS thesis ($n=11$) dealt with education policy issues in regard to certain periods in history or their historical dimensions such as (Ersöz, 2002; Kerimoğlu, 2006; Oktay, 2018; Tazar, 2010; Uyanık, 2000); a remarkable number of theses ($n=8$) handled the issues of foreign/EU education policy and/or their comparison to Türkiye’s, like (Bural, 2007; Çakır, 2010; İzgi, 2014; Kihitir, 2003); several theses focused on education policies on certain disciplines, such as Semerci (1999); Şahin (2013)– Foreign language; Ülke (2011) – Music education; there were also theses on more specific fields like education policies of political parties (e. g. Yalçınkaya, 2015) and on variations/changes in education policies such as Gür’s (2016).

When the search was expanded to include all searching criteria – not solely the titles – with the same key-word – “education policy” – 265 theses were found. With the variations of the key-word the search was elaborated; for instance, when the adjective “education” was replaced by the word “educational”, the search yielded 115 results. Later, the word “policymaking” with its variations was involved in the search and 5 results were reached. When the search was conducted with the Turkish words, 113 records were obtained with the key-word “eğitim politikaları” while 45 theses were identified by the singular key-word “eğitim politikası”. “With the words “politika yapımı” 82 entries were found; but none of them was related to education. With “politika yapma”, out of 50 records, only one was concerned with education (Meydanlı, 2013 – policy transfer from EU). Consequently, evaluating all these searches for theses in YÖK records, it was spotted that similar categories as the ones mentioned above were prevailing too with the addition and influence of certain other categories of education policy such as (Syrian) refugees’ education (e. g. Caymazoğlu, 2019; Erbay, 2020; Şen, 2020) media literacy and cyber security (e. g. Aslan, 2019; Koç, 2016); gifted students/students with special needs (e. g. Güneş, 2020; Kemahlı, 2017; Mammadov, 2012).

Having inquired into the records, it was discerned that certain theses had common/similar aspects to the present study in regard to thematic and/or methodological points. Among them, some had more similarities on certain points in regard to either/both thematic content or/and method such as: (Korumaz's (2017) "Investigating the role of educational administrators in education policy process"; Uysal's (2018) "Evaluation of education policies in Türkiye according to the opinions of educational administrators and experts"; Özdem's (2007) "An evaluation of education policy implemented in Türkiye after 1980s and the transformation it created on primary schools"; Çakır's (2016) "The role of actors in forming the policy of national education in Türkiye"; Baydar's (2016) "Analysis of teachers' opinions on the role of unions for constitution of educational policy"; Keser Aschenberger's (2012) "Dynamics of policy formation in Türkiye and the U.S. : A comparative case study of two reform initiatives"; Turgut-Top's (2008) "The evaluation of foreign language educational policies since 1980"; Sabaz's (2003) "Views of managers and teachers concerning changes in education policies (Eskişehir province)"; Kaya-Kaşıkçı's (2016) "Experiences of education policy actors in relation to the role of the national education council in the process of policy-making"; Yaman's (2018) "Teacher training in Türkiye, Germany, France, China and Japan (2000-2017)" and Akdağ's (2001) "Evaluation of national educational policies from 1960 up to present". However, none of them dealt with educational policymaking issues in the Turkish context by evaluating the perceptions of main stakeholders qualitatively as done in the present study. (Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı, 2021).

On the website labelled "YÖKACADEMIC" (Yükseköğretim Kurulu, YÖK, CHE – Council of Higher Education), according to the results of the search with the key-word "education policy" on 30 November 2021, out of 6 **projects** found, only one (Örücü's (2016) – The Roles And Competencies Of School Principals In Mediating Educational Policy And Reforms At School Level: An Exploratory And Comparative Study" seemed to resemble the present study; however, it was conducted regarding the UK context.

39 *proceedings* were found in the same search. Among them, 9 studies were regarded as *relevant* to the present study: Kavak, Kırkgöz and Karakaş's (2021) "The case of L1 in English-medium Universities (EMI) in Turkish Higher Education: Policy, Perspectives and Practices"; Kondakçı, Örücü, Oğuz and Beycioğlu's (2015) "Large scale change and survival of school principals in Türkiye. In the Symposia The imposition of government education policy initiatives and school enactment: Responses in Mediterranean countries"; Akar and Erden's (2010) "Efficacy beliefs of teachers to optimize learning opportunities Incentives for teacher education policy making"; Karaman's (2016) "Teacher identity and current teacher education policy challenges in Türkiye"; Karakaş's (2019) "Addressing the policy-practice divide in foreign language education policy in Türkiye: A focus on in ELT curricula"; Kahraman's (2016) "Reinventing the Wheel Education Policy"; Keser's (2018) "An Investigation on the Turkish Education System Through Public Policy Transfer"; Döş's (2013) "National education councils and education policy"; Yirci and Karaköse's (2010) "Democratic education policy and Turkish education system". 10 *proceedings* were considered as *slightly relevant* while 7 seemed to be *negligibly relevant*.

In regard to *articles*, 39 studies were found. Out of them, 8 were deemed as *relevant*: Hendek's (2019) "Supranational Religious Education Policy and Its Influence: Perspectives from Policy Actors in Türkiye and England"; Akın and Köksal's (2012) "Macro level foreign language education policy of Türkiye A content analysis of national education councils"; Sevinç's (2006) "Development of Turkish Education Policy and the Modernization of Primary Education"; Arar, Kondakçı and Tysum's (2019) "The imposition of government education policy initiatives and school enactment: uncovering the responses of school principals"; Öztürk's (2017) "Understanding Education Policy: The 'Four Education Orientations' Framework"; Nohl and Somel's (2020) "Education Policy in Türkiye"; Balkar, Öztuzcu and Akşab's (2019) "Inferences on Turkish Education Policies in the Light of International Education Policy Studies following the Compulsory Education Reform"; Zengin and Zengin's (2012) "New Trends And Practices In Turkish Higher Education Policy: Teaching Staff Training Program

(ÖYP)”. 13 articles were regarded as *slightly relevant* while 11 works were deemed as *negligibly relevant* (YÖKACADEMIC, 2021).

Consequently, in the light of the information obtained from the surveys of the related literature conducted both in 2016, at the beginning of the present study, and in 2021, at the final (draft) stage of it, as presented above, it can be concluded that there is a gap in the literature in regard to the subject matter(s) and method of this study concerning educational policy/policymaking/decision-making issues – to be *urgently* filled.

2.8. Summary of the literature review

Based upon the aim of investigating the perceptions of teachers, academicians and government officials about curricular/educational policy-making process in Türkiye, a comprehensive literature review was conducted in this study for two main purposes:

a) Relevant theories, models and concepts were examined to inform and support the infrastructure of this research and help contextualize the entire study. In order to achieve this, the related concepts and terms regarding “(public) policy, education policy, ideology influencing education policy, curricular/educational policy-making, policy-making actors, participation in policy-making” are defined, elaborated and exemplified through references from the relevant literature. Among a number of definitions of policy, the most common ones are as follows: a course of purposive action and/or plan of intent; a method or strategy to guide future decision-makings and applications. There are many kinds of policies varying depending on the nature of the contexts and people involved. If the policy concerns the public and done by the governments, they are called public policies, which, ironically, may sometimes depend on *doing nothing* or delaying the actions. Policies related to (all sectors of) the educational fields are named education policies and they may cover a wide range of decisions and actions from the *classroom* to the *Parliament*. It is largely emphasized in the literature that (political) ideologies influence education policies to a great extent and they might be spread and propagated through

schooling systems. On the other hand, various philosophies, theories and approaches might impact education policies, depending on the context, society and time. The *quality* of education policy is also a prevalent topic appreciated much in the relevant literature, and thus, the related issues to this concern attract considerable attention from the decision-makers who establish top policy issues in modern societies. It is commonly accepted that policy-making in regard to curriculum and instruction covers a large place in the entire education systems; moreover, the term “curricular”, having already included both curriculum and instruction, has lately begun to substitute the term “education”. Meanwhile, it noteworthy to underline that the term/adjective *curricular* is used in this study substituting or even including the term *education*, e. g. the usage of the concept *curricular/educational* policy.

In the literature review, the people who take part in the policy processes are called policy actors, who are roughly divided into two as governmental policy actors and non-governmental policy actors. Related to this context, the theme of participation in policy-making covers a wide area in the relevant literature, especially it is paid special attention by the OECD. In the context of curricular policy-making, the topic of participation of education *stakeholders* becomes prominent. Concerning the particular context of this study, *participation of teachers* is often promoted in the related literature; however, the issues concerning it are not studied as required.

In the review, the procedures of public and curricular policy-making in the world are overviewed roughly while those in Türkiye are portrayed in a little more detail. Accordingly, the topic of *implementation* of policies is concisely handled referring to the related literature emphasizing that policies will be just *rubbish* unless they are appropriately implemented. Many factors affect educational policy-making and implementation, such as beliefs, values, political ideologies, economic conditions and other social and cultural elements. Related to policy formulation and implementation, this kind of comment in the related literature should be underscored: It should be considered a dynamic, ongoing, interactional, combative and competitive (selecting among the alternatives) and

it is often improbable that policies can be implemented wholly as they were originally intended at the outset.

In terms of theories of and approaches to policy-making, there have been a number of views and suggestions in the literature. After filtering them according to their relevance to this study, seven of them were examined and accordingly, they are included in the review part in a highly summarized form, namely institutionalism, systems theory, rational (choice). Incrementalism, pluralism, elite theory and policy cycle model. Out of them, policy cycle model was elaborated a little more since its three stages – those of Theodoulou and Kofinis (2004) version – have constituted the general frame of this study; they are *problem/issue identification*, *policy formulation* and *policy implementation* phases. Finally, a very condensed information about the NEC is presented as it is/should be regarded as a significant organization in relation to curricular policy-making. It is practically admitted by almost every literary figure that NECs do not function efficiently as required; they only function as an advisory committee, whose suggestions are often ignored (unless matched with those of the government).

Supporting and/or challenging evidence from earlier studies is utilized and referenced not only in the literature review section but also in any parts required. It was particularly nuanced that original quotations are presented as they are rather than paraphrased or inferred because some significant information or messages might be missed (as the English language is not the native language of the researcher).

b) Related research that was deemed significant prior to this study is presented to portray how previous studies handled the topic, what is missing in the particular area and how this present study can expand the existing body of knowledge and try to fill in the gap(s) in the literature as a contribution to previous work. In this sense, firstly, the relationship between scientific research (from the social science) and policy-making is examined and the importance of research for unerring decision-making and, accordingly, appropriate policy-making is emphasized. Weiss's (1979) highly-appreciated seven models of utilizing research in policy-making are introduced, out of which two are

distinguished as more qualified for research utilization, namely the *enlightenment model* and *research as part of the intellectual enterprise of the society*. It is also underlined in the literature that research is often abused and/or misused by the policy-makers for their political/ideological ends. In this sense, the related literature highly shed light on this study because similar dimensions concerning the involvement of politics in educational policy-making occupied a significant place in all phases of it, before, during and after the conducts.

In close relation with the utilization of research in policy processes, the method of EBP, which provides decision/policy makers with scientific evidence that must be properly evaluated, interpreted and utilized. Similarly, the method of RIA, which provides the decision/policy makers with systematically assessed information about the expected or probable effects/impacts of a regulation or policy before its implementation, is examined in the literature review. Both EBP and RIA are recognized in the literature as methods for improving the quality of policy-making and supporting the policies' cost-benefit balance. Also, both methods utilize *stakeholder perceptions* as significant data for analysis. Envisioning such traits of EBP and RIA, reviewing their eminence in the field in Turkish and worldwide literature has been very supportive for this study. Accordingly, the review of the relevant literature on curricular/educational policy-making research, illuminated the themes of the study through certain concepts or codes such as collaboration among stakeholders of education, consensus/reconciliation among decision-makers, transparency, democratic approach (e. g. comprehensiveness, meritocracy), influence of politics on education and others.

In terms of method, the related literature enlightened and supported this study's technical conducts, particularly in employing qualitative tradition (adopting a phenomenological approach, utilizing analysis of perceptions (as sources) and selecting participants among the stakeholders, interpreting with a critical and metaphorical approach, and others), which is preferred in high-quality policy studies allowing deep investigation, examination and interpretation.

Finally, concerning the investigation of education policy studies in Türkiye and the gap in the literature, two comprehensive searches were carried out *before* and *after* the conduct of this research. Thousands of theses, dissertations, papers, articles, proceedings and other studies were searched on the related databases, on the Internet, libraries and other related sites and centres. The relevant ones were investigated to find out the commonalities and differences between them and this study. After the investigation, it was discovered that there were hardly any studies on curricular education policies and there were no studies that had investigated the perceptions of education stakeholders (teachers, academicians and officials) of the curricular policy-making process in Türkiye conducting qualitative research. Therefore, it is regarded that this study can constitute a *particular* place in the related literature filling a *particular* gap.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter presents information about the method of the study portraying research questions, overall research design, data sources, data collecting instruments, sampling method and procedures for participants, data collection process, researcher experience, data analysis process, trustworthiness, limitations and ethical considerations of the study.

3.1. Research questions

The present work is a qualitative case study that attempted to investigate the curricular policymaking process in Türkiye utilizing the perceptions of teachers, academicians and government officials as the main stakeholders in regard to curricular policies. The problem statement (issue, as it is also called in the literature) of the study was “Why are the curricular/educational policies not practiced satisfactorily as expected in Türkiye? How are they formulated and how does this process affect their practice, which most probably impacts the overall education system?” This issue which prompted the study originated basically from the serious emphasis on the conflicts between the policy and practice in the related literature together with the researcher’s personal observations in the schooling environment. It was naturally presumed that the causes of such conflicts might trace back to the policy formation stage. Having reviewed the issue deeper through the relevant literature and inspired by the *non-methodological* observation of the schooling environment in the light of past experience, it was decided that the perceptions of the main shareholders of education should be investigated, formulating them (with their respective approaches, commonalities and differences among them) as sub-problems. So, in

parallel with the aim of the study and the information consolidated from the related literature the following research questions were formulated:

1. How do the teachers, academicians and government officials perceive curricular policy(making) processes in Türkiye? What are the driving forces that shape their perceptions?

a. What are their perceptions of *identification of issues that require new policies or policy changes*?

b. What are their perceptions of *policy formulation*?

c. What are their perceptions of *implementation of policies*?

2. What are the commonalities and differences among the perceptions of these three groups of stakeholders (teachers, academicians and government officials)? How do they affect educational practice?

3.2. Overall research design

Design of a research is defined by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013) as “a logical construct arranging research questions, data and the findings obtained in the end. Simply, it is an action plan that takes the researcher from the beginning to the end” (p. 316). Similarly, Yin (2003) depicts the concept of *research design* as

Colloquially, a research design is *a logical plan for getting from here to there*, where *here* may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and *there* is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions. Between “here” and “there” may be found a number of major steps, including the collection and analysis of relevant data (p. 20).

In the light of such definitions and views, the design of the present study most basically aimed to answer the questions as suggested commonly in the related literature: “What are the questions to research?”, “what kinds of data are related to these questions and should be collected?”, and “how will the data be analysed?” (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 316; Yin, 2003, p. 21). So, a research design/plan was made and conducted following strategies and procedures in both linear and cyclical manners.

Five components of a research design regarded as significant by Yin (2003) are included in this study as properly as possible:

- 1) **Study question(s)** – based on problem statement: The problems of curricular policies in Türkiye have been prevailing for decades; *Why?* Curricular policymaking processes should/can be improved to ensure proper policy practice; *How?* Specific main research question: How do the teachers, academicians and government officials perceive curricular policymaking processes in Türkiye?
- 2) **Study propositions:** The reasons for and solutions to curricular policy issues can be explored and explained through the analyses and interpretation of the stakeholder perceptions, namely teachers, academicians and government officials.
- 3) **Unit of analysis:** The perceptions of the three integral groups of education stakeholders are to be examined – teachers, academicians and officials. The data are to be delimited by the three phases of the policy cycle model – issue identification, policy formulation and policy implementation.
- 4) **The logic linking the data to the propositions:** A) Initially, deriving codes, categories and themes through patterns and/or significantly meaningful single points obtained from the informants' perceptions with an inductive approach and also attaching the perceptions to the *already coded* concepts from the relevant literature with a deductive approach. B) In line with the principles of validity and reliability, the analyses are to be in connection with the research questions and be confined within the scope of the three stages of the policy cycle; a) issue identification, b) policy formulation, and c) policy practice. Then, accordingly, presenting the findings sticking to the principles of trustworthiness (particularly presenting quotations both in English – as translation – and in Turkish – as the original interview language).
- 5) **The criteria for interpreting the findings:** Clarifying and explaining the significant points for qualified and concise discussions, conclusions and

implications, which should contribute to better curricular policymaking and policy practice in the Turkish educational system (pp. 21-28).

As recommended by Yin (2003) as the criteria for judging the *quality* of the research design, the principles of *trustworthiness* (validity and reliability) were conducted with meticulous care (pp. 33-39).

On the other hand, inspired by Yin, the researcher developed initial theories, or rather understandings – Yin (2003) uses the term *understanding* as a substitute for the term *theory* within such contexts as he underlined that “the relevant field contacts depend on an *understanding* – or *theory*” (p. 28) – concerning the case study and also considered rival theories/understandings. In this context, Yin (2003) insistently emphasizes that “the complete research design embodies a ‘theory’ of what is being studied. ...Theory development *prior* [emphasis added] to the collection of any case study data is an essential step in doing case studies” (p. 29), and prescribes to “begin constructing a preliminary theory related to your topic” (p. 28). In regard to cases studies, he underlines the role of theory in design work differing from ethnography and grounded theory studies (Yin, 2003, p. 28) as he also indicates that such theories need not be so assertive or well-founded ones: “This theory should by no means be considered with the formality of grand theory in social science, nor are you being asked to be a *masterful theoretician* [emphasis added]. Rather, the simple goal is to have a sufficient blueprint for your study” (p. 29). In this context, the main understanding/theory of this study was to be that “the present case study will show why and how better curricular policies can be made *once* the perceptions of main stakeholders are evaluated”. And then, the *rival* theory might be that “the case study will also show why traditional methods and strategies utilized in curricular policymaking were not efficient”. Finally, as recommended by the related literature and in particular by Yin (2003), two technical points were to be followed during the entire study: Firstly, reviewing existing relevant theories in the related literature, and secondly, discussing with colleagues, academicians, officials, parents, students and other related people in order to develop a proper understanding/theory at the beginning of the study,

which would improve and might get mature throughout the study. Meanwhile, in order to avoid the most important risk/threat to the study, special care was paid that such efforts for developing an understanding/theory should never create any *researcher biases* that might damage the trustworthiness of the study.

Out of the four case study research designs that are mainly categorized on the basis of a 2 x 2 matrix in the related literature, this study was conducted utilizing a qualitative single-case embedded design, whose case was *the curricular policymaking process in Türkiye*, and whose units of analysis were (the perceptions of) *teachers, academicians, and government officials*. Accordingly, the overall framework of the design of the study was shaped as shown in the figure below:

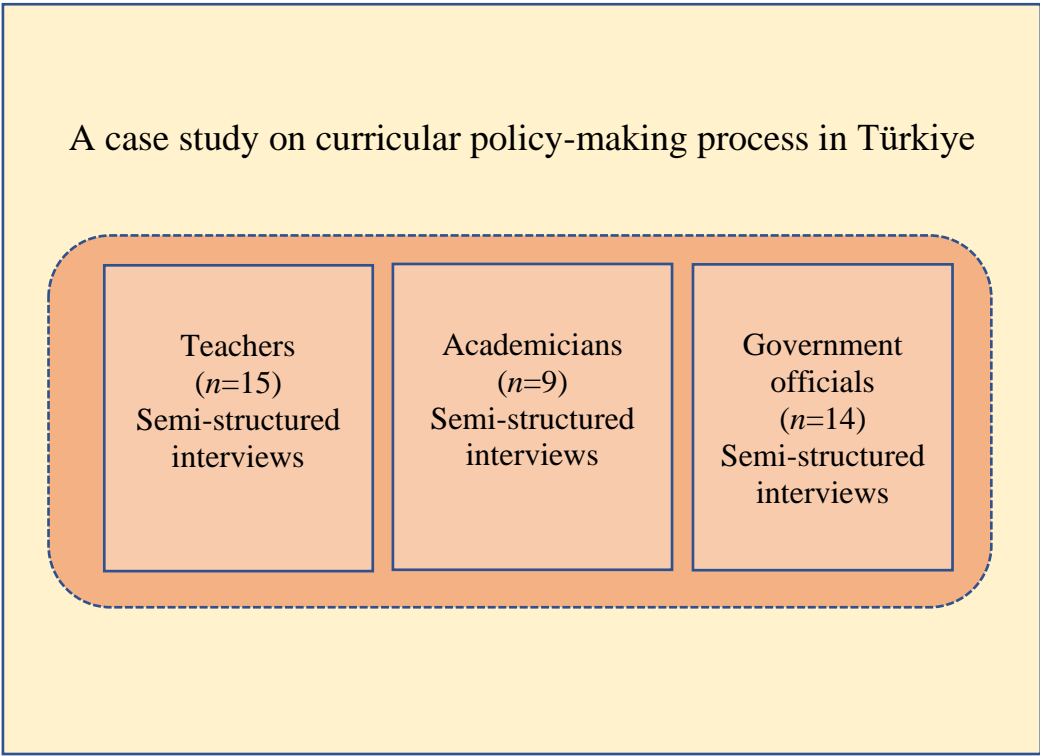


Figure 3. 1.
Single-case Embedded (Research) Design of the Study

The methodical conducts of the study in accord with its design can be summarized briefly as follows: Complying with the steps commonly accepted in the research literature, first of all, the research problem was thoroughly evaluated. Then, the case to be studied was determined. The research questions were formulized having been inspired and led by the research problem, the knowledge from the relevant literature and the researcher's experience. Upon formulizing the research questions, the units of analysis were determined as "perceptions of teachers, academicians and government officials". Then, data sources were determined as semi-structured interviews. Accordingly, as data collecting instruments, interview protocols were prepared. Formal and ethical requirements were settled. Compliantly, the interview protocols were piloted and revised. Then, the participants were selected through purposive sampling (teachers, $n=15$; academicians, $n=9$, and officials, $n=14$) as the three units of analyses. Interviews were conducted and data were collected. Then, the data were analysed and findings/results were reported. As the final part of the report, findings were interpreted and discussed, then, conclusions were drawn. Consequently, implications were presented considering both the related literature and the educational environment in Türkiye together with its conjuncture. Checks for the trustworthiness of the study were attentively applied in a cyclical manner in all the phases required. The generic flow of the conducts in line with the design of the study is portrayed as concise as possible in the following figure:

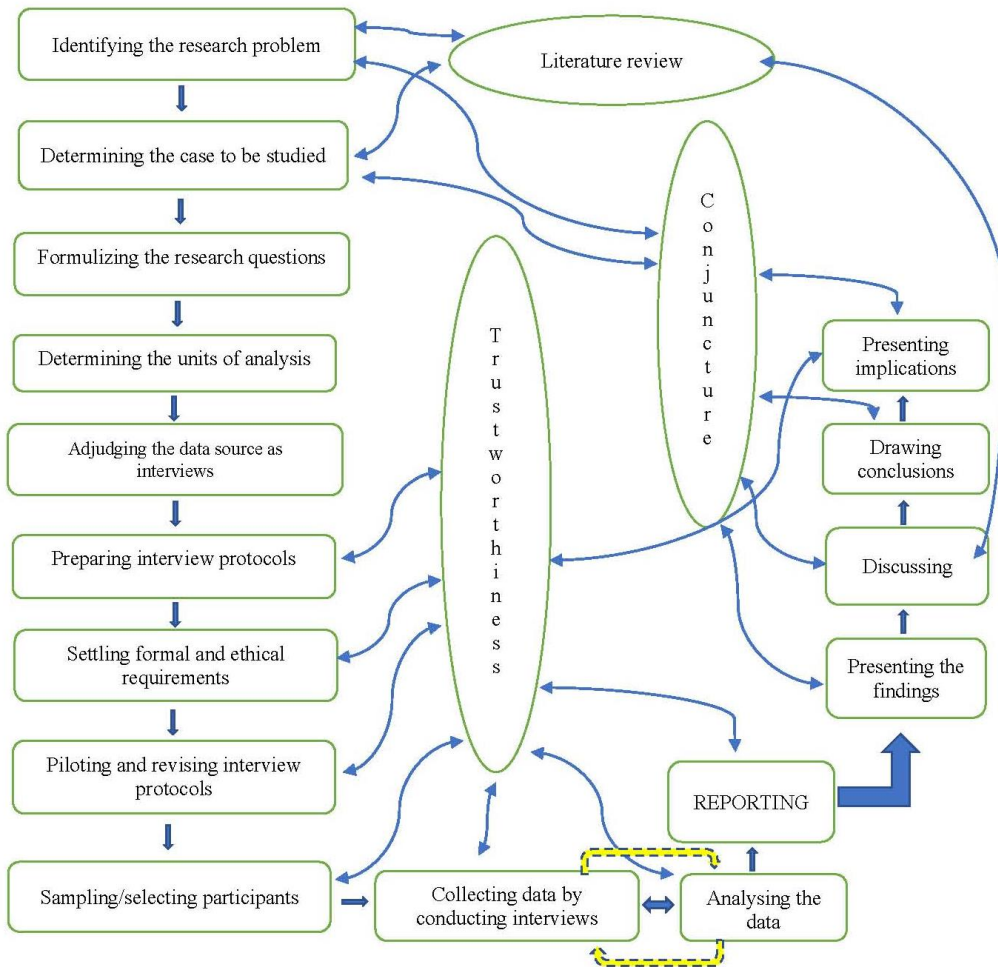


Figure 3. 2.
Overall Flow of the Research Conducts

It is beneficial to inform about the peculiarities of the design of this study referring to certain significant points in the related literature. Mentioning the choices made concerning the design and the rationales behind those choices can enhance the comprehension of the method. In this context, this recommendation by Mills et al. (2010) is valuable: “The design, implementation, and analysis should facilitate a synergistic combination of various aspects or elements of the case study” (p. 362). As suggested in this statement, the present researcher strived to conduct the research in a manner to create synergism among its stages and elements methodologically so that it could produce fruitful implications. This feature showed itself especially in two ways: a) Data analyses started with

the first moment of the data collection period and continued to the last minute of data analysis process developing/improving perpetually, and b) research questions, codes and themes were always shaped, reshaped, varied, modified and evolved flexibly during all phases and became fully-grown in the end; these conducts were formed in line with information from the relevant literature (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Kaya-Kaşıkçı, 2016; Stake, 1995; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Besides, three classes of data from the three groups of informants (embedded units) contributed to each other in a synergetic conduct yielding valuable analytical hints, which, perhaps, could not be obtained through single studies with each group.

Rationales behind selecting a qualitative case study design

As Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) pointed out at the beginning of the 21st century, qualitative research in education and other sciences has been growing rapidly and undergoing changes with the contribution from the fields through books, articles and other works which evidence the productivity of qualitative research. The rising popularity of qualitative research in policy studies during the last two decades is attributed to an increasing interest in evaluating complex systems, cultures, political and social relationships (Heck, 2008; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Yanow, 2007 as cited in Keser-Aschenberger, 2012). Another motive for the rise of qualitative research might be the shift in research tradition from investigating/evaluating the *scores* or *results* to evaluating the *process*. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013) share this consideration by referring to qualitative research as the product of the “rising scientific paradigm”, that is, post-positivism, which emphasizes that there is no single truth but there are *multiple truths*, and thus, research should not be general but context-dependent, and knowledge should not [solely] be discovered or explored but *interpreted* or *constructed* (pp. 31-36). Patton (2002) and Ritchie and Spencer (1994), in a sense, support this view with reference to *policy-making* indicating that in studies concerning policy issues, qualitative research is preferred to a great extent because it is appropriate for studying *process* rather

than *outcomes*. Inspired by this approach and the research tendencies presented above, the process of curricular policy making in Türkiye was investigated through a qualitative case study in this current research.

On the other hand, in the related literature, it is indicated that research on education policy requires more *phenomenological* approaches especially when referring to the perceptions of the stakeholders with a bottom-up perspective (Trowler, 2003). In this context, “a case study can be phenomenological, as long as it focuses specifically on the lived experiences of the individual or group under study and the meanings that this individual or group gives to their experiences” (Zieske, 2020, para. 8). Acknowledging these views as well, it was regarded appropriate to utilize *qualitative* research strategy in this study since qualitative methods seemed to best fulfil the purpose and philosophy of research on *educational/curricular policymaking*, which should be long-lasting, whereas, for instance, the *quantitative* methodology would better fit economic policy making processes that might frequently change according to the demands of the markets. In this context, the researcher sticks to the approach that strategically significant policy making processes, such as educational/curricular policy making, require decision makings as precise – in the meaning of being unambiguous, authentic and detailed – as possible like in medicine and law. The word *precision* in research terminology might seem to be close to quantitative research tradition; however, it can be achieved by qualitative methods as well, provided that the matter is handled with meticulous care in detail. On the other hand, such studies are rather hard and might take relatively longer time (Yin, 2003); but the efforts should not be considered as causing loss of time since the field they will serve/contribute to will function in farsighted periods of time. That is to say, both in political and educational areas, it is idealized that the fundamentals of educational/curricular policies must abide for a long time for their fruitful practice, at least 30-40 years, yet certain modifications might be made within this period; and this can be achieved better through the support by qualitative studies.

Robert E. Stake is one of the well-known authors in the related field, and his “special characteristics of qualitative study” fit the present study to a great

extent: 1) Being “interpretive” and investigating “different views” with “multiple meanings” through “researcher-subject interactions”, 2) Being “experiential”, “empirical” and field oriented” and behaving in a “naturalistic” manner to obtain data from people’s lived experience “tuning with the view that reality is a human construction”, 3) Being “situational” investigating the groups of participants’ within their unique (professional) contexts, but still in a “holistic” manner, and 4) Being “personalistic” and “empathic, working to understand individual perceptions” (Stake, 2010, p. 15). Correspondingly, in order to *interpret* the perceptions of three integral groups of stakeholders in an *empathic* manner, this study inquired into the Turkish case of curricular policymaking process through *situational-holistic* and *empirical* methodologies, and thus, suited Stake’s (2010) approach depicted above.

Concerning some other peculiarities of the qualitative research genre, the nature of this research best fitted qualitative tradition since it investigated the phenomenon of curricular/educational policy process in the Turkish case, handling the three related conceptions presented in the related literature “process, perceptions, and dissatisfaction”: a) the educational policy making *process*, b) the *perceptions* of stakeholders of education, and c) the *dissatisfaction* with the implementation stage of education policies (Cohen, et al. 2007; Patton, 2002; also cited in Gall et al. 2003;).

As for the definition of case study research, Merriam (1998) conceives qualitative case study as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit” (as cited in Yazan, 2015. p. 139), which is suitable to this study focusing on curricular policymaking process intensively as a whole.

As another rationale for choosing such a genre and design, the enlightenment by Yıldırım and Şimşek’s (2013) views should be asserted too. They indicate that, in a qualitative case study, the agents/factors related to the case (environment, individuals, events, processes, and others) are investigated with a holistic approach, and the focus is on how they affect the case and be affected by it (p. 83); and this is what the present study tried to do: To investigate how teachers, academicians and government officials affect

curricular policymaking process in Türkiye, and how they are affected by it. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013) also assert that, through (*quantitative*) questionnaires, it is not possible to inquire *deeply* into the content in which a phenomenon generates; but qualitative case study is a research method that handles “how” and “why” questions as a base, and thus it enables a researcher to deeply examine a case or phenomenon, which she/he cannot control (p. 313). Therefore, such a design was appropriate for this study since its case “policy making process” was an uncontrollable one for the researcher, which required a “how and why” type of investigation to obtain significant and long-lasting implications for better curricular/educational practice.

Similarly, defining as the third type of case study designs – holistic single-case study design – Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013) signify that the cases which (almost) no one has ever reached or studied can be researched utilizing this design and these sorts of studies are significant because they facilitate some unknown or obscure topics to become evident, and they constitute bases for and lead future research in that field (p. 327). This point is also underscored by Yin (2003), presenting examples from the research literature, as that “a fourth rationale for a single-case study is the *reveatory* case. ... a significant case study because few social scientists had previously had the opportunity to investigate these problems, even though the problems were common across the country” (p. 42). Through a similar mindset, evaluating that the curricular policymaking process in the Turkish system was a little-known phenomenon that had not been studied very much, the researcher decided that it should be researched holistically and deeply, after having scanned and covered the relevant research history meticulously. (In the investigation conducted in April-May 2016, during the proposal period of this study, it was discovered that, out of 425.000 results from METUnique search, 2412 results from the OECD library, 536 results from EBSCOhost, 644 theses from YÖK libraries and similar sites with over 20 various combinations of related key words concerning this study, *only 2 theses* handled the issue of educational policymaking with a qualitative case study design including in-depth interviews as data sources; however, indeed, they did

not get the perceptions of the same participant groups in this study). Therefore, it was ascertained that such a study had not been conducted before.

Another motive that prompted the researcher to conduct a *qualitative case study* was the inspiration from the related literature, specifically by Yin (2003) on these three points: 1) Its “focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context”, (that is, curricular policymaking process in Türkiye, a subject matter – a case – which is regarded as one of the most significant issues within real-life contexts in the country nowadays), 2) The researcher has little or no control over the events, (the researcher had no control but shared similar experiences with the participants having worked as a teacher, administrator and academician in state and private schools/offices, and 3) The study tries to seek answers (mostly) to ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions (‘how’ is educational policy made and ‘why’ do the stakeholders have such perceptions, and others) (p. 1). Accordingly, similar to many other literary figures, Akar’s (2016) statements also contributed to the researcher’s motivation in this context, by defining the concepts “contemporary case”, “context/perspective of real world” and “holistic and deep investigation” as the milestones of case studies (Saban & Ersoy, 2016, pp. 113-114). These views fit both the philosophy and methodology of the present study.

As for the types of qualitative case studies in the related literature, it is generally accepted that it is difficult and *not so much necessary* to sort case studies into categories as Stake (1995) signifies that “often we cannot decide” (to sort case studies into categories) (p. 4); however, still there are authors, including Stake, who created some types. Among those case study types; this research has the qualities of an *exploratory case study* in the relevant literature since it strives to explore the mechanisms of policymaking process with its basic dynamics through the perceptions of its stakeholders. Its type can also be regarded as possessing certain characteristics of Stake’s (1995) three categories: Firstly, it resembles an *intrinsic case study*, in which “the researcher is primarily interested in fully understanding the particulars of a specific case in detail in order to shed some light on what is going on, or how effectively a program is working etc.” (as cited in Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 430). In this context, Stake (1995) also

points out that “we are interested in it (the case), not because by studying it we learn about other cases or about some general problem, but because we need to learn about that particular case. We have an intrinsic interest in the case, and we may call our work *intrinsic case study*” (p. 3). Secondly, this case study has also the qualities of an *instrumental case study* (Stake, 1995) since it is instrumental to “accomplishing something other than understanding one particular teacher” (p. 3) (or academician or official in the particular context of this study), but it is instrumental to learning about curricular policy formation, and thus, it serves to illuminate a general problem. Thirdly, as it has comprised relationships among three groups of stakeholders, it has similar characteristics of a *collective case study*, in some senses as well (Stake, 1995, pp 3-4). Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) also signify that “the researcher’s goal in each instance is to understand the case in all its parts, including its inner workings. Intrinsic case studies are often used in *exploratory research* when researchers seek to learn about some little-known phenomenon by studying it in depth” (p. 431). Thus, in summary, the present study could be depicted as having “exploratory, intrinsic, instrumental and collective” case study qualities instanced in the related literature.

On the other hand, Bogdan and Biklen (1998) mention a case study form named “situation analysis” in which a *particular event* is studied from the points of view of *all the participants* (p. 60). In this context, some parts of this research, for instance, evaluating the perceptions of the stakeholders concerning the curriculum workshops among the heads of disciplines from schools summoned by the BDE, commission studies and meetings during NECs and the like, can be regarded as including properties of *situation analysis* format.

In the light of the information presented so far, it can be told that the basic features of qualitative case study/research design on the whole, (with several variations detailed above) best suited to the aims and nature of this study, in which the perceptions of teachers, academicians and government officials were analysed deeply and interpreted comprehensively, in order to investigate the curricular policy making process with the overall purpose of contributing to the solutions to the problems, basically related to implementation, which might have been hindering the progress of the educational system in Türkiye.

3.3. Data sources

The data sources in this study were 38 face-to-face, in-depth interviews with the purposefully-selected information-rich participants, who were discerned as key informants. These interviews included meaningful and significant data to be distinguished, transcribed and analysed in order to obtain valuable findings. Accordingly, the findings prepared proper basis for interpretation and discussion so as to produce useful implications.

Additionally, some sort of descriptively utilized data obtained in the interview sessions and captured from official documents presented by the participants and collected from the related internet sources can be presented as minor/secondary data sources: During interview sessions, the researcher took down small notes (memos) such as describing the environment when the interviews were conducted in the informants' office/home, and/or evaluating their body language and others. In addition, reflection notes including valuable information were taken down during the occasions before and after the interview sessions (e. g. short conversations with groups of teachers/academicians/officials including the participant(s) of the study in lounges or offices, similar to focus group interviews, which were unplanned and informal; short view-exchanges with the participants before or after the interview sessions that are not recorded, and others). On the other hand, some interviewees gave some documents (e. g. the report book of NECs by senior officials), materials (e. g. the statistical results of the feedback for drafted curricula by active officials) and notes to the researcher while some other documents were obtained by the researcher on the internet sites of the MNE, other related institutions and media (relevant regulations and procedures for policy processes). Selected meaningful and supportive pieces of information from these documents were regarded as evidence of what they communicated in the sessions, and they contributed to the interview data. Thus, such documents might be mentioned as secondary data sources as they, in a sense, helped triangulate the primary data from the interviews, to an extent.

In qualitative studies, the usefulness of in-depth interviewing in data collection is emphasized by many researchers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Gal et al. 2003; Meriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1997; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013; Yin, 2003). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) mark that in qualitative research, either utilized as the dominant strategy (as in this study) or employed in conjunction with other techniques, “the interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subject’s own words so that *the researcher can develop insights* on how subjects interpret some piece of the world” (p. 94). In this study, through such interpretations (perceptions) of the informants, the researcher also tried to “develop insights” through the informants’ interpretations about the case of this study – the curricular policymaking in the Turkish context – as some *piece of the world* - the relevant environment.

Concerning the types of interviewing approach, there has been debate in the related literature about which type is more effective, “structured or unstructured” (Bogdan & Biklen, p. 95). It depends on the aim and approach of the researcher, who shapes her/his choice considering the criteria of significance and feasibility from various angles. In this study, the *semi-structured interview* approach was adopted because the fundamental aim of the conduct was to obtain data that would allow to explore, explain, compare and contrast the perceptions of the three groups of participants involved, and in this context, some sort of delimitation was required. This perspective of the researcher is supported by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) noting that “with semi-structured interviews you are confident of getting *comparable* data across subjects” (p. 95); however, they warn that using semi-structured data “you lose the opportunity to understand how the subjects at hand structure the topic at hand” (p. 95). This disadvantage of the approach did not function as a defect in the present study since it was not a *grounded theory* study or pure *phenomenological* research but a case study based on the analyses of participant perceptions on certain thematic points and concepts.

3.4. Sampling method and procedures for participants

In order to determine the participants in this study, the purposeful/purposive sampling method was utilized with its three strategies: a) snowball/chain sampling, b) criterion sampling, and c) maximum variation sampling. The strategies applied to each group differed; these are detailed in the following part handling the participants.

As assured by almost all the authors in the related field, and as Patton (1990) specifically signifies, *purposeful/purposive sampling*, whose “logic and power lies [sic] in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (p. 169) is the most appropriate method for qualitative studies and it was indeed particularly suitable for this qualitative case study. Patton (1990) also indicates that “information-rich cases [informants] are those from which [whom] one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (p. 169).

Three approaches or *strategies*, as Patton (1990; 2002) names, of purposeful sampling were employed to distinguish the most appropriate informants; the first one was *snowball* or *chain* sampling. For Patton (1990),

The snowball sampling process begins by asking well-situated people: ‘Who knows a lot about ___? Who should I talk to?’ By asking a number of people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information-rich cases. In most programs or systems, a few key names or incidents are mentioned *repeatedly* [emphasis added] (p. 175).

The search for reaching the proper participants in each group started with asking for the ideas of immediate surroundings/milieu of the researcher in the professional sense: For teacher participants almost all old/past and present colleagues from schools (both private and state) were contacted; for academician informants education faculty milieus were consulted while for government officials both colleagues from the schools and academics at the universities were referred to their expertise and acquaintances. Then, tentative lists and spare lists were made, reviewed and revised after further negotiations. Meanwhile, the interview sessions started and were going on. After each session,

further/other/additional candidate participant names were requested from the interviewees; new names were added and/or cross-checked with the previous ones, considered over and over. Consequently, lists were determined when the same names began to be voiced repeatedly – like a *list saturation*. Patton (1990) depicted similar conditions:

Those people or events recommended as valuable by a number of different informants take on special importance. The chain of recommended informants will typically diverge initially as many possible sources are recommended, then converge as a few key names get mentioned over and over (p. 176).

Accordingly, the candidates were contacted – mostly through strong multiple references by their close friends/colleagues – first by phone, and soon face to face. More than half of them accepted on the phone to participate in the study, that is, the first face to face meeting with them was the interview session. The interviews started with a highly-experienced government official (a teacher as well) over seventy years of age, and ended with a middle school teacher. To sum up, in the present study, the methodological steps of this strategy – *snowball/chain* sampling – were followed strictly and the participants were reached.

The second strategy/approach of purposeful sampling utilized in the study was *criterion sampling*. In Patton's (1990) words "the logic of criterion sampling is to review and study all cases [participants] that meet some predetermined criteria of importance" (p. 176). However, this strategy was less strictly conducted since it was regarded (by the researcher in this study's context) as relatively less significant than the previous strategy (snowball/chain), to which priority was given when needed. For instance, one criterion was that the teacher participants should have at least 10-year teaching experience; but when two information-rich teacher participants less experienced than ten years were reached, they were included in the study. Certain criteria were settled for each group of participants, which are explained below informing about each group of participants.

The third strategy was *maximum variation sampling*, which was utilized in order to reach a wide variety of participants, as much as possible with a holistic and comprehensive/inclusive understanding. The basic aim was to distinguish themes addressing a wider range of key informants, for instance, among teacher participants, the researcher tried to select informants from at least more than three subject branches. This point is also stressed in the literature:

This strategy for purposeful sampling aims at capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or program variation... Any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared aspects or impacts of a program (Patton, 1990, p. 172).

Information about the diversity of participants by maximum variation application is detailed for each group in the following part.

Participants

In this study three groups of participants as key informants were interviewed and their session transcripts were labelled by their initials at first and are kept in the archive of the study. Later, in all other forms and documents, their names were coded (by the letter “T” for teachers, letter “A” for academicians and letter “O” for government officials) and numbered randomly like T1, T2 as seen in the tables below.

3.4.1. Teachers as participants

The first group of participants was composed of primary and secondary school teachers from state and private schools, who were information-rich, who had (sincere) interest in contributing to education/curricular policy processes and who were enthusiastic about sharing views. The (*tentative*) criterion for the selection of teachers was “having more than 10 years of teaching experience” (this was required because certain curricular policies that would be in question in some part of the interviews would be dated back to a ten-year period; and also,

professional experience was crucial to the study); however, two teachers with less than 10 years of experience were included because they had been promoted by the relevant milieu consulted as being information-rich among the younger generation, from whom valuable data would be obtained (average of participants' experience in this group was 21,3 years).

As for maximum variation, it was planned that teacher participants from various disciplines/subjects, levels and school types would be included; thus, teachers from ten subjects/branches participated, and four of them also worked as administrators. 3 teachers were teaching at elementary schools while 7 teachers were teaching at secondary schools, and 5 teachers were teaching at both elementary and secondary schools. On the other hand, 10 teachers were teaching at state schools whereas 5 teachers were working at private schools. Altogether, 15 teachers participated in the study; their certain demographic and background features, which contributed to the analyses and interpretation of the interview data, are presented in Table 3. 1.

Table 3. 1.

Demographics of Participating Teachers

Code/ Name	Subject / Discipline	Gender	Years of Experience	School level (Elem./Sec.)	School Type (State/Private)
T1	Classroom Teacher	Male	37	Elementary	State
T2	English	Male	20	Secondary	Private
T3	Mathematics	Female	14	Elementary	Private
T4	Technology and design	Female	22	Elem. & Sec.	State
T5	Accounting and design	Female	24	Elem. & Sec.	State
T6	Turkish	Male	10	Elementary	State
T7	Science-Biology	Male	35	Elementary	State
T8	Mathematics	Female	4	Elementary	Private
T9	Mathematics	Male	34	Elem. & Sec.	State
T10	Science-Chemistry	Male	41	Elem. & Sec.	Private

Table 3.1. (continued)

T11	Turkish	Male	24	Elementary	State
T12	Social Sciences	Female	11	Elementary	State
T13	English	Male	10	Elem. & Sec.	State
T14	Turkish	Female	3	Elementary	State
T15	Physics	Male	31	Secondary	Private

Note. The participants T1, T4, T10, T12 and T13 also served as administrators.

3.4.2. Academicians as participants

The second group of participants were information-rich academicians, who had been selected as key informants from universities in Ankara according to the criteria: a) being from the faculty of education of a university, b) having over ten years of experience, (average year of participants' experience in this group was 24,4 years) c) being interested in education policy and being willing to share knowledge. For maximum variation purposes, the researcher tried to sample scholars from both state and private universities; however, as snowball sampling strategies evolved, it turned out to be that only 2 out of 9 informants were from private universities, which might be regarded as a sampling *limitation*. If data saturation could not have been obtained from the universities in Ankara, participants from the universities out of Ankara would have been included; but there had been no need for it; nine academicians were sufficient for data saturation. Certain features of the academician informants are presented in Table 3. 2.

Table 3. 2.*Demographics of Participating Academicians*

Code/ Name	Subject / Discipline	Title	Gender	Years of Experience	University Type (State/Private)
A1	Educational Sc.-Design	Assos. Prof.	Female	25	State
A2	Turkish Literature	Dr.	Male	21	State
A3	Turkish Education	Prof.	Male	18	State
A4	Educational Sciences	Prof.	Female	18	State
A5	Economy	Assos. Prof.	Female	25	State
A6	Psychology- Counselling	Prof.	Male	26	State
A7	Physics	Assos. Prof.	Male	16	Private
A8	Fashion Design	Prof.	Female	26	State
A9	History	Dr.	Male	45	Private

Note. One of the participants was also a dean; due to confidentiality issues, it is not explicitly revealed.

3.4.3. Government officials as participants

The third group of the participants were government officials sampled among the officials who had worked/were still working in the MNE government offices, preferably in the Board of Education and Discipline (BED) – (Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı-TTKB). One sampling criterion was to have 10-year or more experience in the MNE offices as a governmental official (average of participants' experience in this group was 29,2 years), and at least 2-year experience if having worked/still working for the BED in the offices authorized or involved in decision making and/or policy making processes concerning K-12 curricular and instructional issues. Another criterion was that the participants

would be the ones who had attended at least one National Education Council (NEC); however, this criterion could not be fulfilled for 5 participants out of 14. In terms of maximum variation, it was schemed that (nearly) half of the participants should be selected among the officials who were still working at the time of the interviews, while the other half ought to be among the retired officials so as to compare their perceptions providing an extra dimension to the study, that is, to investigate if there was a significant/meaningful difference between their perceptions due to bureaucratic pressure or other factors assumedly. It turned out to be that 8 informants were retired officials while 6 were still working. 14 government official participants were ample for data saturation in that group. Table 3. 3. presents descriptive information that was used to contribute to the interpretation of the findings by diversifying.

Table 3. 3.

Demographics of Participating Government Officials

Code/ Name	Gender	Subject / Discipline	Years of Experience	Working/ Retired	BED Offices?
O1	Male	Educational Sciences	21	Working	Yes (High-level)
O2	Female	Biology - English	13	Working	Yes
O3	Male	History	42	Retired	Yes (High-level)
O4	Male	Economy	39	Retired	Yes (High-level)
O5	Female	English	31	Working	Yes
O6	Female	Physics	24	Working	Yes (High-level)
O7	Male	Philosophy	38	Retired	Yes
O8	Male	Science	42	Retired	Yes
O9	Male	Physics	44	Retired	Yes (High-level)

Table 3.3. (continued)

O10	Male	Mathematics - Librarian	25	Retired	Yes
O11	Male	Guidance - Counselling	26	Working	Yes (High-level)
O12	Female	Technology - Design	15	Retired	Yes
O13	Male	Philosophy	35	Retired	Yes (High-level)
O14	Male	Educational Sciences	24	Working	Yes (High-level)

Note. The heading “BED Offices?” stands for whether the participant worked in the offices of the Board of Education and Discipline; the expression “High-level” indicates that the participant worked as the Head of a department and/or as a member of the BED or in a higher office.

During the sampling process, participants were multiplied until data saturation was obtained as indicated: “Qualitative researchers gauge when they are finished by the term *data saturation*, the point of data collection where the information you get becomes redundant” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 62).

Concise rationale for selecting the instrumental and sampling method utilized

There are many stakeholders of education, from students and teachers at schools to parents, publishing houses, associations, unions and other sectors in the modern educational environment. As noted in this statement “Holistic case study designs build a research framework that draws from an array of stakeholders” (Mills et al. 2010, p. 381), this study endeavoured to obtain the most useful data from the most significant shareholders, namely, “teachers, academicians and government officials” concerning the formation and implementation of curricular policies. (By the way, though the quote is seemingly addressed to *holistic* case study designs whereas this present study has an *embedded* design, the information it conveys is also valid for this study as well because this study, too, has a holistic nature juxtaposing the findings

obtained from the three embedded units of *stakeholder* participants within the context of exploration and explanation of the primary case as a *whole*. It is natural that all single-case designs have also a holistic structure though some types are embedded).

Creswell (1998) shares similar views and notes that the characteristics and assumptions of the phenomenological qualitative approach to research necessitates that the participant's view be the entire reality of the study. Aytaçlı (2012) specifies, citing Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p. 317), that a case study ought to focus on its distinctive individual actors or actor groups and their perceptions (p. 3). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) indicate that “qualitative researchers study things ... attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them” (p. 43). Appraising that these statements denote the term “perception of stakeholders” and evaluating other views in the literature, this study gathered the perceptions of the three groups of main educational actors in Türkiye. Actually, Bogdan and Biklen (1998) indicate that the participants do not axiomatically or needfully compose a “group” in their research methodology:

Individuals who share a particular trait but do not form groups can be subjects in a qualitative study, but interviewing is usually a better approach here than observation. What they share will emerge more clearly when you individually solicit their perspectives rather than observe their activities. Similarly, sharing the same organizational positions does not necessarily mean that people form a group (p. 56).

In the light of their depiction above, the participants in this study shared a particular trait of having a common profession or organizational position but they might or might not form a group. What the teachers, academicians and officials shared emerged more clearly when their perceptions were obtained in this study (sharing similar perceptions, not the same sort of schools or offices, did produce meaningful data); thus, interviewing was preferred as an appropriate instrument as stressed in the quotation. Yet, the three categories of the participants are labelled as groups in the discourse of this study symbolizing both their common organizational positions and shared perceptions/perspectives.

3.5. Data collecting instruments

As data collecting tools, this study utilized three semi-structured interview protocols, which had been prepared in parallel to each other's content and relevant to the nature of the data sources, in order to obtain the informants' perceptions of curricular policy processes in Türkiye:

a) Teacher perceptions curricular policy-making semi-structured interview form (for 15 teacher participants).

b) Academician perceptions curricular policy-making semi-structured interview form (for 9 academician participants).

c) Government official perceptions curricular policy-making semi-structured interview form (for 14 government official participants).

Considering the related literature concerning the method of this particular research and the aim of the study, in order to obtain the *best* data for investigating the research questions, the data collection instrument was selected as semi-structured interview schedule comprising mostly open-ended questions supported by/with probes and alternative questions. Once the relevant literature about the curricular policymaking process both in Türkiye and in the world was thoroughly reviewed and covered, first *drafts* of the semi-structured interview schedules for the three groups of participants were prepared. The main body of the three forms was identical; there were just small variations/modifications according to the peculiarities of each group (e. g. the expressions related to the environment of *schools* for teacher participants, *faculties* for academicians and the *MNE offices* for officials are used). The forms contained three basic parts: The first part included demographic and background questions inquiring about general descriptive information about the participants such as, their professional branch/subject, years of experience, work affiliation, working or retired and the like, which could be utilized in coding, interpreting the findings and discussion. This part also included two warming-up questions, which also functioned to provide data for one of the essential concepts/themes of the study: "participation". One question inquired whether the interviewees had ever participated in any curricular/educational policymaking process or offered any

views or suggestions to authorities, while the other tried to explore their perceptions of NECs and whether they took part in any of them. Meanwhile, in some sessions, these questions led the conversation to the other questions in the format, changing the order, which is, in literature, regarded as very common and normal within the natural flow/course of interviews. The second part included questions inquiring into their perceptions, especially, of “why” and “how” curricular policies were made. The third part comprised questions investigating their perceptions of curricular/educational policy implementation.

After the drafted interview schedules were improved through first-stage peer review and expert opinion, they were formulized as *tentative* interview schedules. Four pilot interviews (two from the teachers’ group and one from each of the others) were conducted in order to make final variations, modifications and amendments to the tentative interview forms. Next, evaluating the feedback from the second-stage peer review (from 2 colleagues) and expert opinion (from three scholars), the final versions of the interview schedules were developed. (Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C). However, still, it was kept in mind that the questions might need to be modified even during the interviews as indicated by most researchers in the relevant literature and emphasized clearly and frequently by Yıldırım and Şimşek, (2013) who noted that the interview questions might evolve continuously during the process. Actually, certain modifications, though minor, were needed during the sessions. The questions in the semi-structured schedules were open-ended in order to conduct in-depth interviews. As recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (1998), “Be flexible; but to do analysis and to complete the study, you have to define a finishing point” (p. 62), the researcher strived to keep a balance between *flexibility* and *finishing point* during the sessions: Since the questions were open-ended, the interviews were flexible; but as the schedules were semi-structured, the conversations could be controlled and directed when needed (when a risk for permanent diversion appeared). Furthermore, interview schedules were fortified with alternative questions and prompting and probing statements/questions to facilitate the conversation when sufficient depth was not reached.

3.6. Data collection process

This part presents information about the data collection process concisely detailing the procedures and environment of the interview sessions and aftermath. On the whole, the following points are touched upon: the gist of information from the related literature concerning technical and ethical strategies and/or suggestions for conducting efficient interviews that guided the researcher; formal and ethical obligations for the study, environment of the sessions (informing the participants, warm-up and providing confidentiality/rapport atmosphere, informants' consent to the research and audio-recording and other procedures); place and time-duration of the sessions, the attitude of the participants and the researcher during sessions; interview schedule with probing and alternative questions; points regarding trustworthiness, hindrances to collecting data, transcription of the raw data, and utilization of other data sources.

Before starting to collect data through interview sessions, related literature was reviewed thoroughly several times with meticulous care so as to conduct the process to get the most valuable data in the most proper way, both technically and ethically. Below is the gist of guiding information from the literature, which led the course of data collection in this study. After the quotations and references are presented, the process is detailed in accordance with the literary knowledge in this section.

Stake (1995) suggests “the researcher should have a connoisseur’s appetite for the best persons, places, and occasions. ‘Best’ usually means those that best help us understand the case, whether typical or not” (p. 56), and adds “each researcher is different; each has to work out methods that make him or her effective in understanding and portraying the case” (p. 57). Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013) emphasize the “reciprocal and interactive” qualities of the interview method, referring to Stewart and Cash (1985), while Patton (1990) compares interviewing to “art and science” (pp. 147-148). Citing Burges (1984), and Fontana and Frey (1994), Bogdan and Biklen (1998) claim that “in the hands of

the qualitative researcher, the interview takes on a shape of its own” (p. 93).

They also hint at valuable manners and tactics such as

good interviewers need to have *patience* [emphasis added]. You often do not know why respondents reply as they do, and you must wait to find out the full explanation. Interviewers have to be *detectives* [emphasis added], fitting bits and pieces of conversation, personal histories, and experiences together in order to develop an understanding of the subject’s perspective” (p. 101).

... They [qualitative researchers] believe that each subject needs to be approached somewhat differently. The goal is to get each subject to feel relaxed and open and to talk about the topics in a meaningful way, exploring the different meanings of words and questions (p. 98).

... Good interviewing involves *good listening* [emphasis added]. ... Interviewing requires flexibility. Try different techniques, including jokes, and sometimes gentle challenges (p. 96).

The researcher tried to apply the strategies suggested in the quotation above, especially by being *patient* and *inquisitive*, by relaxing the participants through warm-up conversations, by listening to (and telling) memories from school life, and by joking and so on in order to get the *most* information he could. Over all of the recurrent declarations of such modes of behaviour as above, the indisputable importance of *confidentiality* (and rapport) between the researcher and the interviewee has been forcefully manifested in literature. This peculiarity of the interview technique stands as the most significant attitude on the side of the researcher of this study as well. Therefore, from the very beginning to the end of each interview, it was attentively followed that the participants fully trusted both the researcher and any pieces of the study.

Before the conduct of the interviews, all formal obligations were fulfilled and ethical issues were meticulously considered: Permission from the Applied Ethics Research Center of METU (Appendix D) and permission from MNE for interviewing teachers and officials (Appendix E) were received. At the beginning of the interview sessions, a detailed explanation about the conduct was presented to the interviewees. Anonymity and confidentiality of the entire study were emphasized specifically face to face; and approval of full comprehension of this explanation was taken from the participant either verbally or through body language, like nodding. Verbal consent was asked for in order to audio-record

the sessions. Upon comprehending the *sincerity* and *goodwill* of the researcher during a 5-10-minute informal conversation at the beginning and since the researcher had been referenced by one or more trusted acquaintances of the interviewees (this can be regarded as a dimension of purposeful sampling because while the researcher seeks to find *information-rich participants*, the candidate participants surely will talk to a *confidence-rich interviewer*), all of the participants consented to the recording of the interviews, and accordingly, they willingly provided valuable information in detail. (Three participants, one retired and one working government official and a teacher refrained from consenting to the audio-recording at first; however, they agreed to it within 10-15 minutes of the session of their own free will without any reminding by the researcher. (On those occasions, the information in the unrecorded part was noted down and verified with the interviewee in the following part of the session). Although the interview schedule had been peer-reviewed and piloted before, still minor modifications were made after the first 2-3 interviews in each group as if a further piloting.

As for places of the sessions, two participants were interviewed in the office of the researcher while all the other interviews were conducted at the offices or homes of the participants. It was observed that having conversations in their own places contributed to their feeling of ease and relaxation, as indicated by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) “good interviews are those in which the subjects are at ease and talk freely about their points of view” (p. 95).

Two different types of recording devices were used for the security of the data. Apart from recording, when *exceptional/distinguishing/unexpected* attitudes of the participants were observed, which might be regarded as meaningfully noteworthy, including body language, voice tone and the like, notes were taken down in case they might contribute to the interpretation of the findings. These were also utilized for the trustworthiness of the study as part of memoing. After the sessions, books on education and self-help were presented to the interviewees as incentives.

The shortest interview lasted 48 minutes while the longest one lasted 114 minutes. As Bogdan and Biklen (1998) point out “some subjects are more

willing to talk, have a greater experience in the setting, or are especially insightful about what goes on. These people become key informants and often you will talk with them, compared to other subjects, a disproportionate amount of time” (p. 61), such participants provided extra valuable information in the present study as well. Most of such interviewees were retired high-level government officials, who *courageously* and openly expressed their perceptions. On the contrary, most officials who were still working for the government/state, seemed to refrain from expressing their perceptions freely at the level the researcher expected. Then, the researcher struggled to relax them by reminding them that their names or any information that might associate with them would not ever be mentioned or implied anywhere in this study or any other studies. Their relaxation was supported to a great extent, and through alternative questions and probing, rather satisfactory information was obtained from them. On the other hand, older participants (over 70 years of age) intended frequently to divert the planned/expected course of the interview by starting to tell memories unrelated to the study; but still, they were listened to carefully indeed, lest some valuable information be missed or motivation of the interviewee be lessened. Though it caused some loss of time, as a qualitative researcher attitude, it was accepted that encountering this sort of issue was not unusual regarding the nature of qualitative study. Such sessions lasted nearly 2 hours; nevertheless, the average duration of all the interview sessions was 68 minutes. On the whole, the sessions of the teachers and the retired officials lasted comparably longer than those of the academicians and working/active officials.

During the interviews, alternative questions and probes were utilized when needed to contribute to smooth flow or redirecting the conversation course to a deeper stage, and accordingly to obtain more valuable information. On the whole, 6-10 fundamental questions were sufficient; however, there were times when a remarkable number of probing, prompting or alternative questions were utilized. When there was an ambiguous or obscure point, the researcher took down notes (part of memos) and tried to clarify them when there was an opportunity later in the session, or at the end of the interview.

After each interview, the recording was listened to attentively by the researcher the same day or the next to find out whether there were any missing parts or unsatisfactory information, and accordingly, the researcher reflected on the process deeply in order to find out whether there were any conditions that might damage the trustworthiness of the study concentrating on two main points: a) concerning researcher bias, b) concerning the accuracy of the data. When such a threat was detected, the participant was contacted again to clarify and articulate any points or other required steps were taken.

The 15th July 2016 coup d'état attempt delayed the data collection process of the study for a considerable time. Some of the participants, especially (high-level) officials continuously postponed the appointments arranged for the interview, some of them several months, indeed. As detailed in the section called "Trustworthiness of the Study", contrary to the worries of the researcher, this unfavourable condition did not impair the interview data so much, as it was ascertained that the quality of the sessions was as satisfactory as desired.

The first 6 audio-recordings were transcribed by the researcher; however, since it took so long a time, the rest were transcribed by a professional company. The shortest transcription comprised 14 pages while the longest one consisted of 27 pages with 1,5-line space. Altogether there were nearly 800 pages of interview transcripts in the present study. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) mention that "the data for a typical dissertation study, usually runs [sic] 700 to 1500 pages of fieldnotes or interview transcripts" (p. 62). There were more than 300 pages of official documents deeply examined; then, it can be said that all together this study included around 1100 pages of significant raw data. Most of the documents were obtained from the Internet; formal documents were downloaded from the websites of governmental institutions, universities, unions, NGOs, and the like, and popular documents were captured also from internet sites, (of) TVs, newspapers, magazines and so on. On the other hand, some documents were handed by participants, especially by the government officials, like minutes of some meetings, to support their views and arguments, in a sense, to triangulate their own data. The meaningful notes (member checking, simple behaviour observation records, memos, and others) were also regarded as

valuable data sources, inspired by Denzin (2017) who quoted from Allport (1942): "... evidence obtained by such polydimensional approaches ... So by all means let *personal documents* [emphasis added] fall into a larger battery of methods [1942, p. 121]" (p. 238). Collecting the interview data and the documents took more than 1,5 years. The transcription process of the data started and went on while the collection had still been in progress.

3.7. Researcher experience

It is rather conventional in the qualitative tradition/literature that her/his position should be contemplated in a reflective manner by the researcher during the process as indicated by Moch and Gates (1999): "One of the most prominent currents felt in the arena of qualitative research methods is the impulse toward reflexivity and self-analysis: researchers considering their own place in the research act" (Description, Para. 1). Accordingly, it is regarded appropriate that certain points should be reported as researcher's experience within the presentation of the study in order to clarify and contribute to the meaning of the results while strengthening the trustworthiness of the research. These points mostly refer to articulation of the researcher's world view concerning the research, which is depicted by Austin and Sutton (2014) as "the core feature of qualitative work: the explicit acknowledgement of one's position, biases, and assumptions, so that readers can better understand the particular researcher" (p. 437). They also note that

reflexivity describes the processes whereby the act of engaging in research actually affects the process being studied, calling into question the notion of 'detached objectivity'. Here, the researcher's own subjectivity is as critical to the research process and output as any other variable (p. 437).

Referring to the relevant literature, they further stress that

some researchers believe that objectivity is a *myth* [emphasis added] and that attempts at impartiality will fail because human beings who happen to be researchers cannot isolate their own backgrounds and interests from the conduct

of a study (Flick, 2009). Rather than aspire to an unachievable goal of “objectivity”, it is better to simply be *honest and transparent* [emphasis added] about one’s own subjectivities, allowing readers to draw their own conclusions about the interpretations that are presented through the research itself (p. 437).

In a similar vein, the following lines depict *reflexivity* conception together with the difference between *preconceptions* and *biases* in a quite suitable manner to my researcher mindset:

Reflexivity starts by identifying preconceptions brought into the project by the researcher, representing previous personal and professional experiences, pre-study beliefs about how things are and what is to be investigated, motivation and qualifications for exploration of the field, and perspectives and theoretical foundations related to education and interests.... Preconceptions are not the same as bias, unless the researcher fails to mention them (Malterud, 2001, p. 484).

In light of the knowledge in the related literature like the ones above, I tried to reflect on every step in my research process concerning the probable influence of my personal state on the data in order to obtain scientific results as objective as possible. Thus, in this part and in some other sections of the study, I briefly presented information about myself related to the research, namely my world view, professional background, related experience, thoughts, feelings, assumptions, biases and others honestly in a transparent manner where and when I considered as required.

I worked as a teacher and administrator in both state and private schools for over 20 years. I also worked at higher education institutions as a lecturer, administrator and programmer. I have one master’s degree in Educational Administration and Inspection and another master’s degree in British Cultural Studies. I had several advanced-level curricular and instructional trainings in the USA and the U.K. for comparably shorter periods, from three days to three months. I had quite a comprehensive scientific preparation education in Curriculum and Instruction Program at METU prior to my doctoral education. Especially in regard to field expertise, it might be stated that I have had remarkable experience in the school environment and academic milieu in the Turkish educational system. This background provided me with substantial

commonality with two of the three groups of participants in my study, teachers and academicians. Considering the studies during my professional career in primary, secondary and high schools, I had the opportunity to contact the MNE officials, which gained me considerable experience with the third group of participants in my research, the government officials.

Deliberating my experience during years with these three groups, *teachers, academicians* and *government officials*, I was rather convinced that they are the most significant educational stakeholders in Türkiye, and thus, if there are problems in the educational system, these people should know the reasons of and the solutions to them better than any other stakeholders, such as students, parents, NGOs, and others. This was my initial point for conducting such a study. On the other hand, I witnessed many occasions that caused me to think there were rather serious issues among them, from which some of the significant educational problems might have stemmed. To me, this sort of an assumption might well have been some kind of bias concerning my research. Therefore, this might have affected the research process from several angles at some stages, from preparing interview questions and session management to presenting findings and discussion although I tried to show great effort to minimize such a researcher effect/bias. For instance, most probably because I had engaged in teaching much longer than conducting academic studies or official work, I noticed that I was feeling emotionally closer to the teachers than the other groups during the interview sessions. This attitude caused me to seem to be approving *fervently* what the teachers said or asserted during the interviews; furthermore, on some occasions, I felt I was also talking on a shared subject as if I were a participant, and *stopped* at once. However, on those occasions, since my participation in the conversations took place after the participant finished what she/he was telling, it can be stated that, because of my interruption, the data in that part were not harmed much in terms of trustworthiness. Furthermore, such an incident rarely occurred, only 3-4 times during the whole process. Likewise, on some unique occasions, I found myself *almost* defending teachers against the criticisms of the academicians and officials

for *several seconds*; then I immediately changed my attitude and concentrated again on being an objective researcher and listener.

Another point is that, in piloting sessions, I might have exaggerated probing/prompting while the participants were criticizing themselves and the other two groups, even by expressing my own views. (In the following sessions, I relatively softened probing in this manner and stopped expressing my personal comments.) This sort of conduct might have influenced the data as the participants produced some harsher critical views, some of which they would not have said if I had not disclosed my views. I had done this because I thought the data should yield as much detail as possible concerning the informants' views of each other so as to more deeply explore the core of the problems among them. Then, the findings would provide considerable knowledge for further studies (probable action research) and efforts to solve those problems, which would lead to better cooperation among them. Similarly, in the piloting sessions, when I did not directly read the interview form, some of my prompting questions seemed like "leading questions" to me as if I were steering the conversation if not manipulating. Then, I straightaway corrected this attitude and tried to repeat the questions in a more appropriate way.

During the sessions, occasionally the order of the questions in the interview protocol could not be followed regularly, and from time to time, some minor variations in the statements were made when the form was not read but the questions were being recited. In two sessions I forgot to ask a few questions; then, I had to ask them after the sessions ended. But actually, the routes including the gist and basic points of the questions were maintained in each session.

Occasionally, the interviewees (especially older ones) diverted the conversation from the context of the interview schedule, especially telling their personal concerns and memories. I *patiently* tried to listen to them in such situations if I thought there might be even very slight valuable information. I often had difficulty reverting the conversation to the research focus when they were talking so enthusiastically. After 2-3 interviews, I had the required skill and experience of stopping the interviewee politely and turning back to the topic in

around half a minute. Meanwhile, it might be useful to underline that it is possible to ask and re-ask the interviewee questions in ambiguous situations when the researcher does not comprehend a point clearly; but it is not so possible to do it in observation, especially if/when the observation session is not recorded. Therefore, I can claim that interview conduct is more advantageous than observation in this context.

During the sessions, it seemed to me as if asking closed-ended questions was easier than asking open-ended ones and especially in the first several interviews, I noticed that I was inclined to transform my open-ended questions into closed-ended ones; therefore, I needed to show extra care forcing myself to avoid that transformation, which might have damaged the depth of the process; however, most of the time it became unavoidable while asking prompting/probing questions, which, I suppose, did not actually harm the data. Similarly, from time to time, semi-structured questions in the schedule tended to move towards structured-questions in line with the probing; when I noticed it, I tried to step back to follow the semi-structured questioning construct/approach.

Another aspect I noticed was that, in the first half of the sessions, the interviewees gave a lot of meaningful data; but in the second half, the data were mostly repeated. During the last quarter, the conversation seemed to produce the previous data since most of the final questions, more or less, had already been answered within the former questions. Thus, it can be said that I attained data saturation within the interview itself!

As a strategy concerning the question-asking technique, I got the idea that, instead of a final seemingly closed-ended question like “Is there anything you would like to add?” it might be better to ask an open-ended question such as “What else would you like to add lastly?” in order not to prompt the interviewee to finish the session immediately before giving some more valuable data.

Consequently, I would like to indicate that, during the whole process, I tried to make critical reflections on any conduct. Even though I did not write regular reflexive journals (I wish I would have), I utilized the memoing technique very frequently, whenever or wherever I regarded it necessary. The most useful ones were the notes I took during the interview sessions, which

stood for, in a sense, *observation notes* including the information about the atmosphere of the environment, the body language of the participants, simply *unvoiced interview data* and also the notes I took down just after the sessions while reflecting on the conduct and checking whether there were any unasked questions or ambiguous parts in my mind.

Analytic memos can be written anywhere: on a napkin, in your field journal, in a transcript, even recorded at the end of an interview when you are by yourself... Memos can be short or long, but should contain enough information that you know what you were thinking when you made them (Mimin, n. d. Analytic memos, Para. 3).

As indicated in this quotation, written on the spaces on an interview form page, on business cards of the participant or in the researcher's palm, and kept as they were, the notes were not so regularly recorded chronological notes; but I utilized each piece of those memos fruitfully in the required parts of the study, and I felt multiple-sided immersion in the data, having found valuable pieces of unique information, which I would not have found if I had not kept memos. As the final words in this part, the following quote by Birks et al. (2008) points out the use of memos rather well:

Memoing enables the researcher to engage with the data to a depth that would otherwise be difficult to achieve. Through the use of memos, the researcher is able to immerse themselves in the data, explore the meanings that this data holds, maintain continuity and sustain momentum in the conduct of research (p. 69).

The last point I should indicate is that the study had been originally planned to dwell on curriculum policy processes (including instruction) in particular; however, from the beginning, through a sort of natural evolution, it turned out to be covering broader areas/issues of education. Therefore, it has finally encompassed both closely and rather remotely-related issues of overall educational policy processes to curriculum. Later, surprisingly, I read Short's (2007) recommendation in this direction: "More curriculum policy researchers should begin to connect their studies with the research agendas of the larger curricular/educational policy planning ..." (p. 425).

3.8. Data analysis process

This section presents how the in-depth interview data collected with semi-structured internet protocol instruments from the three groups of participants were analysed through the techniques of content analysis. Additionally, it is indicated that related extra data sources like memos, short observation notes, formal regulations and documents were utilized through descriptive analysis as a means of triangulation – though not directly – to strengthen the interview data.

The general structure of the data analysis plan was based on the generic frame of the overall study, which comprised three stages of the policy cycle, namely, a) identification of the issues that require a new policy, b) policy formulation, and c) policy implementation. Both during the interview sessions and in the analyses, it was discerned that the codes, categories and themes/subthemes of the first two stages converged while the third one evolved through its peculiar codes. Therefore, themes were composed under these main titles: 1) *identification of the issues that require a new policy or policy change and policy formation.* 2) *policy implementation.*

The gist of the data analysis procedure in this study can be described as follows: The primary data, collected through face-to-face in-depth semi-structured interviews, were analysed utilizing mainly content analysis methodology with both inductive and deductive approaches eclectically. The technique employed to analyse the secondary data, collected from official and public documents, was both descriptive analysis and content analysis selectively.

The main purpose of the content analysis was to obtain the concepts and relationships that would explain the data collected (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Before the interviews, the information obtained from the relevant literature review was tentatively conceptualized within the framework of the research questions and the interview protocol, and then several (tentative) preliminary subthemes and themes were formulated, keeping in mind that they might need to be evolved, modified or changed through the course of the study. As expected, during and after the interview sessions, such changes occurred and accordingly

required modifications were made. After the sessions were completed and interview audio-recordings were transcribed, two sample teacher interview transcripts, together with one academician and one official interview transcript were coded, and it was discovered that new codes/concepts, categories, subthemes and themes emerged while some of them needed modifications and reformulations. During these processes of decision-making, technical support of peer debriefing and expert opinion were utilized properly. Then, three interraters (intercoders/interjudgers) from the field of education, experienced in qualitative research – two experts from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and one expert from Human Resources Management and International Relations – coded the data and once technical requirements were met for trustworthiness, the codes, categories and themes were finalized. Later, the long process of coding the rest of the data was completed through 3-4 times intensive readings. Accordingly, the lists including the number of participants from each group, who reflected their views in regard to each code, were determined through (manual) counting. Meanwhile, after deep, attentive evaluations and interpretations, the organization of the codes under the categories and accordingly the categories under the themes were revised and finalized having consulted with experts and peers. Finally, the findings were reported in accordance with the research questions, discussed and implications were presented. The secondary data including memos, small observation notes and some documents (formal and media) were analysed and interpreted to support the interview data, under the *supervision* of trustworthiness principles and ethical considerations.

In analysing the interviews, firstly, meaningful codes were depicted out of the statements that were regarded as including significant information. Depending on the nature and structure of the statements, the codes emerged in several forms; while some codes are distinguished as simple codes, some other codes were distinguished as phrases or simple sentences as exemplified in the table below:

Table 3. 4.*Samples of Variations in Code Composition*

Simple codes	compound codes	code phrases	code sentences
views	valuable views	exchanging valuable views at the district level of MNE	Exchanging valuable views at the district level of MNE is promoted.
suggestions	visionary suggestions	visionary suggestions from academicians	Getting visionary suggestions from academicians is precious for education policy theory.
feedback	feedback from teachers	permanent feedback from experienced teachers	MNE should permanently collect feedback from experienced teachers.
participation	democratic participation	democratic participation of stakeholders	Ideal educational environment requires democratic participation of stakeholders.
data	guiding data	cheap way of obtaining guiding data	Listening to stakeholders is a cheap way of obtaining real guiding data.

In the process, together with simple and compound codes, code phrases and code sentences are also utilized because it is seen that they assist and catalyse smooth, correct and comprehensible transition from codes to categories and accordingly to themes. Later, the number of participants from each group, who stated/referred/implied the same or similar codes were detected and listed in tables under the titles (T) for teachers, (A) for academicians, and (O) for government officials. Then, the codes were classified into categories to which they refer as presented in the following tables:

Table 3. 5.

Sample List for Organizing the Distribution of Each Participant to the Codes in a Category

Category 1

Government plans and programs (prepared prior to elections) as the main sources

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>			<i>Participants</i>		
	T	A	O	T	A	O
Premeditated changes (by politicians)	12	9	10	T1-T2-T4-T6-T7-T8-T9-T10-T12-T13-T14-T15	A2-A3-A4-A5-A6-A7-A8-A9	O2-O3-O4-O5-O7-O9-O10-O11-O13-O10
No evaluation of current issues	9	7	8	T2-T4-T7-T8-T9-T10-T12-T14-T15	A1-A3-A4-A5-A6-A7-A8	O1-O2-O3-O5-O7-O9-O10-O13
Imposing ideologies, doctrines and beliefs	10	8	8	T1-T2-T4-T7-T8-T9-T9-T10-T12-T14	A2-A3-A4-A5-A6-A7-A8-A9	O1-O3-O4-O5-O7-O9-O11-O13
Propaganda through education	9	8	7	T2-T4-T6-T7-T8-T10-T12-T14-T15	A2-A3-A4-A5-A6-A7-A8-A9	O1-O2-O7-O9-O10-O13-O14
Hidden agenda	6	5	6	T4-T6-T7-T10-T12-T14	A3-A4-A7-A8-A9	O3-O4-O5-O7-O9-O10-O11-O13-O14
Customary practice in Türkiye	9	7	8	T1-T4-T6-T7-T8-T9-T10-T12-T15	A2-A3-A4-A5-A6-A7-A9	O2-O3-O4-O7-O9-O10-O11-O13

Note. Letters stand for participants; T: Teacher ($n=15$); A: Academician ($n=9$); O: (Government) Official ($n=14$)

Table 3. 6.

Sample List of Codes in a Category (with only the frequencies of the three groups of the participants)

Category 1

Government plans and programs (prepared prior to elections) as the main sources

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Premeditated changes (by politicians)	12	9	10
No evaluation of current issues	9	7	8
Imposing ideologies, doctrines and beliefs	10	8	8
Propaganda through education	9	8	7
Hidden agenda	6	4	6
Customary practice in Türkiye	9	7	8

By analysing, uniting and re/organizing the related categories, the themes were finalized as in the sample below:

Table 3. 7.

Sample List of Categories of a Theme

Theme 1.

Sources of curricular issues that require a new policy or policy change

<i>Categories</i>	
<i>No</i>	<i>Title</i>
1	Government plans and programs (prepared prior to elections) as the main sources
2	Arbitrary individual choices of the governing authority
3	Impact of international tests on the determination of curricular and instructional education policy issues
4	Foreign educational system models as sources
5	Feedback and suggestions from the practitioners, namely teachers
6	Feedback and suggestions from academicians
7	Avoidance of giving feedback/view presentation by two key stakeholders; teachers and academicians

One point should be highlighted here: some codes are considered under several different categories and themes in the study in terms of various contexts. For instance, in the condensed codebook, the concept/code “participate” takes place in 65 statements (just one derivation of its “participation” is cited in 45 locations); the code “merit” and its derivations are referred on 18 occasions (as meritocracy, meritocratic, and the like), and the codes derived from the word “account” are utilized in 20 parts (account for, accountable, accountability).

Several codes, categories and themes were obtained through the related literature and played role in formulating the interview protocol such as, “democratic participation, meritocracy, hidden agenda, top-down and bottom-up approach, nepotism, partisanship, consensus, transparency, accountability”; others were inspired by the data that coincided with the researcher’s personal experience like, “lack of voluntary feedback or suggestions from teachers, habit/tradition of unconditional obedience to authorities, traditional malpractice/political disease/cultural issue of politicization of education, value of opposition, (from) down-to-top information flow from – the *fountainhead*, the *cradle* – the primary source”; and some other codes, categories and themes emerged from the research data such as “limited and self-centered visions of decision-makers, teacher feedback as the least considered source, consulting practitioners after decisions are made, reservations due to lack of trust among stakeholders, hidden/manipulative silencing by administrations, ‘Everybody knows education more than the teachers do!’ mutual/respective accusations and conflicts among stakeholders, the MNE is a closed box, invitation of “yes-men” to the MNE committees and NECs, umbrella ideology of education, teaching to the test, capacity building”.

The process of analysing the data was carried out utilizing eclectic methods and techniques; in linear/circular and inductive/deductive manners. The figure below portrays the flow of the data analysis process briefly:

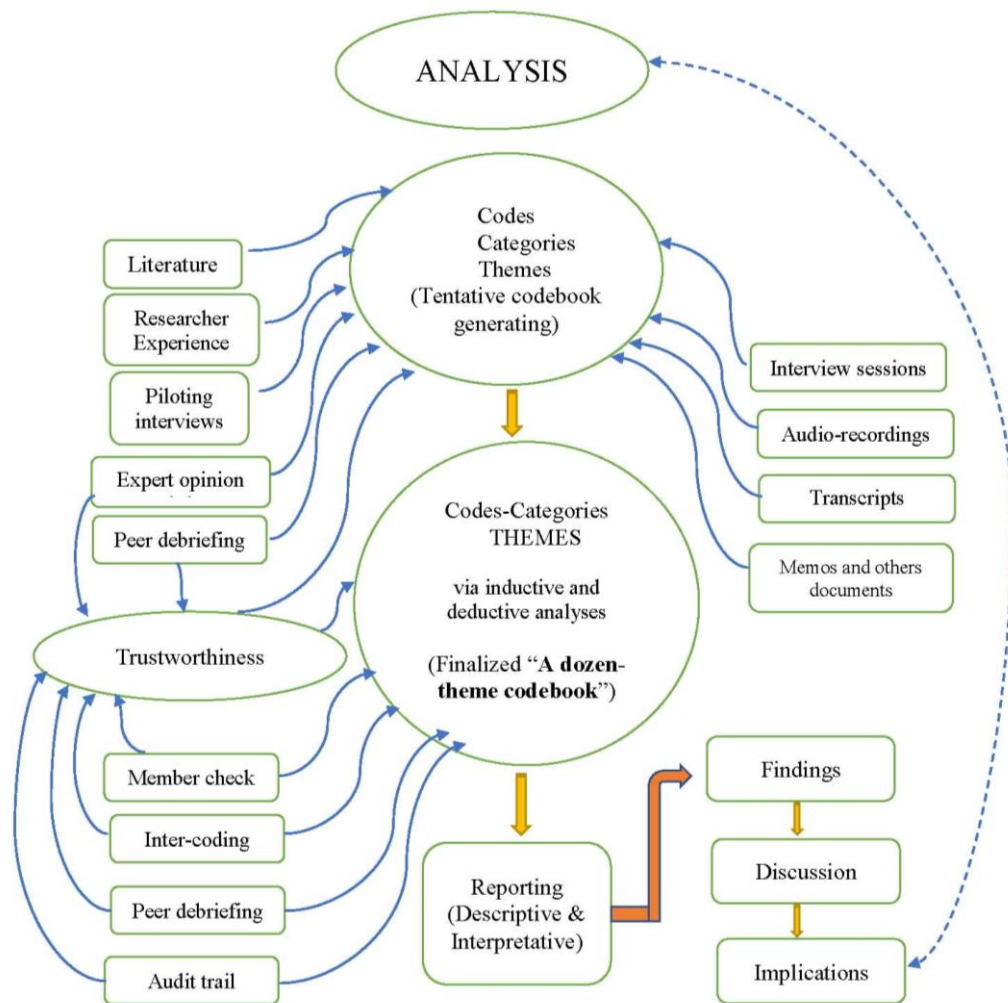


Figure 3. 3.
Data Analysis and Reporting Scheme of the Study

In the following part of this section, the data analysis process in the study will be handled in some more detailed manner referring to the related literature. The process conducted can be explained concisely through the four stages defined by Yıldırım & Şimşek (2013) which were employed eclectically:

1. Coding the data: The data were classified into meaningful categories that were labelled (coded) with certain words or expressions standing for related concepts. In this context, Straus and Corbin (1998) mention 3 types of coding: a) coding according to themes defined in advance, b) coding according to the concepts deduced from the data, and c) coding within a general framework. These three types of coding were utilized eclectically in the current study:

General categories or themes were determined in advance and more detailed codes that could be placed under those general themes emerged and evolved during and after the examination of the data; some of the codes needed to be changed, modified or developed during the data analysis process.

2. Creating/recreating the themes: The concepts, codes and subthemes/themes emerged from the data were evaluated together with the ones from the literature (tentative ones), and the final versions of the themes were determined. These themes had the properties of explaining the data in a more general style. The following principles were especially employed during thematic coding: The first one was related to internal consistency, that is, whether the data under the themes constituted a meaningful unity. The second one was that all the themes obtained should explain the data in a comprehensively meaningful manner. That is to say, although the themes were different from each other, they should form a relevant wholeness and integrity altogether.

3. Organizing and defining the data according to the codes and the themes: The data were designed, defined and presented in an understandable way so as to facilitate comprehension by the reader. In this phase, only the analysed data were to be demonstrated to the reader as results/findings without any views and/or comments of the researcher.

4. Interpreting the findings: Acknowledging that the interpretations and comments of the researcher were precious, special care was paid to their consistency with the information and definitions provided in the third stage. The findings (and data) were attached to the meaning, the relationships among the findings were delineated, cause-and-effect relations were built, conclusions were drawn from the findings, and finally explanations were generated concerning the significance of the results (pp. 260-272).

This data analysis plan was separately applied firstly to all three groups of data (units of analysis), obtained from the *teachers*, *academicians* and *officials* in order to seek answers to the research questions. Next, the commonalities and differences among the findings were examined. Finally, interpretations were made in accordance with the research questions; special care

was paid to the second part of the second question, “How do the perceptions of the participants affect educational practice?”, the implications of which should expectedly contribute to the betterment of formulation and implementation processes of curricular policy on the whole.

During the process of data analysis, a flexible approach was adopted. In this sense, Stake’s (1995) two strategies, *direct interpretation* and *categorical aggregation* usually guided the study: “Two strategic ways that researchers reach new meanings about cases are through *direct interpretation* of the individual instance and through *aggregation of instances* until something can be said about them as a class. Case study relies on *both* [emphasis added] of these methods” (p. 74). However, the analyses in this study, technically seemed to be based mostly on “categorical aggregation”, which can, in a sense, also be labelled as “data saturation” obtained by coding and thematizing, while “direct interpretation” method seemed to stay in secondary position. From this point of view, the study looked more like an instrumental case study, which utilizes more aggregated categorical data; but in essence, this study has also characteristics of an intrinsic case study, with which “our primary task is to come to understand the case. It will help us to tease out relationships, to probe issues, and to aggregate categorical data, but those ends are subordinate to understanding the case” (Stake, 1995, p. 77).

After the data collection process was finished, having determined that the data were saturated, the researcher went on with the *manual* coding and thematizing to obtain *categorical aggregation* of all the interviews according to the analysis plan and methods presented above. When valuable data revealed by direct interpretation in single cases became meaningfully repetitive, they were transferred to the categorical aggregation process. Then, evaluating all the information acquired by both techniques, the interpretations were finalized.

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. Analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding

what you will tell others. For most projects, the end products are *dissertations* [emphasis added], books, papers, presentations or, in the case of applied research, *plans for action* [emphasis added]. Data analysis moves you from the *rambling pages* [emphasis added] of description to those products (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 157).

As depicted and stressed in the lines above, through data analysis in this section, the main aim of this analysis (and the study) was moving from the *rambling pages to a dissertation*, with a secondary purpose of *a plan for action*, which was imagined to be carried out after further study to contribute to the betterment of education policy-making and educational system in the country. To this end, the researcher strived to choose the methods of analysis most appropriate both to the nature of the study and to himself as indicated by Stake (1995) “Each researcher is different; each has to work out the methods that make him or her *effective* [emphasis added] in understanding and portraying the case” (p. 57).

In the relevant literature, data analysis in a qualitative study is usually contemplated as a *challenging and tough job*, which comprises the basic stages of a) organizing the data, b) coding the data, c) portraying the themes and d) interpreting them (Creswell 2014; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Kaya-Kaşıkçı, 2016; Keser-Aschenberger, 2012; Patton, 2002; Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Saban & Ersoy, 2016; Straus & Corbin, 1998; Yıldırım, & Şimşek, 2013). Each phase is connected to each other and has been re-examined and re-evaluated many times one after another during the analyses in order to obtain a higher level of consistency among several aspects of the data. As indicated by Kaya-Kaşıkçı (2016), “This is a spiral process in which each step supports another” (p. 62).

Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013), reporting from Wolcott’s (1994) and referring to other categorizations in literature, emphasize three important concepts in qualitative data analysis: a) describing, which can answer the question “what” to reveal what the data say or what conclusions the data have found, b) analysing, which stands for answering the questions “why and how” in order to explore the themes and the relations among these themes which cannot be seen directly on the data set but can be obtained by conceptual coding and classification, and c) interpretation, which seeks answers to the question “what

does this thing observed or said mean?” focusing on the meaning (p. 254). They also present two distinct processes of data analysis referring to Straus and Corbin (1990): 1) descriptive analysis which produces more surface level findings and 2) content analysis, which requires deeper examination of the data and produces themes that are not known beforehand. In this context, the main method utilized in this study was content analysis with the aim of exploring and interpreting the themes obtained from the data especially focusing on the questions of *how* and *why* while exploiting the suitable data through descriptive analysis mostly concentrating on *what* questions in order to support the interpretations.

On the other hand, utilizing technological tools/programs that facilitate qualitative analysis was deliberated broadly before starting the data analysis in this study; however, it was decided that manual analysis by the researcher in a meticulous manner was the best method. There are computer programs that are utilized for analysing qualitative research data. Generally recognized as “CAQDAS” (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software), or “QDAS” (Qualitative Data Analysis Software), such programs are claimed to be used in medicine, law, sociology, anthropology, geography, geology, forensic fields, marketing, tourism, music, theology, philosophy, history and education to help analyze qualitative interview, observation and document data in coding, interpretation and abstraction. They are promoted highly as they help save time in organizing and analysing data and improve research validity and reliability. Though acknowledging their valuable uses, the researcher of this study preferred to do the manual analysis of all the interview data. (Actually, it was quite a tiring conduct, but the outcomes were worth the effort). The rationale behind this decision might include several dimensions: Firstly, the researcher believed that he nearly memorized the data by having listened to, having read, reread and having inquired into them so many times, though they contained hundreds of pages. Therefore, there was almost no risk of losing or missing any part of the data; on the contrary, using a computer program would cause such a risk respectively due to some failure in providing the program with the required vocabulary/terminology or translation of the data, and others. Secondly, it might be asserted that, the researcher, as a human being, could more sensitively

produce appropriate interpretations with his own coding at the desirable quality level in terms of comprehensiveness because the data had been obtained not only from texts but also from body language, voice tone and other meaningful attitudes and environmental sources observed during the interview sessions; moreover, the researcher recurrently recalled the interview atmospheres during the following phases of the study. Actually, the researcher felt himself *superior* to a computer program not only for coding, but also for interpreting spoken and visual messages as well as appreciating and using metaphors (and other figures of speech) since he had gotten education in language and literature together with cultural studies. Thirdly, in June 2016, the information obtained from the user evaluation statistics of top-ten programs according to certain criteria like ease of use, features and functionality, integration, performance and customer support under the titles “aggregated user rating and editor rating” showed an average around 8 points and below out of 10 (Pat Research, n. d.). In such ratings, an average of 9 points and over was expected by the researcher to make a preference as the scores might have been overstated or inflated by 1-2 points for promotional marketing concerns. Above all, inspired by the statement emphasized by Kaya-Kaşıkçı (2016) referring to Merriam (2002), “Data analysis is a procedure which simultaneously takes place with data collection” (p. 62), the researcher did not prefer to utilize a program in the process since it was *himself* not the machine, who had been analysing the data while *collecting* them. Asserting that “there is no particular moment when data analysis begins. Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations” (p. 71), Stake (1995) seems to support the researcher’s views since it is hard for a program to follow a process from the beginning to the end while attributing meaning to impressions as attentively as a *dedicated* researcher.

As another point to indicate, during the entire process, Stake’s (1995) statements were considered and appreciated: “The quantitative side of me looked for the emergence of meaning from the repetition of phenomena. The qualitative side of me looked for the emergence of meaning in the single case” (p. 76). Then, an eclectic approach was adopted in the analysis process. *Generalization* of data was not ever aimed at by direct interpretation, but valuable findings could

be captured in single cases through it, (which could never be reached by categorical aggregation method). Although they were meaningful only in their respective cases, it was evaluated by the researcher that some of them were so significant as to be reported and thus, they were presented in the related contexts/occasions in the study. Likewise, categorical aggregation analysis provided the study with features of transferability (generalizability). Similar eclecticism was also adopted while conducting mostly *content analysis* but utilizing *descriptive analysis* as well. Most of the information obtained from descriptive analysis such as background information or attitudinal messages from the interviewees was largely used to contribute to the findings received from content analysis. On the other hand, despite the flexible and eclectic approach in analysis practice in the study, the principle of keeping close connection to and relevance of all procedures with the research questions was persistently followed.

The boxes below present the themes obtained. Some of the themes had already been deduced from the related literature (and later corresponded with the coded ones obtained from the analyses) and constituted baselines for the interview schedule before data collection in a deductive mode while some others emerged from the data and evolved in an inductive mode (Straus & Corbin, 1990). Here, the themes are presented in a categorical manner as lists while in the other sections (findings, discussion, and implications) they are staged in a more interpretative and narrative manner together with their categories and codes. In the first box, in line with the general structure of the study's presentation form, there are the themes concerning *Participants' Perceptions of "Identification of Policy Issues" Phase and "Policy Formulation" Phase*:

I. Participants’ Perceptions of “Identification of Policy Issues” Phase and “Policy Formulation” Phase

Themes

1. Sources of educational/curricular issues that require a new policy or a policy change.
2. Political and ideological approach in educational/curricular decision-making and policy-making.
3. Participation of stakeholders in educational/curricular decision-making and policy-making.
4. National Education Councils’ (NECs’) not functioning in policy-making as they should.
5. Expectations for ideal applications of the “identification of policy issues” and “policy formulation” phases.
6. An inevitable need for the constitution of a common uppermost ideology of education over (and excluding) all other political ideologies

In the second box, there are the themes concerning *Participants’ Perceptions of “Policy Implementation” Phase of Policy Cycle Model*:

II. Participants’ Perceptions of “Policy Implementation” Phase of Policy Cycle Model

Themes (Enumeration of themes follows the previous part)

7. Criticality of proper dissemination of new policies to practitioners for their appropriate implementation.
8. Practitioners’ attitudes toward new policies/policy changes.
9. Teacher quality as a powerful factor affecting policy implementation.
10. Teacher motivation as an influential component of practitioners’ performance.
11. Association between teachers’ capacity building and teacher quality with regard to policy practice.
12. Expectations and recommendations for proper implementation of new policies.

The analyses in the following two tables may seem to be not so much meaningful since the samples were too small to yield significant information in

quantitative manner; however, the researcher considered they were meaningful because all of the participants were information-rich people, willing to share knowledge key informants, who had been selected through snowball sampling method among outstanding figures in their fields. That is to say, for instance, if 0 or around 10%, in other terms, only 1 or 2 of those highly-distinguished participants having a famous and weighty place in their professional milieu, participated in curricular policymaking processes, then, such data should be considered as quite significant. From the reverse angle, it can be asserted that if none or only 1 of such meritorious professionals had been let participate in such a process, then there must have been a serious issue revealed by this quantitative datum. On the other hand, together with background information about the participants like years of experience or current state of employment, the data obtained in such analyses were duly evaluated in discussions and implication sections, such as the confession-like self-criticism by a retired high-level official, who worked for the MNE for over 30 years, also as the member of the BDE for a considerable period. In line with this mentality, these sorts of findings were also appreciated having been found meaningful and accordingly were presented. In this context, the researcher was inspired highly by Miles and Huberman (1994) who signify:

Clustering is a technique that can be applied at many levels to qualitative data: at the level of events or acts, of individual actors, of processes, of settings/locales, of sites or cases as wholes. In all instances, we are trying to understand a phenomenon better by grouping and conceptualizing objects that have similar patterns or characteristics (p. 263).

In qualitative research, numbers tend to get ignored. ... However, a lot of counting goes on in the background when judgements of qualities are being made. ... The 'number of times' and 'consistency' judgements are based on counting. ... When we say something is 'important', or 'significant' or 'recurrent,' we have to come to that estimate, in part, by making counts, comparisons, and weights.... So, it is important in qualitative research to know (a) that we are sometimes counting and (b) when it is a good idea to work self-consciously with frequencies, and when it is not.... Doing analysis of all data with the aid of numbers is a good way of testing for possible bias, and seeing how robust our insights are (pp. 252-253).

In line with this approach that appreciates the value of numbers in qualitative analysis, the data in the following tables (Table 3. 8; Table 3. 9) were also evaluated to improve interpretations.

Table 3. 8.
Frequency of “Participation in Person” in at least one Policymaking Process Conducted by the MNE

Group of Participant	Participated in policy making in person	Attended at least one NEC
Teachers (n=15)	1	0
Academicians (n=9)	1	1
Officials (n=14)	13	11

Table 3. 9.
Number of Participants Having Presented Views/Suggestions for a Policy-making Process Conducted by the MNE

Group of Participant	Presented view/suggestion on demand	Presented view/suggestion without demand
Teachers (n=15)	2	1
Academicians (n=9)	1	0
Officials (n=14)	13	2

3.9. Trustworthiness of the Study

In the related literature, the subject of trustworthiness of a qualitative study is paid special care by distinguished authors. In light of the knowledge obtained from their views, interpretations and recommendations, meticulously selected principles were applied to this study in order to check and strengthen its validity and reliability. One of those remarkable authors is Creswell (2007) who, referring to other outstanding authors in the field, states:

During or after a study, qualitative researchers ask “Did we get it right?” (Stake, 1995, p. 107) or “Did we publish a ‘wrong’ or inaccurate account?” (Thomas, 1993, p. 39). Is it possible to even have a “right” answer? To answer these questions, researchers need to look to themselves, to the participants, and to the readers. There are multi- or polyvocal discourses at work here that provide insight into the validation and evaluation of a qualitative narrative (p. 201).

“I acknowledge that there are many types of qualitative validation and that authors need to choose the types and terms in which they are comfortable. I recommend that writers reference their validation terms and strategies” (Creswell, 2007, p. 201). Having appreciated the assertions by Creswell above and the common implications by other authors, validity and reliability of this study had been evaluated and questioned attentively from the beginning to the end with the aim of presenting accurate and useful findings to the field, and accordingly possible precautions against the threats to validity and reliability were taken utilizing proper scientific methods. In this process, three entities, the *researcher* himself, the *participants* and the *audience* were viewed and treated duly in terms of required procedures of “trustworthiness”, the terms and strategies of which will be presented briefly in this part, as recommended by Creswell (2007) above.

The terms “validity and reliability” are handled in quite different manners in qualitative studies from quantitative studies. This is accepted as natural since these two types of research have rather different natures with almost all their characteristics. Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that these terms are used to answer the question “How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?” (p. 290 as cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 601). As noted by Creswell (2007) in the quotation above, there have been quite a number of “insights” (p. 201), approaches and terminologies among the authors in the field. As well as the generic terms like “trustworthiness” preferred to “validity and reliability”, some other related terms created before have been modified or renamed by several authors while the usages of some terms are completely disregarded by some authors - like Bogdan and Biklen’s (1998) disapproval of using the term *triangulation* asserting “We advise against using the term. It confuses more than it clarifies, intimidates more

than enlightens... In short, describe what you did rather than using the imprecise and the abstract term *triangulation*” (p. 104). As for others, like Lincoln and Guba (1985) “in qualitative studies, the terms ‘Credibility, Neutrality or Confirmability, Consistency or Dependability and Applicability or Transferability’ are to be the essential criteria for quality” (as cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 601). On the other hand, some authors use the term “trustworthiness” in a broader manner covering both validity and reliability in qualitative research while some others use it for only reliability (Golafshani, 2003). The following table demonstrates the perspectives and terminology adopted by some outstanding authors in the related literature:

Table 3. 10.

Perspectives and Terms Used in Qualitative Validation

Study	Perspective	Terms
LeCompte & Goetz (1982)	Use of parallel, qualitative equivalents to their quantitative counterparts in experimental and survey research	Internal validity External validity Reliability Objectivity
Lincoln & Guba (1985)	Use of alternative terms that apply more to naturalistic axioms	Credibility Transferability Dependability Confirmability
Eisner (1991)	Use of alternative terms that provide reasonable standards for judging the credibility of qualitative research	Structural corroboration Consensual validation Referential adequacy Ironic validity
Lather (1993)	Use of reconceptualized validity in four types	Paralogic validity Rhizomatic validity Situated/embedded voluptuous validity
Wolcott (1994b)	Use of terms other than “validity,” because it neither guides nor informs qualitative research	Understanding better than validity
Angen (2000)	Use of validation within the context of interpretive inquiry	Two types: ethical and substantive

Table 3.10. (continued)

Whittemore, Chase & Mandle (2001)	Use of synthesized perspectives of validity, organized into primary criteria and secondary criteria	Primary criteria: credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity Secondary criteria: Explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence, and sensitivity
Richardson & St. Pierre (2005)	Use of metaphorical, reconceptualized form of validity	Crystals: Grow, change, alter, reflect externalities, refract within themselves

Note. The table is taken from Creswell, 2007, p. 203.

For Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013), the terms corresponding to the ones in quantitative research are used in the qualitative research literature as follows: *credibility* for internal validity, *transferability* (or generalizability) for external validity, *consistency* for internal reliability, and *confirmability* (or replicability/repeatability) for external reliability (pp. 298-299). Appreciating and utilizing eclectically all the approaches and terminology in the relevant literature including basically the ones in the table above, this study tried to follow and fulfil Whittemore, Chase and Mandle's (2001) criteria as enlightening fundamental principles, while appreciating Yıldırım and Şimşek's (2013) interpretations and classifications as clearer and more practical. In terms of terminology, generally, the term "trustworthiness" was adopted in this study, while the other terms in the relevant literature were also referred to when necessary. On the other hand, all the strategies presented in this part might well be regarded under one title like "Strategies conducted for supporting trustworthiness" or "Strategies for avoiding threats to trustworthiness" and the like as many authors have done in the literature. However, the researcher wanted to categorize them separately under the four titles and to delineate in this part by eclectically evaluating the information provided by Creswell (2007), Miles and Huberman (1994), and Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013):

3.9.1. *Credibility/authenticity* for internal validity

Here we arrive at the crunch question: truth value. Do the findings of the study make sense? Are they credible to the people we study and to our readers? Do we have an authentic portrait of what we were looking at? ... Warner (1991) also speaks of 'natural' validity- the idea that the events and the settings studied are *uncontrived*, [emphasis added] unmodified by the researcher's presence and actions (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278).

In order to provide a study with the qualities of credibility/authenticity (internal validity), there are certain strategies that can be applied, which demonstrate that the findings and interpretations are true and valid for their contexts. Thus, it can be proved to a considerable extent that the data and results were not influenced by any other factor beyond the knowledge and control of the researcher. In this context, several strategies were applied to assure credibility in this study: Firstly, with the aim of reducing the research/er effects and providing a proper atmosphere, the interview sessions were planned to last long enough to warm up the interaction climate at the beginning with casual and sincere conversation about the background of the participants (in some sessions, hobbies, informants' memories from school or professional life and the like were also included). In this part, also the researcher introduced himself and the study in detail, mentioning any points the interviewees wondered about, fulfilled ethical requirements clearly, tried to comfort them by indicating the secrecy of the names and other peculiarities of the participants in the study sincerely, and others. Due rapport, essential for such sessions, was maintained in each phase of the interviews. Also minimizing the research (climate) effects, this strategy functioned similarly to the ones utilized for supporting external reliability by reducing researcher effects/biases and provided the study with most of the utilities of *prolonged engagement* method in the relevant literature: "Prolonged engagement means being present in the site where the study is being done long enough to build trust with the participants, experience the breadth of variation and to overcome distortions due to the presence of the researcher in the site" (Williams, 2018, Chp. 5. Credibility). This strategy is generally preferred in conducting ethnographic studies for much longer periods compared with

interview sessions; however, as Denzin (2017) named “prolonged interview” (p. 237) – informing about life history research – it can be utilized in interviewing and the time might be shorter: “There is no set amount of time a qualitative inquiry should last; but the proper length can be estimated by the inquirer once they have spent some time in the site (Williams, 2018, Chp. 5. Credibility).

Secondly, through in-depth interviews, using alternative questions and probes in addition to the basic questions, detailed data about the phenomenon (perceptions of the informants about policymaking process) were collected. Meanwhile, when there were unclear points in the interviews, the informants were asked to clear those points either during the interviews on another occasion by probing, or after the interview face to face or by phone, even those obscure points were detected long after the session, and all were noted down. During the interviews, the interview schedule was not rigidly followed, the flow of conversation was let move smoothly so as to gather as much information as possible without much interruption; however, the researcher was usually careful to ask all the questions. Soon after each session, the questions were quickly reviewed to detect if any questions were missed; occasionally when one or two questions were forgotten, they were asked to the participant minutes after the session. This was done with the permission of the informant again. All this process was a part of the *member check* strategy. By the way, all the participants said they were always ready to have future interviews and answer further questions. During all the interviews, the research questions were always kept in the mind of the researcher in order not to deviate much from the regular course of the conversation. Therefore, through in-depth data collection and prolonged interaction with the informants, comprehensive data were obtained, analyzed, compared, evaluated, interpreted and conceptualized in order to capture patterns and themes. Then, the data and findings were evaluated in a critical manner, they were inquired whether they were efficient to answer the research questions and whether the results were veridical or if extra data needed (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 301).

Thirdly, data triangulation strategy was utilized assuming that “findings can be corroborated and any weaknesses in the data can be compensated for by

the strengths of other data, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the results” (Hales, 2010, p. 14). Some data obtained from the interviews were verified by the examination of related documents when needed. Though it might not, technically, be regarded as regular *triangulation* strategy to contribute the interview data by *standard* document analysis, the researcher regarded such an effort of document examination as meaningful analysis for supporting those data. Denzin’s (2017) assertions may support such an approach: “Archival analysis will record events that occurred prior to the study and may be additionally used to validate respondent reports during the interviewing period” (p. 309). In this context, especially in the sessions with the government officials, when there were pieces of information that could be confirmed or supported by the documents, such as, government plans and programs, minutes of meetings, laws and regulations, public announcements, and the like, those documents were found, examined and presented when required. This was also employed for the interviews with the teachers, for instance, concerning the data related to curriculum and instruction, dissemination of regulations, and the like. On the other hand, the small observation notes and memos that included meaningful information about the ambiance of the environment and behaviour of the participants, which were written before, during and after the interview sessions could be reported as triangulation elements since they supported the analyses and interpretations, as highlighted by Denzin (2017):

I will triangulate data sources by examining encounters in a variety of different situations-marital interactions, encounters at work, and behavior in nonserious settings will be the major data sources. More specifically, I will examine the nature of face-to-face interaction as it occurs in office settings, in private homes, and in public cocktail lounges and bars (p. 310).

... such methods permit the direct study of behavior and allow the investigator to combine subject perceptions with his interpretations (p. 309).

As Miles and Huberman (1994) indicate “... triangulation is supposed to support a finding by showing that independent measures of it agree with it or, at least, do not contradict it (p. 266), in this study, especially some of the interview data obtained from the government officials were needed to be confirmed by

both official and public documents mostly validating, sometimes at least not contradicting them. However, despite this sort of verification, some of such data from the officials produced different meanings from the ones expressed in the interviews and they were checked through the documents when the other groups' (teachers and academicians) perceptions were evaluated. For instance, concerning the participation of stakeholders through their views and suggestions in decision-making about curricular changes, the officials strongly asserted that they had received views from them and publicized the new draft curricula before putting them into effect. This was verified by the researcher through documents; however, evaluating the perceptions of teachers and academicians, it was detected that even though their views were (though rarely) asked for before curricular changes, they were hardly appreciated and applied in the draft curricula. And, on the other hand, they perceived that the drafts were always enforced without any modifications even if there had been significantly valuable suggestions in that period as well. Therefore, although the data in question were confirmed, in practice it meant nothing since the suggestions from teachers (and academicians) were not included, and thus, were not implemented. More similar points were detected and detailed in the discussions. As stressed by Miles and Huberman (1994), "It may well happen that our different sources are inconsistent or even directly conflicting" (p. 267), such conflicts were detected in this study too and investigated to determine which were correct, and the researcher interpreted the results with a new insight as indicated by these authors, referring to Rossman and Wilson (1984): "Such results (contradicting ones) may help elaborate our findings, or even initiate a whole new line of thinking" (p. 267). In this context, two quotations should be presented as well: As the first one, Denzin (2017) indicates that "... the use of dissimilar comparison groups as a sampling strategy, but it more properly reflects a strategy of triangulation" (p. 301). As the second one, Hales (2010) claims that

when there are sufficient data but they are dissimilar, triangulation can balance the different perspectives and lead to a valid conclusion or a new hypothesis that can be tested. In fact, triangulation can create opportunities to compare a wide

range of data on a particular situation or phenomenon side by side, providing new insights and generating new hypotheses (p. 25).

In sum, appreciating the views in the literature and the related contexts in this study concerning triangulation strategy, it can be deduced that analysing the perceptions of three different groups (teachers, academicians and officials as the units of analysis) provided the research with triangulation evidence as the main source, and other documents including the official records, media news, memos, notes and the others, supported the findings as the secondary-level triangulating sources of information.

As the fourth strategy to assure internal validity, two scholars were consulted with for expert opinion (as *peer debriefing/review*) in order to get critical feedback about the research process. This was conducted through three individual meetings with each expert, in which all research procedures were explained in detail, the data and the findings were presented to the peers by the researcher. They asked questions, exchanged views and evaluated the procedures to provide feedback about their appropriateness to research tradition. Moreover, the experts and the researcher together discussed the researcher's approach and way of thinking and reasoning to assure their suitability to research validation. Referring to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) definition of the role of the *peer debriefer* as a 'devil's advocate,' Creswell (2007) describes her/him as "an individual who keeps the researcher honest; asks hard questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations" (p. 208). In this study, the end product of peer review showed itself mostly as a contribution to the interpretation and discussion of the findings. This strategy is presented here under the title of internal validity; however, it has similarities to the strategies conducted to contribute to the other strategies utilized for trustworthiness, such as intercoder/interrater evaluation for internal reliability.

The next strategy concerning internal validity in this study, stimulated also by the information in this quote,

Actors play a major role directing as well as acting in case study. Although it is they who are studied, they regularly provide critical observations and

interpretations, sometimes making suggestions as to sources of data. They also help triangulate the researcher's observations and interpretations (Stake, 1995, p. 115)

was conducted as *cooperation with the participants* in two ways, basically for confirming the data and the findings (utilizing *member check* strategy eclectically): The first one was related to the accuracy of the interview data, which the researcher employed to determine if there were any probable misunderstandings, missing, unclear or obscure points in the data collected. As roughly mentioned in the second strategy in this section, just after each session, in 5-10 minutes, the researcher quickly tried to recall the conversation by reviewing the interview schedule and by checking the notes taken. When he detected unclear points, he tried to *strike while the iron was hot* to secure the data. Since most of the sessions were held in the informants' offices/homes, it was not difficult to reach them again for 3-5 more minutes; in fact, all of the participants, while finishing the sessions, had promised to give a further interview if the researcher might need. In 7 cases in the study the researcher needed this sort of extra dialogue; 5 of them were completed just after the sessions while one was carried out on the phone one day later, and one was conducted when the same institution was visited for another interview around 10 days later. Furthermore, within several days after each session, the recordings were attentively listened to by the researcher to detect if there had still been any unclear points; in two cases the researcher needed to contact the interviewees again face to face, and clarified the ambiguous parts in the data.

The second tactic of cooperating with the participants to contribute to the internal validity of the study was closer to the traditional exercise of *member check*. The application of this strategy in this research was mostly inspired and directed by the first and second methods portrayed by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013, p. 303) referring to Erlandson et al. (1993): Through the end of the data collection phase, when the data began to get saturated, the researcher of this study prepared a rough list of codes and themes and asked the participants' opinions about the accuracy of them after he briefly summarized the study. In this period, he did not record the conversation (upon the demand of the first

informant for member check), which lasted 10-15 minutes, but he took down notes. This was applied to the last two of the teachers and officials, and to the last academician. The researcher also briefed his perceptions of the findings and requested from them whether those perceptions would reflect the collected data accurately. The method was also applied, though rarely, during the interview sessions: Once a participant stated perceptions that confirmed a theme in the related literature or fitted the researcher's own experiences in the context, the researcher informed the participant about the theme or the finding on the whole and requested her/his comments for confirmation. On one occasion, the researcher found a chance to make an informal focus group interview for member check for over 20 minutes with four of the participants, who were retired government officials often meeting at their small club office to play bridge and other games. In all these applications, over 85% agreement was revealed between the views of the informants and the "preliminary analyses" (Creswell, 2007) of the study as the result of the member check strategy. It would have been very beneficial if proper focus group sessions with all three groups of participants for member check had been conducted as recommended by Creswell (2007, p. 209).

3.9.2. Dependability/auditability/consistency for internal reliability

The underlying issue here is whether the process of the study is consistent, reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods. We can in effect, speak of "quality control" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; A. G. Smith & Robins, 1984). Have things been done with reasonable care?" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278).

As noted in the related literature, repeatability of measurements or findings in qualitative studies cannot be assured as precisely as in quantitative research; that is to say, it is almost impossible to obtain the same results in replicated measurements, because the phenomena under examination occur in changing time and context; and differences emerge from the nature of truth (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 305). Guba and Lincoln (1985) propose to use the term "consistency" for internal reliability. Admitting that consistency of the

whole research process should be assured basically in the phases of data collection instrument formation, data gathering and data analysis, (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 306) certain strategies were employed to avoid threats concerning internal reliability in this study. For consistency examination, three evaluators participated in the study: one scholar was from social studies/human resources, and the others were from educational sciences as academic fields, and they were originally school teachers with more than ten years of experience. Their feedback was valued eclectically as expert opinion and peer review in the related literature. They checked whether the data were collected from the participants in a similar context, time and procedure, with a similar approach to the methods; for instance, applications in interview sessions (interview schedule, time, location, interaction, atmosphere and the like), recordings and transcriptions. They also evaluated the consistency of the approach in coding and thematizing, in reporting by linking the results with the data and conceptualizing the findings and other procedures. Especially, the coding process was appraised in detail; evaluating the recordings, transcripts and notes taken during the sessions of the first and second interviews together with the interview schedule, extra descriptive information by the researcher and related documents, they thematized the data and sent their coding results with feedback as intercoders. The results were compared with the researcher's and found to be having a rate of agreement over 90% (similar to those of the peer debriefers), thus securing *intercoder/interrater reliability*. In this context, one unfavorable condition seemed to threaten consistency: The 15-July-coup-attempt in 2016 interrupted the data collection process for a while. Some of the interviews had been conducted before it and some interview appointments which were taken before 15th July to be realized after that time, were cancelled while some others were postponed. Almost 3-6 months elapsed before the interviews, especially the ones with the government officials, resumed. However, luckily, only one of the sampled participants changed, replaced by another; all the others were interviewed properly on the whole. At the beginning of the sessions after July 15th, the interviewees seemed to be rather nervous compared with the previous ones; but, following some lengthened warm-up sessions, in which an ideal

rapport atmosphere as in the former sessions was attained, the threat could be removed, with one negative consequence, that is, the sessions lasted longer. This was confirmed by the comparison of the data collected in both periods. Therefore, it was observed that this threat did not impair the consistency of the process so much.

3.9.3. Objectivity/confirmability for external reliability

The basic issue here can be framed as one of relative neutrality and reasonable freedom from unacknowledged researcher biases- at the minimum, explicitness about the inevitable biases that exist. In short, do the conclusions depend on ‘the subjects and conditions of the inquiry,’ rather than the inquirer (Guba & Lincoln, 1981)? This domain is sometimes labelled “external reliability”, with emphasis on the replicability of a study by others (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982) (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278).

With the aim of contributing to the external reliability of this research so that the study could possess the qualities of repeatability by other researchers to a possible extent, first of all, the researcher always tried to do his best to minimize the researcher effects; both the ones related to his own biases or presuppositions and to his presence on the participants. Among the three groups of participants in the study, *teachers, academicians* and *government officials*, the researcher had more in common with the teachers since he had been a teacher and administrator at schools for over 20 years. Therefore, during data collection, interpretation of the findings and discussion, he often seemed to *identify* himself with the teachers. It was an advantage during the interview sessions with the teacher participants as the interviewees felt themselves very comfortable conversing with a colleague. However, regarding this might have been a threat, the researcher forced himself to keep neutral by not confirming what they said so much enthusiastically though he, from time to time, actually desired to, by being very careful with probing and using his body language so as not to influence them or be influenced by them. Also, during interpretation and discussion, he very frequently examined the raw data trying to overcome possible biases of being a teacher. On the other hand, having had academic experience in education during his three post-graduate education studies (two master’s and one doctoral),

he also felt himself rather close to the group of academician participants; but that was hardly to be regarded as a threat but simply view-sharing. Concerning the sessions of the government officials-group of participants, the researcher sensed himself as quite neutral; however, the participants seemed to be a bit nervous at the beginning of the sessions since the researcher was one of the teachers, who they might have thought, “habitually would criticize them”. But luckily all of them seemed to be convinced that the researcher was neutral after, at the most, 10 minutes, and – thanks to the due rapport established – such a threat risk disappeared before being effective. The sessions were long enough (an average of 68 minutes) to obtain data with no time pressure and with a warm-up period comprising casual conversation emerged through background questions. All, except two of the interview sessions, were held in the participants’ offices or homes; thus, they talked in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. This also provided that the presence of the researcher was not so much influential. In addition, at the outset, the participants were clearly informed about the intentions of the research and the researcher, the principles of ethics, the methods of data collection and future use of the study.

In order to avoid biases stemming from the influence of the participants on the researcher, firstly, the issue of “elite” bias was handled: Especially before the interviews with high-level government officials and academicians, this threat seemed to be effective. However, all of such informants had been reached through the reference of some of their close friends or colleagues, and the researcher had the chance to know them either face to face or on the phone before the sessions. Besides, those mediating people had contacted the participants in advance, and informed the researcher that they (the informants) were willingly expecting his call. Furthermore, the researcher was received by some of such *so-labelled elite* participants some days before the interviews, for a coffee, which constituted a warm-up opportunity on the side of the researcher. Moreover, luckily, despite their high professional statuses, those participants (seemed to have) had rather a humble, modest and generous nature. This advantageous condition might also have been an outcome of the sampling method, that is, purposeful (snowball) sampling, through which information-rich,

willing-to-share-knowledge participants were reached. On the other hand, some parts of the conversations of these *elite* informants, who occupied high-level offices, were like official declarations made to mass media. This condition might create some sort of pressure on the researcher's interpretations due to the risk of regarding that piece of information as a collection of formally-documented statements rather than some part of interview data. Similarly, in some interviews, there were statements containing emotional views and thoughts that might cause diversions from the essence of the research questions. In both conditions, as suggested by Miles and Huberman, the threats were overcome by translating sentimental or interpersonal thoughts into more theoretical ones by thinking conceptually during the analysis and interpretation processes (1994, p. 266).

In terms of assuring confirmability, two other measures recommended in the literature were also taken: firstly, as peer review/debriefing from outside, two external researchers, who had not known much about the study, did evaluate the interpretations, judgements and implications, and confirmed their consistency with the raw data at a level of over 90% commonality with the researcher (six data sets bearing the essence of most of the codes were examined). Secondly, all data collection instruments, raw data, audio recordings, transcriptions, coding lists and all sorts of notes including evaluations and interpretations that provided basis for reports gathered during the entire process have been kept to be presented to outside researchers when needed (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 306).

3.9.4. *Transferability/fittingness for external validity*

We need to know whether the conclusions of a study have any larger import. Are they transferable to other contexts? Do they “fit” (Lincoln & Guba 1985)? How far can they be “generalized”? ... Generalizability, he (Maxwell, 1992c) suggests, requires such connection-making, either to unstudied parts of the original case or to other cases (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 279).

Since qualitative studies tend to investigate phenomena deeply and in detail with smaller samples, they do not seem to generalize their research results directly. Therefore, using the term “transferability” is preferred to

“generalizability” for qualitative studies, and by this, it is meant that temporal judgements concerning the applicability of results to similar cases can be obtained and theories that could be tested can be developed. The responsibility of the qualitative researcher is to reveal the quality of transferability of the findings to similar environments. In this way, the audience of the study can develop an understanding of similar cases and processes, and they can approach their *own* applications in a more experienced and conscious manner (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 304). In this context, Stake (1995) points out that “the case is given. We are interested in it, not because by studying it we learn about other cases or about some general problem, but because we need to learn about that particular case” (p. 3). Appreciating Stake’s views, within the frames of the purpose of this study – concerning generalizability – the main intent was to delve deeply into the specific case (of the curricular policymaking process in Türkiye), and then, to enlighten the audience to draw parallels to their *own* cases utilizing the findings in this study.

Two strategies for supporting the quality of transferability were utilized in this study. The first one was to equip the findings – and the themes – with *direct quotations* from the informants and some extra detailed information about them concerning the context, which could be called a strategy similar to *thick description*. For instance, while presenting the findings, the theme “involvement of political ideology in educational/curricular decision-making” was exemplified by a direct quotation from a government official, who harshly criticized the government authorities; and extra descriptive information that she/he was retired, worked for the MNE for over 30 years, (last 10 years as a higher-level bureaucrat), spoke with a defying voice tone and body language and the like or other details about the atmosphere in the session were portrayed as well. These were thought to contribute to the transferability quality of the findings to similar cases for the audience, who were expected to make inferences for their own cases by visualizing the context in mind.

The second method which was expected to contribute to external validity was purposive sampling, together with its two strategies: 1) maximum variation/diversity sampling, i.e. teacher participants from various subjects; both

retired and working/active officials, and 2) criterion sampling, i.e. being information-rich and willing to share knowledge for all, having at least 10 years of experience for officials. Through these strategies, the researcher strived to increase the transferability quality of the study so that its findings might fit other cases and phenomena better. As well as by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013, p. 305), this approach is specified in the literature related to qualitative and mixed method research as in the quotation below:

Individuals are selected based on the assumption that they possess knowledge and experience with the phenomenon of interest and thus will be able to provide information that is both detailed (depth) and generalizable (breadth). ... A narrowly focused purposeful sampling strategy for qualitative analysis that “complements” a broader focused probability sample for quantitative analysis may help to achieve a balance between increasing inference quality/trustworthiness (internal validity) and generalizability/transferability (external validity) (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Concerning all validity and reliability issues to different extents, some other strategies recommended in the literature were utilized in the study in order to contribute to the strength of the findings and to reduce the effects of probable threats. For instance, the strategy of “making contrasts/comparisons” was also employed in this study in order to produce meaningful implications for practice. Miles and Huberman (1994) say: “Comparison is a time-honored, classic way to test a conclusion; we draw a contrast or make a comparison between two sets of things – persons, roles, activities, cases as a whole – that are known to differ in some other important respect” (p. 254). As the second research question in this study implies, the commonalities and differences among the perceptions of the three groups were compared and contrasted in the study to contribute to the improvement of policy practice. Again, some other strategies advised by Miles and Huberman, (1994) were adopted: *Outliers, extreme cases, surprises* and *negative evidences* (rival explanations) were checked and reported when meaningful data were detected, either to verify the findings or to present some valuable information apart from the themes.

Miles and Huberman (1994) also mention another kind of validity, *pragmatic validity* under the title of “Utilization/Application/Action

Orientation”, which is very much valued and evaluated within the scope of this study as well:

Even if a study’s findings are “valid” and transferable, we still need to know what the study does for its participants, both researchers and researched-and for its consumers. We simply cannot avoid the question of “pragmatic validity” (Kvale, 1989a); it is an essential addition to more traditional views of “goodness”.

Evaluation and policy studies in particular are supposed to lead to more *intelligent action* [emphasis added]; whether or not they do, real people’s lives are being affected, and large amounts of money are being spent (or misspent) (p. 280).

Inspired by the views in this quotation and by other approaches such as Yıldırım and Şimşek’s, (2013) noting “the significance of a research is appreciated with respect to the knowledge it adds to the related literature and the solutions to the problems in the field” (p. 299), the implications of this policy study are expected to help its participants/consumers/audience (the researched) to attain more democratic professional conditions in educational policy issues, especially decision-making processes and to improve educational practice in the system by leading more *intelligent action*. In this manner, the researcher plans to carry out action research in a similar context as in this study with the aim of contributing to the educational practice in Türkiye in a more concrete manner.

As the last remarks, it can be declared that, the warnings and tips demonstrated through questions (like a check list) in the table below, concerning validity and reliability issues were intimately appreciated; required precautions were taken and recommendations were observed and applied when needed.

Table 3. 11.*List of Strategies Utilized to Support Validity and Reliability*

Type of Validity/Reliability	Strategy Utilized
<i>Credibility/authenticity</i> for internal validity	Data triangulation (participant and document) Prolonged engagement (reducing research/researcher effects) In-depth data collecting Peer review Member check
<i>Dependability/auditability</i> for internal reliability	Expert opinion and peer review as interrater/intercoding for consistency
<i>Objectivity/confirmability</i> for external reliability	Reducing researcher effects and biases Reducing participant effects Peer review/debriefing from outside Keeping all data and other material for further external evaluation
<i>Transferability/fittingness</i> for external validity	Thick description-direct quotation Purposive sampling method (snowball/criterion/maximum variation sampling strategies)
Supporting all types (secondarily by making contrasts and comparisons)	Examination of outliers, extreme cases, surprises and negative evidences (rival explanations)
<i>Pragmatic validity</i>	Utilization/application/action-orientation

Note. The source is Miles and Huberman, 1994, pp. 278-280.

3.10. Limitations of the Study

To start with, concerning the sample, the findings and the interpretations were limited to the perceptions, experiences and views of the participants of three groups of stakeholders, namely teachers, academicians and government officials (as the delimitation of the study); thus, other stakeholders, such as students, parents, unions and NGOs were not included in the study.

Three actual/conjunctural circumstances nationwide/worldwide might be regarded as limitations as well: 1) The political environment in the country was going through a critical and extraordinary period due to the coup d'état attempt on 15th July 2016, when the data collection had been in progress. Apart from the delay it caused concerning interview sessions, the political climate in the country might have effectuated tension on the participants, which could compel them to refrain from expressing perceptions openly, even though the researcher did not get such an impression so much. 2) The unfavorable conditions due to Syrian civil war, having caused the migration of over 2 million refugees to Türkiye (in 2016-2017) might have caused changes or modifications in the mindset of the participants, which would influence their perceptions expressed in the interviews. For instance, the empathic approach towards Syrian children's educational problems may have softened the participants' (probable) critical ideas concerning curricular policies, owing to an attitude of gratitude toward the present conditions/system in Türkiye. 3) The global COVID-19 pandemic caused delays and extra hindrances to the study, such as having to collaborate with the committee members, experts, peers and other related colleagues, professionals and institutions (faculties, schools and libraries) through remote interaction. However, it was good that all the face-to-face interview sessions had been completed before the outbreak of the disease.

The last limitation might have been that the government officials who were working for the MNE seemed anxious time to time during the sessions. Their anxiety might have influenced their expressions. In the researcher's personal memos, there was a collection of notes indicating that, occasionally, they were reluctant or peeped around if anyone was all ears beyond them although the interviews took place in a safe and isolated office. The political context of the time may have aroused some reservations on their side due to ideological or political concerns.

3.11. Ethical Considerations

In terms of research ethics, honesty in the whole research process and unconditional respect for participants and the audience were the basic principles of the study. Before data collection, approval from METU Applied Ethics Research Centre was taken (extended one time since data collection had not been completed) and written permission from the MNE was also granted. Concerning the interview sessions, the participants were informed about the research; especially the anonymity of names and secrecy of the data were stressed, approval and permission documents were shown, and all the questions they asked were answered clearly before the sessions. The sessions were audio-recorded after their consent was taken at the very beginning. As well as these requirements of *procedural ethics*, during the interviews, the considerations of *ethics in practice*, which were needed to handle unexpectedly emerging issues (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 120, referring to Guillemin and Gilliam, 2004) were obeyed carefully too. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013), Tracy (2010) defined them within three dimensions: *situational ethics* and *relational ethics* (the first two dimensions), which mainly focus on appropriate manners of the researcher by “respecting individuals’ views and emotions, status and attitude” were required in this study especially in the conversations with the retired officials over 70 years of age, and conducted properly while the third one, that is, *exit ethics* considerations were minded attentively by trying to code, analyze and interpret the data keeping loyal to the original versions, and by observing the principles of “privacy, confidentiality and free of harm” concerning the informants (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, pp. 117-124).

The researcher tried to be as objective as possible in order to inquire into the phenomena through actual information from the informants; but, even for the sake of objectivity to explore truth, he did not apply any form of deception, which might be legitimized to an extent in positivist tradition (Lincoln & Guba, 1978, p. 10 as cited in Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 117).

Consequently, related to ethics, the researcher tried his best to unquestioningly obey and respect any rules, regulations and traditions under any

topic, especially “honesty, objectivity, integrity, carefulness, openness, respect for intellectual property, confidentiality, responsible publication, responsible mentoring, respect for colleagues, social responsibility, non-discrimination, competence, legality, animal care, human subjects protection” (Shamoo & Resnik, 2015) and others.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the educational policymaking process in Türkiye through the perceptions of teachers, academicians and government officials. There are a number of theories of and approaches to policymaking process in the literature as detailed in the literature review section. Among them, the “Policy Cycle” approach (model) was utilized for forming the framework of this study. As Keser-Aschenberger (2012) indicates, – referred to in the literature review section – various researchers formulated the stages of policy cycle in slightly different manners. Lasswell’s (1971) original seven stages; Rist’s (2000) three stages; Kraft and Furlong’s (2004) and Fowler’s (2009) six phases; Theodoulou and Kofinis’s, (2004) seven phases; Howlett et al.’s, (2016) five stages can be given as some samples. Upon examining the models, it was concluded that handling the three common fundamental phases of the policy cycle models in the literature was appropriate for the main structure of this study. Therefore, these three stages of this approach constituted the basic classifications in this study, under which the themes derived from the findings were evaluated: a) Identification of the issues (that require a new policy or policy modification), b) Policy formulation, and c) Policy implementation.

From the overall analyses, 12 themes emerged out of 58 categories that were derived from the codes in the study. During the analysis process, it was discovered that the themes related to the first and second phases of the policy cycle were remarkably common and overlapped; therefore, they are presented under the same heading in this part while the themes of the third phase are handled separately. Thus, the sections evolved under these titles: 1) Findings related to the phases of the policy cycle model labelled as “Identification of the issues” and “Policy formulation”, and 2) Findings concerning the phase of the policy cycle named as “Policy implementation”.

4.1. Participants' perceptions of the "Identification of policy issues" phase and "Policy formulation" phase

Following the demographic questions in the first part of the interview schedule, the participants were asked about their perceptions of the two policymaking phases: identification of policy issues that require a new policy/policy change and policy formulation. Their answers reflecting their perceptions were analysed and accordingly the following six themes got matured through the categorized codes and concepts as descriptors (presented in a box, numbered 1-6, at the end of the section 3. 8. Data analysis process).

It is noteworthy to clarify that, though they are evaluated under separate headings, each of the themes may have several common sub-themes and descriptors shared by some or all; thus, such occasions are underlined referring to the related themes when needed. Initially, the participants discerned the theme "issue sources stipulating a new policy or policy change" that was regarded as the originator of a policymaking process.

4.1.1. Sources of educational issues that require a new policy or policy change

Since change is inevitable in almost every environment of modern life, educational ecosystems also require new policies or amendments/modifications of the current ones perpetually. In order to generate new policies or make changes to the existing ones, there must be certain reasons or rationales for their legitimization so that their related community shall accept, acquire and practice them properly and fruitfully. Therefore, "identification of the issues that require new policies or policy modifications" is the first and the most significant stage of the policy cycle constituting the rationale for the understructure/infrastructure on which the policy is developed. Simply, the reasons for a policy induction must be so powerful that it should be effective and long-lasting; that is, if the foundation of and the rationale for this phase are not robust enough, the other stages of policy-making process cannot be firmly built on, and the efforts made

in the whole process may miscarry. Similar points are emphasized in the OECD 2020 Recommendation of the Council on Improving the Quality of Government Regulation (Better Policies for Better Lives), in which the OECD reference checklist for regulatory decision-making stresses: “Question No. 1: Is the Problem Correctly Defined? The problem to be solved should be precisely stated, giving clear evidence of its nature and magnitude, and explaining why it has arisen (identifying the incentives of affected entities and their consequent behaviours) (p. 10).

In the light of such an approach, findings of the study revealed that, while identifying the educational issues that necessitate a policy (change), their sources emerge as a significant element and these sources provide a base for the formulation of the policy. Meanwhile, it should be clarified that, while some of the results in this study emerged as directly related to curricular and instructional matters, which prompted me as the most significant purpose as a researcher of curriculum and instruction, some other results appeared to be covering more general educational issues, which seem to be indirectly related to curriculum and instruction, but influence them on a consequential level. Furthermore, apart from educational policy-making, there have sprung up meaningful messages concerning the policy-making process in a generic manner to be utilized in other fields as well.

According to the results, three main sources of issues became prominent in this study: a) the plans and programs of the current governments, b) international impacts (the results of international tests and the impact of foreign country educational system examples), and c) feedback and suggestions from the essential stakeholders (practitioners and academicians). In connection with these, several other (minor) categories emerged through the codes that are going to be presented in this part.

a) Plans, programs and agendas of the current governments

Analyses of the participants’ perceptions displayed that the most influential source of educational policy change was the plans and programs of

the current governments, which had been determined in advance, mostly before elections. Political parties prepare their plans and programs to be applied if/when they become a governing body, in which they also declare certain promises to their voters in line with their ideologies. In this context, it is significant whether the governments consider other factors, such as new conditions that appear after they have prepared them, views and suggestions from the stakeholders, opposing views and so on and accordingly make modifications, or they directly put them into practice disregarding those factors (Category 1).

Category 1

Government plans and programs (prepared prior to elections) as the main sources

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Premeditated changes (by politicians)	12	9	10
No evaluation of current issues	9	7	8
Imposing ideologies, doctrines and beliefs	10	8	8
Propaganda through education	9	8	7
Hidden agenda	6	4	6
Customary practice in Türkiye	9	7	8

Firstly, the participants perceived that governments would make educational policies on the basis of their plans and programs determined and designed before the elections. They agreed that such education policy decisions were made without so much considering current developments in the area or any other factors. A retired official (O6) expressed this sort of decision-making attitude by giving an example related to the initiation of the 4+4+4 system:

I participated personally in the 4+4+4 project process; I can say that, for instance, in 2004 and 2006 there was a program different from the previous ones, and without getting the feedback about it, and without research on whether the condition in our country in regard to the PISA and TIMSS exams was going well, transition to a different program system, 4+4s, was called onto the agenda. Then, I had asked many times why we would not modify the old program discussing the shortcomings and merits of it [pros and cons], and instead, we were passing to something under the name of a new, first-hand, another formation, well, in spite of this, it was decided to proceed with it *because it had already been decided by the government in advance*. And, within those 4+4s, I

contributed a lot to the contents of Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Health Education, and many other courses, which were demanded from me.

4+4+4 proje sürecinin direkt içinde bulundum; şunu söyleyebilirim ki, mesela 2004 ve 2006'da daha öncekilerden farklı ortaya konulan bir program vardı ve bunun dönütleri alınmadan, PISA, TIMSS sınavları kapsamında ülkemizdeki durum iyi gidiyor mu bir araştırma yapılmadan farklı bir program sistemine, 4+4 lere geçilmesi hemen gündeme gelmişti. Ben o aralar çok söylemiştim neden eski programın eksikliklerini, artılarını tartışıp onu modifiye etmiyoruz da yeni, sıfır başka bir oluşum adı altında bir şeye geçiyoruz diye, ee, fakat buna rağmen geçilme kararı alındı çünkü *önceden hükümet tarafından zaten karar verilmişti*. Ve, o 4+ 4lerin içinde benden istenen Fizik, Kimya, Biyoloji, Sağlık gibi birçok dersin içeriğine katkıları olmuşur.

The respondents expressed their perception that governments would dictate their ideologies, doctrines and beliefs through education policies and underlined that it should not have been done. While the retired officials shared this view, most of the ones who were still working for the government at the time of the interview either did not make any comments in this context, or claimed that it would not be regarded as *improper*, seeming to be refraining from talking about the topics. Furthermore, teachers and academicians believed that governments did make propaganda by way of education, supported by the retired officials again. Nearly half of the participants from each group together also felt that there were hidden agendas within the plans and programs of the governments. That the government plans and programs were the main source of new educational policies was accepted by more than half of the 38 participants ($f=24$) as *natural* and *customary* in Turkish political environment.

Arbitrariness in issue identification

According to the insights of the informants, even arbitrary individual and emotional attitudes of the political authority, namely ministers or governors, which derived from very personal backgrounds or views, were influential on decision-making about determining the sources of policy issues. It was discovered that this attitude also had impacts on the government plans and programs – the sources in the first category; thus, the category concerned is portrayed just after it as the second category (Category 2).

Category 2

Arbitrary individual choices of the governing authority as sources

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Influence of personal wishes (of politicians)	6	5	6
Limited and/or self-centred visions	9	7	8
Impact of private backgrounds	5	4	6
Unscientific choices	9	8	8
Unethical impact	10	7	8
Personal ideological manipulations	6	5	6

The participants in the three groups apprehended that the personal wishes and private backgrounds of the politicians, who were defined as having limited and self-centred visions, were influential on decisions about issue identification. Accordingly, it was indicated that these decisions were not ever scientific but individual and arbitrary. The participants also added their supposition that such choices, including individualized ideological manipulations, would bear an unethical impact on the process. In regard to sharing the perceptions in this category, the informants in the government official group were the retired ones again.

This sort of arbitrary attitude was signified by an academician (A6) who had also worked as a higher-level official in a managerial office of the MNE:

In Türkiye, there emerges *a necessity* for an education program that depends on individuals and that can be changed according to the proceedings of the governments. “When I take office,” a person [having authority] says, for instance, “I am a graduate of Faculty of Science and Letters, and my field is literature; I will change all the rules of Turkish language” says a minister, for example. Why? Because you are a Turkish language specialist or a man of letters. Or, another minister comes and says “environment is very important and I will inaugurate a course on environment”. “I am in the Traffic Committee, and I will start a Traffic course” she/he asserts. Now, it is such a thing, this much, you know; *unethical, unmethodical, and unsystematic* things. I mean, *there is no principle for this. There is no route that it follows. There is no graphical order*, that is to say. In that period, it was like that, in this period like this; according to the daily flow of events.

Türkiye’deki iktidarların seyrine göre değişebilen, kişilere bağlı olan bir eğitim programı *ihtiyacı* doğuyor. “Ben geldiğimde,” diyor mesela, “Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi mezunuyum, alanım da Edebiyat” diyor. “Türkçe kurallarının hepsini değiştireceğim” diyor bir bakan mesela. Niye? Çünkü sen Türkçecisin veya

Edebiyatçısın diye. Ya da başka bir bakan geliyor diyor ki “çevre çok önemlidir, çevre dersi koyacağım” diyor, “Trafik Kurulundaydım” diyor “trafik dersi koyacağım” diyor. Şimdi bu kadar şey hani; *gayri etik ve gayri metodik, ve gayri sistemsel* şeyler. Yani *bunun bir prensibi yok. Takip ettiği bir seyir yok. Bir grafiksel düzen yok, yani. Şu dönemde şöyleydi, bu dönemde böyleydi; tamamen günlük akış ile ilgili.*

A retired official (O5) supported these views that laid stress on the arbitrary decision-making mechanisms of MNE, highlighting the importance of participatory decision-making:

Let me tell you something: A minister, *I shall not relate her/his name*, came. We were implementing modern science programs. This was being implemented in almost more than a hundred high schools. One day he told “*Why are not traditional Physics, Chemistry and Biology being taught, but this sort of modern science program is being taught? Annul it man!*” I was also a member at the school. *It was abolished. No academic evaluation was made, or, well, no boards were consulted;* instead of it, Physics, Chemistry and Biology courses were set. For those programs, old curricula were redesigned, old coursebooks were retouched, some new coursebooks were written, later of course. But, *in education, such decisions could not be made like that*, this shall not happen in education. These must be discussed in a committee. You discuss them in the Board of Education and Discipline, you discuss them in the Education Council. Well, then, you make a decision accordingly. See, in the early years, either BED itself would prepare the programs, or they would bring to the NECs the ones prepared by the general directorates, which they had regarded suitable. After approval by the NEC, they would be presented to the Minister for recognition. This procedure disappeared after around the 1960s. Now, BED prepares them itself, *they [the members of BED] make decisions playing by ear, or in line with the manipulations of the minister or the politicians.*

Bakın ben size bir şey söyleyeyim: *Bir bakan, ismini vermeyeyim*, geldi. Bizde modern fen programları uygulanıyordu. Aşağı yukarı 100’den fazla lisede uygulanıyordu bu. Adam bir gün demiş ki: “*Niye eskiden olduğu gibi fizik, kimya okutulmuyor da biyoloji okutulmuyor da bu modern fen programı okutuluyor? Kaldırın kardeşim!*” Okulda ben de üyeydim. *Bu kalktı. Hiçbir akademik değerlendirme yapılmadı, veya efendim kurula danışılmadı;* yerine fizik, kimya, biyoloji kondu. O programlar için eskinin programları alındı, eskinin kitapları üzerinden işte rötuşlar yapıldı, bazı yeni kitaplar yazıldı, sonradan tabii ki. *Ama eğitimde bu kararlar böyle verilemez, eğitimde bu olmaz. Mutlaka bunların bir kurulda tartışılması lazım. Siz bunu Talim Terbiye’de tartışırsınız, siz bunu Şûra’da tartışırsınız. Efendim, ondan sonra, ona göre bir karar verirsiniz. Bakın daha önceki yıllarda, programları, işte Talim Terbiye ya kendisi hazırlıyor ya genel müdürlüklerden gelenlerden olumlu bulduklarını Şûraya getiriyordu. Şûrada olumlu bulduktan sonra bakanın onayına sunuluyordu. Bu aşağı yukarı 60’lı yıllardan sonra kalktı. Şimdi Talim Terbiye kendisi hazırlıyor. Kendisi işte oradan geleni kabul ediyor, *kafalarına göre veya bakanın ya da siyasilerin yönlendirmelerine göre karar alıyorlar.**

Such distress felt about the arbitrary attitude of decision-makers was expressed rather directly and fervently by the teacher and academician participants together with the retired officials whereas the informants in the “officials” group, who were actively working at the time of the interviews, were observed to be quite timid and sensitive about speaking of this sort of topics and it was noticed that they mostly preferred to keep silent.

b) International impacts

The participants appreciated that the second significant *source* for identification of the issues that require a new policy or policy modification was the results of international tests and the knowledge acquired from foreign educational system models/examples (Category 3).

Category 3

Impact of international tests on the determination of curricular and instructional education policy issues

<i>Codes</i>			
International tests: PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS	11	7	11
Fair comparison of student scores	8	5	8
Poor test results (as impetus)	12	8	11
Lack of effort for discovering the causes behind failures	9	7	8
Secondary-level source for policy change	7	5	6

This kind of general judgment was reported by all the participants in the three groups, either by indicating directly or implying. (The ones who more openly expressed such a perception were included in the related analyses). They believed that especially PISA together with two other international exam results, namely TIMSS and PIRLS, had become influential sources on defining educational policy issues. These student achievement assessment systems were recognized by the participants as scientifically-proven high-quality exam systems comparing the scores at the international levels rather fairly. The respondents highlighted that because, for years, the rank of Turkish students in these exams had mostly befallen among the students of the least successful

countries, the policymakers decided that policy changes or modifications were needed; thus, poor test results of Turkish students always created a kind of impetus for policy change. However, the participants signified that the educational systems of foreign countries and the results of international exams might/should be evaluated in order to provide secondary-level information for policy change; such knowledge obtained from those sources could not function as the main source of information to identify educational issues that required policy change. They should be considered and appreciated if/when/once supported by the information obtained from the teachers, the academicians and other domestic stakeholders together with knowledge of local needs. The participants, especially the teachers ($f=9$) and the academicians ($f=7$) criticized the authorities' lack of effort in investigating the real causes behind such failures, and that, without that knowledge, making new education policies would be inefficient; 8 out of 14 officials expressed similar views on this matter.

Apart from the impact of international assessment systems, qualified education systems of foreign countries, especially of the Scandinavian and far east countries, were related by the informants as other sources of educational issues standing for policy change (Category 4).

Category 4

Foreign educational system models as sources

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Good-quality education systems	12	7	10
Finland, Scandinavian countries, far east samples	11	8	11
Borrowings: no copy but nationalization and localization eclectically	10	8	11
Overcrowding student population as an excuse for poor quality	9	7	9

On the other hand, it was signalled that the knowledge about foreign systems would be utilized mainly to determine the defects of the Turkish system so as to redesign it according to the merits of those samples. However, the respondents warned that such systems should not be copied completely but should be adapted to the Turkish national and local contexts in an eclectic manner. As the last point concerning this category, the overcrowded student

population in Türkiye was put forward as an excuse for the poor-quality education system at present and most participants expressed that it might hinder borrowings from other systems in some ways.

c) Feedback and suggestions from the essential stakeholders, teachers and academicians

Teachers, academicians and government officials were recurrently labelled as the three pillars of educational policymaking in the study. However, in terms of providing feedback for issue identification and policy formulation, teachers and academicians became more prominent actors; and between them, teachers' feedback and suggestions were appreciated as exceeding those of academicians (Category 5).

Category 5

Feedback and suggestions from the practitioners, namely teachers as sources

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Most significant and valuable source (directly from the field)	15	9	13
Least considered source	9	7	8
Consulted but not put into practice	12	6	8
Consulting on trivia	9	2	7
Consulting practitioners after decisions are made	12	6	8
Top-down approach	13	8	9
MNE's properly consulting teachers!	1	1	6
Lack of voluntary feedback or suggestions	12	6	11
Teachers' views are questionable	8	5	8
Teachers' capacities are insufficient	8	4	8
Teachers with post graduate degrees	5	8	9
Use of technology in view-sharing	12	8	13

Appreciating teachers' views

All teacher and academician participants ($f=24$) agreed that teachers' views should be appreciated as the *most* primary data source for determining policy issues since teachers were the practitioners who put the policies into

practice in the real arena; the majority of the officials ($f=13$), both retired and working, also felt the same while only one of them did not approve. However, most teachers and academicians definitely believed that teachers' views and suggestions had never been considered enough by the policymakers; they declared them as the least considered source while determining the educational issues that would lead to policy changes. This perception was shared by most of the officials ($f=8$) as well. In regard to this finding, one over-forty-year-experienced teacher (T8) stated that

But they [policymaking officials] must consider the views obtained from the teachers [and] they must eventually utilize those views in the practice; otherwise, they will be useless! Previously, during the transition period to the constructivist approach in 2005, they collected a lot of opinions and views, and for days, discussed with tens of teachers till evening, but they did not appreciate any of them in decision-making and application. While we were expecting "such and such changes would probably be made", we saw that no changes were made in line with our views.

... all teacher colleagues expressed their views... they [the views] were debated in detail, and it was very good, we really enjoyed it. But actually, the first draft plan appeared in the end without applying any changes that we had suggested.

Ama öğretmenlerden alınan görüşleri de dikkate almalılar, sonucunda, uygulamada o görüşleri değerlendirmeliler; yoksa ne önemi kalır! O zaman, 2005'deki yapılandırmacı yaklaşıma geçişte bir çok fikir ve görüş aldılar, günlerce, akşama kadar onlarca öğretmenle bir sürü tartışıldı, ama karar almada ve uygulamada hiç birini önemsememişler. "Şöyle değişiklik olur galiba" derken gördük ki bizim görüşlerimiz doğrultusunda hiçbir değişiklik olmamış. ... bütün öğretmen arkadaşlar fikirlerini söylediler, ... detaylarıyla her şeyiyle tartışıldı, çok da güzeldi, hoşumuza da gitti doğrusu. Ama yine de ilk taslak plan olduğu gibi çıktı sonuçta, bizim önerdiğimiz değişiklikler yapılmadan.

Another teacher stressed the influence of this issue in a sarcastic manner: "Well, we are in this job. We are the ones who shall direct this process, but they settle the issues by themselves at the table without consulting our views; they *think* they settle!" (T9). ("Yani tabii bu işin içinde bizleriz. Bu işi yönlendirecek olan bizleriz ama bizim düşüncemiz alınmadan masa başında bu işi kendi aralarında çözüyorlar; çözdüklerini sanıyorlar!")

The participants admitted that teachers were occasionally consulted; however, they criticized that their views were neither evaluated nor put into practice in policy formation. On the other hand, most teachers ($f=9$) felt that they

were consulted on trivia (e.g., only asking for the mistakes in the books not any other points or policies – only using them as proof-readers or editors); 7 officials thought the same and only two of the academicians expressed similar perceptions. Actually, as an epitome of the matter, the informants regarded referring to teachers' views as only a formality, and they definitely had the idea that during such a formality process, always a top-down approach was followed. Neither teachers nor academicians did ever believe that the MNE appropriately consulted with them and none of the retired officials had such an idea either; only most of the active (working) officials ($f=6$) rather sharply stated that it was actually done by the MNE in any way. In this context, insisting that teachers' views had always been evaluated, one high-level official (O1) stressed

There is, indeed, a department in all units of our ministry called "Department for Monitoring and Evaluation" and this department always monitors, follows up and evaluates the ongoing activities. What does this evaluation consider? One: the teacher reports, and two: the meetings of working groups conducted with teachers... A listing is made by combining similar views and taking different views if there are. In this way, well, actually in brief, these pieces of information are permanently collected by utilizing all areas on which the views of teachers and all stakeholders of education are reflected.

Bakanlığımızın bütün birimlerinde zaten "İzleme ve Değerlendirme Daire Başkanlığı" diye bir daire başkanlığı vardır ve bu daire başkanlığı süre giden faaliyetlerle alakalı sürekli bir izleme-değerlendirme yapar. Bu değerlendirme nelere bakar? Bir: öğretmen raporları, iki: öğretmenlerle yaptıkları çalışma grubu toplantıları. ... Benzer görüşleri birleştirmek, farklı görüşler varsa onları da almak şeklinde bir sıralama yapılır. Bu şekilde yani, kısacası aslında, öğretmenler ve eğitimin tüm paydaşlarının görüşlerinin yansıdığı mecraları kullanarak sürekli bu bilgiler biriktirilir.

Another active government official (O6) also pointed out that teachers' feedback was always appreciated as long as they brought concrete explanations. Furthermore, she/he highlighted that they were *incredibly sensitive* about documented suggestions and views, which could be used to correct the errors in coursebooks, implying in a sense, *perhaps unintentionally*, that they were not appreciated on other occasions:

One teacher taught Biology for a semester in XXX [a city]. She/he, together with colleagues and the students, found a number of errors in the textbook, 11

pages. Can you imagine? They sent here [to the related MNE office] the list of errors, it caused a big shock here! Well, such as, “why had not those errors been detected before?” ... etc. We cared about it so much that we invited that teacher here [to the MNE office]. I do not really like those characters who say “my views are not appreciated” and who suddenly get caught by negative attitude... Instead of complaining that “my views are not appreciated”, apply [to us] by listing what you told, and what was not done? I do ask; Am I not right? “I told this”; where did you write it? To BİMER? [Communication Centre of Prime Ministry], how many items? etc. What did you say, at what point? ... Is there anything written? They say that “words in voice do disappear; but written words do stay”. ... We get whatever suggestions and views [presented] in writing; We are incredibly sensitive [in this context].

XXX’da [bir şehir] bir hocamız dönem boyu çocuklara Biyolojiyi okutmuş. Zümre arkadaşlarıyla birlikte, hatta çocuklarla da birlikte kitabın dünya kadar hatasını bulmuş, 11 sayfa. Düşünebiliyor musunuz? Hataları buraya göndermişler, burada yer yerinden oynadı ya! Hani, “niye daha önce o hatalar görülmedi”, böyle. O kadar önemsedik ki o hocayı buraya davet ettik. “Önerilerime değer verilmiyor” diyen, o tip, birden negatifliğe kapılan insanları gerçekten sevmiyorum. ...”Benim görüşlerim önemsenmiyor” diye yakınmaktan ziyade, maddelerle sırala gel, ne dedin de ne yapılmadı? derim. Değil mi? “Şunu dedim”, nereye yazdın, BİMER’e mi, kaç maddelik vb. hangi noktada ne söylemiştin? ... yazılı bir şey var mı? “Söz uçar yazı kalır” derler... o tip yazılı çizili ne öneri, görüş varsa alırız; inanılmaz hassasız.

However, it was obvious that such occasions could not be regarded as instances of participation in curricular decision-making or so, but could just be considered as utilizing teacher feedback for redaction in re-editing coursebooks. Moreover, two active officials (O1, O13) insisted that not only the teachers’ but also all of the related people’s views were demanded by publicizing the drafts of the curricula to everybody, exemplifying their claim by presenting the list of statistics that included over 180.000 suggestions/views/critics and so on, which had been announced in related the MNE internet sites during the process of 2017 curricular changes. These officials also asserted that all of those views had been examined one by one, and O1 underscored that even they had sent letters of gratitude to many institutions: “Well, regarding their contributions, one by one, we sent a letter of gratitude to those institutions, which had sent us several reports, critiques, suggestions during the suspension period of the curricula” (O1). İşte bize özellikle kurumsal düzeyde bir takım rapor, eleştiri, öneri göndermiş olanlara, o müfredat askı sürecinde iken, bütün o kurumlara tek tek katkıları ile alakalı olarak bir teşekkür mektubu yazdık. However, one of these

higher-level officials admitted that teachers, *still*, did not think their views were appreciated by the ministry offices, resembling their attitude to “learned helplessness” saying

Actually, as known, there is a concept named “learned helplessness” in psychology. Our teachers have developed something like that, it should be admitted; because, our teachers, in fact, have a mechanism through which they can normally convey their messages in a very participative manner. What is that? They work in subject groups at their schools. Subject groups are formed, those groups [views, suggestions and decisions] are consolidated in the districts and formed into an epitome and that epitome is sent to the Province, it is [re]epitomized in the Province and sent to the Ministry. Now, teachers, here, for instance, by acting in the direction of their opinion and prejudice that their views are not considered, have completely transformed this [activity] into a format of fulfilling a bureaucratic directive. Here, indeed, actually, since this is a habit that has been shaped in a very long time period, it is hard to change it... But, if this teacher colleague knows that what she/he sends is appreciated, she/he will participate much more (O1).

Aslında “öğrenilmiş çaresizlik” diye bir tabir vardır ya psikolojide. Bizim öğretmenlerimizde böyle bir şey var, bunu kabul etmek lazım; çünkü, aslında öğretmenlerimiz normalde çok katılımcı bir şekilde görüşlerini aktarabilecekleri bir mekanizmaya sahipler. Nedir o? Okullarında zümreler halinde çalışırlar. Zümreler oluşur, okullardaki zümreler [görüş, öneri ve kararlar] ilçelerde konselide edilir, bir icmal hale getirilir ve o icmal İl’e gönderilir, İl’de icmal edilir ve bakanlığa gönderilir. Şimdi öğretmenler burada mesela tekil bir takım görüşlerinin dikkate alınmadığı düşüncesinden, önyargısından hareketle yıllar içinde bunu tamamıyla bir bürokratik talimatı yerine getirme formatına dönüştürmüş oluyorlar. Burada yalnız yani bu çok uzun süreçte oluşmuş bir alışkanlık olduğu için değiştirmesi de zor... Halbuki eğer öğretmen arkadaşımız yani bu gönderdiklerinin dikkate alındığını vesaire biliyor olsa çok daha katılım yapar.

Most of the officials ($n=11$) and higher than the majority of the teachers ($f=12$) and most academicians ($n=6$) pointed to the lack of voluntary feedback and/or suggestions from teachers in a critical manner. Furthermore, again in a *fault-finding* mode, more than half of the teachers and a remarkable number of officials stated that teachers’ views were *questionable*, and their capacities were insufficient; in this context, around half of the academicians shared the same views. As 8 of 9 academicians and 9 of 14 officials appreciated knowledge from the teachers with post graduate degrees as an asset; only 5 of 15 teachers had similar ideas. On the other hand, the participants supported the use of technology and the internet for consulting the stakeholders. As a final remark in regard to

teachers' participation through views, one significant point was notified by an academician (A2) – in a mode of confession or regret – that teachers' views, rather than academicians', should be prioritized in the studies like educational needs assessment:

Teachers should be utilized especially while conducting needs analyses. Surely, indeed, others should not carry out [needs analyses]. Curricularists should not administer needs analysis by saying “I am a programmer”. A programmer can plan it, the country may feel such a need, and the politicians can decide on it, that is a different thing; but, whatever field it is, may it be Math education, Turkish, or any discipline, or another educational field, teachers must be consulted for this issue, needs analysis must be carried out through them.

Özellikle ihtiyaç analizlerini yaparken öğretmenler kullanılmalı. Tabii, yani başkaları yapmamalı. Eğitim programcısı, “Ben programcıyım” deyip ihtiyaç analizi yapmamalı. Programcı onu planlayabilir, böyle bir ihtiyacı ülke hissedebilir, siyasiler de karar verebilir, o ayrı bir şey ama hangi alanda olursa olsun bu Matematik eğitimi de olabilir, Türkçe de olabilir, herhangi bir disiplin de olabilir, başka bir eğitim alanı da olabilir, onunla ilgili uygulayıcı olan öğretmenlere önce bu iş sorulmalı, ihtiyaç analizi onlar kanalı ile yapılmalı.

Appreciating academicians' views

As another source of issue identification, feedback and suggestions from academicians were evaluated by the participants within the following category; basically, such knowledge was appreciated as valuable information from the related research and theory fields defining the “what of policy” (Category 6).

Category 6

Feedback and suggestions from academicians

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
As researchers and theorists	13	8	11
Lack of scientific data provision	8	6	9
Personal interests weigh more	6	4	7
Importance of theory	9	9	8
Too theoretical knowledge	11	6	8
The need for harmonizing theory and practice	13	8	11
Irrelevant research data!	4	3	5
Governments' discarding universities	6	5	3

The informants clearly indicated that, as researchers and theorists, academicians should support policy-making processes with valuable scientific data from their fields; however, it was felt that academicians do not perform it properly since, concentrating mainly on their personal academic career/life, they do not bother themselves with providing data and suggestions to education policy-making processes. On the other hand, even if academicians provided the required data and information, the decision-makers would not appreciate their feedback censuring that their approach was too theoretical. In relation with this understanding, it was sensed that reports from universities were overlooked by the related milieu, especially by decision-making bodies, as irrelevant research data. In somewhat a controversial manner, the significance of the theory of education in policy-making was emphasized by a remarkable number of informants ($f=26$). In this context, the common idea among the participants was that, epistemologically, it was an urgent need to harmonize theory (of the academicians) and practice (of the teachers). As the last point in this part, especially by the academicians, the governments were criticized because they would determine their agendas while discarding universities – academic knowledge. In order to avoid repetition, some of the results in regard to considering academicians' feedback and suggestions are not displayed here since more detailed information accompanied by quotations will be presented in the part related to the participation of academicians in the policy-making processes.

Hardly any voluntary feedback from teachers and academicians – reservations, scepticism and fear

Findings indicated that teachers and academicians would avoid presenting feedback, views and suggestions to the decision-making authorities due to several reasons. The reasons varied: as portrayed in category 7 (of Theme 1), the participants felt that there was mistrust among the stakeholders concerning mainly educational knowledge domains in the professional sense; again mistrust prevailed among them towards the MNE in terms of bureaucratic and political aspects; teachers felt pressure from their administrators at schools

to keep silent regarding view presentation; again teachers judged that decisionmakers would surely ignore their views, and this judgment was supported by most of the informants in the other two groups ($f=13$); teachers also expressed their fear for criticism and even insult from their own colleagues, academicians and the MNE, which was approved by a considerable number of officials ($f=8$). Four other outstanding excuses were expressed by the majority of all three groups: Teachers and academicians would refrain from expressing *opposing* views; they (especially teachers) were uncertain of their knowledge and capacity; they would cherish their own personal interests rather than improve the teaching profession; their indolence and indifference hindered their participation in determining policy issues by view presentation. As a final point in this category, it was notified by the majority of all groups that the convention (cultural attitude) of unconditional obedience/allegiance to what the authorities agreed without evaluation of any suggestions from the lower layers of bureaucracy would incite their avoidance (Category 7).

Category 7

Avoidance of giving feedback/view presentation by two key stakeholders; teachers and academicians

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Hardly any voluntary feedback	11	8	8
Reservations (due to lack of trust)	9	6	7
Mistrust towards MNE	13	8	7
Hidden/manipulative silencing (by administrations)	8	4	5
Bias/suspicion about not being appreciated	13	6	7
Fearing criticism and insult	9	3	8
Refraining from expressing opposing views	10	7	8
Uncertainty about self-knowledge and self-capacity	8	5	8
Habit/tradition of unconditional obedience to authorities	9	7	7
Laziness and indifference	10	5	11
Cherishing personal interests	8	4	7

That teachers and academicians would not submit any views or suggestions for policy processes emerged as a significant result. The question

concerning this outcome was prompted in the interviews as twofold: The first was “were you asked to present any views on a policymaking process?” and the second one was “have you ever submitted any views or suggestions by yourself without any demand?” As seen in Table 4. 1, it was found that only 2 of 15 teachers and 1 of 9 academicians presented views or suggestions on demand by authorities while 13 out of 14 officials submitted. On the other hand, just 1 teacher out of 15 and none of 9 academicians submitted views without any demand from the authorities, whereas 2 of the 14 officials did it (Table 4. 1.).

Table 4. 1.

Number of Participants Having Presented Views/Suggestions for a Policy-making Process Conducted by the MNE

Group of Participant	N	
	Presented view/suggestion on demand	Presented view/suggestion without demand
Teachers (n=15)	2	1
Academicians (n=9)	1	0
Officials (n=14)	13	2

In this context, it was guesstimated that educational stakeholders in Türkiye belonging to these three groups did not ever have a *habit* of presenting views or suggestions without being asked for them; it was a common prevailing attitude of refrainment. While some participants associated this sort of behaviour with refraining due to lack of self-confidence stemming from their *poor capacity*, some others still linked it to the view that the related offices would not appreciate them if they presented any views; thus, it would be a futile effort:

I have never presented my views without being asked for; but, actually, in my mind, there has always been such a thought in a shape of a comprehensive report: prepare in the form of a report and present it to the Ministry; but, to what extent, will it be appreciated? How much care will be paid to it? As I have had doubts about it, or since I have not been able to persuade myself, I have not ever felt the requirement of writing so far (T6).

Benden istenmeden hiç fikrimi sunmadım; ama, aslında hep kafamda, kapsamlı bir rapor şeklinde böyle bir düşünce oluştu: bir rapor şeklinde hazırlayıp da Bakanlığa sunmak; ama o da ne kadar artık rağbet görür? Ne kadar dikkate alınır? Ona dair şüphelerim olduğu için ya da kendimi ikna edemediğim için yazma gereği de duymadım şu ana kadar.

The important point that teachers would not present any criticism about policies for fear of *intimidation* from authorities by whom, they thought, they had been silenced, was expressed by one teacher as:

We criticize new policies, new programs a lot among ourselves, we react [to them], but [only] among ourselves; if only the walls of that teachers' room could talk! Things are spoken here and stay here. However, they cannot ever reach [be communicated to] the positions where they should. Why? Because we have been silenced. Well, no one can stand up and say easily "Oh! It is like this; but, why?". No. Well, in a way, it depends on the courage of the teacher... Criticism and opinions remain limited to the dialogues within the subject groups. That is, these complaints and suggestions are not transmitted to the actual [proper] units (T4).

Kendi içimizde yeni politikalara, programlara birçok eleştiri yapıyoruz, tepki gösteriyoruz, ama kendi içimizde; şu öğretmenler odasının duvarlarının dili olsa da konuşsa! Burada konuşuluyor ve burada kalıyor. Aslında ulaşması gereken yerlere hiçbir zaman ulaşmıyor. Niye? Çünkü artık susturulduk. Hani kimse kalkıp çok rahat "a! böyle de; fakat neden böyle" diyemiyor. Yok. Ha ama bu biraz öğretmenin cesaretine de kalmış. ... Eleştiriler ve fikirler zümrelerin kendi arasındaki diyaloglarla sınırlı kalıyor. Yani, bu gerçek birime taşınmıyor bu şikayetler, öneriler.

4.1.2. Political and ideological approach in educational/curricular decision-making and policy-making

In regard to the identification of policy issues and policy formulation phases of policy cycle, the theme "political and ideological approach in educational decision-making and policy-making" emerged as a significant and recurrent one according to the perceptions of the informants in the three groups. The theme included five generic categories made up of crucial codes and concepts expressed by the participants.

a) Politicization of education is “not a new story”: a (traditional!) malpractice since the 1970s; a cultural motive or political disease?

The respondents in all three groups discerned definitely that politicization of education had been a traditional matter, and they answered the question in the title of this part above as “both”, some directly and some through implications in the interview sessions, signalling that, unfortunately, it was a political disease that had (been) settled as a cultural motive (Category 1).

Category 1

Involvement of the current government’s political ideology in the process

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Influence of governments’ ideologies	12	8	8
Corruption/improper applications	12	8	8
Politicization of education is “not a new story”	10	8	9
It is natural that (political) ideology impacts educational decisions	3	1	8
Expected principle: No involvement of political ideology	10	8	8

In a disapproving manner, a history teacher stated her/his perceptions of the political ideology issue in this context as follows:

Involvement of ideology in educational policymaking is not normal and political ideologies, from whichever side, should never be involved in it; however, unfortunately, they, from various political wings, have always been strongly influential on the Turkish educational system for *over 40 years as an unpreventable political habit.*” (T12).

Eğitim politikası yapımına ideoloji karışması normal değildir ve hangi taraftan olursa olsun, siyasi ideolojiler asla karıştırılmamalı; fakat maalesef, *40 yılı aşkın süredir, engellenemez bir politik alışkanlık* olarak, değişik siyasi kanatlardan (ideolojiler) Türk eğitim sistemi üzerinde güçlü biçimde etkili olmaktadır.

In similar manners, like T12, 7 of 8 retired MNE officials – around and over 65 years of age – confirmed the assertion that political ideologies of the governments have always influenced Turkish educational policymaking since the 1970s; thus, the attitude of involving ideology in educational issues has not been unique to any single government in Türkiye. It has almost been a *political party*

heritage in governing Turkish educational system and this condition should not solely be limited to the current government's applications. The academicians and teachers also perceived that the *involvement of ideology in education* – politicization of education – is like a “political disease” that had been prevailing for more than 40 years in the country. A former teacher who later became an academician told

I began to work as a middle school principal in 1968, and left the same place as a high school principal in [19]75. I worked in a town in the southern region, a place where strong political polarization prevailed. I did not let anything politicized slip into the school. I was reported because of that. A colleague of mine asked me “which political party do you belong to?” I said “I do not belong to any parties, but I do have my political views.” ... Later, this person became a candidate for school principalship. I told them “do not make him the school principal after me; otherwise, the school will be politicized”. They did not listen to me, they qualified him as the principal. Needless to say, then, people from the opposite political side came and raked the principal's flat with gunfire and so on (A9).

Ben 1968'de ortaokul müdürlüğüne başladım, 75'te lise müdürü olarak aynı yerden ayrıldım. Güney bölgesinde bir ilçede görev yaptım, politik anlamda çok kamplaşmanın olduğu bir yerde. Ben okula hiçbir şekilde siyasi bir şey sokmadım. Şikayet edildim bunun yüzünden. Bir öğretmen arkadaşım bana “sen hangi partisin” dedi. “Partili değilim, ama tabii ki siyasi düşüncem var” dedim. ... Sonra bu kişi müdür adayı oldu. “Benden sonra bu arkadaşı müdür yapmayın, siyasallaşır okul” dedim, dinlemediler, yaptılar. Tabii sonra karşıt düşünceliler geldi ve makinalı tüfeklerle falan o müdürün evini taradılar.

He/she also portrayed a dangerous aspect of politicization of educational environments, which even caused polarization among teachers, by these statements:

During the 70s and 80s, ideological polarizations reached a peak. This influenced the policies of the (Ministry of) National Education extremely. My personal separation from the MNE and transition to the university occurred due to the problems concerning this situation. Actually, my transfer to XXX University is interesting as well: I had been appointed to a school in Mamak (Ankara), now, I was commuting by train. At the place where we got off the train, there were groups of people. If you were not a member of a group, it was more difficult for you; your life would be in jeopardy. There were polarizations. When I applied for a transfer to XXX [a University], the deceased Professor ... told “for God's sake, you were a successful administrator, a successful school principal; why would you think of moving to the university?” “Sir,” I said, “MNE has become politicized. I cannot work in such a politicized institution in

that manner, because we do not have a warranty either. Universities are more independent, more liberal decisions can be made; therefore, I want to transfer.” (A9).

70’li 80’li yıllarda ideolojik ayrılmalar bir şekilde tavan yaptı. Milli Eğitim politikalarını da aşırı şekilde etkiledi. Ben şahsi olarak ME den ayrılmam ve üniversiteye geçmem bu şekildeki sıkıntıdan dolayıdır. Hatta, xxx’ye [a university] geçişim de enteresandır: Mamak da bir okulda görevlendirildim. Şimdi trenle gidip geliyorum. İndiğimiz yerde gruplar var, bir grubun adamı değilseniz daha zor. Hayatınız tehlikede. Kamplaşmalar var. XXX’ye [a university] geçmek için başvurduğumda, rahmetli rektör yardımcısı ... Hoca, "yahu sen başarılı bir yöneticiymişsin, başarılı bir okul müdürüymüşsün, niye düşünüyorsun üniversiteye geçmeyi” dedi. “Hocam” dedim, “ME politik hale geldi. Ben o şekilde politik bir kurumda çalışamıyorum, çünkü bizim de bir güvencemiz yok, üniversiteler daha özgür, daha rahat kararlar alınabiliyor; o yüzden geçmek istiyorum.” dedim.

Especially the most experienced participants, who could compare the old and current conditions, pointed out that such a political attitude had prevailed for at least the past half a century or more, not only in educational offices in the MNE but also in any other governmental offices. In this context, related to the attitude of politicians and voters, an academician hinted at an engaging point that the perception of people (voters) might change according to the dose of political-ideological involvement in education:

The ideological attitude and sanctions of the ruling authority, that is to say, the government, the ones who rule the country, towards education are unflinching; that is, either little or much, little in some periods. The degree that a human being feels its amount is different, indeed. For example, if we are asked about what had been done before 2002 concerning this issue, we would say those were less compared with the present. However, more pious people would say what had been done in that period was too much for them. For instance, while, in my position, I consider the ideological interventions of the present government as excessive, what is being done is still very slight for the ones who carried the governing body to authority (A7).

İktidarın, yani hükümetlerin, ülkeyi yönetenlerin eğitim üzerindeki ideolojik tavırları, yaptırımları da hiç eksik olmuyor; yani az veya çok, bazı dönemlerde az. Azlığı veya çokluğunu bir insanın hissediş derecesi de farklıdır zaten. Mesela, şimdi bize sorsalar, eskiden, 2002 yılından önce yapılanlarda, bu anlamda yapılanların şimdiye göre daha az olduğunu söyleriz. Ama, daha mütedeyyin insanlar, o dönemde yapılanların kendileri için çok olduğunu söylerler. Mesela, şu andaki hükümetin, bu anlamda ideolojik müdahalelerini ben, benim bulunduğum yerden çok olarak görürken, iktidarı oraya iktidar yapan insanlar için yapılanlar hala çok az.

However, the respondents sincerely hoped that, as a principle, political ideology should never be involved in educational policymaking. In this context, the findings also uncovered the belief that politicians – if not professionalist of education – should never participate in curricular policy making, either directly themselves or indirectly through officials they managed. Rather, it should be carried out by teachers and academicians collaboratively. One teacher signified

[A] politician shall not involve in any school course issue. Teachers shall decide among themselves. Politicians cannot say “do not instruct this [topic], instruct that in your class”. Let the teacher decide on instructing or not instructing it. These have nothing to do with politics. A Religion Teacher does decide to teach or not to teach religious subjects. Hey! does a politician go and tell “Include these or those in the curriculum”? She/he should not. Academicians and teachers discuss such matters and decide. Politics cannot interfere in these issues in line with its political view; ideology should not involve in this matter, to me. A politician should not intervene in this issue; otherwise, he would be directing education according to her/his own [political] views, wouldn't he? (T14).

Hiçbir ders konusuna karışmasın politikacı. Kendi aralarında öğretmenler karar versinler, Siyasetçi diyemez “bunu anlatma, onu anlat dersinde”. Bunlara öğretmen karar versin anlatmaya veya anlatmamaya. Bunların siyasetle bir alakası yok. Dini konuları da Din Bilgisi öğretmenleri karar verir anlatıp anlatmamaya. Bir siyasetçi gidip de programa şunları koy bunları koy der mi yahu? Dememeli. Bu tür konularda akademisyenler ve öğretmenler tartışır ve karar verirler. Siyaset kendi görüşüne göre bu işlere karışamaz; ideoloji bu işin içine karışmamalı bence. Siyasetçi bu işe karışmamalı; yoksa kendi görüşüne göre eğitime yön veriyor gibi olmaz mı?

The same number of participants from each group also admitted that there was always heavy influence of the ruling governments' political ideologies on educational policy decision-making. An academician said

It is sure that political governments influence education through their ideologies; for instance, prohibiting the entry of the turbaned/scarfed students into schools was the result of an educational policy, indeed; viz, identifying this with secularism. Those times, they were not permitted to step in here and there, ‘do not let them in there!’, and so on. Moreover, there were extreme incidents like barring turbaned women from getting on busses. Then, that was too much for some people; what is being done today is too much for some others (*letting turbaned/scarfed ladies enter everywhere*). But, eventually, the ruling authorities definitely interfere with the education system in order to adapt their political ideologies (A7).

Tabii ki siyasi iktidarlar etkiliyor eğitimi kendi ideolojileriyle; işte, mesela, kapalı öğrencilerin okullara alınmaması bir eğitim politikasının sonucudur yani; işte bunu laiklikle özdeşleştirmek. O zaman, işte oraya da almıyor, buraya da almıyor, ‘şuna da alma!’ gibi. Hatta otobüse bile bindirmemeye kadar giden durumlar. O da o zaman birilerine göre çoktu. Şimdi yapılanlar da birilerine göre çok (*türbanlı/başörtülü kadınlarının her yere girmesine izin vermek*). Ama sonuç olarak, iktidarlar eğitim sistemine, ideolojilerini adapte etmek üzere mutlaka ve mutlaka müdahale ediyorlar.

Another teacher specified the influence of the governments’ ideology aimed to affect future generations emphasizing that “the source of the change lies within the definition of education: To raise people in the desired [planned] direction. The government makes changes to raise people according to itself, its own ideology. That is, the type of person it desires (to grow).” (T11). (“Değişikliğin kaynağı, eğitimin tanımının içinde yatıyor: İstendik yönde insan yetiştirme. İktidar kendine göre insan yetiştirmek için değişiklikler yapıyor, ideolojisine göre. Yani hangi tip insan istiyorsa o tipte.”)

An academician, a former experienced teacher and administrator indicated that teachers would avoid implementing new programs due to the involvement of politicization and would prefer to practice *her/his own* program:

When the teacher is politicized so much possessing ideological foundations, she/he stays away from them [program changes]. Furthermore, as I worked in schools for a long time, I know very well and observed: She/he says “The new program does not ever interest me at all”, adding “I know better” and goes on with her/his own way. That is, there is no change in question for her/him (A7).

Bu kadar politize olunca, ideolojik temelleri olunca, öğretmen bir kere bunlardan uzak duruyor [program değişikliklerinden]. Hatta, yine okullarda çok çalıştığım için çok iyi biliyorum, gözlemlerim: “Beni hiç ilgilendirmez yeni program” diyor, “ben daha iyi biliyorum” diyor ve bildiğini okumaya devam ediyor. Yani onun için bir değişiklik söz konusu değil.

On the other hand, quite a number of the officials ($f=8$) asserted it was rather natural that the elected current government’s ideologies could influence education policymaking while three teachers and one academician shared a similar opinion. They claimed that the involvement of ideology in educational policies is inevitable and reasonable because the majority of people elect governments and then, the politicians have the power and right to enforce their

ideology in every area. One teacher asserted “It would be too naïve to expect that no ideology should be involved in educational policymaking in our country since, in a society, people’s political mentality is naturally reflected in educational systems” (T7). (“Bizim ülkede eğitim politikası yapımına ideolojilerin karıştırılmamasını beklemek çok saflık olur; çünkü bir toplumda, insanların siyasi mentalitesi doğal olarak eğitim sistemlerine yansıtılır.”). Similarly, a higher-level official having an influential decision-making status in the MNE indicated that

The word ideology has a natural negative attribution; In fact, Cemil Meriç has a famous saying: “Ideologies are straitjackets enrobed on our consciousness”. Thus, let us not call it ideology; instead of it, we can call it [just] opinion, political view, tendencies, preferences, or philosophy. Actually, this is a prerequisite. ... And these must be reflected in education policies. In fact, their reflection is a suggestion presented to society. That is, when a voter, a voting citizen votes for a party, indeed it means “I want you to operate and practice your political views, philosophy in the field” (O1).

İdeoloji kelimesinin doğal bir negatif yüklemi var; hatta Cemil Meriç’in meşhur bir vecizesi vardır: “İdeolojiler idraklerimize giydirilmiş deli gömlekleridir” der. Onun için ideoloji kelimesi demeyelim; onun yerine düşüncesi, politik görüşü, yönelimleri, tercihleri, düşünceleri, felsefesi diyebiliriz. Bu olmazsa olmaz bir şeydir zaten. ... Ve bunların eğitim politikalarına yansımaları gerekir. Bunların yansımaları aslında topluma sunulmuş da bir tekliftir. Yani bir siyasi partiye bir vatandaşımız, bir seçmen yurttaşımız oyunu verdiği zaman aslında “ben senin politik görüşlerini, felsefeni sahada opere etmeni, uygulamaya sokmanı istiyorum” demek oluyor.

Lastly, as a significant side-effect of politicized education, the participants notified that such an attitude had led to improper applications and caused corruption in the system.

b) Frequent policy changes and their results

The informants sturdily emphasized that both the policies and policy actors would change so frequently and this sort of application would impact the whole system in an unfavourable manner; this determination of theirs was conceptualized in category 2.

Category 2

Instability in the system due to frequent curricular policy changes

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Frequent policy changes (with the changing governments)	10	7	9
Change of political actors	8	5	7
Change demands of voters	6	4	5
Frequent changes in official cadres	9	6	8
Negative impact of changes on schooling processes	9	8	9

“When the minister changes, the office boy changes”

The participants indicated that educational policies would frequently change with the changing governments, even within the ruling period of the same political party. Thus, such an educational environment would always be unstable. Accordingly, some of the respondents referred particularly to curricular changes when the political decision-making actors changed. In this context, a Physics teacher said in a critical manner that “So what? The politicians will say that they want it like this, and will the curriculum be changed? Does the curriculum ever have politics (in the meaning of political ideologies)? Does the Physics course have its political ideology? I do not know, there are no political aspects of it, in my opinion” (T15). (Ne yani, siyaset böyle istiyorum diyecek, eğitimde yıllık program mı değişecek yani? Programın siyaseti mi olur? Fizik dersinin politik ideolojisi mi olur? Bilmiyorum. Siyasi bir yanı olmaz bence.) The informants also signified that, under the influence of political ideologies, the new policies would be put into practice very *fast*, in a hurry, without being considered and tested sufficiently, especially lately, as another academician who had formerly been a teacher indicated:

In the applications of the governments formed after 1980 there had been such matters though not as much as today’s; however, with a general look, since the formation of this government, with the change of each minister, the programs changed, plans changed. Actually, in the past, prior to the foundation of science schools, experimental [pilot] high schools and middle schools had been established. While the curricula were being developed, needs analyses would be conducted, it would be discussed by the experts whether the curricula needed to be changed or not, later, revisions would be made, then, by going to the field,

these changes would be piloted in piloting schools, the views of teachers, students, inspectors and other higher-ranking officials would be appreciated, they would be tried for 4-5 years, pre-tests and post-tests would be conducted; finally, the changes would be implemented if they were approved to be useful. But, nowadays, such changes are rapidly being put into practice by the government's bureaucrats without following the procedures mentioned, without getting the views of the stakeholders and without discussing them (A3).

1980 den sonra kurulan hükümetlerde bu günkü kadar çok olmasa da gene bu tür sıkıntılar oldu ama bu, şimdiki hükümetin oluşumundan itibaren genelde baktığımızda her bakan değişikliğinde mutlaka program değişti, planlar değişti. Oysa geçmişte, fen liselerinin kuruluşunda, deneme liseleri, deneme ortaokulları vardı. Eğitim programları gerçekleştirilirken ihtiyaç analizleri yapılır, programın değişip değiştirilmeyeceği konusu uzmanlarca tartışılır, sonra bununla ilgili revizyonlar yapılır, sahaya inilir, deneme okullarında bunlar denenir, uygulanır, öğretmenlerin, öğrencilerin, müfettişlerin ve diğer üst düzey yöneticilerin fikirleri alınır, en azından 4-5 sene denenir, ön testleri son testleri yapılır; eğer faydalıysa program değiştirmesi ona göre yapılırdı. Ama artık bu tür değişiklikler, hiç bu yollar izlenmeden, paydaşlardan doğru dürüst fikirler alınıp tartışılmadan hükümetin bürokratları tarafından hızlıca uygulamaya koyuluyor.

An official who personally had taken part in educational policymaking processes highlighted the importance of piloting the policies underlining that policymaking should not be in a hurry, it should be slow but fully-grown in all aspects. He also criticized that in the Turkish system, the decisions were mostly made by unprofessional politicians in a hurry:

The change in our policies or system is not made with the proposal of academicians or teachers. In many countries, those who prepare these educational programs are those who constantly do this job and follow it up. They also constantly try [them] in the field too, pilot applications etc. are made. In our system, collectively, government staff decide on their own, and government officials immediately apply; no way for pilot implementation, etc. The system of 'passing courses with credits' was executed in the same way in our time. I was also personally involved in this work. There was no sort of pilot application or so, it was directly implemented. When England started 'the course passing system', they tried it for 10-15 years. The political decree [authority] in our country said "we will neither wait nor try [pilot]; we will go into practice immediately", but that generation was devastated (O4).

Akademisyenlerin veya öğretmenlerin değişiklik teklifiyle falan olmaz bizde politika veya sistem değişikliği. Birçok ülkede bu eğitim programlarını hazırlayanlar sürekli bu işi yapanlardır ve takip edenlerdir. Sürekli sahada da denerler, pilot uygulamalar vb. yapılır. Bizde toptancı, hükümet elemanları kendilerine göre karar verir, memurlar hemen uygulamaya geçer, pilot uygulama vb. olmaz. 'Ders geçme kredili sistemi' de öyle oldu bizim zamanımızda. Ben de bizzat işin içindeydim. Hiç pilot uygulama falan olmadı,

direkt geçildi uygulamaya. İngiltere ders geçme sistemine girdiğinde 10-15 yıl denediler. Bizde siyasi karar “beklemek, denemek falan yok; hemen gireceğiz uygulamaya” dedi, ama o nesil harap oldu.

An official, who served in the Board of Education and Discipline from the mid-70s to 2009 under the command of many ministers of various political parties, and who conducted NECs as the general secretary, pointed to the issue as follows:

Once a minister [of education] changed, the new minister would distort the policies of the previous one and try to create his own; if and when the new minister would not do it, - when he did not change - the bureaucrats would do [*smiling sarcastically*]. For instance, as a good educator and a democratic person, the minister, Mr AAA did not change the former policies, but his bureaucrats did...To whom, to what would he consult, man! Once you convinced the man [*the minister*], it was alright! (O9).

Her bakan deđiřtiđinde, yeni bakan önceki bakanın yaptıđı politikaları bozup kendininkileri oluřturmaya çalıřırdı; bunu bakan yapmazsa - deđiřtirmedeđi zaman - bürokratlar yapardı (*alaycı bir şekilde gülümseyerek*). Örneđin, iyi bir eđitimci ve demokratik bir insan olan bakan Sayın Avni Akyol önceki politikaları deđiřtirmede, ama onun bürokratları deđiřtirdi. ... Kime, ne danıřacak yahu! Adamın kafasına girdin mi tamam!

In this context, as a more up-to-date comment, what the teacher said in the following lines signified that similar approaches have been adopted *today* as well:

We assert that fundamental education policies and principles should not change according to changing governments; however, we, now, have a government, you may like or not, well, I shall not make a political talk; you know, a government that has been ruling our country for 15 years, since 2002. I guess, 6 ministers have changed till 2017, if I am not wrong. 6 ministers have changed and 6 fundamental views [approaches], fundamental policies have been created. Each new-coming minister refuted the previous minister. They have been coming from the same political party, they eat from the same dish... Yes, now, how is it going to be? If they cannot constitute a common policy among themselves, I mean, if they cannot build a consensus, will there be radical changes in the educational system all the time? (T7).

Temel eđitim politikaları ve prensipleri hükümetlere göre deđiřmemeli diyoruz ama řimdi bir hükümetimiz var, beđenirsiniz beđenmezsiniz, yani siyaset yapacak da deđilim; yani, 2002’den bugüne kadar 15 yıldır ülkemizi yöneten bir hükümet. 2017’ye kadar sanırım 6 bakanımız deđiřti galiba yanılmıyorsam. 6 tane bakan deđiřti ve 6 tane temel fikir, temel politika ortaya çıkarıldı. Her gelen

bakan bir önceki bakanı çürüttü. Aynı siyasi politikanın içinden geliyorlar, aynı kaptan yemek yiyorlar... Evet şimdi nasıl olacak? Kendi içlerinde böyle bir ortak politika oluşturamıyorlarsa, yani bir konsensüste birleşemiyorlarsa, eğitim sisteminde sürekli radikal değişiklikler mi olacak böyle?

On the other hand, the informants claimed that political party voters were very influential in assigning governing entities and personnel – from the highest to the lowest posts and offices – when their favourite party set up the government. So, it was seen that the findings also drew attention to the point that frequent personnel and cadre changes in the bureaucratic offices after elections or changes in ministerial management offices stood for a serious problematic condition in educational policy processes because every time the new staff both/either stopped the ongoing policy process half way and/or brought about a new agenda according to their own political approaches. An academician indicated that “... now in Türkiye, when the minister is changed – a new minister is appointed –, if the undersecretary is changed, and if the *office boy* is changed, you cannot maintain such an educational system stably.” (A7). (“... şimdi Türkiye’de her bakan değiştiğinde – yeni bir bakan atandığında – müsteşar değişiyorsa, *çaycı* değişiyorsa, siz böyle bir eğitim sistemini tutturamazsınız”). A teacher talked about the influence of political ideologies and voters upon policies 20-30 years ago in similar aspects in a metaphoric manner:

You see, once you do not have an independent, objective, scientific and stable official education policy, it is just the same as, “when a government changes, mom-and-pop grocery in the street changes”. This has been the same for years... In the 80s and 90s, “the grocer in the street” would decide on my destiny; where I would be appointed to, what I was going to do. Because, then, the grocer was a delegate, or something, in the governing party. “Look, this teacher is bad, change her/him, the other is good, let her/him stay”, etc., that is all! This was how it worked then (T11).

İşte bağımsız, tarafsız, bilimsel ve kalıcı bir resmi eğitim politikan olmadıktan sonra aynen nasıl bir iktidar değişiyor, *mahalle bakkalı* değişiyor. Yıllardan beri böyle. ... İşte 80-90’lı yıllarda benim kaderimi mahalle bakkalı belirliyordu; nereye tayin olacağımı, ne yapacağımı. Çünkü, o zamanlar, bakkal iktidar partisinin delegeesi ya da şeyi. Vay şu hoca kötü al, değiştir, öteki öğretmen iyi, kalsın vb bitti! İşler böyle yürüyordu.

Consequently, the concepts and codes in this category as a whole were the results of the perception that frequent and fast curricular policy changes negatively impact implementation and schooling processes as a big impediment damaging the system. Concerning the theme and the whole category 2 in this part, an academician pointed out the effects of ideological approach and rapid policy changes imposed by changing governments in terms of manipulating generations:

I think there lies [some sort of] ideological thinking at the root of it. I mean, everybody is premeditating to bring up a generation according to her/his own vision through formal education. That generation follows (an education system) for three years; before being able to get the results of it, the other comes and changes it. She/he says “it will be better if we apply this”. Well, this is definitely an ideological matter. (A3)

Bunun da temelinde ben tamamen ideolojik düşüncenin olduğunu düşünüyorum. Yani, herkes formal eğitim vasıtasıyla kendi kafasına göre bir nesil yetiştirmek istiyor bence. O nesil üç sene (o sistemde eğitim) yapıyor; sonucunu alamadan öbürü geliyor, değiştiriyor. Diyor ki “bunu yaparsak daha iyi olur”. Yani bence bu tamamen ideolojik bir şeydir.

The same informant touched upon the matter labelling such attitude as a “conspiracy” addressing the global dimensions of educational politics (involving in imposition of political ideologies):

Turkish education system fell victim to a conspiracy; it fell victim to the conspiracy of the globalists in those years. In 1998-99, the undersecretary of the MNE and the head of the Council of Higher Education carried out this operation together. ... their aim was not solely to block the spread of Imam Hatip Schools [Religious Vocational Schools]; they could do it easily as well since thousands of village schools were being closed in those days. Instead of doing this, endorsing it to the military in that way was [in fact] politicizing the matter and conducting an operation over it. The blame was put on the soldiers. A certain group within the ministry did this operation together with the World Bank. The World Bank had some programs to implement globalism and they applied them. (A3)

Türk eğitimi bir komploya kurban gitti; küreselleştirmecilerin komplosuna kurban gitti o senelerde. Bunu işte 1998-99 yıllarında bu operasyonu Milli Eğitim Müsteşarı ile YÖK başkanı ikisi yaptılar.... İmam Hatiplerin önünü kesmek değildi sadece amaç; binlerce köy okulu kapanıyordu o sırada, zira, bunu da yapabilirlerdi. Bunu yapmayıp bu şekilde askerlere ciro etmeleri meseleyi siyasallaştırmak ve bunun üzerinden bir operasyon yapmaktı. Suç

askerlerin üzerine kaldı. Bakanlığın belli bir grubu bu operasyonu yaptı, Dünya Bankası ile beraber. Dünya Bankasının elinde küreselleştirmeciliği uygulamak için bazı programları vardı ve bunu uyguladılar.

c) Pro-government cadres instead of the staff deserving – issue of meritocracy

The thematic conceptions in category 3 evolved through the perceptions of the informants about the decision-making personnel and other MNE officials, the majority of whom they did not accredit due to several arguments (Category 3).

Category 3

Poorly-structured policy-making cadres and other official personnel (MNE)

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Deficiencies in staff management	9	7	8
Politicized personnel - pro-government staff	8	6	9
Lack of meritocracy	12	7	8
Nepotism	9	7	8
Partisanship over professionalism	11	8	9
A cultural and traditional phenomenon!	9	6	9

Firstly, the respondents asserted that staff management of the MNE was poorly structured. They condemned the system emphasizing that decision-makers were assigned from among only the ones who were supporting the governing political party. Nearly none of the active officials – among the participants – shared this perception as they did for the other codes in this category (only retired officials agreed with the other two groups). The same ones also expressed their belief that lack of meritocracy prevailed in staff selection for the posts other than decisionmakers as well; nepotism dominated professionalism and competency; and as a cultural and traditional phenomenon – a national political plague – partisanship and nepotism were prioritized over professionalism and meritocracy in MNE management.

d) Ideological impositions

In line with the theme concerning political approach to educational policy-making, imposition of political ideology through education policies emerged as a significant category in the study (Category 4).

Category 4

Imposing ideology through education policies (sample cases from the past)

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Influences of political ideology	13	8	9
Termination of village institutes	8	5	8
Compulsory uninterrupted 8-year-primary education system; 4+4+4 system	8	6	8
Imposition of ideology through courses/elective courses	6	4	6
Hidden curricula-infiltration of ideology	8	7	7

The majority of the participants in the teacher and academician groups ($f=21$) and all retired officials with one addition from the actively working ones ($f=9$) discerned that ideologies influence educational – and mostly curricular – decisions and policies. They referred to the termination of Village Institutes as an example of involvement of ideology in educational policies as well as the influence of the military authorities on education policies (some told about the policy which introduced the system of compulsory uninterrupted 8-year-primary education and induced the number of Imam Hatip Schools to fall in 1997). They also regarded the 12-year interrupted compulsory education system (4+4+4) as another involvement of ideology in education policy. Meanwhile, the active/working officials did not voice any common points in this regard whereas the retired ones expressed their approval. The informants stated their views not only on involvement but also imposition of ideology through courses/elective courses. Finally, it was correspondingly notified that ideologies would be infiltrated through hidden curricula.

One academician portrayed the influence of political ideologies upon the educational system and how each government changed the system to serve their ideological expectations distorting the previous one through tricky and deceiving

strategies, giving examples from the re-designations of the duration of elementary and middle school education and İmam Hatip Schools and how this attitude caused mutual hatred among respective groups:

But that program did not yield the appropriate result in the pedagogic sense as well; but they had distorted the system. Later, when ... Party came to power, they said insistently “we, ourselves, shall make an innovation; it should be our own system” and brought this system of 4+4. And that did not fit the primary education. It does not fit, indeed. Why? They had deformed it radically, in order to suit it to the 8-year system. For this reason, as a disguise (camouflage), they utilized Imam Hatip Schools, abused them as a pretence: So to speak, it was necessary to pass to 8-year primary education in order to shut down Imam Hatip Schools. Such a claim is absolutely irrelevant; that is, it should not be. They had authoritative power in their hands. They both deceived the military and the mass media. Meanwhile, they were striving to collect votes from the laicist group who would say “Hey, look, Imam Hatip Schools are being shut down, and it was as if that laicist group would be supporting the action; they expected it.

... rejections, reactions and the like, the hate speech at the base of the ... Party supporters, such reactions and irrational responses emerge from that event. The Ministry would shut down the middle part of the Imam Hatip Schools. ... The number of students going to Imam Hatip Schools would never exceed 10 % of all students; actually, it was less in the middle schools. I cannot remember exactly at present; but, concerning the school type of the 10 % of the students, they would say “this year, we converted these schools to general schools, made them ‘General Middle Schools’. You will go on your education through these schools and graduate from them”, it was this simple. But, I mean, they did not do it. The waves of that operation are still continuing. The Ministry of National Education has not recovered itself. During this government’s rule, firstly, a FETÖ (Fethullahist Terrorist Organization-The Gülen Movement) group entered the ministry; that group made a lot of destruction (A5).

Ama uygun, pedagojik olarak da uygun sonucu vermedi o program. Fakat sistemi bozmuş oldular. Ondan sonra ... Parti geldiği zaman da ... Parti “ille bize ait olsun. Biz kendimiz bir yenilik yapmış olalım” diye bu 4+4’ü getirdi. O da ilköğretime uymadı. O da uymuyor. Niye? 1997’de bunu bozdular temelinden, 8 yıllığa getirelim diye. Bunun için de, kamuflaj olarak o İmam Hatip Ortaokullarını malzeme yaptılar, bahane ettiler: İmam Hatip Ortaokullarını kapatmak için güya 8 yıllık eğitime geçmek gerekiyormuş. Böyle bir şey kesinlikle söz konusu değil. Yani olmaması lazım. Elllerinde yetkileri var. Hem askerleri aldattılar, hem basını aldattılar. Bu arada da laikçi kesimden “aaa! bak İmam Hatip Okulları kapatılıyor” diyerekten bir oy toplama şeyisine düştüler ve güya darbeyi bu laikçi kesim destekleyecek falan gibi oldu, olsun istediler.

... İtirazlar mitirazlar falan, bugünkü ... Parti tabanındaki bu nefret söylemi böyle karşı tepkiler, irrasyonel karşı tepkiler o olaydan kaynaklanıyor. İmam Hatiplerin Ortaokulları kapatılacaksa bunu bakanlık kapatırdı. 600 tane şeyde de (okulda) öğrencinin %10’ununu aşmaz hiçbir zaman İmam Hatip’e giden; ki ortaokullarda daha da azdı galiba. Şu anda, geçmiş gün hatırlayamıyorum ama, %10’luk bir öğrencinin okulunu derlerdi ki “bu sene biz bu okulları

genelleştirdik, ‘Genel Ortaokul’ yaptık. Siz böyle Genel Ortaokul olarak buradan devam edip mezun olacaksınız” bu kadar basit. Yani yapmadılar. Bu operasyonun hala dalgaları sürüyor. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı hala kendine gelmiş değil. Bu hükümette işte önce bir FETÖ’cü grup girdi bakanlığın içerisine; o grup çok tahribat yaptı.

An academician referred to the issue of imposing ideology through curricular policies by mentioning the elective courses and weekly class hours, as presented in the codes, mainly signifying that the current political ideology of government influenced the curriculum (through the number of course hours and elective course system) forced the students into the ideology by limiting their choices to the courses the ministry had already designed:

What do you do with the number of these courses in the curricula? You always change them in line with your political domination and your political views. As a result of these changes, you reduce the number of the Music Courses to one hour, Physical Education to one hour, reduce the number of the courses related to conception (thinking) like Philosophy, and with what courses do you replace them? You replace them with the courses including more dogmatic construct. Now, when we evaluate this sort of construct through a philosophical perspective, you politically situate an educational mentality depending upon perennialism and essentialism in the system. Let us think, well, the schools send a survey form to the children who are about to finish primary school, the ones passing from the 4th to 5th grade. It states “Which of the following (elective) courses would you like to choose?” Now, I have a grandchild in the 4th grade, they sent the list to me. I told them to select courses related to positive sciences, Mathematics and foreign languages. But the school said that there were no teachers to teach these courses”. Then, “what subject teachers are there?” “There are teachers who can teach ‘The Life of the Prophet’”... If you apply an educational approach at the point of deference for everything, it will be deceptive; you will miss the chance to educate a modern generation. I mean, this is the main point concerning education policies (A9).

Bu derslerin sayısını eğitim programlarında ne yapıyorsunuz? Kendi siyasal egemenliğinize göre, düşüncenize göre değiştiriyorsunuz sürekli. Bu değiştirmelerin sonucunda, Müzik dersini bir saate, Bedeni bir saate düşürüyorsunuz, düşünce dersleri olan felsefe vb. dersleri sayıca azaltıyorsunuz, peki bunların yerine neyi koyuyorsunuz? Daha çok dogmatik anlamdaki dersleri koyuyorsunuz. Şimdi, felsefi anlamda baktığımızda bu tür yapıya, daimicilik veya temel esasıcılık anlayışına dayalı, bir eğitim anlayışını politik olarak siz sistemin içine yerleştiriyorsunuz. Şöyle düşünelim; eee çocuklara, örneğin, ilkokulu bitirecekler, 4 ten 5. sınıfa geçecekler, okullar, bir hazırlık olmak üzere bir anket gönderiyor. Diyor ki, “aşağıdaki derslerden hangilerini seçmek istersiniz?” Şimdi, benim de torunum var, 4. sınıfta okuyan, göndermişler listeyi, bana gönderdiler. Ben, Fen Bilimleri ile ilgili, Matematik ve Yabancı Dil ile ilgili dersleri seçin dedim. Ama okul diyor ki, “benim okulumda bu dersleri

verecek öğretmen yok”. Peki hangi dersleri verebilecek öğretmen var? Peygamberin Hayatı dersini verecek öğretmen var... Siz her şeyi kabul noktasında bir eğitim anlayışı uygularsanız, yanılıcı olur; yenilikçi bir nesil yetiştirme şansını kaybedersiniz. Yani, eğitim politikalarındaki temel nokta bu.

e) Governmental attitude toward opposing views

Within the context of the theme “political and ideological approach in educational decision-making and policy-making”, how the governments were reacting to opposing approaches to theirs in terms of educational policymaking appeared as another focus of attention in this section (Category 5).

Category 5

Attitude of governmental decision-makers towards opposing views

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Disregarding opposing/diverse views	12	8	9
Resist, fight, contradict against/to other views	9	7	8
Conjuncture: Political biases lead to decision-making	9	8	9
Opposing is [like] enmity! (governmental outlook)	6	4	6
Lack of empathy and tolerance	11	8	8
Lack of effort for seeking consensus or reconciliation	10	7	8
Conventional approach of ignoring oppositions	9	6	8
Opposition is precious! (It conveys valuable information)	8	7	7
(When there is) no opposition, (there is) no improvement	4	3	3

The participants emphasized that opposing or diverse views were not properly considered by the authorities at all. This attitude was illustrated by several negative words/concepts such as “resist, counterattack, obstruct, fight, impede, contradict and the like. Such conjuncture was described as “political biases that lead decision-making” by most of the participants from the three groups.

Is opposing governmental decisions “enmity”?

A remarkable number of the teacher and academician informants – though not the majority – contended that governmental outlook to opposing

views was like “enmity, animosity, antagonism, hostility and so on”; they expressed their frustration and resentment as well. Nearly half of the officials ($f=6$), all retired, shared similar perceptions. Many informants attributed the *harsh* governmental attitude to the governments’ “lack of tolerance and empathy” toward other opinions. Furthermore, they criticized the governments for not spending sufficient effort to seek consensus or reconciliation with other ideas. They generalized their perception indicating that such an attitude was a cultural matter – retention of a conventional approach towards opposing views. On the other hand, some participants drew attention to two beneficial aspects of opposing views as a) opposition is precious, conveys valuable information, and b) opposition supports progress – (when there is) no opposition, (there is) no improvement.

4.1.3. Participation of stakeholders in educational decision-making and policy-making

One of the most significant themes in the related literature of educational policymaking emerged as a prominent theme in this study as well: “participation of stakeholders”. In this context, findings about the participation of teachers, academicians, and government officials are presented in this part through categories, concepts and codes that include remarkable and striking information together with general perceptions of those participants about the participation of other stakeholders than these three groups.

a) Participation of teachers

The informants accepted that teachers’ participation in educational policymaking should be studied with meticulous care since teachers are regarded as one of the fundamental groups of stakeholders – *pillars of educational policy process* – together with academicians and officials; actually, weightier than the other two groups. In this respect, their participation was examined attentively

with significantly related dimensions in this part of the study through the perceptions of the three groups (Category 1).

Category 1

Participation of teacher as the most significant stakeholder of education

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Vitality of teacher participation	15	9	12
Contribution by every teacher	12	6	10
A policy interests a teacher the most	12	7	9
Participation in person/practical involvement	10	7	7
In any sort of educational policy process (not only in curricular issues)	12	8	7
Active engagement in commissions	10	6	8
(From) down-to-top information flow from - (bottom-up approach)	9	6	7
Practitioner's vision for implementation	12	7	9
Information for formative and summative evaluation	9	7	8
Technological assistance (participation of remote teachers)	11	7	10
Perceptions like "Everybody knows education more than the teachers do!" (common ironical criticism among teachers)	9	3	5
Harms of discarding teacher participation	10	8	9
Assignment of teaching-based officials in MNE offices	9	6	7

The respondents strongly declared that teachers' participation was vital for those two phases of policymaking. The most voiced rationale for this assertion was that teachers were the only group among all stakeholders of education, who personally applied the policies face to face with the targeted receivers of the policy outcomes, namely the students. Therefore, again indicated by the same participants, every piece of information obtained from every single teacher should be considered the most valuable and functional one among many others and as precious and significant contribution to policy process. It was commonly distinguished by the informants that, since the education policy would interest and affect teachers the most, they should surely participate in its formulation. They signified that teachers were the closest witnesses of both the strengths and weaknesses, of both merits and deficiencies in the practice of the policies. One experienced teacher contributed to this perception:

We are always in the field together with the children, we spend more time with our students than with our own children at home. So, we know the problems in

practice much better than anybody else and the policymakers must always refer to our views seriously... (T12).

Biz sürekli alanda öğrencilerle birlikteyiz, öğrencilerimizle evde çocuklarımızla geçirdiğimizden daha fazla zaman geçiriyoruz. Bu sebeple, biz uygulamadaki problemleri herkesten daha iyi biliyoruz ve politika yapanlar bizim görüşlerimize ciddi biçimde başvurmalılar.

Two academicians also supported this view through the following words:

Practitioners, I mean, teachers in schools should be directly involved in the policy and program-making processes. Without engaging, how will the practitioner spread this [the policy] in the field? That is, there will be contributions from the teachers to the formation of this program; because, they are the people who personally witness the shortcomings in the field. First, they will contribute and believe, then, the other stakeholders (A2).

Uygulayıcı, yani okullardaki öğretmenler politika ve program yapımı süreci içine doğrudan girmeli. Uygulayıcı girmeden, bunu nasıl sahada yayacak? Yani öğretmenlerden bu program oluşumuna katkı olacak; onlar çünkü sahada eksikleri bizzat gören kişiler. Önce onlar katkı sağlayacak ve inanacak, ondan sonra diğer paydaşlar.

Problems arise when we mistake the subject; for instance, the subject on this campus is student, here, the subject is not the dean, here, the subject is not the rector. In fact, if they are never here, things work. Here, our subject is the student. Well, in the armed forces, for example, the subject is the soldier; if you make the commander the subject, it would be wrong. When the subject becomes the commander, there will be no such thing as a soldier's fighting power. It is essential to determine the real subject. In regard to this matter, in the issue of educational policymaking, the subject is the teacher. We have to carry out everything concerning education as teacher-centred, we must proceed in line with her/his views; otherwise, it will be faulty. Therefore, I think, both in the planning and in every subsequent phase, indeed, the people who will decide on a change are to be the teachers who are the implementers of the job (A7).

Özneyi karıştırdığımız zaman problem çıkıyor; mesela bu kampüsteki özneniz öğrenci, burada özne dekan değil, burada özne rektör değil. Hatta onlar hiç olmasa bile işler yürür. Burada özneniz öğrenci. İşte örneğin, silahlı kuvvetlerde özne asker; özneyi komutan yaparsanız yanlış olur. Özne komutan olunca, askerin savaşma gücü diye bir şey olmaz ki. Doğru özneyi seçmek gerek. Bu sorunda da, eğitim politikası yapımında da özne öğretmen. Eğitimle ilgili her şeyi öğretmen odaklı yapmak zorundayız, onun görüşlerine göre yönlennemeliyiz; yoksa yanlış olur. Dolayısıyla, hem planlarken hem daha sonraki her aşamada yani bir şeyin değişikliğine karar verecek kişilerin bu işin uygulayıcısı olan öğretmenler olduğunu düşünüyorum.

The respondents appreciated teachers' participation as "provision of practitioner's vision for implementation", valuing the information obtained from them to be used for formative and summative evaluation of the practice. They defended active engagement and involvement of teachers in policymaking commissions not only in curriculum development but also in any sort of educational policy process. Another important point remarked commonly is that teachers' participation should be in person, as practical involvement in all phases, not solely through documents of feedback, questionnaires and the like.

(From) down-to-top information flow – springing up from the "fountainhead"

A significant approach to teachers' participation was identified by a considerable number of interviewees ($f=22$); it could be regarded as a "down-to-top information flow from – the *fountainhead*, the *cradle* – the primary source" springing up from the origin of the process. (It resembled the bottom-up approach of decision-making or management mechanism rather than top-down approach; however, it was labelled, by the researcher, as *down-to-top* since the term *bottom-up* might better suit with the participation approach starting from the students at the bottom). On the other hand, in methodological sense, participants also recommended the utilization of technology like the internet for reaching remote teachers for their participation.

"Everybody knows education better than the teachers do!"

In regard to participation/involvement of unrelated (or less related) entities in education policy process, most teachers ($f=9$) drew attention to their concern in a sarcastic manner: "Everybody knows education more than the teachers do!". This ironical/sarcastic criticism was also shared by the academicians and the officials who were mostly from K-12 school-teaching backgrounds. The main aim of such an expression seemed to underline that many irrelevant actors other than teachers – including the parents – would

participate in educational policy processes more than the teachers. On the other hand, the informants seriously warned that discarding teachers' participation and their views would be very harmful since the outcomes of such attitudes would inevitably affect the practice negatively. Regarding this point, one over-forty-year-experienced teacher indicated that ignoring teachers' views would cost loss of time and energy in the application of the policy due to the problems faced in practice, which would not have occurred if teachers' views and suggestions had been appreciated in the formulation process of the policy, giving the example of 2005 curriculum development:

The decisionmakers do not appreciate our views on curriculum development; but later, when they see the shortcomings in the practice period, they begin to make many modifications in the following years. We witnessed this in the 2005 curriculum application. If they had consulted us and appreciated our suggestions on time, they would not have had to make most of those modifications since the original curriculum would have been close to perfect. In this way, the system would not have lost so many years with curricular changes. Other than time and energy, such a situation also causes many other wastes like textbooks and other educational documents (T10).

Karar vericiler bizim program geliştirme ile ilgili görüşlerimizi değerlendirmiyorlar; ama daha sonra da, uygulama esnasında aksayan yönlerini gördüklerinde, takip eden yıllarda birçok değişiklikler yapıyorlar. Buna 2005'teki program uygulamalarında şahit olduk. Eğer zamanında bize başvurup önerilerimizi değerlendirselerdi, o değişikliklerin bir çoğunu yapmak zorunda kalmayacaklardı; çünkü original müfredat mükemmelere yakın olacaktı. Bu yolla, sistem müfredat değişiklikleriyle yıllar kaybetmeyecekti. Öyle bir durum, zaman ve enerji kaybı yanında, ders kitapları ve diğer eğitim dokümanları gibi birçok başka israfı da sebep olmaktadır.

Noting this attitude would cause loss of time and energy on the side of teachers as well, a very young teacher (3-year-experienced) expressed her/his ideas as

So, though how much we talk here, I mean, let us say we talk with our friends, "it should be like this or that...", well, unless the administration, the National Education [Ministry] approves it, there is no purpose for me to do it. We tire ourselves for nothing, we tire our minds, we waste time; the occasion turns into this [scene] (T14).

Yani biz burada ne kadar konuşsak da yani biz arkadaşlarla da konuşuyoruz diyelim, "böyle olsun, şöyle olsun...", eee buna idare, Milli Eğitim tamam

demedikten sonra benim bunu yapmamın bir amacı yok ki. Boşu boşuna kendimizi yoruyoruz, kafamızı yoruyoruz, zaman harcıyoruz; olay buna dönüyor.

Related to this issue, a subject group leader teacher criticized the approach and attitude of both teachers and the officials who had regarded presenting teachers' views as futile and strange:

Then, I was both the head of my subject group and the head of the school subject groups. When I went to the district offices for meetings as a representative, I would attend equipped with the views of my friends. I would collect and prepare a report out of them; but actually, it would be regarded as very strange by the teachers and other officials in the district; that is, it would seem like “What is the use of it! Here, we gather here just along for the ride”, but I would insistently tell [those views] and, there, I would tell my own ideas as well; however, to no effect, unfortunately (T11).

O zaman hem kendi zümrem başkanımıydım hem de okulun zümre başkanımıydım. Bunu temsilen ilçeye toplantıya gittiğimizde hep arkadaşlarım fikirlerini alıp giderdim. Toparlar, bir rapor yapardım onları ki bu çok da garip karşılanırdı açıkçası ilçede, öğretmenler ve diğer görevliler tarafından; yani “ne gerek var! Biz buraya laf olsun diye toplanıyoruz” gibi olurdu ama ben yine de ısrarla söylerdim ve kendi fikirlerimi de orada ısrarla söylemişliğim vardır; ama boşuna maalesef.

A very experienced teacher depicted an educational policy or a curriculum as “a dream that cannot be fulfilled” unless it was made by teachers or by considering teachers' views:

The whole problem is this: Those who make educational programs or policies produce fantasies, primarily because they are not the people who enter a classroom, because they do not know the pain, because they have never taught in middle school, high school, and because they have never dealt with children for a couple of years successively. This is the difference between the fantasy [illusion] produced and the reality; I mean, unless you reach the teacher, none of the curricula you make will ever be valid. You will be pretending as if you make it and such things always cause trouble (T10).

Bütün sorun da şu: Eğitim programı veya politikası yapanlar en başta bunlar derse giren kişiler olmadığı için, acıyı bilmedikleri için, hayatlarında da gelip ortaokulda, lisede ders anlatmadıkları için, çocukla da birkaç sene üst üste muhatap olmadıkları için hayal üretiyorlar. Üretilen hayalle realite arasındaki fark şu; yani öğretmene siz ulaşmadıkça, yaptığınız müfredatların hiçbirisi geçerli olamaz. Yapmış gibi olursunuz ve onlar daima sıkıntı yaratır.

The importance of teachers' participation in policymaking, despite the heavy influence of the politicians with the governmental power as a hindrance to generating good policies, was signified as the real solution to educational problems; thus, proper channels, through which teachers could present their views, suggestions and demands, should be formed and always kept open:

Politicians are very active in educational policies and program development; in other words, they definitely utilize the power of governing in all ways. And this condition becomes a problem in good policy production. But despite everything, I am telling that the real solution comes and can come from the teachers; Creating channels through which teachers can present all their demands, requests, suggestions, and projects on this subject. Look, these channels do not exist. These channels must be created and kept open (A7).

Siyasetçiler eğitim politikalarında ve programların geliştirilmesinde çok etkinler; yani iktidar olmanın gücünü bir kere her türlü kullanıyorlar. Ve bu durum iyi politika üretiminde sorun oluyor. Ama her şeye rağmen gerçek çözümün yine ben öğretmenlerden geldiğini ve gelebileceğini söylüyorum; Öğretmenlerin bu konudaki bütün isteklerini, taleplerini, önerilerini, projelerini açıkça ortaya koyabilecekleri kanalların oluşturulması. Bak bu kanallar yok. Bu kanalların oluşturulması, açık tutulması gerekir.

The Minister of National Education should be a teacher

According to the respondents, in order to secure teacher participation in educational policymaking, personnel assignment policy in the MNE offices should be referred to, as well. In this context, the final point/code in this category emerged as an action-oriented implication: There should be a prerequisite for being assigned to MNE offices that all officials should have taught at schools for a considerable period, e. g. at least 5-10 years, (to be employed there) and it was believed that all staff assigned to make educational policy should come from school-teaching origin. This sort of perception was presented mostly by the teacher informants and supported by the academicians and the retired officials, like this participant:

Those who were not in the education field were appointed to the top positions in the ministry. It is a big *wound* for National Education. Now, Article 43 of the Basic Law of National Education - it should be 43, about teaching - says "teaching is a specialized profession that conducts education, training and

related management services”. It is so clear. In other words, you cannot separate education and training from [its] management. Well, you may do this in other ministries, no problem; but you cannot do it in education. This is the [special] feature of education (O3).

Bakanlıktaki üst görevlere eğitimden olmayanlar getirildi. O büyük bir *yaradır* Milli Eğitim için. Şimdi Milli Eğitim’in temel kanununun 43. Maddesi - öğretmenlikle ilgili 43 olması lazım - diyor ki: “Öğretmenlik; eğitim, öğretim ve bunlar ile ilgili yönetim hizmetlerini yürüten özel ihtisas mesleğidir” diyor. Bu kadar açık. Yani, eğitimi, eğitim öğretimi yönetimden ayıramazsınız. Yani bunu başka bakanlıklarda yaparsınız, şey değil; ama eğitimde yapamazsınız. Eğitimin özelliği bu.

That all education policy actors had to be from education-based origins, namely from the K-12 classrooms, was asserted insistently. Related to this point, more broadly, it was stated that teachers’ views should be influential in every sort of policymaking in commissions or offices, not solely in curricular issues. Then, there might be a righteous accountability stance in the wider educational ecosystem; nevertheless, it was reported that related conducts concerning this matter are not applied properly in the country. Covering these points, an academician communicated that

Teachers should be consulted not only on curricular issues, but also on all matters concerning education. For example, I know that *none* [emphasis added] of the 5 members (deputies) who made the law proposal regarding the 4+4+4 system have educational backgrounds. For instance, XXX is one of them, not from the field of education or anything, though. Actually, they can give them [proposals on education] too; but they should definitely be discussed with the educators, and when it comes to the agenda, that agenda [issue] should absolutely be reflected to the universities and views should be taken. Only then, can there be fair accountability (A3).

Sadece ders programları ile ilgili değil eğitimi ilgilendiren bütün konularda öğretmenlerden görüş alınmalı. Mesela 4+4+4 sistemi ile ilgili kanun teklifini veren 5 üyenin (milletvekili) hiç birisinin eğitim kökenli olmadığını biliyorum ben. Mesela, XXX bunlardan birisi, eğitim kökenli falan değil. Onlar da verebilir aslında; ama mutlaka eğitimcilerle tartışılmalı, gündeme geldiği zaman o gündem mutlaka üniversitelere de yansıtılmalı, görüş alınmalı. Ancak o zaman hakkaniyetli bir hesap verme olabilir.

The issue of teachers’ participation was elevated to the highest professional status by the informants either through direct discourse or implications: “Even the Minister of National Education should be a teacher”:

'Teacher' should be the *kahuna*, the *big gun*; the Minister of National Education should be a teacher, and the undersecretary should be a teacher as well. Teachers should be managed by the teacher. When someone who is ignorant [of the real profession] becomes a manager, they always ask some others and try to find their way in a groping manner, right? Well, such a person who has nothing to do with [teaching]; Has she/he ever attended a class and taught [in the classroom]? If she/he is the Minister of National Education, or, well, the undersecretary, and when all the administrators downward are people who are not related to [school] education, the shortcomings abound. [Similarly], in a faculty of medicine, everyone [the managing cadre] should be a doctor, they should be experts in the profession, and everyone in the MNE should be teacher (T5).

En çok *sözü geçen* 'öğretmen' olmalı; Milli Eğitim Bakanı da öğretmen olmalı, müsteşar da öğretmen olmalı. Öğretmenleri öğretmen idare etmeli. Hiç bilmeyen birisi yönetici olunca, hep birilerine soruyor, el yordamıyla bulmaya çalışıyor, değil mi? Yani alakası olmayan bir adam; hiç derse girip ders yapmış mı, bu kişi? Milli Eğitim Bakanıysa ya da ne bileyim müsteşar, aşağıya doğru tüm idarecileri eğitimle ilgisi olmayan kişiler olunca arızalar çok olur. Tıp fakültesindeyse herkes doktor olmalı, bu işi bilen olmalı, MEB da herkes öğretmen olmalı.

If our Minister of National Education is an educator with years of experience in education, studied, and taught many students and ... it would be wonderful if she/he were such a person! Because we need people who understand our conditions. Well, I am perplexed very much by the minister's statements; she/he degrades us so much, she/he ignores us... I remember that there was a lot of reaction from the teacher community to one of the previous ministers as well; [she/he caused] such unfavourable things like separating the spouses [both husband and wife are teachers], she/he did not try to reunite them [as a family] though. They do not know, they do not understand our problems because they are not ones from us [teachers] (T14).

Milli Eğitim Bakanımız eğitimci olursa, yıllarını eğitime vermiş, okumuş, elinden öğrenciler geçmiş ve... Öyle biri olursa çok çok iyi olur! Çünkü halimizden anlayan birilerine ihtiyacımız var bizim. ... Yani ben bakanın açıklamalarına çok şaşıyorum yani. Bizi o kadar gömüyor ki, yok sayıyor ki... Önceki bakanlardan birine de öğretmen camiasından çok tepkinin olduğunu biliyorum yani; bayağı bu eşleri ayırmalar falan öyle bir şeyler, çok birleştirme yoluna gitmemişti. Bizim içimizden gelmediği için bilmiyorlar, anlamıyorlar sorunlarımızı.

In the study, it was repeatedly emphasized that for better decision-making, the officials/committee members should be selected among the teachers who taught in schools for a remarkable time. Actually, it was reminded that this was a rule; however, it was not obeyed. In this context, referring to BDE applications, an official indicated that

[In order to be assigned as an official in the offices of the Board of Education and Discipline] you should have a strong educational background, you must be knowledgeable, you should have experience in classroom teaching, for instance, you must have a minimum period of teaching experience, e. g. 5-10 years. When you appoint personnel from outside [the field] to the BED, you cannot discuss the issues and improvement of the teaching profession with the people who have not taught, it cannot be done, we have witnessed this for years... There were occasions in which several personnel who did not teach were appointed there... Yes, against the regulations. They appointed teachers who had only 6-month experience, they considered the positions she/he worked as school-teaching, such things happened, actually (O9).

[Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu'nda görev almak için] eğitimde alt yapın güçlü olacak, bileceksin, sınıftan geleceksin, mesela, en az şu kadar öğretmenlik yapmış olma şartı var orada, 5-10 yıl mesela. Dışarıdan TTK'ya personel atadığımız zaman, öğretmenlik yapmamış adamlar siz öğretmenliğin problemlerini, gelişmesini tartışamazsınız, tartışılmıyor da, bunu senelerce gördük.... Öğretmenlik yapmayanların da atandığı oldu. ... Evet, yönetmeliğe aykırı. Sadece 6 ay öğretmenlik yapmış da atadılar, çalıştığı yerleri öğretmenlik yapmış gibi saydılar, oldu yani, bunlar da oldu.

Detailing that laws and regulations were violated since many officials who had not been teachers were assigned and worked in high-ranking offices in MNE, a retired official and Philosophy Teacher, who worked for the MNE for more than 40 years remarked:

When making any kind of work concerning education or education policies, mostly managers, senior managers are consulted. Those top-level executives in our ministry, – it's especially useful for you to know this – most of them are not teachers. A man who was not a teacher came and became a branch manager or assistant manager. He finished open education [faculty], he worked as a civil servant. He finishes two year-open education while working, becomes the branch assistant manager or manager. Then, well, he completes four-year open education, or he does not, and becomes the head of the department, becomes the general manager. Most of our general managers were like that. A man, who was a graduate of open education or the Academy of Economics and Commerce, became a general manager in the Ministry of National Education. As such, without a teacher/teaching background, every decision they make becomes unhealthy.

... Such is the current regulation. The laws are taken as the basis. Open the Article 2 of Law No. 2451. This is the law regarding which ministry personnel are to be appointed to offices of ministries. Nobody asks anything after the joint decision. The minister determines it, the Prime Minister proposes, and after the President approves ... you will be appointed immediately. Nobody cares if it is against regulations and sub-regulations. ... How should it be? Above all, our ministry, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Interior are special ministries; especially the Ministry of National Education. A person who does not have a teaching background and does not work as a teacher should not ever

assume a managerial post at any level in the institutions and organizations affiliated to the Ministry of National Education (O7).

Eğitimle ilgili her türlü çalışma veya eğitim politikaları yapılırken daha çok yöneticilere danışılıyor, üst kademe yöneticilerine. O üst kademe yöneticileri bizim bakanlığımızda – özellikle bunu bilmenizde yarar var – çoğu öğretmen kökenli değil bunların. Öğretmenlik yapmadan adam gelmiş, şube müdürü ya da yardımcısı olmuş. Açık öğretimi bitirmiş, memur olarak çalışmış. Çalışırken açık öğretimi bitiriyor, 2 yıllık. Şube müdür yardımcısı oluyor, şube müdürü oluyor. Sonra işte 4 yıllık açık öğretimi tamamlıyor, tamamlamıyor daire başkanı oluyor, genel müdür oluyor. Bizim genel müdürlerimizin çoğu öyleydi yani. Açık öğretim mezunu ya da İktisadi Ticari Eğitimler Akademisini bitirmiş, adam Milli Eğitim Bakanlığında genel müdür olmuş. Böyle olunca, öğretmen kökenli olmayınca, verdikleri her karar sağlıklı oluyor.

... . Şu andaki mevzuat öyle. Kanunlar esas alınıyor. Açın 2451 sayılı kanununun 2. maddesini. Bakanlıklara hangi bakanlık personelinin atanmasına ilişkin kanundur bu. Müşterek karar olduktan sonra hiç kimse bir şey sormuyor. Bakan belirliyor, Başbakan teklif ediyor. Cumhurbaşkanı olur dedikten sonra ... tak diye atanıyorsunuz. Yönetmelik ve alt düzenlemeler buna engelmış, değilmiş ona kimsenin baktığı yok. ... Nasıl olması lazım? Bir defa bizim bakanlığımız Adalet Bakanlığı ve İçişleri Bakanlığı, özel bakanlıklar. Özellikle Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, öğretmen kökenli olmayan, öğretmenlik yapmayan bir insanın Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı kurum ve kuruluşların hangi kademesinde olursa olsun yöneticilik görevi almaması lazım.

In a parallel manner, another retired official who had also worked as a higher officer in BED portrayed the malpractice in the application of a curricular study concerning teacher participation due to involvement of partisanship:

It was a requirement that seven out of ten participants in the commissions, which we formed to develop educational programs, had to be teachers, from the field. ... We selected them through interviews in the first year. I also joined the interviews. We also included academician professors, and anybody who are the most successful ones in their schools, who wrote books, who wrote prominent articles, who showed efforts regardless of their political views and other things, we included all ... Well, later, something happened altogether; only participants with certain views were selected, ideological views, all of the participants, all together, including the managers (O4).

Eğitim programları yapımı için oluşturduğumuz komisyonlarda her on kişiden, yedisinin öğretmen olma zorunluluğu vardı, sahadan. ... Bunları seçerken ilk sene mülakat ile seçtik. Ben kendim de gittim mülakatlara. Akademisyen hocalardan da aldık ve kendi bölgesinde okulunda en başarılı en önde giden, kitap yazan öne çıkmış makalesi olan, işte çabası olan kim varsa hiçbir şeye bakmadan, siyasi görüşüne vb. hepsini aldık... Sonraları yaa tamamen şey oldu; sadece belli görüşteki insanlar alındı, ideolojik görüş, hepsi hepsi, yöneticiler dahil.

On the other hand, data revealed significant points mostly from the interviews of the officials, which might constitute counter-arguments to those teachers who put forth their limited participation in decision-making as an excuse for poor policy-making environment. Especially the officials asserted that the MNE always promoted as much teacher participation as possible in such processes, and there were many ways to communicate their ideas to the ministry unless the teachers acted in a lazy or unilateral manner:

I witness that teachers are asked for their views a lot of times; for the last program change, 1200 teachers were summoned to BDE, 1200 persons are not a small group. I see that active teachers, participant teachers are really appreciated; well, if they are not lazy people staying inactively in their profession, or if they do not have unilateral perspective, like believing “I suggest, but it is not done”, they meet with the ministry at some point.

... I visit my children’s schools, I tell the teachers “apply to the panel system”, furthermore, I ask “how many teachers applied? There are TÜBİTAK projects for Science teachers, what do you do, how many teachers apply?”. They say, “Oh, Mrs/Mr. XXX we did not know about it before you told”. I say to them “investigate, look, enter the Ministry’s web site, visit our BDE sites, check the announcement part once a week”. Like this, if everybody pokes the people around them, and these are teachers in Ankara, think of them. Still there are teachers who do not know how to check e-mails in the centre of Ankara; ‘actually, I am not so into [technology]’, or so. Man, be into it a little, be a little, be! When they become contractual teachers, then they will be. This may seem terrifying for some people, but there are so many of them (O6).

Ben öğretmenlere çok fikir sorulduğunu görüyorum; en son program değişikliği için 1200 öğretmen TTK’ya çağırılmıştı, 1200 kişi az değil. Görüyorum ki aktif öğretmenler, katılımcı öğretmenler gerçekten değerlendiriliyor; hani işinde ilerlemeyen uyuşukvari ya da “ben diyorum da, yapılmıyor” gibi tek pencereden bakan kişiler değilse bir noktada bakanlıkla yolları buluşuyor.

... çocuklarımın okullarına gidiyorum ben, öğretmenlere “panel sistemine başvurun” diyorum, hatta “kaç kişi başvurdu?” diyorum, “TÜBİTAK projeleri var Fen Bilgisi öğretmenleri için, ne yapıyorsunuz, kaç kişi başvuruyor?” “Ahh XXX Hanım/Bey” diyorlar, “siz demeden şunu bilmiyorduk”. “Ya araştır” diyorum “bak, bakanlığın sayfasına gir, bizim Talim Terbiye’nin sayfasına gir, duyurular kısmına haftada bir bakın”. Mesela herkes çevresini böyle dürterse, ki bunlar Ankara’nın öğretmenleri düşünün yani. Daha mail bakmayı bilmeyen öğretmen var Ankara’nın göbeğinde; “ama ben çok ilintili değilim” falan. ... Ya ol biraz, ol biraz, oool! Sözleşmeli öğretmen olunca o zaman olur. Bu birtakım insanlar için ürkütücü gelebilir ama miktar o kadar çok ki.

Similarly, with regard to participation in policymaking an official pointed out that teachers were more *reluctant* and *passive* compared with the academicians, and they should be encouraged more, as one official highlighted:

Particularly, it is necessary to encourage teachers' participation and encourage them in regard to their participation. Teachers are unavoidably hesitant and unwilling to participate. That is, for example, when they meet with academicians, they can behave more passively than academicians. There could be several reasons for this. One of these reasons: the person might have moved away from the field. The second one: he may not trust himself. I don't know, of course, that's something personal; he may not be sociable, or he may say "I do my own job, I lecture, I do not get involved in these things". In other words, academicians can be more dominant in this issue, but I think it is useful to embolden teachers' participation a little more, despite everything (O14).

Özellikle öğretmenlerin katılımcılığını ve onları katılımcılık konusunda cesaretlendirmek lazım. Öğretmenlerde katılım konusunda ister istemez bir çekingenlik oluyor ve isteksizlik oluyor. Yani şöyle, mesela akademisyenle karşılaştıkları zaman akademisyene göre daha pasif davranabiliyorlar. Bunun birkaç sebebi olabilir. Bu sebeplerden birisi: adam alandan uzaklaşmıştır. İkincisi: kendisine güvenemeyebilir. Bilemiyorum tabi kişisel bir şey. Girişken değildir, ya da "ben kendi işimi yaparım, ders veririm, bu işlere karışmam" diyebiliyor. Yani, akademisyenler bu konuda daha baskın olabiliyorlar, ama bence mesela öğretmenlerin katılımcılığını biraz daha teşvik etmekte fayda var, her şeye rağmen.

b) Participation of academicians

Academicians' participation in the policy processes was highlighted in detail by the informants since it would provide significant contributions (Category 2).

Category 2

Academicians' participation as a significant contribution to the process

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Value of academicians' participation	14	9	13
In all educational policy processes (not only in curricular issues)	8	8	10
Theoretical fields of education	13	9	11
Contribution (of theory) to practice	10	8	9
Scientific approach, scientific filtering of educational decisions	10	8	8
Researching foreign systems and improvements in the world	9	7	10
Vital need for close and continuous interaction between theoreticians and practitioners – academicians and teachers	11	8	9
Provision of teacher education, in-service training	12	8	10
Requirement of being in the arena (schools) more often	13	8	10
Collaboration with other stakeholders	11	8	9

It is broadly accepted by the informants in the study that academicians were needed as participants in not only curricular studies but all educational policy processes; they were educational researchers who were to support educational decision-making with scientific approach; they were theory makers in both universal and local sense contributing theoretical support to practice; they would supply research data from foreign systems and worldwide improvements and they would provide teacher education and training in both faculties and by in-service training. It was also widely admitted that there must be close and continuous interaction between theoreticians and practitioners – academicians and teachers; by way of this interaction, there should be reconciliation among their views evaluating all pros and cons on each side.

Academicians' active presence at schools

One crux was permanently distinguished by almost all the teachers ($n=13$) and the officials ($f=12$), and all-but-one academician ($f=8$) that academicians must appear in the school environment more often being more active in order to observe policy implementations as well as supervise practitioners. As one of the most outstanding commonalities among the three groups of participants, it was noticed in the study that this point must be handled seriously and in detail: It was advocated that academicians had to be in close relation with the school teachers all the time, they should frequently visit schools, and cooperate with the practitioners. In this way, it was perceived that, they could have the opportunity to combine what was theoretical with what was practical, simply, the theory and the practice. Then, they could support teachers with their academic vision and also, they could collect actual data for their own teaching profession in their faculties since they were educating teacher candidates coming from those (primary and secondary) schools. It was also strongly stated that when teachers and academicians did not collaborate, neither functional policies could be formulated nor could they be implemented properly. The requirement for academicians' collaboration with other stakeholders (than teachers) was also stressed.

Judging academicians' attitude (in regard to participation)

Academicians were criticized severely by the participants, including themselves, for their lack of effort, capacity and motivation and some other deficiencies in terms of academic quality and their contribution to education policymaking (Category 3).

Category 3

Criticism on academicians' participation in the processes

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
No proper contribution by academicians	9	6	10
Avoiding participation	9	3	10
Academic cowardice	6	4	7
Far from realities of school education	12	5	10
Low professional and ethical quality	5	3	6
No proper education in education faculties	10	4	9
No proper selection of students for education faculties	9	6	9
Arrogance towards other stakeholders	8	3	9
Doing only sedentary job	10	2	10
Devotion only to their own academic issues and career	8	4	9
Exclusion of academics by the MNE	8	5	9
Disparities between academicians and teachers – theoreticians and practitioners	9	7	10

Academic cowardice

In regard to academicians' participation in educational policymaking, a number of serious criticisms were obtained from the participants' perceptions. While some of them could be considered quite constructive, some others were rather harsh. First of all, two thirds of the academicians in the study ($f=6$) together with the great majority of the teachers ($f=9$) and the officials ($f=10$) pointed out that academicians did not contribute to the educational system appropriately in Türkiye. Most of the teachers and the officials ($f=19$) accused academicians themselves of avoiding participation in decision-making processes; only 3 academicians shared similar views in this context. Actually, as a general perception, it was revealed that stakeholders of education often shunned

participation in terms of presenting views, suggestions or feedback since they believed the authoritative officials would not consider them at all and such attempts would be loss of time and energy for them. Academicians possessed similar mindsets as well. In this context, an academician who worked for the MNE as a higher-level official as well, sarcastically indicated that

I generally stay away from offering views and suggestions, I am not reporting. Well, if they do not ask, I do not say anything; the reason for this is, well, because I find these studies dysfunctional. So, if only I find them functional! I do volunteer work every week for the teachers in public schools. That is, I dedicate some of my time. I would also bother myself to express my opinions on such studies, I would criticize the current [situations], I would write reports; but these have no response in decision mechanisms or scientific processes in real life. Therefore, for instance, if a thousand people have expressed their opinions so far, not even one of them has had the chance to function. There is only the purpose of diminishing social pressure by pretending to be consulting the society and to be asking for others' views so as to fulfil a formality, for a very long time; it is not a new issue. There is no tradition, no habit, or no attitude like really consulting the society, asking the experts, and thus, shaping the current arrangements according to the data obtained. That is why it seems very dysfunctional to me to mediate such a thing. So, I have never tried ... Waste of time. Because I know more or less the mechanism inside, I don't deal with this kind of things (A6).

Ben genelde fikir ve öneri sunmadan uzak duruyorum, bildirmiyorum. Hani sormazlarsa söylemiyorum. Bunun nedeni de şey; yapılan bu çalışmalarını işlevsiz bulduğum için. Yani işlevsiz bulsam! Ben her hafta gönüllü çalışma yapıyorum devlet okullarında, öğretmenlere yönelik. Yani vaktimin bir kısmını vakfediyorum. Hiç üşenmeden bu tür çalışmalara görüş de bildiririm, mevcutları eleştiririm, rapor yazarım; ama, bunların karar mekanizmalarında ya da bilimsel süreçlerde karşılığı yok gerçek yaşamda. Bu sebeple, şu ana kadar diyelim ki bin kişi görüş bildirdiyse bunlardan bir tanesi bile işlevselliği kazanmamış. Sadece toplumsal baskıyı azaltmak ya da sivil topluma da soruldu, başkalarından da görüş alındığı [imajı oluşturmak] için de bir yasak savma şeyi [amacı] var, çok uzun yıllardır; bu yeni bir şey değil. Gerçekten topluma sormak, gerçekten bilirkişilere sormak ve bunun sonucunda da gelen veriye göre mevcut düzenlemeyi şekillendirmek diye bir gelenek, bir alışkanlık ya da bir tavır yok. O sebeple böyle bir şeye aracı olmak bana çok işlevsiz geliyor. Hiç denemedim yani... Boşa vakit kaybı. Çünkü içerideki mekanizmayı az çok tanıdığım için bu tür işlerle uğraşmıyorum.

However, concerning this category, a considerable number of teachers and officials ($f=16$) attributed academicians' avoidance of participation to *cowardice*, underlining that they would refrain from declaring their views because of their fear of politics (concerning imposition of political ideologies)

and politicians, and implying that they should be more courageous towards politics of education; more than half of the academicians ($f=5$) also agreed on this apprehension. Connected to this context, by the other two groups ($f=17$), academicians were reproached for devoting themselves solely to their own academic issues, and 4 academicians approved this opinion as well. Accordingly, another accusation was raised by most informants in those two groups ($f=20$): academicians did only sedentary jobs, sitting at the desk and wrote about education without giving any concrete support to the field; this claim was also admitted by two academicians while the other seven did make no comment on this issue. According to most teachers and officials, such an attitude, in a sense, proved academicians' indifference to the real arena of education practice – the schools; this criticism was concurred by the majority of the academicians too. Therefore, it was exposed by the informants that academicians were so immersed in the theoretical world of education, they were almost isolated (themselves) from the practical world of it. They were not aware of what was actually happening in schools and what the teachers were doing in classrooms and the like, thus, most of their efforts were almost futile as one teacher said "... Academicians cannot be productive by sitting at their desk in the faculty department buildings; they should get up and go to schools; but unfortunately, they do not." (T8). ("... Akademisyenler bölümlerinin binasındaki masalarında oturarak verimli olamazlar; çıkıp okullara gitmelidirler; ancak gitmiyorlar"). In this context one teacher indicated that

We have academician professors, but, as I observe, [I wonder] which level [school] can they go down and evaluate at that level? I'm telling you again: The field is very significant. It is very important to live in the field and breathe that air. The things created by someone who is not in that field are just memorization, in my opinion; whatever he memorized.

... Let us suppose this: Now there is a teacher who graduated from Turkish Language and Literature in Educational Sciences and he was not appointed to any place as a teacher. He immediately started his master's degree and reached an academic level. Now, for me, this person cannot go beyond the books he read. He seriously falls short of a field experience (T4).

Akademisyen hocalarımız var ama yani baktığım zaman onlar ne kadar seviyeye [okul] inip o seviyede değerlendirme yapabilirler? Yine söylüyorum: Saha çok

önemli. Sahada yaşamak ve o havayı solumak çok önemli. O sahada yer almayan birinin oluşturduğu şeyler bana göre ezber; ezberi ne olursa olsun.

... Şimdi şöyle düşünelim: Şimdi Eğitim Bilimleri, Türk Dili ve Edebiyatından mezun olan bir öğretmen var ve hiç öğretmen olarak bir yere ataması yapılmamış... Hemen yüksek lisansına başlamış ve akademik bir boyuta gelmiş. Şimdi bu bana göre okuduğu kitaplardan öteye gidemez. Bir saha tecrübesi ciddi anlamda eksik kalır.

Related to this issue, a teacher criticized the academicians at the faculty of education stressing

I think academicians are far from the real school area. Well, I realized this when I came to school. They drew such a beautiful and perfect picture [of schools where we would teach] for us at the faculty, that is, we were brought up as incredible idealists considering the schools they told about. Well, when I entered the classroom, I realized that things were not like that. So, I thought that our lecturers at the faculty were far from the field, indeed (T8).

Bence akademisyenler gerçek okul alanından uzak. Yani ben bunu okula geldiğimde fark ettim. Bize fakültede o kadar güzel, mükemmel bir tablo çizmişlerdi ki, yani inanılmaz idealist olarak yetişiyoruz anlattıkları okulları düşününce. Eee sınıfa girdiğimde işlerin öyle olmadığını fark ettim. Yani demek ki fakültedeki hocalarımız alandan uzaktalar diye düşündüm yani.

Although the academicians were criticized for not visiting (K-12) schools frequently enough to maintain their relations and cooperative studies with teachers, it is a fact that subject teaching departments are (should be) regularly in schools for both supervising intern student teachers and other requirements as part of the formal practicum. This point was also underlined by several informants in the study; therefore, it might not be proper to generalize such a perception.

On the other hand, the informants also generalized the demerits or flaws of the academicians to their “low professional and ethical quality” in a rather harsh and offensive manner. Closely related to this criticism, academicians’ arrogant behaviour towards other stakeholders of education was disapproved by more than half of the participants ($f=17$) including three academicians. Concerning their profession at the faculties, two main judgments were made by the majority of each group altogether: a) no proper education was provided for preservice teachers in education, and b) no proper process of selection and

acceptance of students to the faculties as future teachers could be managed by them. This issue was believed not directly related to academicians' professional initiatives; however, they were blamed for not attempting seriously to take part in the regulation of policies concerning the matter. The common perception that the MNE excluded academics from the educational decision-making might have been an excuse for the previous accusation. Presented by great majority ($f=26$), one of the most significant criticisms was the final one: there were strong disparities between academicians and teachers – as theoreticians and practitioners – that hindered collaboration initiatives, which were vital. Though participants definitely expected that academicians ought to participate in policy making processes substantially, academicians seemed to prefer staying remote, and not involving in the processes. A teacher highlighted this sort of preference emphasizing also the importance of academicians' consulting teachers and students in policymaking:

Things do not work without academicians; however, academicians should also acknowledge that teachers and students are at the core of this work concerning educational programs. Programs should be made by listening to a large number of teachers and students. Annual plans and programs should be prepared by talking and discussing with teachers and students, not by academicians alone. Examples in the world should be examined. However, academicians generally prefer to stay away and not to participate in policy-making processes (T4).

Akademisyenler olmadan olmaz; ama akademisyenler de bilmeli ki bu işin temelinde öğretmenler ve öğrenciler var öğretim programları için. Çok sayıda öğretmen ve öğrenciyi dinleyerek programlar yapılmalı. Tek başına akademisyenler değil de öğretmenler ve öğrencilerle birlikte konuşarak tartışarak yıllık plan ve programlar yapılmalı. Dünyadaki örnekler incelenmeli. Ancak, akademisyenler genelde uzak durmayı ve politika yapımı süreçlerine katılmamayı tercih ediyorlar.

As another remarkable quote in this context, an academician, in a confessing manner, clarified that because of academicians' ignorance of school environment and their improper attitudes, their participation in policymaking, especially concerning curriculum development/studies, was not as fruitful as it should have been:

Our universities, or rather academicians, can have this sort of a problem: It is quite ordinary to be a research assistant as a student without working in the field, to be an assistant professor, to be an associate professor, to be a professor without going and teaching at a school. But this is wrong. For instance, if you are going to instruct Turkish at a secondary school, if you are going to make a program for them, you need to do some basic things here. Those faculty members should go and teach at those schools for certain years, at least in their first years, even if it is one day in a week, so that they can see the field. In other words, the program made by an academician, who does not know the field, surely remains theoretical; It will be incongruent with the practice. He cannot conduct needs analysis exactly, either. ... Now, I will give you an example from myself: I have taught Turkish to foreigners, Turkic people, bilinguals, for many years. Now, the needs analysis I will do will not be the same as the needs analysis, nor the curriculum, done by a person, who has never seen a foreigner learning Turkish, who has never seen a bilingual person, and who has not taught him. Neither will the solution suggestions be the same. Thus, there is nothing as wrong as having someone make program just by considering his attribute, his title I mean, you must also attend the practice of the thing whose theory you produced (A2).

Bizim üniversitelerin yani akademisyenlerin şöyle bir sıkıntısı olabiliyor: Alanda çalışmadan öğrenci iken asistan olmak, asistanken de gidip bir okulda ders vermeden yine yardımcı doçent olmak, doçent olmak, profesör olmak gayet sıradan bir şey. Ama bu yanlış bir şey. Yani siz ortaokula eğer Türkçe öğretecekseniz, onlara program yaparsanız, burada temel bazı şeyler yapmak lazım. O öğretim üyeleri haftanın bir günü de olsa gidip belli yıllar, en azından ilk yıllarında, gidip o okullarda ders vermeli ki alanı görsün. Yani alanı tanımayan öğretim üyesinin yapacağı program da tabii ki teorik kalır; Uygulamadan kopuk olur. İhtiyaç analizi de tam olarak yapamaz. ... Şimdi ben kendimden örnek veriyorum: işte yıllarca yabancılara, Türk soylulara, iki dillilere Türkçe öğretmiş biriyim. Şimdi benim yapacağım ihtiyaç analizi ile hiç hayatında Türkçe öğrenen bir yabancı görmemiş, iki dilli birini görmemiş, ona ders vermemiş bir insanın yapacağı ne ihtiyaç analizi aynı olur, ne müfredat programı aynı olur. Ne de çözüm önerileri aynı olur. Yani sadece sıfatına, titrine bakarak program yaptırılması kadar yanlış bir şey yok.... Yani siz teorisini ürettiğiniz bir şeyin pratiğinde de bulunmalısınız.

Another striking angle of the issue was also reflected: Since academicians at the faculties of education did not know the schools well, accordingly they could not teach the prospective teachers at the faculty the real atmosphere at schools. A teacher who had been working as a school administrator for 10 years signified this in the following lines:

Actually, when our teachers come here, to the school, when they are first appointed, I always talk to them, “how is it to be a teacher?” and the like. “Sir”, she/he says, “it's not what I have ever imagined. Here, I cannot apply anything they taught us at the university”. Why? They bring us problems like “The

classes are overcrowded. The student is unwilling. We don't have the necessary materials and equipment". They don't know the real school environment though; they have not been taught (T13).

Zaten öğretmenlerimiz buraya, okula geldiğinde, ilk atandıklarında, ben onlar ile konuşuyorum sürekli, “nasıl öğretmenlik?” falan diye. “Hocam, hiç hayal ettiğim gibi değil diyor. “Üniversitedeki bize öğrettikleri hiçi bir şeyi burada uygulayamıyorum”. Niye? “Sınıflar kalabalık. Öğrenci isteksiz. Gerekli malzeme ekipmanımız yok” gibi sorunları bize getiriyorlar. Zaten gerçek okul ortamını bilmiyorlar; öğretilmemiş.

c) Participation of officials

As one of the three pillars of educational policy-making in Türkiye, government officials' participation in the processes occupied a significant place in the study. A general view that emerged from the informants' perceptions was that the environment of the officials in the processes was rather unfavorable and their wanted attitude was quite improper (Category 4).

Category 4

Government officials' participation; their improper attitude in an unfavourable environment

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Under heavy influence of the politicians	9	8	8
Nepotistic, political and ideological approaches	8	7	8
Unknown, obscure, opaque decision-making manners	10	7	7
Being aware of the problems but not struggling to solve	7	5	6
Trying to keep their positions and offices	8	6	8
Exerting domination over teachers and academicians	10	5	8
Undemocratic approaches to issues	11	4	6
Ignoring opposing views	10	8	9
Intolerant to criticism while in the MNE offices	7	3	7
Too slow performance	11	8	9
There are good officials doing good things as well, but not enough	7	5	9

When moved into detail through codes, first of all, it was believed by teachers and academicians that officials were extremely close to the ruling authority and under the heavy influence of the politicians, and a nepotistic and ideological atmosphere always prevailed in the environment; this view and similar ones were also agreed by the majority of the officials. One point to

emphasize concerning this category is that the perceptions of the officials mostly comprised those of the retired ones ($f=8$) and occasionally one or two of the active/working ones. Meanwhile, during the interviews it was often noticed that the actively working officials did not feel very comfortable especially conversing about the matters in regard to governmental applications while the retired officials seemed to feel quite comfortable. The participants depicted the officials' manners in regard to policymaking as "often unknown, obscure, ambiguous, not transparent in decision-making processes". The officials were observed as they did not attempt to solve educational problems by trying to find solutions in the correct manners though they were clearly aware of them mostly because they had the anxiety of losing their positions if they had to oppose the politicians. Their approaches to issues were regarded as undemocratic since they tried to exert domination over the two groups, namely teachers and academicians. Officials were also criticized for not appreciating and/or simply ignoring opposing views though they could learn a lot from them to utilize in decision-making. On the contrary, more than half of the officials strongly asserted that every idea even the opposing ideas were appreciated by authorities: "Opposing ideas are more valuable than the supporting ones since they show other viewpoints which we, the officials, do not see." (O14). "Karşıt fikirler destekleyici fikirlere daha değerli, çünkü biz görevlilerin görmediği başka bakış açıları gösteriyor".

An ironic perception about a double-dealing attitude attributed to the officials was expressed by the teachers ($f=7$) and academicians ($f=3$) as well as most of the officials ($f=7$) themselves: the officials would not let people criticize MNE applications while they were employed there; but they themselves would harshly condemn those *dear* applications after they left MNE offices! On the other hand, officials' too slow performance in the offices (also believed to be a traditionally common *state-office sickness* in all governmental institutions in Türkiye other than MNE) was insulted by the informants. As a consequential remark, it was clarified that there were good officials doing good things in a proper manner as well, but hardly any!

Government officials should...

The participants proclaimed their recommendations concerning government officials' participation in educational policymaking. The gist of them were collected in the following category. It is noteworthy to remind that several officials in the study also shared similar views as the others regarding some codes even though those recommendations included criticism of their own attitudes (Category 5).

Category 5

Recommendations about government officials' participation: They should ...

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
conduct cooperation with other stakeholders properly	12	8	10
not participate in decision-making	7	5	6
only conduct bureaucratic procedures; do paper work	11	6	6
just provide cooperative environment and logistics	11	7	7

On the whole, it was expected that officials should conduct sustainable cooperation with other stakeholders properly in the policymaking processes but, it was felt, unfortunately, that they did not perform in that manner – as detected by 5 official informants; two active officials (O9, O13) together with three retired ones (O2, O5, O6). Quite a number of participants ($f=17$) openly declared that officials should not participate in decision-making because their attitude and environment were neither democratic, nor meritocratic to make sound decisions. Almost the same participants insisted that officials' participation should be utilized in only conducting bureaucratic procedures; doing paper work. Similarly, they suggested that officials should just provide cooperative environment and logistics for the decision-making teachers and academicians.

Official mise-en-scène in the Ministry of National Education

The formal atmosphere of the MNE concerning participation in policy-making appeared as a significant topic during the interviews but was only

distinguished with its inimical traits and conditions rather than sympathetic ones (Category 6).

Category 6

Official environment in the MNE in regard to participation in policy-making

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Not democratic, not meritocratic	10	8	7
Unfair personnel selection and assignment	11	7	7
Very strong top-down hierarchy	13	8	10
Other stakeholders are aware of the wrongdoings	8	6	7
BDE as a tool of the governments	9	7	8

By and large, it can be said that the official environment in the MNE concerning participation in policy-making was censured remarkably by the respondents. It was widely admitted that the environment was neither democratic nor meritocratic. One of the rationales for developing such an opinion was expressed as witnessing applications of unfair selection and assignment of *pro-government* teachers and academic participants as decisionmakers in MNE. It was felt that decision-makers were not selected on the basis of meritocracy but of ideology, and most of them were the bureaucrats and officials, assigned and led by the governments. It was highlighted that, especially concerning curriculum, academicians and teachers were selected to work in commissions among the ones whose political ideologies were close to that/those of the governments' and these people were (ab)used to legitimize the governmental decisions as if they had been taken by large participation of stakeholders. The rigid top-down hierarchy in decision-making mechanisms was perceived as another unfavourable condition there; this view was possessed by a great majority of the officials as well ($f=10$). In other words, that strong hierarchical top-down bureaucratic approach in decision-making, by which high-rank ministerial officials would unquestioningly apply the orders of the politicians, was clearly criticized. Concerning the MNE environment, there came an exceptional notice by the informants that other stakeholders (academicians and teachers) were aware of the antidemocratic and antimeritocratic situations but

would keep silent/indifferent and seem to submit/consent to them. BDE was accepted as a powerful decisionmaker but it was believed to be the arbitrary, high-handed, “tyrannical” tool of the governments’ decision-making mechanisms. In this context, politicization of educational decision-making in BDE was exemplified in the following lines by an academician, who attended NECs more than once:

We attended the 19th NE Council with 6 professors from ... University. They [arrangements] had branches, in whatever areas. I worked in the Teacher Training group. In that group, there were students, teachers and people working in MNE or elsewhere. They put forward their views on teacher training. Then we prepared a report. We submitted this report to the BED as a preliminary report. All of these preliminary reports are evaluated by the BED, they are included in the agenda of the council and discussed in the council. *This is what should happen. So, what is it that happens?* What happens is: Well, unfortunately, the political system sets the agenda by determining the style and type of agenda they want, as a result of politicization of the unions and the dominance of the unionists on the education system in the context of politics [ideologies]. And therefore, in a BED [meeting] gathered with that agenda, a scientific environment and scientific work, which we have mentioned, does not emerge. Or, let me say, the preliminary commission reports are to be discussed and approved there, the final authorization is with the minister; if the minister says “it is okay, endorse it”, it will be put into effect. Nevertheless, even the commission reports are not on the agenda; Well, then, what you see there is that irrelevant topics are being talked about! (A9)

19. ME şûrasına biz ... Üniversitesinden 6 hoca katıldık. Seksiyonları vardır onların [düzenlemelerin], hangi alanlardaysa. Ben Öğretmen Yetiştirme grubunda çalıştım. O grupta öğrenci, öğretmen MEB’de veya başka yerlerde çalışan insanlar vardı. Bunlar öğretmen yetiştirme konusunda kendi görüşlerini ortaya koydular. Sonra bir rapor hazırladık. Biz bu raporu TTK’na ön rapor olarak sunduk. Bu ön raporların hepsi TTK’nca değerlendirilir, şûra gündemine bu şekilde alınır ve şûrada bunlar tartışılır. *Olması gereken bu. Peki olan ne?* Olan şu: Eee, maalesef siyasal sistem, sendikaların da siyasallaşması ve siyasal anlamda sendikacılık yapanların sendikaların eğitim sisteminde egemen olması sonucunda, kendi istedikleri tarzda, türde bir gündem belirlemek suretiyle gündemi oluşturuyor. Ve dolayısıyla o gündemle toplanan bir TTK’da sözünü ettiğimiz şekilde bir bilimsel ortam, bilimsel çalışma meydana gelmiyor. Ya da, şöyle söyleyim, ön komisyon raporları oradan görüşülüp tartışılacak, onaylanacak, en son yetki bakanda; bakan “onaylayın, tamam” derse devreye girecek. Fakat komisyon raporları bile gündeme gelmiyor. Yani orada bir bakıyorsunuz hiç ilgisi olmayan konular konuşuluyor!

Some quotes seemed to uncover that ideological, undemocratic and tyrannical bureaucratic attitude of MNE generated the great problem of

meritocracy within the governmental offices. A highly experienced teacher criticized this political habit of involving ideology, which, in time, led to an attitude conflicting with the principle of meritocracy as

Officials who are the closest to the government at the time occupy the educational decision-making and policymaking positions, not the ones who really deserve those posts. This is reality. Thus, political power overcomes professional power, which consequently causes the production of low-quality education policies.

... selection of board members to work on policy processes must be fair and meritocratic as well; but we have never witnessed such an exercise at any time in Türkiye.” (T11).

O zaman hükümete en yakın olan memurlar eğitimle ilgili kararların alındığı ve eğitim politikalarının yapıldığı makam ve mevkileri işgal ediyorlar, o görevleri gerçekten hak edenler değil. Böyle olunca, politik güç profesyonel gücü yenmiş oluyor ve sonucunda düşük kalitede eğitim politikası üretilmesine sebep oluyor. ... politika süreçlerinde çalışacak kurul üyelerinin seçimi de adil ve hakkaniyetli olmalı; fakat biz böyle bir uygulamayı Türkiye’de hiçbir dönemde asla görmedik.

No meritocracy at all; but just an “old boy network”

Another teacher (T9) mentioned a colleague, who had been assigned to the Board of Education and Discipline from a school, just in the first year of his appointment to that school as a teacher. He was *awarded* that post since he had close personal connections with high level officials up there, although, obviously, he had not had sufficient experience and competence to work there. In this context, for that kind of appointments based on personal relationships, an academician introduced a customary metaphor: “No meritocracy at all but just *old boy network*” (A8). (“Liyakatla hiç ilgisi yok; sadece *ahbap-çavuş ilişkisi*”). Again, related to this topic, quoting from a conversation with another outstanding colleague, an academician stated

The professor said this: If I become an authority one day, I will include all colleges affiliated to National Education under the governance of universities because National Education is really a political place, universities are not at all. Of course, [the Ministry of] National Education has its politics/policies, so does the Minister of National Education. He has two hats: one is a political hat, and the other is the hat of a National Education [Ministry] bureaucrat. If those who

are assigned there possess their positions according to the principles of license and merit, it will not be a problem; however, unfortunately there is nothing of the sort! Of course, the minister will continue to work by preferring those who support him more, and this will be favourable for him. But, instead of preferring the deserving ones, they prefer the ones who are more loyal to them in terms of ideology and nepotism (A4).

Hoca şunu demişti; ben bir gün yetkili olursam Milli Eğitim'e bağlı bütün yüksek okulları üniversite kapsamına alırım çünkü Milli Eğitim gerçekten politik bir yer, üniversiteler pek değil. Tabii ki Milli Eğitim'in politikaları olacak, Milli Eğitim Bakanı'nın da politikaları olacak. İki şapkası var adamın: birisi siyasi, diğeri Milli Eğitim'in bürokrati şapkası. Oraya gelenler ehliyet ve liyakat ilkelerine göre gelse sorun olmayacak; ama maalesef öyle değil olay! Bakan da tabii ki kendisine taraf olanları daha çok tercih ederek çalışmasını sürdürecektir, işine öyle gelecek. Ama layık olanları tercih etmek yerine torpilli ve ideolojik olarak kendilerine daha bağlı olanları tercih ediyorlar.

An academician told two anecdotes related to the issue of meritocracy in the BED,

There was a friend named XXX, he said, "I am the head of a department in BED". So, "what's your specialty?" I asked. "I am a German Teacher," he said. "Well, did you have any education, undergraduate or graduate education, etc. on curriculum development?" I asked. He said "no." Here, this person is the head of the department responsible for program development, in the Board of Education and Discipline.

Recently, 4-5 years ago, I visited a person there again with fellow friends; He is a friend of ours, a graduate of the Faculty of Theology, he is the Head of the Program Development Department. I asked him. He was Mr. ..., this friend, one of those I also knew in the past, his field is theology. "What is your connection with program development? Some changes are happening, how do you evaluate these changes? As the head of department, you have to see and control some things" I said. He said, "experts are doing those things, I'm not directly involved" (A9).

XXX adında bir arkadaş vardı, "Talim Terbiye'de görevli bir daire başkanımı" dedi. Peki "sizin alanınız ne?" dedim, "Almanca öğretmeniyim" dedi. "Peki, siz program geliştirme konusunda, lisans, yüksek lisans eğitimi vb aldınız mı?" diye sordum. "Hayır" dedi. İşte bu kişi program geliştirmelerden sorumlu daire başkanı Talim Terbiye Kurulunda.

Son zamanlarda, yani, bundan 4-5 sene evvel tanıdık arkadaşlarla yine oraya birini ziyarete gittim; İlahiyat Fakültesi mezunu bir arkadaşımız, Program Geliştirme Daire Başkanı. Ona sordum, ... Bey idi bu arkadaşımız, benim de geçmişte tanıdıklarımın birisi, alanı ilahiyat. "Senin program geliştirme ile ilişkin ne? Bazı değişiklikler oluyor, bu değişiklikleri nasıl değerlendiriyorsun? Senin daire başkanı olarak görmen, denetlemen lazım bazı şeyleri", dedim. "Onları" dedi, "uzman arkadaşlar yapıyor, ben doğrudan ilgilenmiyorum".

He went on

It is important to obtain that position by being *someone's [favourite]man*, so to speak, without considering merit. I mentioned the former Minister of National Education, xxx, who later, himself, became the Minister of National Education. He made a request from the Minister of National Education when xxx [political party] was in power. He says, for BED, that “it is an autonomous institution, I cannot interfere with what they say, it is a scientific institution. They bring me what this scientific institution has revealed, and I approve”. And he responds “If I become the Minister of National Education one day, my first job will be to abolish the autonomy of the Board of Education and Discipline” and he does it [when he becomes the minister]. You can find this [information] in anecdotes in books. This phenomenon, unfortunately, has not been based on meritocracy since the time of xxx . Two things have happened in the BED in terms of policies: either the BED has been a place of exile; for example, you are an undersecretary, you have been dismissed from your post, then, you are appointed as a member or consultant in the BED. This is a punishment, in a sense, you become dysfunctional, you sit there and receive your salary. Or you are assigned there for a reward, because when you look at their regulations, there are trips abroad, per diem allowances, prestigious places in the protocol, etc., which are extremely important. You send the person you like there, then you promote her/him there. It's easier to transfer anywhere from there. You can also degrade someone who is in a higher position by taking him down there (A9).

Liyakate yer vermeksizin deyim yerindeyse *birinin adamı* olmak suretiyle oraya gelme konusu önemli. Eski Milli Eğitim Bakanı'ndan bahsettim, sonradan kendisi de Milli Eğitim Bakanı olan ...'nin, ... nin iktidarda olduğu dönemde Milli Eğitim Bakanından bir ricası olur. Milli Eğitim Bakanı der ki Talim Terbiye için, “Orası özel kuruluştur, ben onların dediklerine karışamam, orası bilimsel bir kuruluştur. Bilimsel kuruluşun ortaya koyduğunu bana getirirler, ben onaylarım”. O da der ki, “ben bir gün Milli Eğitim Bakanı olursam ilk işim Talim Terbiye Kurulu'nun bu özerkliğini kaldırmaktır” ve kaldırır. Bunu kitaplardaki anekdotlarda bulabilirsiniz. ...'den beri gelen bu olgu, maalesef liyakate dayanmamıştır. İki şey olmuştur TTK'da politikalar bakımından baktığımızda: ya sürgün yeri olmuştur TTK; mesela müsteşarsınızdır, görevden alınmışsınızdır, TTK'da üye veya müşavir olarak görevlendirilirsiniz. Bu bir tecziyedir bir anlamda, işlevsiz olursunuz, orada oturup maaşınızı alırsınız. Ya da taltif için görevlendirilirsiniz, çünkü yönetmeliklerine baktığımız zaman onların yurtdışı gezileri, harcırahları, protokoldeki yerleri vs. son derece önemlidir. İstedığınız adamı oraya gönderirsiniz, oradan yükseltirsiniz. Oradan her yere geçmek daha kolaydır. Daha yüksekte olan birini de oraya indirebilirsiniz.

With a more holistic viewpoint, an academician commented on the issue of meritocracy concerning MNE, also referring to the *tactical flattery* of the subordinate:

There is a great meritocracy problem. After that, these people cannot see education in a systematic wholeness. Therefore, they are not aware what their decisions, even if they are small, spoil or affect. They do it just for the sake of appearances. For example, they said, “we will reduce the number of high school types”. It *came to a pretty pass* that the main institution General High School has now been abolished. You removed the General High School. If only one parent takes it to court, the court will overturn it.

... And ministers are also political; they can't even understand why they got that position. A minister who makes decisions without being able to comprehend the education system. So, and what happens if the staff below him are so incompetent? They first try to grasp the mood of a new minister or an undersecretary; what does he like? Projects based on the things he likes come in front of him. Then, he thinks that he is doing a good job, indeed (A5).

Büyük bir liyakat sorunu var. Ondan sonra bu insanlar eğitimi sistem bütünlüğü içinde göremiyorlar. Dolayısıyla almakta oldukları ufak da olsa kararların nereleri bozduğunun, nereleri etkilediğinin farkında değiller. Dostlar alışverişte görsün şeklinde yapıyorlar. Mesela işte “lise tür sayısını azaltacağız” dediler. O hale geldi ki temel kurum olan Genel Lise kaldırılmış oldu şimdi. Genel Liseyi kaldırdınız. Bir tek veli mahkeme açsa mahkeme bozacak bunu.

...Ve bakanlar da siyasi; oraya niye geldiğini dahi anlayamıyor. Eğitim sistemini kavrayamadan kararlar veren bir bakan. Eee altındaki kadro da bu kadar liyakatsiz olursa ne oluyor? Bunlar, önce bir gelen bakanın, müsteşarın falan nabzına bakıyorlar; bu nelerden hoşlanıyor? Onun o hoşlandığı şeyler üzerinden önüne projeler geliyor. O da zannediyor ki ben iş yapıyorum.

An experienced official who served in the BED confessed that meritocracy and formality of regulations had hardly ever been taken into account in the selection of the MNE bureaucrats, especially in recent applications, saying

The BED regulation includes the duties of the members and the rules for how they are selected. ... However, unfortunately, throughout the history of Turkish National Education, this hasn't been paid much attention. ... There is not much care for meritocracy. There was not so much mobility [in the personnel] in the past when governments changed; in recent years there is more, that is, they dismiss one [official] and bring the other. In the past, those who served the longest time used to be the members of BED, but not anymore (O9).

TTK yönetmeliğinde üyelerin görevleri ve nasıl seçilecekleri var. ... Ancak, maalesef Türk Milli Eğitimi tarihinde buna o kadar da fazla dikkat edilmiyor, ... Liyakate fazla dikkat edilmiyor. Hükümetler değişince eskiden hareketler çok değişti; son yıllarda daha fazla oluyor, yani, birini görevden alıyor diğerini getiriyorlar. Eskiden en uzun süre görev yapanlar TTK üyeleri idi, artık değil.

An academician who served as the dean of a faculty of education pointed out what happened when meritocracy was ignored in MNE procedures:

Let us assume that a commission on education is established, a meeting will be held, and I am a faculty member invited to that meeting. If I am not invited according to merit, if I am invited because I know them, then, the ones in such a situation, in order to seem sympathetic to them, will respond positively to any attitude by saying “alright sir/madam, why not?”, “of course, we will settle it”, “we will do it, we will arrange it”, etc. They will not be able to say “No, you are proposing it, but this is not something that can be realized; let us not do it like this” with a real academic level of consciousness. Because they came there [to those positions] as they were appreciated through *old boy network* or relations of *pulling strings*, not according to meritocracy, they respond to them by seeming sympathetic and handling the job by doing whatever they desire, in line with their wish for being together in higher duties or in other meetings. Therefore, I think the problems cannot be fixed (A8).

Diyelim ki, eğitim ile ilgili bir komisyon kuruluyor, toplantı yapılacak ve ben de o toplantıya, komisyona davet edilmiş bir öğretim üyesiyim. Eğer ben liyakaten davet edilmediysem, onları tanıdığım için davet edildiysem, benim bu durumumda olanlar, onlara daha şirin görünmek için onların istediği her şeye “Olur efendim, niye olmasın?”, “Tabii ki biz hallederiz”, “Biz yaparız, biz uyumlandırırız” diyeceklerdir. Gerçek akademik bilinç düzeyi ile “hayır, siz bunu teklif ediyorsunuz ama bu çok da olacak bir şey değil; Biz bunu böyle yapmayalım” diyemeyeceklerdir. Çünkü onlar oraya liyakaten değil *ahbap çavuş ilişkisi* ya da *hatır gönül ilişkisi* ile takdir edildikleri için geldiklerinden onlara daha şirin görünüp, onların dilediklerini yapıp bu işi kotarma ve daha üst görevler ya da başka toplantılarda beraber olma dileği ile cevap veriyorlardır. O yüzden sorunların düzeltilemediğini düşünüyorum.

Paralyzing the system

Another academician warned about the serious issue of “lack of meritocracy” in educational governmental offices, which aggravated the fatal impacts of involvement of ideology:

Now, if you assign a man graduated from the Faculty of Theology to the top of Education and Discipline, his focus will always be on theological activities. If the ones in decision-making positions excessively inject their own political views into education policies, the education system will be paralyzed. Now, is it not what these men do? There was the influence of ideology during the rule of previous governments as well, but it was not this much (A9).

Şimdi ilahiyat fakültesi mezunu bir adamı siz programcı olarak talim terbiyenin başına getirirseniz, onun gözü hep ilahiyat eylemlerindedir. Karar makamındakiler kendi siyasal düşüncesini aşırı şekilde eğitim politikasının içine enjekte ederse, eğitim felç olur. Şimdi bu yapılanlar böyle değil mi? Bundan önceki hükümetlerde de ideolojinin etkisi oluyordu ama bu kadar değildi.

The sick man and the doctor are the same body!

Portraying the environment of the MNE with a sarcastic metaphoric description, an academician who had worked previously as a high-level official at MNE pointed out that: “One of the problems Türkiye has been facing with is that the operator (doctor) and the patient is the same person; that is, the ministry itself is sick but decides for itself” (A6). (Türkiye’nin yaşadığı problemlerden bir tanesi de hasta ile operatörün (doktorun) aynı kişi olması. Yani bakanlık kendisi hasta ama kendi karar veriyor).

Once the perceptions about the participation of those three groups of stakeholders were obtained, the interviewees were asked about how the degree/extent of their participation should be in order to secure a proper policymaking process.

d) Degree of participation is not significant; quality of participation is!

The respondents expressed their perceptions of stakeholders’ participation level definitely preconditioning “quality of participation” over and before any other criteria (Category 7).

Category 7

Degree/percentage of participation (of teachers, academicians and officials)

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Vitality of democratic/fair participation	12	8	10
Participation of each is indispensable	11	8	9
Percentage is not significant; quality of participation is!	8	5	6
Difficult to determine/to give a percentage	8	6	6
(Whatever the percentage is,) reconciliation is needed	9	7	7
Consensus among the groups	10	8	9
Convincing each other	8	5	6
Weight on teachers’ participation	14	8	11
Recommended degrees of participation - 3 flexible groups:	12	8	12
70 % teachers, 20 % academicians and 10 % officials	(6)	(4)	(6)
60 % teachers, 30 % academicians and 10 % officials	(5)	(3)	(2)
50 % teachers, 30 % academicians and 20 % officials	(1)	(1)	(4)

When asked how the degree/percentage/proportion of participation of these three groups should be in policy-making process, more than half of the interviewees stated that determining such a number would be rather difficult ($f=20$); however, most of them ($f=32$) recommended a certain percentage. The majority ($f=16$) suggested the percentages of stakeholder participations as: *70 % teachers, 20 % academicians and 10 % officials* while 10 of them proposed it should be *60 % teachers, 30 % academicians and 10 % officials*, and 6 of them prescribed as *50 % teachers, 30 % academicians and 20 % officials*.

Upon insistence by the researcher to think up proportions for participation for these groups, before the percentages given above, the informants highlighted the requirement of weight of teachers' participation: teachers should constitute majority in decision-making since they were the final implementers; accordingly, the same ones strongly recommended that teachers as practitioners should be more active and dominant in policymaking, especially concerning curriculum and instruction.

A teacher signified teachers' participation in education policymaking through a metaphor from a national (mass) transportation vehicle in Türkiye called "dolmuş":

If a percentage for member participation in educational policy making is to be given, there must be a minimum of 50 % participation from the teachers. Actually, the more you raise this, the more beneficial it shall be ... Because the teacher is the practitioner of this job, she/he should be involved more; It is not that I am a teacher too, thus, I want the percentage of people representing me to be more. But, unfortunately, *teachers are the least represented* there. Teachers' opinions are the least considered ones. In fact, the ones who face with the problems are the teachers. So, imagine you are producing a car or a minibus. You say to the minibus driver that "You serve by carrying passengers with this [vehicle]", but you do not get his opinion in any way. Well, "for how many people should this vehicle's capacity be? How should the seats be? Should the inside be wide? Should the ceiling be high? Or, should the shock absorbers be rather flexible?", or, "what are the things that the driver and the passengers usually complain about? What kind of service do they expect?". You do not get any of his views. Then, you say "well, why could you not serve well? Why are the passengers not satisfied?" You move to the point of calling the driver to account for [this]. But, if you take his opinion, if you do a work that will minimize the problems of the passengers, the passengers will be glad too. The person who uses it (the driver) also uses it comfortably. He also enjoys what he does (T6).

Eđitim Politikası yapımına katılım için, yani yüzde vermek gerekirse asgari %50 öğretmen olması gerekiyor asgari. Yani ne kadar bunu yükseltirseniz o kadar faydalı olur.... Çünkü, öğretmen bu işin uygulayıcısı olduğundan daha çok dahil olmalı; yoksa ben öğretmen olduğum için aman benim oradaki beni temsil eden insanların yüzdesi fazla olsun babından değil bu. *Ama maalesef en az temsil edilen öğretmen* oluyor. En az görüşü dikkate alınan öğretmen oluyor. Oysaki sıkıntıyla karşılaşan öğretmen. Yani düşünün siz bir otomobil yapıyorsunuz ya da bir minibüs yapıyorsunuz. Diyorsunuz ki dolmuşçuya “Sen bununla yolcu taşıyacaksın” ama onun hiçbir şekilde görüşünü almıyorsunuz. Ya “bu kaç kişilik olsun dolmuş? Koltukları nasıl olsun? İçi geniş mi olsun? Tavanı yüksek mi olsun? Yani amortisörleri daha esnek mi olsun?” Yani “şoför ve yolcu neden şikayet ediyor? Nasıl bir hizmet bekliyor?” Hiçbir görüşünü almıyorsunuz. Ee sonra diyorsunuz ki “ee niye sen iyi hizmet veremedin? Yolcular niye memnun değil?” Hesap sorma noktasına geçiyorsunuz, şoföre. Oysaki, onun görüşünü alırsan, yolcuların sorunlarını asgariye düşürecek tarzda bir çalışma yaparsan yolcu da memnun olur. Onu kullanan (şoför) vatandaş da rahat bir şekilde kullanır. Yaptığı işten de keyif alır.

The informants *incessantly*, on every relevant occasion, stressed that democratic participation was vital and the participations of the three groups were all indispensable, resembling their participatory combination to a *trivet*; for a proper function, none should be excluded, otherwise, the tool would not stand regularly and fall. It was exceptionally concluded that “the percentage is not significant at all; but the quality of participation is!”. Related to the concept of quality, the respondents emphasized the need for reconciliation among the stakeholders; they prioritized the sides’ efforts to convince each other during the process, and in that way, they believed that the stakeholders in those three groups could settle the issues of participation proportions in a democratic manner. In close connection with these conceptual approaches, “consensus” among the groups was discriminated by the participants as a quality instrument that could be utilized to eliminate the question of degree of participation fairly.

e) Who else (is) to participate?

As for the category emerged through informants’ opinions about the participation of other stakeholders (apart from teachers, academicians and government officials), students, parents and NGOs were specified as other actors for representative roles (Category 8).

Category 8

Participation of other stakeholders in decision-making: Students, parents, NGOs

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Multiplicity of participation	12	8	9
Pluralistic perspectives	11	8	9
Views of every stakeholder group	12	8	10
Value of opposing views	7	6	6
Opportunity for possible variations and modifications	9	8	7
No imposition of the dominant culture	7	6	5
Students' participation (as valuable as teachers'!)	9	7	8

The multiplicity of participation in educational decision-making with a pluralistic perspective was promoted by the informants with a huge ratio of commonality ($f=29$) prescribing that views of every stakeholder group should be appreciated in policy processes. The benefit of considering opposing views, which would lead to improvement by stressing certain shortcomings or forgotten/neglected points, was underlined. In that sense, it was notified that the information obtained in this way, might prompt possible variations and modifications as a valuable opportunity. In a similar vein, the participants put stress on the need for avoidance of imposing the dominant culture on the minority through policies: the majority is not always right!

Students' participation is as valuable as teachers'!

A rather *surprising credence* was contemplated by a remarkable majority ($f=24$) that 'students' participation in educational policymaking was as valuable as teachers'!

f) Issues of participation

Participation of stakeholders in educational decision-making and policymaking could be regarded as the most crucial theme in the study; accordingly, the most revelatory category under this theme arose as the issues of

participation, the gist of which surfaced as the lack of proper interaction among participants as an unending matter both in the past and today (Category 9).

Category 9

Issues of participation: lack of proper interaction among participants (conjuncture-today and the past)

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Vitality of multi-level collaboration	14	9	13
Lack of coordination among teachers, academicians and officials	12	7	9
Lack of dialogue, no view-exchange, no consultancy	8	6	8
Lack of common ideals for education	8	6	6
Poor interaction between education faculties and schools (theory and practice)	13	7	10
Mutual accusations and conflicts among stakeholders	8	4	7
Neglecting teachers' views	13	7	9
Lack of teacher quality	6	8	10
MNE's responsibility for the lack of interaction	9	8	9
Effects of inflexible top-down/central decision-making	12	8	8
MNE's disregarding academic research	8	8	8
Attitude of MNE: It works in seclusion; a "closed box"	11	7	6
MNE does what it should do!	2	0	8

All informants from all groups in the research but two, ($n=36$) unquestionably agreed on the vitality of multi-level cooperation, collaboration and coordination among the three integral stakeholders of education in policymaking, namely teachers, academicians and government officials. An academician emphasized the requirement of proper interaction between teachers and academicians in terms of exchanging ideas and experience, stating:

There are lots of things that academicians can learn from teachers and teachers can learn lots of things from the academicians. Teachers do not know and see enough about the theoretical part of education in practice; and academicians are far from the practical field, and do not know about the practice and conditions of the teachers... Academicians and teachers should understand each other well" (A7).

Öğretmenin akademisyenden, akademisyenin de öğretmenden öğreneceği birçok şey var. Öğretmen uygulamanın içinde teorik olanları yeteri kadar bilmiyor, görmüyor; akademisyen de pratik alandan uzak, uygulamayı ve öğretmenlerin durumlarını bilmiyor ...Akademisyenler ve öğretmenler birbirlerini iyi anlamalı.

However, the respondents felt that such interaction did not ever exist in a positive and fruitful manner. The concern was delved into by the participants and several matters were exposed: There was almost no [*genteel and lofty*] dialogue, no view-exchange, no consultancy in a proper manner among these three groups; they did share almost no common ideals for education; and there was rather a poor interaction between education faculties and schools – theory and practice. The participants expressed their respective regrets about mutual accusations and conflicts among the groups; one of such accusations contained serious insult to the teachers because, it was claimed, mostly by the academicians ($f=8$) and the officials ($f=10$) and even by several teachers ($f=6$), that teachers were not qualified enough to cooperate properly. As also handled within the context of other themes, “that teachers’ views would always be ignored by decision-makers” was declared as another serious issue of participation as well.

In an overall manner, as deduced from the analyses in this part, the common recurrent perception was revealed that there was not an appropriate cooperation – *even interaction* – among these groups concerning educational policymaking. An academician criticized this sort of attitude of the institutions through a specific but *rife* example:

Meetings were held, we took commission decisions. None of them was ever taken into consideration. See! the Council of Higher Education does not let us participate in the educational workshops, we do not let high schools participate in ours, most probably the MNE does not allow the high schools to participate in their studies either. Well, there is such lack of interaction (A1).

Toplantılar yapıldı, kurul kararları aldık. Hiç dikkate alınmadı. Bakın YÖK eğitimle ilgili çalışmalarında bizi almıyor, biz liseleri almıyoruz, liseleri büyük bir ihtimalle Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı da almıyor. Yani böyle bir iletişimsizlik var.

Another academician underlined the issue of lack of cooperation, even lack of *dialogue* and communication condemning the governmental attitude:

We can tell when we are asked. We discuss on various platforms; in symposia, in congresses, but do not go further... There is no authoritative office to listen to us, anyway. You cannot even go get an appointment. In other words, the state office that you can go to and tell that “I have such a problem...” will not listen to you, at all. Indeed, there is no such place [office]! (A8).

Sorulduğu zaman söyleyebiliyoruz. Çeşitli platformlarda tartışıyoruz; Sempozyumlarda, kongrelerde, ama daha ilerisine gitme... Bizi dinleyecek bir makam yok zaten. Gidip randevu bile alamıyorsunuz. Yani, “böyle bir sorunum var...” diye gidip anlatacağınız bir devlet makamı sizi dinlemez ki zaten, yok yani!

Exemplifying through curriculum development studies, another academician presented an experience she/he had personally had, underlying the lack of right interaction among stakeholders. She/he emphasized that teachers and academicians were invited to work in commissions after decisions had already been made. She/he also criticized the procedures of workshop commissions in terms of poor time management and the desultory attitude of the officials, which aggravated the poor interaction:

I will tell you my observations concerning these. Let us say, teachers from different cities are invited as the 2005 program for Turkish is being made. For example, they are also asked for their ideas; but there is a program development team for that. They are preparing the program, and there must be discussions about each part in the meetings in which there are experts from the Board of Education and Discipline. However, the programs made are very comprehensive and spared discussion time spared is very limited. ... This is not possible, not enough. Then, the reason why discussions about them are not very healthy is that, well, the program is written, it has already been written, then it is discussed. After that, they might also say the implementation has already begun. In other words, they have started to write the course book in accordance with the curricula... I am telling this as I myself personally experienced it. So, let's understand our shortcomings. I say this because I experienced this. For example, when I was at ... University, one day, I received a phone call from the commission I was in. I left the class. They said that they were calling from BED: "Sir, we have your name here. Why have you not showed up? There is a program development meeting. It has started today". "Where is my name registered?" I asked. They called me in the evening. But they said, "Be sure to come tomorrow." ... Alright. The next day, I cancelled my classes and went to the meeting. They said “we will decide on that issue in those 20 minutes. Here, we will decide about the following issue in half an hour. It will be discussed”. Then, of course, there were those who made the program. When the teachers asked questions and the programmers could not answer, they would turn to ask us. So, when we attempted to tell the truth, some discussions arose. Those from BED, interfered and said "this is not a place for discussion". I said, "Excuse me, why have I come here if we cannot discuss?" So, I quitted the meeting, and then I left. More interestingly, a person, whom I learned afterwards that he was from BED, said "Sir, let them discuss; actually, the course book has already been being written, in accordance with the program". Here, these are our main issues (A2).

Bunlarla ilgili, gözlemlerimi ben size aktarayım. Diyelim ki Türkçeye ilgili 2005 programı yapılırken değişik illerden öğretmenler çağırılıyor. Mesela, onlara da fikir soruluyor; ama bunun için bir program oluşturma ekibi var. Onlar programı hazırlıyorlar ve Talim Terbiye Kurulu'ndan da uzmanların yer aldığı toplantılarda her bölümle ilgili tartışmalar olması gerekir. Fakat yapılan programlar çok geniş kapsamlı ve tartışılacak süre çok az. ... Bu mümkün değil, yeterli değil. Sonra bunlarla ilgili tartışmalar çok sağlıklı yapılmamasının sebebi, yaa zaten program yazılıyor, halihazırda yazılmış, sonra tartışılıyor. Ondan sonra da, bir yandan da uygulama başladı denebiliyor. Yani programa uygun kitap yazılmaya başlanıyor. ... Bu başıma geldiği için söylüyorum. Onun için benim de içinde bulunduğum komisyonda, mesela ... Üniversitesindeyken bir telefon geldi bir gün. Dersten çıktım. Dediler ki, işte “Talim Terbiyeden arıyoruz. Hocam sizin burada adınız var. Niye gelmiyorsunuz? Program toplantısı var. Bugün başladı” dediler. Nerede adım var? Akşam arıyorlar beni. “Yarın mutlaka gelin”. ... Tamam. Bir gün sonra ben derslerimi iptal ettim, gittim ve toplantıya girdim. Dediler ki işte “bu 20 dakikada şu konu hakkında karar vereceğiz. yarım saatte öbürü hakkında karar vereceğiz. Tartışılacak”. Sonra, orada tabii programı yapanlar da vardı. Öğretmenler soru sorduğunda programcılar cevap veremediğinde dönüp bize soruyorlardı. Biz de doğrusunu söylemeye kalkınca bazı tartışmalar çıkıyor mesela. Oradan Talim Terbiyeden bize karıştılar dediler ki “burası tartışma yeri değil”. “Özür dilerim ben buraya niye geldim, tartışmayacaksak?” dedim. Bıraktım çıktım yani, sonra. Daha ilginç tarafı: Oradan yine Talim Terbiyeden biri olduğunu sonradan öğrendiğim biri: “Hocam tartışınlar, zaten kitap yazılıyor” demez mi “programa uygun”. İşte temel sıkıntımız bunlar.

Again, in regard to lack of proper interaction, an official criticized the unbecoming attitudes of the academicians in the education commissions:

Academicians *grasp the rod*; they are generally dominant! I have also been in many commissions. We were struggling with the professors. Everyone is trying to establish their own system; XXX's [a university] own arrangement, another university's own arrangement. So, a proper number of educators are needed to achieve a happy medium, but qualified educators. ... A teacher who *knows the ropes* indicates “there is a mistake here”, “I will have troubles while applying this”. If the academician cannot answer, he agrees. It does not mean much that the academician knows the theory very well. ... The teacher who knows well will defend [himself] even if an *American professor* were there; Can he say anything! (O9).

Akademisyenler *değneği ele alıyor*, dominant oluyor genellikle! Ben de çok komisyonlarda bulundum. Profesörlerle mücadele ediyorduk. Herkes kendi sistemini yerleştirmeye çalışıyor, XXX [a university] kendi düzenini, bir başka üniversite kendi düzenini. O yüzden orta yolu bulmak için uygun sayıda eğitimci gerekir, kaliteli eğitimci ama. ... İş bilen öğretmen “burada hata olur” diyor, “ben bunu uygularken sorun yaşarım” diyor. Akademisyen de cevap veremezse katılıyor. Akademisyenin çok iyi teori bilmesi çok fazla bir şey ifade etmiyor. ... Bilen öğretmen savunacak, isterse *Amerikalı profesör* gelsin, bir şey diyebilir mi!

The issue of inefficient relations between MNE and academicians was voiced by an academician as

What I have observed is that there is no proper communication and coordination between MNE and academicians, or between MNE and universities. In other words, the MNE does not cooperate with universities concerning its own revisions, or program changes, and program development. Or if it actually does, it cooperates only with certain people; people who are close to their political ideologies (A3).

Benim gözlemlediğim şu anda MEB ile akademisyenler arasında veya MEB ile üniversiteler arasında hiçbir şekilde doğru dürüst bir iletişim ve eşgüdüm yok. Yani, MEB kendi içindeki revizyonlarda veya program değişimlerinde, program geliştirmelerde üniversitelerle işbirliği yapmıyor. Ya da yapıyorsa belli kişilerle işbirliği yapıyor; kendi siyasal ideolojilerine yakın kişilerle yapıyor.

Lack of prolific communion between MNE and teachers, was portrayed by a teacher, who, exemplifying her/his subject, condemned the devious attitude of the officials claiming to have consulted with teachers for curriculum change:

They say they care about us; they say that they also get study groups from us, the teachers; they indicate that, even if they do not get them, they collect teachers' opinions in written forms or through the Internet. However, the Chemistry curriculum has [been] changed 3 times in 13 years, and now it is changing again. When the curriculum of a course changes 4 times, we do not understand how they obtain views! Well, are we rediscovering America? Indeed, they do not properly take our views as such ... But I do not believe that these will happen if they really get our views appropriately instead of getting them ostensibly as formality (T10).

Bizi önemsediklerini söylüyorlar; biz öğretmenlerden de çalışma grubu alıyoruz diyorlar; onu almasalar da zaten öğretmen görüşlerini yazılı ya da internet ortamında alıyoruz diyorlar. Ama yani 13 yılda 3 kere Kimya müfredatı değişti şimdi yine değişiyor. 4 kez bir dersin müfredatı değişirken bu nasıl görüş almak yani anlamıyoruz! Amerika'yı yeniden mi keşfediyoruz? yani. Doğru dürüst görüşümüzü falan almıyorlar... Ama görüş almış olmak için görüş almak yerine hakikaten görüş alınsa bunların olacağına inanmıyorum.

One academician expressed similar ideas and perceptions through metaphoric words:

Communication channels of policy makers with teachers within school culture are closed. When there is a problem, they say that "the current program does not work, we made a new one, and the new program is this, we have put it on the

Internet". ... So, you made it; it is a 'fait accompli', you have not let teachers be involved in while you are making it. In advance, *the water should have kept the grass green by flowing on it continuously*. You should have been in contact with the teacher, gotten information and views from him, and informed him so that he would ensure to maintain and improve the system in his school. It is not right to take measures or introduce a new system when it is too late; that is, *you never water the grass, it fades and dies*. Then you say to the teacher: "*get the water and water the grass*". Now, the grass will not come to life anymore, indeed. Or you try to plant new grass, no way! (A7).

Politika yapıcıların okul kültürü içindeki öğretmenle iletişim kanalları kapalı. Sorun çıkınca, diyorlar ki "mevcut program yürümüyor, yenisini yaptık, yeni program şudur, İnternete koyduk". ... Yani sen yaptın oldu artık, öğretmeni katmadın işin içine yaparken. Bunun öncesinde, *suyun sürekli akarak çimleri yeşil tutması gerekirdi*. Öğretmenle iletişimde olman, ondan bilgi ve görüş alman, onu bilgilendirmen gerekirdi ki, o da okulunda sistemin devamını ve iyileşmesini sağlasın. İş işten geçtikten sonra önlem alman veya yeni bir sistem getirmen doğru değil; yani sen çimleri hiç sulamıyorsun, onlar soluyor, kuruyor. Sonra diyorsun ki öğretmene: "Al suyu sula çimleri". Şimdi artık hayat bulmaz o çimler, yani. Ya da yeni çim ekmeye kalkıyorsun, olmaz!

The findings even signalled that there was not a proper relationship among the members within each group either. An academician criticized themselves for lack of interaction among themselves by saying

In regard to academicians; some within themselves, usually *sit on the fence burying their heads in the sand* and move around some other fields. Some, yes, constantly complain, and constantly criticize. So, there are differentiations around. Whom do you call an academic? Today there are 82 education faculties. Concerning educationalists, for instance, we do not know who the academicians at Fırat University Faculty of Education, or the academicians at Yüzüncü Yıl University are, what they do, what they think". Actually, there is no coordination within ourselves; then, how come there could be proper cooperation between other stakeholders of education! (A4).

Akademisyenler de; kendi içlerinde bazıları hiç *suya sabuna dokunmadan hani kafasını kuma gömüp* başka mecralarda geziniyor. Bazıları evet sürekli şikayet ediyor, sürekli eleştiriyor. Yani ortada farklılaşmalar var. Akademik dediğiniz kim yani? Bugün 82 tane eğitim fakültesi var. Eğitimciler açısından söylerseniz. bilmiyoruz yani, Fırat Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesindeki akademisyenleri, Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesindeki akademisyenler kimdir, ne yapar, ne düşünür? Bizim kendi içimizde koordinasyon yok ki; eğitimin diğer paydaşları arasında uygun işbirliği olsun!

Another academician presented similar perceptions indicating "We are not in connection with each other. Personal interests, personal ideologies

dominate. National interests, community benefit or need are not considered at all” (A1). (“Birbirimizle bağlantımız yok. Kişisel çıkarlar, kişisel ideolojiler baskın. Ülke yararı, toplum yararı ya da ihtiyacı hiç düşünülüyor”).

As a critical factor in this context, which would hinder good interaction between teachers and officials, one teacher criticized the casual approach and indifference of teachers toward officials’ query for their views: “What is the use of it! We gather here just along for the ride” (T11). “Ne gerek var, biz buraya laf olsun diye toplanıyoruz”. Similarly, through the following words, T7 criticized /her/his colleagues, the teachers, for deforming the formal way of presenting views as a functionless formality instead of utilizing it for their feedback and opining:

Sometimes MNE sends some questionnaires, there are times you fill [them] out here and there. But I do not believe that my friends would fill out those questionnaires very realistically [properly]. I personally do not, either. Well, it is a task; they order us to fill them out. And we mark the items as true, yes, false, agree, disagree and send (T7).

Bazen MEB bazı anketler gönderiyor, şurada burada doldurduğunuz zamanlar oluyor. Ama ben o anketleri de çok gerçekçi bir şekilde arkadaşlarımın doldurduğuna inanmıyorum. Şahsen ben de öyle. İşte, görev verilmiş, doldur denmiş. Doğru, evet, yanlış, katılıyorum, katılmıyorum gibi işaretleyip gönderiyoruz.

“I do not know what the MNE does”; it is a “closed box”

Four codes surfaced criticizing the MNE more directly in this category: According to the informants, 1) The MNE was directly responsible for the lack of interaction and cooperation among the stakeholders; it is a myth that the MNE was innocent of the accusations about it since it was the primary institution responsible for such procedures. 2) inflexible top-down/central decision-making mechanisms of the MNE were distorting interaction among the stakeholders (it was noteworthy that 11 officials out of 14 also shared this criticism), 3) The MNE would not appreciate academic research in a due manner, 4) The MNE was

working in seclusion, in opaque procedures – another serious criticism about the most power-holding educational institution.

An academician underscored the significance of collaboration of universities and MNE, which could not be achieved since the MNE was working as “a closed box”:

Educational units of the Ministry of National Education and universities must be in cooperation very tightly, like the links of a chain. So, they have to be aware of what each other is doing. I do not know what is happening at the Ministry of Education today; because MNE works as a *closed box* at its own convenience (A6).

Milli Eğitim Bakanlığıyla üniversitelerin eğitim birimleri mutlaka bir zincirin halkaları gibi çok sıkı şekilde işbirliğinde bulunmak zorunda. Yani, birbirlerinin yaptıklarından haberdar olmak zorunda. Ben bugün Milli Eğitim Bakanlığında ne olup bittiğini bilmiyorum; çünkü MEB işine geldiği şekilde, *kapalı kutu* olarak çalışıyor.

Concerning the lack of proper cooperation between academicians and MNE officials, a striking argument came from an academician (A9). She/He alleged that after 1980, politicians and MNE bureaucrats began to see academicians as “enemies”; and this attitude still prevailed then.

On the contrary, one reactive assertion against the accusations on MNE, appeared claiming that the MNE was usually designing proper environments for interaction and cooperation among the stakeholders – this was fervently declared by all active officials plus one retired ($f=8$); however, it was completely rejected by the entire academicians ($n=9$) and supported by only two teachers while objected by the other teachers ($f=13$). In this context, two active high-status officials (O1, O5) claimed that teachers’ participation in curricular policymaking was utilized by obtaining their views through official channels starting from the schools’ subject group committees following the lines to the Ministry, and also, teachers and academicians were encouraged to participate with their suggestions through the internet and other media as the draft curricula had been publicized. However, teachers and academicians considered the publicizing of draft curricula for (*so-called*) getting feedback and views from the stakeholders was

only a pretence of creating an image [*cover/show*] of democratic participation; that is, just a populist approach. An academician argued that

Planned changes and new policies are publicized only for formality or political show-off, actually not for asking for people's views. If not, stakeholders would have been consulted before preparing the drafts, not after. ... There has always been an ideological template behind these drafts and this template does never change according to feedback or views from the stakeholders (A1).

Planlanmış değişiklikler ve yeni politikalar sadece formalite veya siyasi şov için halka ilan ediliyor, gerçekte insanların görüşlerini sormak için değil. Eğer böyle olmamış olsaydı, taslaklar hazırlanmadan paydaşlara danışılırdı, sonra değil... Her zaman bu taslakların arkasında ideolojik bir şablon vardır ve bu şablon paydaşlardan alınan dönütlere veya görüşlere göre asla değişmez.

Lastly, regarding the context of participation, the informants were asked whether they had participated in any policy-making process conducted by MNE. As seen in Table 4. 2, it was discovered that only 1 of 15 teachers and 1 of 9 academicians had taken part in such a process while 13 of 14 officials had gotten involved in a policy-making activity. On the other hand, when inquired about their attendance at the NEC meetings, it was exposed that none of the teachers and only 1 of the academicians had joined an NEC, whereas 11 officials out of 14 attended at least one NEC (Table 4. 2.).

Table 4. 2.

Frequency of "Participation in Person" in at least one Policymaking Process by the MNE

Group of Participant	Participated in policy making in person	Attended at least one NEC
Teachers (n=15)	1	0
Academicians (n=9)	1	1
Officials (n=14)	13	11

4.1.4. National Education Councils do not function in policy-making as they should

For nearly a century, in the Turkish Republic, National Education Councils (NECs) have met to discuss the views on educational issues as an advisory committee every four or five years (this interval has been an expected period; however, for some periods, NECs could not meet for double of this period while in some other eras, they met within the half of this period). Decisions taken in these council meetings are presented to the governing bodies of the time, and it depends on the governmental decisionmakers' choice to consider and apply those advisory NEC decisions. Therefore, it was evaluated that this institution might be regarded as an entity to influence (or to be utilized as an instrument in) educational policymaking processes in the country, and accordingly it was included in the research.

a) General views on National Education Councils

Concerning this part of the study, the participants were asked about their perceptions of the NECs at the beginning of the interview session – after the descriptive and demographic questions – as “Have you had any experiences concerning NECs; what are your views about this institution?”. The general perception of the informants was shaped around a feeling of frustration about the effectiveness of the NEC meetings. Therefore, three categories appeared to be containing mostly codes of critical views while a fourth one included the participants' expectations for the betterment of the NECs (Category 1).

Category 1

Inappropriate, obscure and politicized structure of NECs

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
NECs are not independent	11	9	9
Not scientific institutions	9	8	8
Ignorance of stakeholders about NECs	10	6	8
Determination of NEC agendas by politicians	9	8	10
Misuse/abuse by governments for political ends	10	8	9
Politicized - a long story like other issues (over 40 years)	11	9	9

NECs are not independent

The first category comprised criticism on the structure of the NECs and their meetings. Dominant perception came out as that NECs were not independent scientific institutions because only politicians from the governing party would determine the NEC agendas, and the ruling authorities misused and abused these meetings for their political purposes, which had been an unceasing attitude of politicization for over 40 years. Another significant point mentioned was that many educational stakeholders did not know much about the NECs. It is remarkable that several active government officials shared these perceptions too.

Some quotations from the interviews would help clarify these perceptions; an official who was working for BDE said in a confessing manner:

The ministry, the minister, the undersecretary, the chairman of the Board of Education and Training, and the members of the board determine a number of issues to be discussed at the council by joint consultation. ...To tell the truth, I do not think that views are taken from sub-levels, teachers and others to determine the issues (O6).

Şurada görüşülmek üzere bakanlık, bakan, müsteşar, Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanı ve kurul üyeleri ortak istişare ederek birtakım konular belirliyorlar... Konuları belirlemek üzerine sanmıyorum alt kademelerden, öğretmenlerden vb den görüş alındığını açıkçası.

A retired government official from a teaching background, who worked at the highest-level offices of the state educational institutions for over 40 years, including being a member and head of BED, member of Board of Higher

Education (BHE), General Manager of Higher Education, inspector of MNE, and so on, affirmed that

After the transition to multi-party system, the councils began to become a little more politicized. After that time, the ministers invited people who were close to their views or who were close to the views of their parties to the councils and today, nowadays, it is my belief that the councils have become politicized. Therefore, I do not believe that the councils have been making positive, impartial decisions that will enlighten national education. ... I mean, the councils are show places. Now, when I am saying this, I am not stating it only for this period; it has been like this since around the 70s. ... I mean, I have attended councils until recently and this is my opinion (O3).

Çok partili hayata geçtikten sonra şûralar artık biraz daha siyasileşmeye başladı. Ondan sonra bakanlar kendi görüşlerine yakın veya partilerinin görüşlerine yakın kişileri şûralara çağırdılar ve bugün günümüzde de şûralar benim kanaatim siyasallaşmıştır yani. Onun için de, ben bugün şûraların olumlu, tarafsız, efendim milli eğitime ışık tutacak kararlar aldıklarına inanmıyorum. ... Şûralar şov yeri, yani. Şimdi bunu söylerken de bu dönem için söylemiyorum; aşağı yukarı bu 70'li yıllardan bu tarafa böyle geliyor. ... Yani bu yakın zamanlara kadar şûralara katıldım ve görüşüm bu şekilde.

Mostly the teachers indicated that they had not known enough about the NECs; who attended and how the attenders were selected to join them, how the agendas were formed, how they were conducted and how the results obtained or decisions made in their sessions would influence the educational system. Furthermore, it could be deduced from the findings that especially young teachers did know *almost nothing* about the formation and the functions of the NECs as one 4-year-experienced young Math Teacher said

I think that the participant selection is random, I want to think that it is by lot, I mean, presumably, so that there will be no injustice, unfairness. ... You see, decisions are made at councils, some of them are implemented, some of them are not implemented. ... So, we have just a little idea about these issues. Actually, we do not know what they are, how things happen, etc. (T8).

Katılımcı seçimi rastgeledir diye düşünüyorum kura iledir diye düşünmek istiyorum, muhtemelen, yani adaletsizlik, haksızlık olmasın diye. ... Şûralarda kararlar alınıyor, işte, bazıları uygulanıyor, bazıları uygulanmıyor.... Yani bu konularda az biraz fikrimiz var. Pek bilmiyoruz nedir, nasıl olur vb aslında.

b) Participation in NEC commissions and meetings

The interviewees expressed their perceptions without so much need for prompting questions; however, one of the prompting questions was about the mode of participant selection for the councils/commissions and NEC meetings (Category 2).

Category 2

Inappropriate fashion of participation in NEC meetings

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
No meritocracy	12	8	8
Partisanship in selecting members	9	8	7
Influence of politicians	10	7	8
Invitation of teachers and academicians with political connections	6	6	5
Invitation of only “yes-men”	8	7	7

The common perception was that principles of meritocracy were not ever obeyed and partisan attitudes dominated the procedures of selecting NEC members, both in the commissions and the meetings since government officials led by the politicians would determine who would attend NECs.

“Yes-men”

In such an environment, the respondents believed that teachers and academicians without political connection to the current party were hardly invited to the meetings or related workshops and commissions; in this context, it was indicated in a sarcastic manner – while depicting the “allegiance” of submissive progovernment NEC attendees as if they were paying tribute or homage to the ruling political party – that “only ‘yes-men’ would be invited to the meetings so as to (have them) approve what the government would manipulate.

In regard to the findings in the first two categories above, tracing back the custom of determining NEC attendees, an academician asserted

Basically, it should be the National Education Councils that give general direction to national education policies. Previously, these councils were effective in this regard. And participants would be invited to councils selecting on the basis of merit. BED members were also appointed according to meritocracy. This continued about until the time of the 11th and 12th councils. However, after xxx' s ministry period, the Board of Education and Training, entered into a position to abolish its autonomous structure (end of the 1950s). That is, until then BED members had been assigned there [being selected] on merit. Since then, neither BED staff nor NE Council participants have been selected according to merit, and it [that practice] has continued in the same manner (A9).

Temelde, milli eğitim politikalarına genel yön veren Milli Eğitim Şûraları olmalıdır. Önceden bu şûralar bu konuda etkili oluyordu. Şûralara da liyakate göre katılımcı davet ediliyordu. TTK üyeleri de liyakate göre görevlendiriliyordu. Bu aşağı yukarı 11. 12. şûralara kadar bir şekilde devam etmiştir. Ancak Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu XXX'in bakanlığı döneminden sonra özerk yapıyı ortadan kaldıracak şekilde bir konuma girmiştir (1950li yılların sonu). Yani, o zamana kadar TTK üyeleri liyakate göre oraya getirilmişlerdir. Sonrasında ise, TTK personeli de Milli Eğitim Şûrası katılımcıları da liyakate göre seçilmemeye başlanmış ve öyle de devam etmektedir.

An academician commented on the selection mode of NEC attenders and expressed her/his feelings about NECs:

I mean, we know about these [councils] as much as what we read in books and documents. We usually know the consequences. ... We follow those discussions from outside. In the classes, we definitely refer to the decisions and activities of the councils, but from outside. I mean, I never felt like someone in it. It is not allowed for us to feel. ... More than 700 people attend the Council and it is held in Ankara. And, if no people are invited from the Faculty of Education of a deep-rooted university like Ankara University, I cannot understand [this situation] either. I think that there are acquaintances, kith and kin, comrades, fellows or people who are ideologically close, politically close, and who will not bother [the administration] too much in the commissions there. ... Or they keep away the people whose views they do not approve of. However, this [attitude] is not just related to this government, to the ones before this, too; the main problem here is that we do not have a culture of institutionalization (A4).

Yani işte bunları [şûraları] kitaplardan, belgelerden okuduklarımız kadarıyla biliyoruz. Sonuçlarını biliriz genellikle. ... O tartışmaları takip ederiz dışarıdan. Derslerde mutlaka referans gösteririz şûraların kararlarını, etkinliklerini ama dışarıdan. Yani hiçbir zaman ben onun içinde birisi gibi hissetmedim kendimi. Hissettirilmez yani bize.... Şûraya 700 küsur kişi katılıyor ve Ankara'da yapılıyor. Ve Ankara Üniversitesi gibi köklü bir üniversitede Eğitim fakültesinden birileri davet edilmiyorsa, ee o da bilmiyorum. Tanıdık, eş, dost, ahbab ya da işte ideolojik olarak, siyasi olarak yakın, [idarenin] çok canını sıkmayacak hani oradaki komisyonlarda kişiler olduğunu düşünüyorum. ... Ya da görüşlerini onaylamayacakları kişileri uzak tutuyorlar. Ama bu sadece bu

hükümet ile ilgili değil, bundan önceki hükümetlerde de; buradaki temel sorun kurumsallaşma kültürümüz yok bizim.

On the other hand, one point was indicated by an official that opposing views were (seemingly) recorded in NECs to be appreciated later; however, they would be disregarded, discarded and forgotten later: “There are opposing ideas, they are also recorded, at least they are written down among the notes, let me not say they are recorded. But later, as in every dissident incident, when opposing ideas become part of the minority, they disappear, like thought (O6). (Muhafif fikirler var, onlar da kayda alınıyor, yani yazılıyor en azından, alınıyor demeyim de, notlar arasına. Ama daha sonra her muhafif olayda olduğu gibi muhafif fikirler azınlıkta yer alınca yok olup gidiyor, düşünce gibi).

c) How effective are NECs?

Similar to the views in previous categories, NECs were evaluated by the informants as neither efficient nor effective (Category 3).

Category 3

Inefficacy of the NEC as a decision-making partner

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Not so influential on education policy-making	12	8	9
Inefficacy of NEC meetings (compared with past)	9	8	8
A spokesman and a tool of the governments (for legitimizing)	9	8	7
Only an advisory committee	11	9	10

Spokesman of the government

The participants presented their perceptions of the NECs regarding mainly educational decision-making that NECs were solely an advisory committee whose decisions would not be effective unless they were in accordance with the government’s presupposed decisions to be legitimized by them as a *spokesman* of the ruling political authority. Therefore, it was conceived by the informants that NEC meetings were inefficient, especially

compared with the past and accordingly most NEC activities were futile as they would not be so influential on (ideal) policymaking at all.

A higher-level official and academician, who worked for MNE for more than 25 years exemplified how the governments abused the NECs – utilizing them as an instrument – in order to manipulate their own policies in a tactical manner:

For instance, the 15th Council. [In this council] I observed very well being involved in the essence of the organization at the ministry. (We had always been invited to the previous ones [councils]; we always attended.) ... Then I witnessed that there was a [kind of] manipulation within the Ministry. They tried to bring this 8-year uninterrupted education beyond the planned policies, beyond pedagogy, and beyond the course and practices of the European Union [procedures] ... I never liked the 15th Council! After that, they held the 16th Council. It was also manipulative. There were also manipulations partly in those held until recently. But the 15th Council! More precisely, they do it like this: Let us say that 200 [decision] items were accepted in the councils. Among these 200 items, they take 3-4 items that they prioritize, then [they present them] to the minister. You know, these councils are consultative, advisory. The parts of the items which are approved by the minister are officially applied. They just get the minister to approve only those [they had selected] and they put those into practice. They do such things. This has been the case until all the last councils (A5).

İşte, 15'inci Şûra. Ben, [bu şûrada] esas işin içinde, bakanlığın içinde olarak çok iyi gözlemiş oldum. (Ötekilere hep davetli olduk. Hep gittik.) ... Bakanlığın içerisinde bir manipülasyon olduğunu o zaman gördüm. Bu 8 yıllık kesintisiz eğitimi tamamen planlı politikaların da dışında, pedagojinin de dışında, Avrupa Birliği'nin de uygulamalarının ve gidişatının dışında bir şekilde getirmeye çalıştılar... Hiç beğenmedim 15'inci Şûrayı! Ondan sonra 16'ıncı Şûrayı yaptılar. O da bir manipülasyondur. Son zamanlara kadar olanlarda da yarı yarıya manipülasyon var. Fakat 15'inci Şûra! Daha doğrusu bunu şöyle yapıyorlar: şûralarda diyelim ki 200 madde kabul edilmiş. Bu 200 maddenin içerisine kendilerinin öncelik verdiği 3-4 tane maddeyi alıyorlar, sonra bakana. Biliyorsunuz bu şûralar istişaridir, tavsiye niteliğindedir. Bunun bakanın onayladığı kısmı uygulanır. Bakana sadece bunları onaylatıyorlar ve bunu uyguluyorlar. Böyle şeyler yapıyorlar. Bütün son şûralara kadar bu var.

d) Expectations for better NECs

Following a bunch of concrete critiques, participants presented their expectations regarding the propriety of the structure and function of NECs (Category 4).

Category 4

Expectations concerning the formation and function of National Education Councils (NECs)

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
An opportunity for view-exchange among stakeholders	9	8	9
Meritocratic and multi-level participation	12	8	8
Being effective for educational policymaking	12	7	7
Free from ideological pressure	11	8	7
Not a tool/spokesman of the government	9	7	8
Guiding MNE, not being guided/driven by MNE	10	7	8
No influence of governmental agendas	11	8	7
Sources of its agenda: the suggestions from stakeholders	12	8	9
Being more influential in policy-making, not solely an advisory entity	12	8	10
Leading educational policies	9	7	8
Meeting more often	9	7	8
Scientific, professional and impartial decision-making	9	8	8

Firstly, the informants voiced their expectation that NEC meetings should function as “a proper opportunity for presentation of views from various educational sectors/stakeholders”; in connection with this, meritocratic and multi-level participation in meetings was strongly advised. They believed that NEC activities should be scientific, professional and impartial decision-making/applications. Three implications disapproving the involvement of political influence were declared: a) NEC functions must be effective for educational policymaking but not in a political ideology-led manner; they ought to be free from political pressure and effects in any way, b) NECs should never play its role as a tool or spokesman of the governments, and c) governmental agendas should not lead the meetings: sources of its agenda should be the feedback from stakeholders.

NECs should guide the MNE, not be guided/driven by the MNE

In line with these implications, most teachers and most academicians recommended that NECs should guide the MNE, not be guided/driven by the MNE; similar opinions were supported by 6 retired officials while two retired and six active officials did not make comments on this point. A consequent

expectation was posed by the great majority of the interviewees ($f=30$) that NEC activities and decisions should be more influential on policy-making, it should not be solely an advisory entity. A considerable number of the respondents ($f=24$) emphasized that NECs should lead educational policies and they should meet more often (not in certain intervals but whenever required).

Concerning functions and participants of NECs a high-level official (who was still working/active in an authoritative position in MNE) advised:

Most basically, the councils exist normally as a part of our tradition. It is referred to as an advisory body, a consultant. You know, the council is structurally a formal consultative advisory body as a whole. Its resolutions are sort of recommendations. Governments or executives can create policies based on these policies and recommendations. I regard the councils as necessary. ... But of course, here, there are a few points to be paid attention to. One point is that the *right* men should be brought together in the councils. When the *right* persons, the owners of the business, people of expertise come together, it is possible for better results to emerge (O14).

Şûralar en temel anlamıyla bizim tabi geleneğimizde de var. Bir istişare, danışma organı olarak geçiyor. Hani şûra yapısal olarak da tamamen bir istişari danışma organı. Kararları tavsiye kararları niteliğinde. Hükümetler ya da uygulayıcılar bu politikalardan, buralardan hareket ederek politikaları oluşturabiliyorlar. Şûraları ben gerekli görüyorum. ... Ama tabi burada dikkat edilmesi gereken birkaç husus var. Bir husus şu: Şûralarda doğru adamların bir araya getirilmesi lazım. *Doğru* adamlar, işin sahibi adamlar, işi bilen insanlar bir araya gelince daha güzel sonuçlar ortaya çıkması da mümkün oluyor.

4.1.5. Expectations for ideal/better applications of the “identification of policy issues” and “policy formulation” phases

Participants’ expectations for ideal applications of the issue identification and policy formation phases evolved under six categories. The respondents expressed their contemplations in a broad and universal sense and listed their recommendations in a seemingly more specific and methodological manner. The main points on which the group members accused other group members were presented in the final part, and it was emphasized that such accusations should be avoided.

a) The sine qua non for a proper policy process: A democratic and unbiased attitude

Initially, the respondents took notice of an attitudinal requirement: Policy issues should be identified and policies should be formulated with a democratic and unbiased approach in an unconditional manner (Category 1).

Category 1

Democratic and unbiased approach is needed as a general fundamental attitude

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Democratic approach is fundamental, basic, the sine qua non	11	8	8
Plurality: different views from all stakeholders	13	9	12
Majority is not always right and fair	5	3	6
Variety of participation	9	8	7
Power of opposition to improve the system	8	7	6
Multilevel participation assists in better practice	12	8	9
Eschewing the involvement of political ideology	11	8	7

The informants underlined the vitality of this approach as a general fundamental attitude – a prerequisite – comparing it to an essential principle of a *constitution*. Then, the need for plurality in terms of respect to every opinion from all stakeholders was emphasized; closely related to this claim, two other beneficial points were indicated: Variety of participation would support comprehensiveness and multilevel approaches in regard to participation would assist in better practice. They especially highlighted that due attention should also be paid to minority views and participation by declaring “majority is not always right and fair” and opposing views and approaches were appreciated as a means of powerful contribution to improving the system. The requirement of avoiding involvement of political ideology into educational matters was stressed as expressed by one academician “[There should be] no politics [in the meaning of ideology imposition] in schools, mosques and military barracks” (A3). (“Okulda, camide, kışlada politika olmaz”).

As for other remarkable quotes concerning this context, an academician (A6), who had also been a higher-level official, asserted that working with

ideologically opposing individuals and groups by bringing them together with an inclusive approach was crucial for educational policymaking and she/he illustrates how they managed to do it:

It was something that would not happen in those days, for example, AAA Education Union was totally against the government. I called the union's central office and said "I will pay you a short visit, *come for a tea*", "Even I will *take* the minister with me", I said. They didn't believe it. I said "we are coming, the minister is coming, too,". They said "He will not come to us". I said, "He will come". We went to BBB Union. We went to XXX Party. We went to Mr. YYY. Mr. YYY was the General President of ZZZ Party [opposition]. I had called from the Ministry and told Mr. YYY that Mr. Minister and I wanted to speak with all the members of the Parliament [belonging to your party] who had a professional background in education. Mr. YYY accepted. He invited thirteen MPs. We entered the field, so we really talked to the opposition. We really listened. I had breakfast and dinner with fifty-two columnists, whether dissidents or not. I went to all of them. They said, "Nobody has asked us [our views] until now." I said "you are welcome, you are very valuable". We talked to the leftist, the fascist, and whoever from this and that [ideology], QQQ party members, all of them, without discrimination.

O gün olmayacak şey mesela, AAA Eğitim Sendikası tümüyle karşı idi hükümete. Sendikanın genel merkezini arayıp "çay içmeye geliyorum" dedim. "Hatta bakanı da getiriyorum" dedim. İnanmadılar. Dedim ki, "geliyoruz, bakan da geliyor" dedim. "Gelmez o bize" dediler. "Gelir" dedim. Beraber BBB sendikasına gittik. XXX partililere gittik. Bay YYY'e gittik, Sayın YYY Genel Başkan'dı, ZZZ Partisi. Bakanlıktan arattırıp eğitim ile ilgili eğitim kökenli bütün milletvekilleri ile Bakan Bey ile birlikte görüşmek istediğimi söyledim Sayın YYY'e. O da kabul etti. On üç tane milletvekilini çağırdı. Sahaya girdik yani muhalefet ile gerçekten konuştuk. Gerçekten dinledik. Bütün muhalif ya da olmayan elli iki tane köşe yazarı ile yemek ve sabah kahvaltısı yaptım, hepsine gidip. "Bize hiç kimse sormadı şimdiye kadar" dediler. Dedim ki "olur mu! siz çok değerlisiniz". Hiç ayırmadan hepsi ile yani solcusu, faşisti, bilmem şusu busu, OOO Partilisi hepsi ile konuştuk.

(A6) went on by exemplifying how unbiased, democratic and comprehensive their official attitude was in including academicians in decision-making/policymaking. She/he portrayed the exhausting bureaucratic processes of involving the critical academic milieu seemingly opposing the government. She/he emphasized that, without any discrimination (political or ideological), they gathered the ones who were good at their professional fields in various universities, provided them with the funds required for scientific research and other activities. She/he concluded with the remarks that all the academicians

worked hard and productively in a collaborative manner though they were exposed to many sorts of adverse pressure from certain reactionary groups:

We also met with academics. At that time, for example, METU was in withstanding position. Mr. PPP, the Chairman of CHE (Council of Higher Education) was [constantly] in opposition, as well: "I will not allow any academics to work on the QQQ Party's curriculum project," he said. He said it explicitly. He *said it to my face*. He said it on the phone. I wrote an official letter for it. He refused [officially]. So, I said, "then, I will shift and try another path"; I said, "I'll go from around the back". He said, "How are you going to do it?" I said "I will do it". I went to the European Union and said "Give me some money from the Union's Fund". I signed personal contracts with the professors and it was legal. I paid all of them in Euros. Among them, there were sixteen or seventeen people from METU. Some were from XXX [a university]. Some were from Gazi [University]. Some were from Ankara University. There were rightists, leftists, Atatürkists [among them], all of them. The only common feature of them was this: They were very good in their fields and they sat down like brothers and sisters, worked together and produced. They were so pressured that "you are doing business with BED!" etc. They responded, "we saw the [proper] environment and exchanged ideas, we don't care [about any other things]". They all decided "we continue". Nobody left.

Akademisyenlerle de görüştük. O dönemde mesela ODTÜ muhalif olarak şey yapıyordu. YÖK başkanı muhalif idi, Sayın PPP. "Ben hiç bir akademisyenin OOO Partisinin müfredat projesinde çalışmasına izin vermeyeceğim" dedi. Açıktan söyledi bunu, yüzüme söyledi, telefonda da söyledi. Resmi yazı yazdım. Ret cevabı verdi. Ben de dedim ki "ben de başka yoldan dolanırım" dedim. "Arkadan dolanırım" dedim. "Nasıl yapacaksın?" dedi. "Ben yaparım" dedim. Gittim Avrupa Birliği'ne, "Birliğin Fonunun bir kısmını bana verin" dedim. Hocalar ile kişisel sözleşme imzaladım ve bu yasal idi. Hepsine Euro üzerinden para verdim. Bunun içerisinde ODTÜ'den işte on altı, on yedi kişi vardı, XXX'den [a university] vardı, Gazi'den vardı, Ankara Üniversitesinden vardı. Sağcısı vardı, solcusu vardı, Atatürkçüsü vardı, hepsi. Sadece ortak özellikleri şuydu: Alanlarında çok iyilerdi ve bunlar oturdular kardeş kardeş beraber çalıştılar, ürettiler. O kadar baskı yediler ki "siz Talim Terbiye ile iş yapıyorsunuz!" falan diye. "Biz gördük konuştuk ortamı, hiç umurumuzda değil" dediler. Hepsi devam dedi. Hiç kimse ayrılmadı.

Another academician defended participation of stakeholders who favoured different views and ideologies in policymaking processes giving examples from teachers' unions – NGOs:

If a science and education policy of the country is to be established, all stakeholders should contribute to this policy. ... This must be the participation of all stakeholders, of all opinions, not of a certain opinion or a thought, the thought of a certain political party. All thoughts are special and nice. It must be a process in which all different thoughts are expressed, can be expressed,

cleared from all these ideologies, in which all policies that will make people happy within Türkiye's geography are created all together. For example, as it is today, it should not be such an application that appreciates every word of a teacher from AAA [Education Union], while it never takes into account what the teacher from BBB [Education Union] says. It was just the opposite in the past; In the past, whereas being a member of BBB [Education Union] was something that should not be taken into account, being from AAA [Education Union] was influential for someone's views to be considered. This is not righteous; both what a colleague from BBB [Education Union] and a colleague from AAA [Education Union] say should be regarded as remarkably significant. In other words, we must establish a process in which all our experiences, problems and troubles emerging from our lives are presented all together and solutions to these are found all together (A7).

Ülkenin bir bilim ve eğitim politikası oluşturulacaksa, bütün paydaşların bu politikaya katkıları olmalı. ... bu salt belirli bir fikrin, bir düşüncenin, bir partinin düşüncesi olmaksızın tüm paydaşların, tüm düşüncelerin katılımı olmalı. Tüm düşünceler özeldir, güzeldir. Farklı düşüncelerin hepsinin ifade edildiği, edilebildiği işte bu ideolojilerin hepsinden arındırılmış, Türkiye coğrafyasında insanı mutlu kılacak bütün politikaların hep birlikte yaratıldığı bir süreç olmalı. İşte mesela, bugünkü gibi, AAA [Eğitim sendika]'lı öğretmenin söylediğini hiç dikkate almazken BBB [Eğitim sendika]'lı bir öğretmenin her söylediğini dikkate alan bir uygulama olmamalı. Geçmişte de tersi idi; geçmişte BBB [Eğitim sendika]'lı olmak hiç dikkate alınmaması gereken bir şeyken AAA [Eğitim sendika]'lı olmak görüşlerinin dinlenmesinde etkiliydi. Doğrusu böyle değil; Eğitim Bir Sen'li arkadaşımın da söylediği son derece önemli olarak değerlendirilmeli, Eğitim Sen'li arkadaşımın da. Yani, yaşantılardan çıkan bütün tecrübelerimizin, problemlerimizin, sıkıntılarımızın hep birlikte ortaya koyulduğu, bunlara çözümlerin hep birlikte bulunduğu bir süreci oluşturmalıyız.

b) Consensus and/or reconciliation

The participants presented certain method-like suggestions that reflected their expectation of democratic approach to policymaking (Category 2).

Category 2

Consensus and/or reconciliation among different views

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Dialogue	14	9	12
Common grounds	12	9	10
Cooperation	15	9	14
Mutual respect, understanding and tolerance	14	8	13
Transparency	14	9	9
Use of constructive and <i>quality</i> opposition	8	8	7
Less resistance	10	7	11

In this respect, they regarded that consensus and/or reconciliation among different views should be obtained through dialogue, seeking common grounds through continuous view exchange, cooperation, mutual respect, mutual love, and mutual understanding/tolerance. It was underlined that transparency in the process, especially concerning decision-making, would support the success of all the process. The benefits of considering and utilizing opposing views were again highlighted in this category as well. As an overall belief with a holistic approach, it was hinted that consensus and reconciliation help diminish resistance to new policies so as to speed up and stabilize the process.

c) Meritocracy for policy actors

The informants espied actors conducting the policy process as the people who should be selected according to meritocratic criteria in regard to personality, professionalism and attitude. Most notable criteria are listed by them highlighting the significance of maintaining the selected personnel as policymaking actors without frequent changes in the cadre (Category 3).

Category 3

Meritocracy in participation of policy actors (all stakeholders as participants)

	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Fair selection, assignment and rotation of teachers and officials	12	7	10
Professional qualifications: talent, skill, competence	10	8	9
Managers and consultants with visions	9	8	8
No nepotism	8	9	9
No partisanship	11	8	8
Not frequent change of the staff	9	7	10

Emerged in this study as a recurrent concept within the themes, “meritocracy” was underscored by the participants in this section once more concentrating on the participation of policy actors. Primarily, the informants underlined the requirement of *fair* selection, assignment and rotation of teachers, administrators and officials to schools and MNE offices. They promoted the criteria of talent, skill and competence as professional qualifications for officials

and policy actors drawing attention to the need for managers and consultants with visions. In this context of the personnel assignment regime in the MNE, an official underscored the parallelism between meritocracy and accountability:

For *accountability* [emphasis added] in regard to policymaking, carefully selected personnel according to *meritocracy* [emphasis added] should have been assigned to the ministry. In the past, civil servants used to be selected with such meticulous care while being assigned to services in the central organization of the ministry. But these [principles] were completely discarded after the 70s. Every incoming party tended to establish their own staff cadre loyal to them; they never paid attention to meritocracy. Of course, actually among them, the ones who were carefully selected according to their merits should have been assigned (O3).

Politika yapımında hesap verilebilmesi için bakanlık içerisinde de liyakate göre çok iyi seçilmiş kişiler getirilmeliydi. Eskiden hakikaten bakanlık merkez teşkilatında görev verilirken memurlar böyle çok titizlik ile seçiliyordu. Ama 70'li yıllardan sonra bunlar tamamen kalktı. Her gelen parti kendi kadrosunu kurmaya yöneldi; hiç *liyakate* [vurgu eklendi] dikkat etmediler. Tabii, deneyim kazanmış, hatta onlar içerisinde de liyakate göre çok iyi seçilmiş kişiler getirilmeliydi (O3)

Related to this context, some serious issues caused by frequent personnel change and unmeritocratic cadre assignments are exemplified by a respondent as follows:

There has emerged mismanagement problems and lack of educational knowledge issues in the Ministry due to such frequent appointments. ... Ministers compose the personnel cadres in this way. These [officials] are ignorant people, most of them are ignorant people, so much so that there are people who call the secretary with her/him and ask, "where am I going to sign here?", then, sign the part she/he shows without knowing how to read the upper part (A5).

Bakanlıkta yönetim ve eğitim bilgisi eksikliği oluştu bu kadar sık tayin dolayısıyla. ... Bakanlar kadroları bu şekilde getiriyorlar. Bunlar bilgisiz insanlar, çoğu bilgisiz insanlar, o kadar ki, yanındaki sekreteri çağırıp "ben buraya nereye imza atacağım?" diye sorup imzasını onun dediği yere atıp üstünü okumayı bilmeyen adamlar geliyor.

Favouring (is bad) and referencing (is good)

Two “no”es were strongly reminded once more: *no* nepotism and *no* partisanship. In that sense, a message about selecting policy players was given: Favoring certain personnel for political or relational connections, discarding meritocratic principles would not be a proper attitude, but evaluating references about fine professional qualities of the candidate actors would be a respectable one.

d) Interaction and cooperation among main stakeholders

There arose a meaningful invitation from the participants’ perceptions to the three pillars of education, teachers, academicians and officials: “Conduct proper interaction and cooperation among yourselves; this is vital!” (Category 4).

Category 4

The vitality of proper interaction and cooperation among teachers, academicians and officials

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Multiple perspectives	14	9	13
A common platform, cooperation	10	9	8
Teacher is essential in curricular studies	12	8	11
Cooperation among MNE, universities and schools	12	6	10
No involvement of political ideologies	11	8	11
Self-criticism by the three stakeholders	10	8	9

To achieve it, the informants expected these stakeholders to evaluate the policy domains with multiple perspectives by exchanging views and visions. They emphasized the need for a common platform for cooperation among students, teachers, academicians, school administrators and other stakeholders; and they stated their expectations for also close cooperation and communication among schools, universities and MNE. They highlighted that teacher was essential in curricular studies and that the other two groups should always

support them. The recurrent stern warning was given again: there should be no involvement of political ideology in educational policy processes. Lastly, a crucial criticism arose that these three groups of education stakeholders had not had proper interaction for years and widespread disconnection had prevailed. Stressing on the cooperation of main stakeholders of education, a higher-level official asserted that

If you are going to make an education policy, academic, bureaucratic and political authorities need to come together. I set the teachers on the academic side. If two of these three authorities come together, without the third one, without any third one, the conduct will not work here, anyway. Therefore, I see the weight of all three authorities equally. Can one of them stand out? Sometimes one must stand out depending on the situation... I mean, neither of them should object. If all three of them do not get together, it does not work (O14).

Eğer bir eğitim politikası yapacaksanız akademik, bürokratik ve siyasi iradenin bir araya gelmesi lazım. Öğretmenleri de akademik tarafa koyuyorum. Eğer bu üç iradeden ikisi bir araya gelirse üçüncüsü olmazsa, herhangi bir üçüncüsü olmazsa, zaten burada iş yürümez. Dolayısıyla üç iradenin ağırlığını da ben eşit olarak görüyorum. Biri birinden ön plana çıkabilir mi? Bazen duruma göre çıkması lazım ... Yani herhangi biri karşı çıkarsa olmaz. üçü bir arada olmazsa o iş yürümez.

e) Mutual training among stakeholders

In regard to the expectations of the participants, mutual training among the three groups was recommended with the belief that each group had something to learn from the other one (Category 5).

Category 5

Mutual training among the three groups; each group has something to learn from the other one!

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Training by academicians	11	8	10
Frequent school visits by academicians	13	8	10
Briefings by teachers to academicians and officials	9	6	9
In-service training <i>for all by all</i>	10	7	9
Academicians should lead in terms of theory and research	13	9	13
Teachers should lead in terms of practice	12	8	12
Officials should lead in terms of bureaucracy and organization	11	8	9

Specifically, they listed their suggestions for reciprocal training as: seminars should be given by academicians, academicians should frequently visit schools in order to learn more about education in the field – the school life, and briefings should be given to academicians and officials by teachers on any occasions. Rather interesting suggestion to the three groups of stakeholders came as “in-service training for all by all” – interesting because it was customary that teachers would be given in-service training, they would not themselves give the other groups, academicians and the officials. The recommended areas of tasks for each group were identified as a) academicians should lead in terms of theory and research, b) teachers should lead in terms of practice, and c) officials should lead in terms of bureaucracy and organization.

f) Avoiding reciprocal adverse attitude

The respondents presented their expectations in the final category of the theme by advising that the pillars of education – as the three groups – should always avoid accusing and despising each other (Category 6).

Category 6

Respective accusation and despisement among the three groups

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Teachers' lack of education theory knowledge	7	8	7
Academics' lack of information about the practice at schools	12	5	10
Officials' working clumsily	8	6	6
Teachers and academics' negligence of formal procedures	7	3	9

Most common ones of such accusations were noted as a) teachers do not know education theory at all (7 out of 15 *teachers* shared similar views), b) academics do not know much about the education practice at schools (this perception was mentioned mainly by teachers ($f=12$) and officials ($f=10$) while 5 *academics* joined them), c) officials work clumsily and slowly (asserted by most teachers ($f=8$), and most academics ($f=6$) together with 6 officials out of 14) and d) teachers and academics do not apply the formal procedures properly (an accusation made by officials ($f=9$), supported by nearly half of the teachers ($f=7$), and 3 academics). Consequently, it was holistically emphasized that all of these accusations and despisement should be avoided and the shortcomings of each group should be overcome through mutual collaboration and understanding.

4.1.6. “What is inevitably needed!” is that a common *uppermost ideology of education over (and excluding) all other political ideologies should be constituted.*

This section covered the theme that emerged as reflecting the participants' recommendation and/or expectation of a robust and sustainable framework that could help ensure the conduct of policymaking process properly with a *holistic* approach. In this sense, they proposed establishing an education ideology, which would be created by the main stakeholders of education as an entity over any other ideologies.

a) A unique education ideology – an umbrella ideology

To be able to construct such an ideology, initially, the informants distinguished the basic principles on which the ideology would be structured firmly (Category 1).

Category 1

Fundamental principles of the required education ideology – an umbrella ideology

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Universal education principles as <i>umbrella</i> axioms	11	8	10
Coherence with the Basic Law of National Education	8	7	8
Uppermost status for education	10	8	9
No involvement of political ideologies	11	7	8
Sticking to the uppermost ideology	9	7	8
Scientific, meritocratic and ethical qualities	12	8	11
(Holistic system) multi-lateral cooperation, pluralist approaches	10	8	10
Democratic approaches everywhere	10	8	8

They determined that such a special education ideology should contain universal education principles over any other rules or codes of conduct, leading the whole system. They depicted those principles with a metaphoric expression as *umbrella axioms* for the umbrella ideology. In other words, the umbrella ideology would protect the educational system from the dangers of other ideologies like political, religious, economic ideologies, and the like, while the umbrella axioms, with their universal power, would protect the education ideology from the risks that might generate within itself. Embracing all domains and stakeholders of education, those principles must be compatible with universally scientific and democratic precepts independent of any political and/or religious ideologies and influences. This view was concisely expressed in the following lines:

A system that does not change according to the governments, in which long-term strategies are realized step by step, revisions are made correctly in line with changes and developments through timely interventions, and serves universal values. Here, within universal values, for instance, there should be no

raising a human type belonging to a particular ideology. There is/should be the raising of a person who adopts universal principles. There is an education system that prioritizes science and wisdom. These are the policies that do not change from A to B, from B to C, and that will contribute to the improvement of the country (A7).

İktidarlara göre değişmeyen, uzun soluklu stratejilerin adım adım gerçekleştirildiği, değişimlere ve gelişmelere göre revizyonların zamanında müdahalelerle doğru bir şekilde yapıldığı, evrensel değerlere hizmet eden bir system. İşte, evrensel değerlerin içinde, mesela belirli bir ideolojiye ait bir insan tipini yetiştirmek yok. Evrensel ilkeleri benimseyen bir insanı yetiştirmek var. Bilimi önceleyen, akli önceleyen bir eğitim sistemi var. Bunlar A'dan B'ye, B'den C'ye değişmeyen şekilde ülkenin gelişmesine katkı sağlayacak politikalar

The participants supposed to place this ideology at the top of the system granting it the uppermost status for education, sticking to it whatever the political environment would be – even when the ruling parties or the governments changed, as defended by a teacher through this rather humorous and challenging expression, resembling the principles to those of a *constitution*: “Here, this [declaration] should be put into the constitution: It should be stated that this is the educational ideology of this country, this is the education policy. It is *this* if Ahmet comes, indeed; it is *this* even if Mehmet comes. No matter who comes to the government!” (T11). (“İşte bu anayasaya konmalı: Denmeli ki arkadaş bu ülkenin eğitim ideolojisi budur, eğitim politikası budur. Ahmet de gelse budur, Mehmet de gelse budur. Kim gelirse gelsin yönetime!). It was strongly stressed by the participants that most of the requirements of such an approach had already been included in the basic Turkish laws related to education, such as the Basic Law of National Education and some other appropriate laws; however, they were mostly ignored in practice. It was prescribed that all the applications should be arranged in line with them in order to establish a strong foundation for the educational system, as one academician indicated:

For [making] education policies, there are normally some basic documents. There are documents adapted to the Constitution as the primary one. There is the Basic Law of National Education and there are several basic laws of its own, for example, like the Vocational Education Law No. 3308. Considering these, innovations are made on their axis. Of course, technology is changing, the needs of life are changing. Modifications [amendments] can be made in line with

these. It is not the modification of the law. Amendments can be exercised in the management and application. Instead of doing this, playing with the system, tampering with the structure of the system through practices such as “I established that school with that part of the system, I removed this [type] school, I cancelled this level, I removed diplomas from these” and so on, causes tracking problems in the system; nothing becomes traceable. On the other hand, development plans are again policy documents as effective as laws. These, for example, determine the main axes. When ministers took office, they are to adapt the government policy to these main policy documents, to make them compatible with the government policy; or to highlight the government's applicable policies and implement them. If it brings something very new and special, the government should review it together with all the main documents, the law, the constitution, etc., and review it in the plans and make modifications there. However, it is not done in that way (A5).

Eğitim politikaları için, normal olarak bunların ana belgeleri vardır. Anayasa birinci belge olmak üzere belgeler vardır. Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu vardır ve birkaç tane kendi temel kanunları vardır. Mesela 3308 sayılı Meslek Eğitimi Kanunu gibi. Bunlar dikkate alınarak bunların eksenini üzerinde yenileştirmeler yapılır. Tabii teknoloji değişiyor. Hayatın ihtiyaçları değişiyor. Bunların üzerinden tadillerle gidilebilir. Kanun tadili değil. Yönetimde ve uygulamada tadillerle gidilebilir. Bunu yapmayı sistemle oynamak, sistemin şurasıyla şu okulu kurdum, bu okulu kaldırdım, bu kademeyi kaldırdım, buralardan diplomaları kaldırdım falan gibi şeylerle sistemin yapısıyla oynamak sistemde takip sorunu doğuruyor; hiçbir şey izlenemez hale geliyor. Ondan sonra kalkınma planları gene politika belgesidir ve kanun niteliğindedir. Bunlar mesela ana eksenleri belirlerler. Bakanlar geldikleri zaman bakanların bu ana politika belgelerine hükümetin politikasını uydurmalı. Hükümetin politikası ile uyumlu hale getirmeli; veya hükümetin uygulanabilir politikalarını öne çıkarıp bunu uygulamalı. Çok yeni özel bir şey getiriyorsa hükümet bunu bütün ana belgelerde, kanunda, anayasada vesairede falan gözden geçirip planlarda gözden geçirip buralarda tadilatlarla giderek yapmak lazım. Halbuki öyle yapılmıyor.

The informants often emphasized that this ideology of education must be equipped with scientific, meritocratic and ethical qualities, founded on multi-lateral cooperation, pluralist approaches, reconciliation and consensus in a holistic manner and, as indicated frequently in the findings of this study on many occasions, concerning this context again, democratic approaches should lead every practice everywhere; in the classroom/school, at the universities and in government offices.

b) Education policies in accordance with the education ideology

To be able to formulate long-term and sustainable education policies, the respondents indicated that every piece of the policy and each step of the formulation process should comply with the principles of the education ideology (Category 2).

Category 2

Sustainable, long-term educational policies (encompassing 30-40 years) in accordance with the education ideology

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Common grounds	10	8	9
Scientific, professional and long-lasting	12	8	9
Humanistic, democratic and meritocratic	10	7	11
Defendable, accountable and justifiable	9	8	9
Suitable to the country and the localities	8	8	7
Stability: incremental changes and modifications	9	8	9
Possessed and obeyed by all stakeholders	8	6	9

In accordance with the proposed principles, the participants anticipated education policies to be produced on common grounds by all stakeholders. Those policies were expected to be scientific, professional and enduring as well as humanistic, democratic and meritocratic. They should also have the traits of defensibility, accountability and justifiability. One point was especially highlighted that in accordance with universal qualities, the policies should be suitable (and/or modifiable) to the special conditions of the country and the localities. It was warned that education policies should be stable, they should not be changed by changing governments frequently and easily; only minor changes and/or modifications would be applied in an incremental manner when required again through consensus and/or reconciliation. This assertion was emphasized by an academician as

There is/should be no mass reform in education; there are/should be step by step reforms called 'incremental reform' in education. Step by step reform is made

by correcting the main frame through modifications, as I call amendments, in line with the needs of the society and the age; it should not be otherwise! (A5).

Eđitimde toptan reform olmaz; eđitimde ‘incremental reform’ denilen adım adım reformlar olur. Adım adım reform iřte bu kurulmuř olan ana çatıyı çağın ve toplumun ihtiyaçlarına göre tadil dediđim modifikasyonlar yapmak suretiyle düzeltmek itibariyle olur. Bařka türlü olmaması lazım!

On the other hand, it was underlined that policy-making should never be in a hurry; let it last for quite a long time to formulate a policy as long as it was to be qualified and durable. The last point stressed was that the policies must be possessed – internalized sincerely – and properly obeyed by all stakeholders.

4.2. Participants’ perceptions of “policy implementation” phase of policy cycle

The “policy implementation” phase of policy cycle, which handles the practice stage of a formulated policy, was studied in this research together with the “identification of issues” and the “policy formulation” phases. Since it is the phase through which the verbal, theoretical or bureaucratic nature of the policy is put into action in the field, the main actors as practitioners are teachers; and therefore, in the research, what teachers did or they *did not do*, what they expected or they *did not expect*, and briefly all valuable/meaningful pieces of feedback about the situations at schools were considered to be consequential. With this approach, six major themes emerged in regard to education policy implementation (presented in a box, numbered 7-12, at the end of the section 3. 8. Data analysis process). In line with the research questions and the sequence in the interview schedule, the first theme emerged covering the codes and concepts concerning the first step of policy implementation phase of the cycle, namely dissemination of the new policy.

4.2.1. Criticality of proper dissemination of new policies to practitioners for their appropriate implementation.

Dissemination of the new policy or regulation is a significant step in the process as it stands for a transition from formulation to implementation; it can also be regarded as a means of passage from theory to practice. Implying mainly that *the better the dissemination of a policy was, the more influential it would be in application*, through this theme, initially, data revealed the first category, which stressed the importance of *understanding* (the essence of) the policy. In this sense, the issues stemmed from the problematic dissemination were defined by the participants.

a) Understanding the policy

It is obvious that practicing any theoretical construct will be difficult and unfruitful to implement unless its essence, principles and required procedures are grasped as completely as possible by the people who will conduct its practice. Thus, in line with this approach, the initial category in this part of the study appeared in relation to understanding the policy, covering mostly the impediments that might hamper the comprehension of the new policy by the teachers (Category 1).

Category 1

Comprehending the “what” of the new policy; problems due to inappropriate dissemination

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Unclear instructions	12	7	8
Inexperienced practitioners	8	6	9
Untimely (or late) announcement	9	6	7
Indifference by the teachers	8	7	10
Lack of background knowledge in the field	9	7	11
Lack of organization and follow-up	8	6	7
Ignoring pilot studies	9	7	5

The participants emphasized that practitioners in schools most of the time did not sufficiently understand the new policies due to unclear instructions. Concerning this issue, also most officials specifically indicated that teachers did not understand many policies; however, the officials, ($f=10$) mostly the ones who were actively working for MNE when interviewed, clearly highlighted that it was not always because of unclear instructions but because of teachers' own deficiencies. Almost the same number of informants also believed that especially inexperienced teachers could not grasp the essence of the policy, and they determined untimely (or late) announcement without prior notice by the authorities was another cause for dissemination failures on the side of the bureaucracy. Here, as criticism of teachers, two points were indicated: Indifference by the teachers because they would not follow the instructions and announcements properly, and their lack of background knowledge in the field. These perceptions were expressed by most of the academicians and the officials while more than half of the teachers admitted them like a confession as "teachers' lack of knowledge, indifference, and *less probably* lack of willingness to learn about new applications/policies and their profession". In regard to this issue, (teachers' lack of subject knowledge and unfavorable attitude) through the example of constructivist curriculum, one teacher told an anecdote:

In a subject group meeting I overheard a history teacher complaining about the textbook since it had nothing inside to tell to the students, but was full of pictures, charts, texts, which required the students to express their ideas in writing and speaking. She would say 'I am fed up with making students write all the time. What a weird method the book has ...' I was terrified to hear these because the activities she was criticizing were just what the constructivist approach essentially required, and they were wonderful exercises. It was clear that she did not know anything about the approach she was expected to practice (T1).

Bir zümre toplantısında bir tarih öğretmenin ders kitabı hakkında söylendiğini duydum: "kitabın içinde öğrencilere anlatacak hiçbir şey yok, sadece resimler çizelgeler ve öğrencilerin kendi fikirlerini yazılı ve sözlü olarak belirtmelerini isteyen parçalar var" diyordu. "Öğrencilere durmadan bir şeyler yazdırmaktan bıktım; ne kadar saçma bir metodu var kitabın..." diyordu. Bunları duyduğumda dehşete düştüm; zira bu öğretmenin eleştirdiği faaliyetler tam da yapılandırmacı yaklaşımın gerektirdiği temel faaliyetlerdi ve harika alıştırmalardı. Kendisinden uygulaması beklenen yaklaşım hakkında hiçbir şey bilmediği açık idi.

On the side of the administration again, the participants blamed the administrative offices (of the MNE) for two deficiencies: a) Lack of organization and follow-up, and b) neglecting the piloting of the new policies. It was noteworthy that these so-called faults were not approved by the officials who were still employed in the MNE offices, whereas the retired ones mostly admitted them.

Touching the codes/concepts in the first category of this theme, following quotations from the interviews substantially highlighted the results too. As a good example in this context, one teacher summarized the gist of constructivist curriculum issues: “For instance, constructivist model was a good application; however, its implementations were not successful since it was not communicated to the teachers well” (T12). (“... Örneğin, yapılandırmacı model iyi bir uygulamaydı; ancak öğretmene iyi anlatılamadığı için uygulamaları başarısız oldu.”). An academician contributed to the clarification of the issue stressing the language of the curricula in terms of comprehensibility (also by specifying the communication of hidden curricula to teachers):

The language of the program should also be understandable to the practitioner in the field. This is really important. What are we doing the programs for, after all? We do them so that teachers in the field [should] give correct information to children in line with them and raise them well. There are also implicit goals of National Education. Well, you also present them by injecting into the program. The teacher should know these, too... Therefore, a program that is not understood and not adopted by the teacher remains only a booklet. Teachers then ask to learn a little from someone who knows – if there is – and then, continue their own way as they know (A2).

Programın dili de alandaki uygulayıcının anlayabileceği bir şekilde olmalı. Bu çok önemli. Sonuçta biz programları ne için yapıyoruz? Alanda öğretmenlerin buna göre çocuklara doğru bilgileri vermesi ve onları iyi yetiştirmesi için yapıyoruz. Bir de Milli Eğitim’in örtük amaçları vardır. Ee bunları da siz yine programa yedirerek veriyorsunuz. Bunları öğretmenin de bilmesi gerekir... Dolayısıyla öğretmen tarafından anlaşılmayan, benimsenmeyen program sadece kitapçık olarak kalır. Öğretmenler o zaman anlayan biri varsa biraz ona sorar ve yoluna kendi bildiği şekilde devam eder.

Similarly, an academician who had served as a high school teacher for 18 years demonstrated the issue instancing credit system used during early 90s, which is still being discussed from time to time:

Well, they found a system called ‘credit [courses] system’ for passing courses... the credit system was a fine system if it was applied properly ... The inventor of it was the late Professor XXX, the former undersecretary of the ministry who was our rector and dean. Well, uh, he conducted such an academic study himself, he applied it from the top to the lower level, [but] the lower level could not understand what it was

... I worked in a short-term course [project] at Buca Faculty of Education. We had teachers from middle and high schools as trainees. One day, they came in alarm and said: "Sir, there came *something* called a ‘course-passing-credit system’; what are we going to do? (A4).

Şimdi ders geçme kredi sistemi diye bir sistem buldular ... kredili sistem güzel bir sistemdi ama iyi uygulanırsa... Bunun mucidi rahmetli XXX Hocaydı, bizim rektörlüğümüzü ve dekanlığımızı yapmış olan eski bakanlık müsteşarı. Şimdi, eee, böyle bir akademik çalışmayı kendisi yaptı, alt kademeye yukarıdan aşağıya indirdi, alt kademe bunun ne olduğunu anlayamadı...

... Ben Buca Eğitim Fakültesinde kısa dönem bir kursta görev yaptım. Ortaokul ve liselerden hocalarımız vardı, onlar ders alıyorlardı. Telaşla geldiler bir gün dediler: “Hocam, ‘ders geçme kredili sistem’ diye *bir şey* gelmiş, biz ne yapacağız?”.

Again, regarding the curricula, the informants indicated that, as it had been in the past, teachers were not informed about or trained on the changes sufficiently either, as one *young* teacher pointed out when prompted by the researcher:

Adequate information regarding the changes and innovations is not given [to school teachers]. Actually, this is a must. In the year I graduated, ... a subject called ‘Histogram and Fractal’ was added to the 8th grade Mathematics course subjects; we had studied it at university. When I started teaching, there were some teachers among older ones who asked "what is this?" We told [taught] them the subject. Well, five teachers of Mathematics were appointed to the school that year; We lectured the fractal and histogram [subject] to the other teachers here (T8).

Değişikliklerle, yeniliklerle ilgili yeterli bilgi verilmiyor. Bu olması gereken bir şey. Ben mezun olduğum yıl, ... ‘Histogram ve Fraktal’ diye bir konu girdi 8’inci sınıf Matematik konularına; biz üniversitede görmüştük. Başladığım zamanki eski öğretmenlerimizden “bu ne?” diyenler oldu. Biz anlattık. Yani, beş tane Matematik öğretmeni atandı o yıl bu okula. Buradaki diğer öğretmenlerimize fraktal ve histogramı biz anlattık.

b) Recommendations for proper dissemination

Category 2 evolved as covering recommendations for minimizing the concerns about dissemination of new policies pointed out in the first category. They included ideas and perceptions mainly concerning the conducts of the MNE while indicating the requirements on the side of the practitioners as well (Category 2).

Category 2

Assuring appropriate dissemination of new policies

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Administrations' informing the personnel	9	6	10
MNE's duty to inform teachers	12	7	10
Intelligible publicizing, circulation, broadcast	11	7	9
Educational gazette – announcements bulletin (Tebliğler Dergisi)	10	4	11
Information update	12	8	9
(Effective use of) technological systems	11	8	11
Teachers' task to follow the changes	9	7	12
Requirement of piloting	10	9	9

The participants basically highlighted the governmental tasks to assure appropriate dissemination of new policies: publicizing, circulation, broadcast and propagation of the disseminated policy should be intelligible, information updates must be punctual, through the official systems like Educational Gazette – announcements bulletin (such as Tebliğler Dergisi) and technological systems (such as utilizing the internet, web sites of MNE and BDE, e-school systems and the like). It was reminded that the MNE was charged with informing teachers even in the remotest part of the country as well as that it was among the main tasks of school administrations to inform their personnel about any changes. Almost all participants underlined that it was the teachers' task to follow the changes too. Last but not least, the informants stressed that piloting should be conducted prior to the implementation in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the new policies in the classroom practice as well as help their comprehension by the conveyors (teachers).

As a significant point related mainly to the themes about participation of stakeholders again, not only in this part but also in almost all parts of the study, it was emphasized that since the teachers had not been allowed to *participate* in the policy formulation processes properly, they could not grasp the real rationale behind the policies. Therefore, it was deduced that such a condition also contributed to the deficiencies in the dissemination. On the contrary, the officials who were still working in the MNE offices insistently claimed that there were no problems with the dissemination of new policies on the side of the MNE offices: New policies were always properly circulated with clear instructions, and necessary in-service trainings were regularly offered to every practitioner. They asserted that the problems arose because teachers did not pay enough attention to the requirements of the new policies, as one of them complained:

If an announcement is made to teachers orally, it is alright; [but] if the announcement is made through a [written] document for reading, they do not read it. As I say, even if this is assigned to them as duty, ordering ‘you will read this’, the teachers do not read it indeed. They listen to a brief about it from someone by phone. ... Our teachers learn by listening and observing; in a manner like that of Turkish peasants of 2000 years ago (O5).

Öğretmenlere eğer sözlü olarak duyurulabilmişse tamam; [fakat] okumaları için belge ile duyuru yapılırsa, okumuyorlar. Diyorum ya, kendilerine bu ödev olarak gelirse, öğretmenlere ‘şunu okuyacaksınız’ diye, onu bile okumuyorlar. Telefonla okuyan birinden özetini alıyorlar. ... Bizim öğretmenimiz dinleyerek ve görerek öğreniyor; taa 2000 yıl evvelki Türk köylüsü gibi bu şekilde.

Such criticism was also interrelated in the data with the theme of “teachers’ attitude toward new policies”, which will be presented in the following part.

4.2.2. Practitioners’ attitudes toward new policies/policy changes

Practitioners’ attitudes toward new policies/policy changes evolved as quite a cogent theme out of eight forceful categories. Three main concepts in regard to this theme developed: (teachers’ feelings of) *resistance*, *ownership* and *accountability* concerning the policy process.

a) Resistance to the new policy/policy change

Participants openly declared their perceptions and views about why and how teachers would resist or react to novelty or modification with respect to an educational policy or regulation (Category 1).

Category 1

Resistance by the implementers to policy change/adopting a new policy

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Not understanding the policy	10	7	11
The change as extra work load/burden	9	7	10
Teachers' comfort zone, laziness, fear/anxiety	9	6	10
(Lack of) motivation, (lack of) dedication; indifference	11	7	9
Claiming to know better than the policymakers	7	3	8
Regarding their own system/policy as alternative	5	2	7
Connection between resistance/reaction and participation	13	8	9
Requisiteness of resistance	8	8	7
Fatalness of practitioner resistance	9	6	10

Most informants claimed that resistance could occur when the policy was not understood enough by the implementers. It was signalled teachers would consider that the change would bring them extra work load/burden; it would disturb teachers' comfort zone because they were rather lazy to cope with something new, and/or they would feel feared by and anxious about novelties. This sort of unfavourable teacher behaviour was judged as the outcome of their lack of motivation, lack of dedication, and their indifference to newness. Additionally, the informants underlined two points: some teachers would claim to know better than the policymakers, and some would regard a teacher's peculiar system/policy and the like as an alternative to those created by the authorities. Such a perception could be interpreted as a criticism of teachers' attitude, pointing to some sort of arrogance, as well as a criticism of low-quality policy production by the authorities. Finally, three significant considerations were noted in this category: Firstly, there was a strong connection between resistance/reaction and lack of proper participation in policymaking; that is, when the participation of practitioners in policy-making was not duly provided, it would be inevitable to expect and witness resistance in its application. That

insufficient participation of teachers in policymaking and lack of knowledge about the new policies would cause resistance on the side of the implementers was signified by a teacher as follows:

There is always resistance [to new policies]; the most significant reason for it is ‘not knowing enough [about them], not working sufficiently, not learning, lack of creativity, fear of taking risks, not knowing how to study certain types of projects, and so on’... If she/he has been given training suitable for your new curriculum in advance, the resistance will decrease. ... When she/he thinks that she/he has also contributed [to policymaking], there will be minimum resistance (T10).

Direnç her zaman olur; en önemli nedeni ‘yeterince bilmemek, yeterince çalışmamak, öğrenmemek, yaratıcılık eksikliği, risk almaktan korkmak, proje türünün nasıl çalışılacağını bilmemek vb.’ ... Önceden kendisine sizin yeni müfredatınıza uygun bir eğitim verilmişse dirençler azalır. ... Kendisinin de katkısı olduğunu düşündüğü zaman minimum direnç olur.

Secondly, as listed under the code “requisiteness of resistance”, it was hinted that teachers *ought to* show resistance to the new policies when the demands/orders of the authority included in the policy were against the nature of the profession of teaching, and laws and regulations (the practitioner should have the courage to oppose). Third and respectively the most significant insight was that resistance by teachers might be fatal for the policy’s future; that is, the policy might result in dysfunction because of teachers’ attitude of resistance in implementation.

Kinds of resistance/reaction

Perceptions in the second category covered remarkable kinds of reactions by the implementers (Category 2).

Category 2

What sort of resistance/reaction?

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Refusal, denial, insolence, defiance, stubbornness	9	6	9
Obstruction through finding faults, fussing	8	7	9
Complexes, feeling of revenge, sabotage (due to lack of participation)	7	5	7
Obvious resistance/hidden resistance	5	3	6
Refuse to teach	6	2	4

The participants mentioned teachers' "refusal, rejection, denial, insolence, defiance, and stubbornness", either directly or indirectly, while depicting their attitude of resistance to the new policies. It was indicated that teachers would also obstruct the practice by finding faults with the policy, in a sense of fussing to rebuke the policy or, they could develop emotions of self-defence, grudge, personal complexes, revenge, attempt of sabotage, and the like, mostly due to the fact that they were not allowed to participate in the process. The resistance might be either obvious or hidden, and it might evolve as refusing the application of the (procedures of the) policy in instruction. This view/perception was shared by rather a small group of the participants ($f=12$, total in three groups), but still should be regarded as significant.

Reducing the resistance

The next category comprised the participants' opinions and suggestions about reducing teachers' resistance to the policies in the practice phase (Category 3).

Category 3

How to reduce resistance?

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Clear and proper dissemination	13	8	12
Reasoning and rationale (behind the change/ new policy)	9	6	10
Continuous informing	11	7	11
In-service training	10	8	11
Explaining to teachers why their suggestions were not applied	9	7	8
Support from (experienced) teachers	7	3	7
Proper selection of teachers	8	6	9
Piloting the new applications	9	8	10
Esteem for teachers by MNE	9	6	8
Appreciation of teachers' views	9	8	9
More initiative (to teachers)	10	7	7
Flexibility (in practice)	9	7	5
Publicizing drafted policy/curricula	9	8	6

Nearly all informants agreed that clear and proper dissemination of policy changes could help reduce the resistance/adverse reaction in the policy implementation phase. It was advocated that their resistance would be moderated if the teachers comprehended the reasoning behind the change/policy and accordingly believed its assets. Continuous informing, in-service training and piloting of the change/new policy by the authorities would help diminish the resistance as well. It was advised that explaining to teachers why their suggestions were not applied would greatly reduce reactions. An academician stressed that resistance to new policies would increase if teachers' views were taken but not applied. Accordingly, she/he clued on extenuating the resistance – explicating the rationale behind the change and explaining why teachers' views/suggestions were not applied:

It is alright if you get an opinion [of stakeholders] and apply that opinion. But if you get an opinion and do not apply it, you may increase the resistance. People can lose their faith. ... Instead of saying “this is how we do it; you don't understand this job”, if they [practitioners] are informed in a way like “we did it this way; and the reason [rationale] is this”, and if they are well trained [on the policy], I think that resistances would not be encountered much. ... [In similar conditions], after expressing *actually how right those people who resist are in their resistance*, when I say, “but would you please also think like this as well?”, I see that their resistance disappears. So, perhaps you should do like this. ... “come on, let us be together, let us apply it like this. Let us try it once; if not successful, let us fix it together then”. In other words, I think you can eliminate the resistances if you clearly express that you involve those people in the work [policymaking] when you do, and if you explain clearly the reasons why you do not involve them when you do not (A8).

Görüş alıp da görüşü de uyguluyorsanız tamam. Ama görüş alıp da görüşü uygulamıyorsanız direnci arttırabilirsiniz. İnançlarını kaybedebilir insanlar. ... “Biz böyle yapıyoruz işte; siz anlamıyorsunuz bu işten” demek yerine “biz böyle yaptık ama sebebi şudur şudur” diye iyi açıklansa, iyi eğitilse bu dirençlerle fazla karşılaşılmayacağını düşünüyorum. ... [Benzer durumlarda ben] o *direnen insanların aslında dirençlerinde ne kadar haklı olduklarını* ifade ettikten sonra “ama şöyle de düşünür müsünüz lütfen?” dediğim zaman onların o direncinin yok olduğunu görüyorum. Yani belki böyle yapmak lazım. ... “Gelin hep beraber bir olalım, bunu böyle uygulayalım. Bir deneyelim, olmuyorsa yine tekrar beraber düzeltelim”. Yani kişileri işin içine çekerseniz de çektiğinizi ifade etmeniz, çekmeseniz de çekemediğinizin sebeplerini ... ifade ederseniz dirençleri ortadan kaldırdığınızı düşünüyorum.

The participants claimed that, both in the policy formulation and practice stages, it was required to get support from experienced and expert teachers. Related to this context, quite a number of informants illuminated the significance of selecting teachers/teacher candidates properly at the faculties. Especially the teacher participants (fervently), most of the academicians and more than half of the officials hinted that teachers would show required respect to MNE policies and policy-makers with less resistance provided that MNE esteemed teachers and their views. In this manner, it was also clued that teachers needed appreciation, which would pay back in the form of appreciation of government policies. Providing teachers with more initiative and flexibility in practicing the policies was believed to diminish reactions too. Finally, it was indicated that the draft of the new policies, specifically the curricular ones, should be publicized before enactment on condition that the opposing views and suggestions ought to be considered seriously.

Concerning dissemination of new policies and teachers' reaction to them, an academician, who also taught in schools for a considerable time, exemplified the situation indicating that usually the essence of new policies could not be communicated and conveyed to the teachers clearly and thus, consequently, either the operations of the policies were distorted or teachers refused to apply them:

Prominently, it is needed to create environments in which we can make the teacher believe this [change/policy]. Let me give you a vivid example that we experienced personally: ... Students were given a task called performance tasks, and those tasks turned into tasks performed by parents, becoming a sort of pain. Well, why did this happen? Because we could not explain what the so-called performance task actually was, what it corresponded to, what it aimed, and we could not explain these changes; we could not achieve, we did it wrong. Why did we go wrong? Because our teacher was not aware of this. ... Many teachers also graded students even without giving and assessing this assignment (A7).

Bir kere öğretmene bunu inandıracığımız ortamları yaratmak gerekiyor. Bunun için çok canlı bir örnek vereyim bizzat bizim yaşadığımız: ... Performans görevleri diye çocuklara bir görev verildi ve o görevler velilerin yaptığı görevler haline ve ızdırap haline dönüştü. Şimdi neden böyle oldu? Çünkü performans görevi denilen şeyin ne olduğunu, neye karşılık geldiğini, neyi amaçladığını bu değişikliklerin anlatamadık; başaramadık, yanlış yaptık. Niye

yanlış yaptık? Çünkü öğretmenimiz bunun farkında olmadı. ... Çoğu öğretmen de hiç bu ödevi yaptırmadan not verdi.

b) Connection between participation and resistance (moving to adoption/ownership)

In the next category, the main idea was, once more, proper participation of teachers in policy process, which would be the best method of reducing resistance (Category 4). Participants declared that democratic approach in policymaking would constitute a robust infrastructure as a preventive measure for avoiding resistance to policies in application (Category 4).

Category 4

Proper participation of teachers in policymaking might be the best way to reduce resistance

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Democratic approach in policymaking	14	9	8
Approval by teachers in the formulation phase	9	7	7
Preventive measures/strategies	12	8	8

Similar implications to the assertion “If I participated as a policymaker, I would not resist as a practitioner” – that are not reported in this category – was expressed by each of the teacher participants ($f=15$) while supported by most of the others. Therefore, approval of policies by teachers in the formulation phase was noted as critical for their implementation. In regard to this context, one teacher presented her/his perceptions in a metaphorical manner:

Imagine we make a dish. I eat the dish that I have made rather confidently; however, while eating a dish cooked by my neighbour, I check it if there is anything wrong with it. I eat that dish with hesitation and criticize it more. Well, I may not see the flaws of the one that I made myself, I see the plusses. So, I can cover up the flaws, too. In other words, the approach, love and respect of a person towards what she/he herself/himself does is something completely different. I adopt [internalize] much and much more a program developed with my own contribution, and I suppose, since the objectives will be the ones which I agree that the children can understand, I will tell [the lessons] better and vigorously considering that they will perceive much more. I mean, it is a process

that we [teachers] must absolutely be involved in. This is a very effective situation. ... Now at least we handle it [the curricula] in September. And we say things like “Did they remove this too? Did they add that too? Where is this attainment/objective?”. There are discussions with friends, for instance, we argue among ourselves. We approach [the matters] critically and there is little constructive criticism. Because, I think every year it gets worse. I think so (T8).

Bir yemek yaptığımızı düşünün. Kendi yaptığım yemeği ben gayet güvenerek yerim ama komşumdan gelen yemeği yerken bir bakarım içinde bir şey var mı diye. Tereddüt ederek yerim ve onu daha fazla eleştiririm. Eeee, kendi yaptığının kusurunu da görmeyebilirim, artısını da görürüm. Yani kusurlarını da örtebilirim. Yani insanın kendi yaptığı şeye olan yaklaşımı, sevgisi, saygısı bambaşka bir şey. Kendi katkımın olduğu bir programı çok çok daha benimserim ve bana göre çocukların anlayacağı kazanımlar olduğu için çok çok daha onların algılayacağını düşünerek daha iyi ve sağlam şekilde anlatırım diye düşünüyorum. Yani muhakkak içinde olmamız gereken bir süreç. Bu çok etkili bir durum. ... Şimdi en azından biz [müfredatı] Eylülde alıyoruz elimize. “Bunu da mı çıkarmışlar? Bunu da mı eklemişler? Hani bu kazanım nerede?” falan diyoruz. Tartışma oluyor arkadaşlarla, kendi aramızda tartışıyoruz mesela. Eleştirel yaklaşıyoruz ve pozitif eleştiri yönleri az oluyor. Çünkü her yıl bence kötüye gidiyor. Ben öyle düşünüyorum.

Another teacher portrayed the issue of democratic approach in decision-making/policy-making by comparing similar conditions in an activity within the classroom:

Simply, when you want to set a rule in class, if you develop it with your student, the student adopts that rule better. I think it's the same for the teacher. I mean, if you take her/his opinion and include her/him in the process, I think that the teacher will adopt the works done and policies made more in the application process. She/he becomes more efficient. She/he feels herself/himself involved in the process. Otherwise, we take a program or policy that we see for the first time and implement it. Then we constantly criticize; like this, well, “should this subject be put here? Is it only that amount of lesson time allocated to this unit?” etc. (T3).

En basitinden sınıfta bir kural koymak istediğinizde, bunu öğrencinizle birlikte oluşturduğunuzda, öğrenci bu kuralı daha çok benimser. Bence öğretmen için de aynı şekilde. Yani görüşünü alıp sürecin içine katarsanız, öğretmen yapılan işleri, politikaları daha çok benimser uygulama sürecinde diye düşünüyorum. Daha verimli olur. Kendini sürecin içinde hisseder. Öbür türlü, ilk defa gördüğümüz bir program veya politikayı alıp uyguluyoruz. Sonra da habire eleştiriyoruz; böyle hani bu konu buraya konulur mu? Bu üniteye bu kadar ders saati ayrılır mı? vb.

c) Owning the policy

Participants, by highlighting certain points, underscored how important the implementers' feeling (of) ownership of the policy was (Category 5). Participants in the study sharply asserted that new policies or policy changes could not be implemented properly without the practitioners' ownership of them. They also believed that there was a direct relationship/correlation between the (degree of) implementers' feeling of owning the policy and reducing their probable resistance to it. Furthermore, it was stated that practitioners' ownership would support accountability for and sustainability of the policy (Category 5).

Category 5

Significance of ownership of the new policy by practitioners

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Ensuring proper implementation	11	8	10
Reducing resistance	10	7	11
Supporting sustainability	9	7	8
Supporting accountability	9	7	8
Comprehending the policy well (supports owning it)	9	6	8
Belief in the policy (reinforces owning it)	10	6	7
Impact of participation (on ownership)	8	6	9

As an answer to the question “how to develop ownership attitude for implementation” the informants indicated that comprehending the policy well and having belief in it would contribute to the owning of it, and accordingly to the better practice. Once more here, stakeholder participation was signified forcefully; resistance or ownership would be decided mainly according to the *participation degree* of practitioners in the policymaking processes. The vitality of this approach was stressed by a teacher underlying the importance of “ownership” for the curriculum implementation: “Actually, a curriculum that is not owned by its implementer is useless, this is the entire issue; [if so, then, in practice] there is always pretence/would-be doing” (T10). (“Zaten uygulayıcı tarafından sahiplenilmeyen bir müfredat hiçbir işe yaramaz, bütün sorun bu; [böyle olunca, uygulamada] miş gibi yapılır sürekli”). A2 also highlighted this

point indicating that “a program that is not owned by the teacher is doomed to remain just as a *booklet*” (“öğretmen tarafından benimsenmeyen program sadece *kitapçık* olarak kalır”). In regard to owning the new policy or program, dissemination of it and teachers’ reaction to it, A7 commented as follows, signifying an important point in an ironical manner with his last words portraying parents’ attitude:

I think that any change, which the [implementing] teacher does not understand well, which she/he does not embrace, which she/he does not wholeheartedly agree to take to his classroom, and which she/he is not volunteer will not be successful. So, we're going to tell this to teachers: We're making this change, but why are we doing it? What are the principles of this change?

... But, now, here is a program that is put on the Ministry's [web] page. Ordering to do this, to do this here, to do that there...It says that “if you have any criticism on this subject, send it to us via this way” etc. Actually, the teacher is completely aware that when this criticism is sent, it will *not be taken into consideration*. Well, consequently, any change that the teacher cannot transfer to her/his class in the classroom – to us, the most important place is the classroom – is not a change at all. If this change is not something that the teacher wholeheartedly agrees with, it is not an improvement indeed. Well, sometimes the teacher automatically rejects both a change and an improvement. Well, then, at that time, there were teachers who did not give any performance assignments. “What is this, though?” one [teacher] said, and added “I'm not doing such a thing!”. Because she/he did not understand its philosophy as well, she/he never applied it. The parents appreciated that teacher more [than the other teachers who applied]: “Our teacher does not give performance assignments; she/he is a very good teacher!”, they say, for example (A7).

Ben öğretmenin iyi anlamadığı, sahiplenmediği, sınıfına götürmeye canı gönülden katılmadığı, gönüllü olmadığı hiçbir değişikliğin başarılı olamayacağını düşünüyorum. Yani bunun için öğretmenlere bunu anlatacağız: Bu değişikliği yapıyoruz ama neden yapıyoruz? Bu değişikliğin ilkeleri neler?

... Ama, şimdi, işte, bakanlığın sayfasına koyulmuş bir program. Ona bunu yapacaksın, burada bunu yapacaksın, şurada da şunu... “Bu konuda bir eleştirin varsa bize şuradan yolla” vs. Bir kere bu eleştiri gittiğinde bunun *dikkate alınmayacağı*nın çok farkında öğretmen. Yani, sonuç olarak öğretmenin sınıfında, – bizim için en önemli yer sınıf – sınıfına aktaramadığı hiçbir değişiklik, değişiklik değildir. Bu değişiklik öğretmenin canı gönülden katıldığı bir şey değilse de bu gelişim değildir. Yani bazen öğretmen hem değişimi hem de gelişimi otomatik olarak reddediyor. O zaman, hem mesela hiç performans görevi vermeyen öğretmenler var o dönemde. “Bu da ne?” dedi ya. “Ben böyle bir şey yapmıyorum!” dedi. Hani felsefesini de anlamadığı için hiç uygulamadı. O öğretmeni veliler daha çok takdir ettiler: Bizim öğretmenimiz performans görevi vermiyor; çok iyi bir öğretmen diyorlar“ mesela.

d) Accountability for the policy outcomes

The next category focused on the concept of accountability in regard to implementation of policies (Category 6).

Category 6

Practitioners' sense of accountability for new policy implementation concerns

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Significance of practitioners' feeling accountable	13	8	11
Sources: Responsibility and/or liability	10	8	9
Impact of comprehending the policy	9	8	8
Impact of clarifying the obscure points	10	8	7
Impact of transparency and sincerity	11	8	8
Convincing practitioners about why their suggestions are not applied	12	8	7
Authenticating sensitivity	9	7	8
Lack of feeling of accountability concerning consultancy	11	8	9
Lack of feeling of accountability concerning participation	12	7	8
Internalization of the policy	10	8	9

One perception expressed more commonly by the participants was that practitioners' feeling of accountability for the policy was significant in the practice phase of it. To them, feeling(s) of responsibility, obligation and liability appeared as sources of accountability attitude on the side of teachers. The relationship between practitioners' sense of accountability and their comprehension, realization and rationalization level of the new policy was emphasized; this, in fact, was also mentioned as a means of internalization of the policy by the implementers, which could lead them to develop an accountability attitude. The informants suggested three conducts that policy actors should administer to support practitioners' attitude of developing accountability: a) policy actors should clarify the obscure points concerning the policy, b) they must be transparent, sincere and honest in formulation and dissemination of it, and more significantly, c) they should persuade the practitioners why their suggestions had not been applied in the policy formulation (if so). They distinguished two factors that would damage practitioners' responsive recognition of accountability: The first was their lack of feeling of accountability

concerning *consultancy*, claiming in similar manners as this defensive assertion: “Why should I be/feel accountable; did they ask for and appreciate my views during policymaking?”. The second one was the lack of feeling of accountability concerning *participation*: “This is your program/policy/curriculum; I did not make it – “If I participated as a policymaker, I would feel accountable as a practitioner”. As a final remark regarding this occasion, the informants hinted that accountability by the implementers could be realized through their internalization of the policy.

The actors who should be held accountable for the policy’s outcomes were the topic of the next category in this section, which comprised differentiated views between the two groups of participants, the teachers and the officials (Category 7).

Category 7

Who should be accountable for policy practice issues?

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Teachers as implementers	8	6	11
MNE’s responsibility not the others’	11	8	8
Policy-making actors’ responsibility	13	9	8
The policymakers not the implementers	11	8	5
Teachers not participated in the process are not to be accountable	12	8	8
Owning the success/rejecting the failure!	8	7	10

Half of the teacher participants together with most of the academicians and the officials stated that, in normal conditions, teachers, as implementers, must be accountable for the (and its outcomes) policy in any way: It was expressed that they, naturally, should be accountable for policy practice; however, almost all the teachers and academicians including more than half of the officials (mostly retired ones, $n=7$) voiced their belief that MNE could not hold the teachers and academicians accountable for the deficiencies in practice, since they were not let involve properly in the process. (This sort of discrepancy was again related to the matter of consultation and participation of teachers in policymaking, which will also be elaborated on deeply in the discussion part). Therefore, the participants insistently claimed that decision-makers and policy-

making actors in the government offices had to be accountable for anything concerning the policies since they were the ones who had made the policy. In line with this approach, in sum, the informants believed that teachers would not be accountable for policies just because they had to implement them; and they were right in saying “Not me/us but MNE must account for”. On the other hand, a significant assertive voice was raised by them as self-criticism in regard to accountability: as both policy-makers and policy implementers, “habitually, we do not ever accept failures, but own success only!”

e) Engineering the policy process according to practitioner ownership and accountability: the key role of participation in policy-making

Respondents underlined the significance of implementers’ (teachers’) participation in policymaking properly as a vital factor for their ownership of and accountability for the new policy/policy change (Category 8).

Category 8

Implementers’ (teachers’) participation in policymaking properly is a must for their ownership of and accountability for the new policy

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Participation of teachers in all phases	14	9	11
Teachers’ participation degree	11	7	8
Possessing the policy	12	8	9
Believing in the policy	11	8	9
Internalizing the policy	10	7	8
Feeling accountable for policy process	13	8	8
When/if the teacher is not involved!	14	8	9

Rather than seemingly engaging in the bureaucracy of policy process as a formality, teachers’ substantially participating in *all phases* of policy process was firmly recommended by the informants. Furthermore, it was suggested that more than half of the decision-makers must be teachers in educational policy processes. By this way, according to the informants, it could be ensured that teachers would possess the policy genuinely and truthfully; they would believe

in the policy admitting its failures and shortcomings and more importantly, they would internalize the policy by sticking to it saying “I am also in the business”. So, they would feel responsible/accountable for the policy process as a whole. Otherwise, it was warned by the informants that, teachers would defend themselves indicating “If I had participated in the policymaking process, I would own the policy altogether; but I had not”. Thus, in a sense, it can be enunciated that the respondents promoted *participation* as a powerful instrument that might engineer the route to better policy practice by arousing feelings of ownership and accountability (in the practitioners) and by bridging the gaps (between policy formulation and its practice) when appears.

Remarkable quotations concerning the relationship between participation in the process and feelings of ownership/accountability which were highlighted more in the 7th and 8th categories are presented in this part. An academician compared teacher participation in policymaking process to that of a military commander in terms of responsibility and she/he emphasized that unsuccessfulness would not be an alternative consequence once a teacher was involved in the process:

It would be natural for a teacher to accept her/his responsibility and to account for all the deeds concerning activities of education – not just the program – in which she/he participated, of which she/he herself/himself is a stakeholder, which are formed by her/his contributions, in which there is her/his elbow grease and sweat ... You know, like in the military; the commander is responsible for what she/he did not do as much as for what she/he did, and so is the teacher! If we involve the teacher in some form of this [policymaking process], she/he will take this responsibility, and in fact, when such a condition is constituted, there will be no failure though, in my opinion (A7).

Öğretmenin kendisinin de bir paydaşı olduğu, kendisinin katkıları ile oluşmuş, kendisinin emeği, alın terinin olduğu, sadece program değil, eğitimin bütün faaliyetlerinde, katıldığı her iş için sorumluluğunu kabul etmesi, hesap vermesi normal olur... Hani askerlikte var ya; komutan yaptıklarından olduğu kadar yapmadıklarından da sorumludur, öğretmen de öyle! Bunun [politika yapımı süreci] içinde bir şekliyle var ederseniz öğretmeni, bu sorumluluğu alacaktır ve aslında böyle bir şey olduğunda başarısızlık da söz konusu olmayacaktır bana göre.

One teacher contributed to this view, highlighting accountability and finding remedies for faults:

If I participated in the program or policy making process, that is, in an unsuccessful application, I would speculate as "where did I/we make a mistake?" and we would move to correct it. However, this time (now, when they made it just by themselves) we would say "they did it wrong again". So, [when I participated], as in my own written student exam [I myself prepared], I would say I did it wrong. Well, by asking myself "Where did I go wrong?", I would check myself. I would criticize positively/constructively instead of blaming (T8).

Program ya da politika yapımı sürecine katılmış olsam, yani, başarısız bir uygulamada "nerede yanlış yaptım/yaptık?" diye düşünürüm, düzeltmeye geçeriz. Bu sefer [şimdi, sadece onlar yapınca] "yine yanlış yaptılar" diyoruz. O zaman, kendi yazılımdaki [benim hazırladığım sınav] gibi yani ben yanlış yaptım derim. "Ha, nerede yanlış yaptım?" diye kendime döner bakarım. Suçlayıcı olacağıma pozitif eleştiri yaparım.

A teacher stressed this point in a similar manner underlying the power and support of participation for sharing responsibility and avoiding accusing others: "No one will accuse anyone since all [of them] participated in the job. When policymaking process is shared, responsibility will be shared too. Then, the problems in the practice will be settled much more easily" (T3). ("... Herkes işin içinde olduğu için kimse kimseyi suçlamayacak. Politika yapımı süreci paylaşıldığında, sorumluluk da, hesap verme durumları da paylaşılacak. Böylece, uygulamadaki problemler daha kolay halledilecek").

The perception of *lack of stakeholder consultation and participation* in policymaking was again emphasized as it was done frequently in previous parts. The informants stressed once more that it caused *lack of ownership* of the policy and accordingly *lack of feeling of accountability* for it by the practitioners (teachers), which would lead to low *quality* of implementation. This argument was rather directly asserted by the teachers, a sample of which was as follows:

The policymakers produce policies without our participation, they do not even really ask for our opinions; so, how can they expect us to perfectly implement those policies that we have not made? Let alone participate, we do not hear anything about some policies until we are assigned to practice them! (T6).

Politika yapıcılar bizim katılımımız olmadan politika üretiyorlar, hatta gerçekte hiç fikrimizi bile sormuyorlar; Bu durumda, bizim kendimizin yapmadığı o politikaları kusursuzca uygulamamızı nasıl umuyorlar? Bırakın katılmayı, taa ki

uygulama görevi verilene kadar bazı politikalar hakkında hiçbir şey duymamış oluyoruz!

Teachers and academicians maintained the perception that they could not be held responsible for the failures of the new policy since they were not let participate *becomingly* in its formulation. Therefore, they believed, the people and institutions that were involved in the policymaking process and the decision-makers had to account for any concerns about the practice of new policies. One academician explained the issue by referring to the concept of *responsibility* as:

If every related person participates in policy making, everyone will take responsibility. Well, of course, if you make a policy without involving me at all or responding to my questions and objections, what will I say when I [have to] account for it?: "You didn't ask me, you didn't get my opinion. I tried to tell you so many times; Now, you will [have to] account for the failure". This is a humane reaction, indeed. This is the correct one. But if she/he has also contributed to it, and if it reflects her/his own opinion, then he will seek solutions to the problems that arise: "Why did this happen? We made a mistake somewhere", etc. It will be resolved more easily. She/he will not accuse anyone, because he's involved in the work, this time; She/he will also participate in problem-solving. Thus, while implementing the policy, he will own it voluntarily (A6).

İlgili herkes politika yapımına katılırsa sorumluluğu da herkes alacaktır üzerine. Şimdi, tabi ki beni hiç işin içine katmadan, sorularıma ve itirazlarıma cevap vermeden politika yaparsanız, hesap verirken ne diyeceğim?: "Bana sormadınız, fikrimi almadınız. Ben size söylemeye çalışmışım o kadar. Siz vereceksiniz başarısızlığın hesabını". İnsani bir tepkidir yani. Doğru olan da budur. Ama eğer kendi de ona katkı sunduysa, kendi görüşü de oysa, o zaman çıkan problemlere çözüm arayacaktır: "Bu niye böyle oldu? Bir yerde yanlış yaptık" vb. Daha kolay çözümlenecektir. Kimseyi suçlamayacaktır bu sefer kendi de işin içinde çünkü; Çözümü de ortak olacaktır. Böylece politikayı uygularken kendi isteğiyle onu sahiplenecektir.

On the other hand, the officials (especially the active ones) claimed that teachers must be accountable for all aspects of the policy practice. In this context, standing for a *reply* or *counter-argument* to that claim, teachers highlighted insistently that they could be held responsible for the outcomes of the curricular changes as long as their views and suggestions had been appreciated properly:

You should invite the stakeholders to the studies properly ... You will ensure the participation of teachers as the majority. You will also take their views into consideration and you will say “we have reflected your views especially or to a great extent on this plan and program. You are its practitioners. Therefore, if I have taken your views into account, then I can naturally ask for an account of it, though, contentedly. Why? Because you suggested that. This program has been shaped mostly in line with your views. But I also ask for the account”.

... If you conduct a study without taking my views into consideration, and make me implement it, then you will not have the luxury of asking for an account from me (T6).

Siz paydaşları olması gereken şekilde davet edeceksiniz çalışmalara... Çoğunluk olarak öğretmenlerin katılımını sağlayacaksınız. Görüşlerini de dikkate alacaksınız ve diyeceksiniz ki “bakın biz sizin özellikle de ya da büyük oranda sizin görüşlerinizi bu plana, programa yansıttık. Uygulayıcısı sizsiniz. Dolayısıyla bakın sizin görüşlerinizi ben dikkate aldıysam o zaman bunun hesabını da sorabilirim rahatlıkla, gönül rahatlığıyla. Niye? Çünkü siz böyle önerdiniz. Büyük oranda size göre şekillendi bu program. Ama hesabını da sorarım”.

... Benim görüşümü dikkate almayıp da bir çalışma yapıyorsanız bana da uyguluyorsanız, o zaman hesap sorma gibi lüksünüz olmaz.

It was indicated by the teachers that the responsible body that would be accountable for the failures of the policy would be the *official institutions unless* the teachers had participated in the policymaking:

If there is a problem in the implementation and if this program or policy has been created by taking my opinion, the ministry can ask me to account for it; They can criticize by saying “You put it forward, it was made in line with your views, look, these problems arose as a result. So, there is a mistake here. You did not give enough or valuable information to me, etc.”. But now, I'm criticizing them [the ministry]. Because they made it themselves without asking me, I have the right to ask the administration to account for it. (T7)

Uygulamada aksaklık çıkarsa ve benim görüşümü alarak bu program veya politikayı oluşturmuşsa, bakanlık benden hesap sorabilir; “Sen bunu ortaya koydun, senin görüşlerin doğrultusunda yapıldı, bak onun sonucunda bu sorunlar çıktı. Demek ki burada bir hata var. Sen yeterli veya değerli bilgi vermemişsin bana vb” diye eleştirebilir. Ama ben şimdi onu eleştiriyorum. Çünkü bana hiç sormadan kendisi yaptığı için benim idareden hesap sorma hakkım doğuyor.

Another significant perception concerning this issue was revealed: For years, there had never been any policy actors or stakeholders who accounted for the faults in implementation of educational policies, from the Minister at the top to the student teacher at the bottom. There was not that sort of a (professional)

culture or tradition in Türkiye. Therefore, it was definitely declared that no one should have expected the teachers to account for the flaws in practice only because they were the final implementers. A teacher said:

Who should be accountable for the program? Have you ever seen someone who accounted for [the failure] when the program failed? What is the teacher's fault? As a teacher, they gave me a program, and I tried to do my best. ... The responsible person is the one who prepared it ... I am sure that there will be fewer problems in the implementation of the programs made by taking the teacher's opinions than the programs made without taking [them] (T2).

Programla ilgili hesap vermesi gereken kim oluyor? Sen hiç program aksadığında hesap veren gördün mü? Öğretmenin suçu ne? Öğretmen olarak bana bir program vermişler, ben de elimden gelenin en iyisini yapmaya çalışmışım. ... Sorumlu onu hazırlayan ... Öğretmenin görüşleri alınarak yapılan programda alınmadan yapılana göre, uygulamada çok daha az sorun çıkacağından kesin eminim.

4.2.3. Teacher quality as a powerful factor affecting policy implementation

Data revealed that teachers were perceived to be the most important actors in the implementation phase of educational policies as they were face to face with students in the classrooms, for/on whom actually the policy was implemented. Thus, the quality of teachers played a significant role in the practice of policies. In this context, initially, participants concentrated on the faculties of education: The first category of this theme covered their opinions on selection and acceptance of teacher candidates to the faculties in the universities.

a) Acceptance to education faculties

In order to improve teacher quality, the respondents proposed several criteria to be appreciated for student acceptance to the faculties as prospective teachers (Category 1).

Category 1

(Recommended) criteria for education faculties' selection and acceptance of teacher candidates

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
The weight of high school scores	9	5	8
Other student scores	8	8	9
References, recommendations, intents, CVs, portfolios	8	7	7
Approval/grading by committees	7	7	6
Special pedagogical and psychological tests	9	8	9

High school degrees, scores in the university entrance exam and other related scores such as language aptitude tests, as well as references and recommendations by remarkable people or institutions, student intent letters, CVs, and portfolios were among such criteria. The informants, especially the academicians, vigorously recommended that there should be committees of experts to interview qualitatively the student candidates who were eligible to be accepted to the education faculties in regard to other quantitative criteria of scores and degrees. Moreover, candidates should go through special pedagogical and psychological tests to qualify them according to the criteria of cognitive and mental appropriateness to the teaching profession. An academician who had been a former school teacher pointed out the weightiness of selection procedures of teacher candidates and portrayed how poor they were at our universities:

Firstly, we should handle teacher training in line with scientific principles. Well, even today, when I question myself whether I am qualified [enough] to be a teacher or not, I cannot answer. So, how was I admitted [to the faculty of education]? By written exam and interview, but not like current interviews. 6 years of training, an education with intensive practices. Now, when we look at the Education Faculties, [we see] that we accept students with the *lowest* scores [emphasis added]. There is no ascertainment of students whether they are psychologically suitable for the teaching profession. In the past, getting a medical report from a full-fledged hospital was necessary; the psychiatry department was the department that examined me the most. Furthermore, the faculty had a doctor; she/he would check me [the candidate students] up from head to toe, and then I [the students] would be accepted there. So, they were preparing you somehow. ... They would train you with ideals, the ideal of the Republic of Türkiye ... None of my friends said "I want [to be assigned to] that place"; they would say "whichever place is welcome". Now you have no chance to see such an understanding. Because, especially the students enrolled in the education faculties of private universities are accepted with lower scores. State

university students are not accepted with low scores, but the excessive class sizes there also reduce the quality of education (A1).

Öğretmen yetiştirmeyi bir kere bilimsel ilkelere göre ele alacağız. Yani ben bugün bile öğretmen olabilecek nitelikte miyim, değil miyim diye hala kendimi sorguladığım zamanlar bilmiyorum. Peki, ben nasıl alındım? Yazılı sınav ve mülakat, ama şimdiki mülakatlar gibi değil. 6 sene eğitim, uygulaması yoğun olan bir eğitim. Şimdi, Eğitim Fakültelerine baktığımız zaman *en düşük puanlı* [vurgu eklendi] öğrencileri alıyoruz. Ruhsal bakımdan bu öğrencilerin öğretmenliğe uygun olup olmadığı açısından tespiti yok. Geçmişte tam teşekküllü hastaneden sağlık raporu alıyordu, psikiyatri bölümü beni en çok irdeleyen bölümdü. Ayrıca okulun doktoru vardı, o da beni baştan aşağı kontrol ediyordu, ondan sonra ben oraya giriyordum. Yani, sizi bir şekilde hazırlıyorlardı. ... ideallerle yetiştiriyorlardı Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ideali ... Mezun olduğumuzda hiçbir arkadaşım “ben şurayı [tayin olarak] istiyorum” demedi, “neresi olursa olsun” derdi. Şimdi böyle bir anlayışı görme şansınız yok. Çünkü özellikle özel üniversitelerin eğitim fakültelerine alınan öğrenciler daha düşük puanlarla alınıyor. Devlet üniversiteleri öğrencileri düşük puanlarla alınmıyor ama orada da sınıf mevcutlarının aşırı olması eğitim kalitesini düşürüyor.

b) Education in faculties

Secondly, the participants expressed their perceptions of teacher education in the faculties. Basically, they expected high-quality education there; however, according to them, faculties lacked it (Category 2).

Category 2

High-quality education in education faculties is required but lacking!

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Neither sufficient nor efficient	9	7	11
Need for high-quality curricula	11	8	8
Gaining proficiency/capacity/competence	12	9	11
Cultivating willingness, dedication and motivation	9	8	9
Academics shape teacher candidates	10	9	11
Teaching both theory and practice	11	9	9
Continuous interaction with the field, the schools	14	8	13
Issues about teacher educator's experience in the field	10	5	10
Lack of high-quality teaching staff	9	7	11
Prioritizing academic career	9	5	8
Deficiencies of faculty education	9	6	9
In-service and life-long training	9	8	9

It was forcefully indicated that teacher education at faculties was neither sufficient nor efficient. The participants suggested that there was a strong need for high-quality curricula for faculties of education, including both theory and practice, through which teacher candidates could gain proficiency, capacity, and competence in regard to teaching profession. Prospective teachers' minds and senses should be cultivated to acquire willingness, dedication and motivation for the profession of teaching with the support of academicians, who were believed to instruct and educate (prospective) instructors by equipping them with such virtues. It was definitely recommended by the informants, especially by all the teacher participants but one ($f=14$), that academicians must be in continuous interaction with the field by working in the schools as well as in the faculties in order to keep in contact with the real practice area; however, since it was not done properly, it was claimed that teacher educators' experience – academicians' – in the field was disputable: Simply, they did not know enough about the implementation processes in schools. On the other hand, there was harsh criticism toward faculty professors on two other points: Firstly, there was not a sufficient number of high-quality teaching staff, and the professors would prioritize their own academic careers (over training future teachers). Another significant point was emphasized that education faculty's aim was dubious because teacher candidates were educated to instruct their prospective students at schools mainly, rather, almost solely, to prepare them for university exams (not for life, nor for improving their intellectual and mental capacity). As the last issue, they underlined that in-service training and life-long training for teachers should be provided by faculties including professional, moral and ethical domains; however, it was signified that they were not carried out properly and sufficiently. A teacher complained about the poor practice of in-service training on new policies:

Not everyone can attend in-service training, indeed. I mean, I cannot attend it when I say "I need this and I want to attend". ... Then, I cannot fully grasp the innovations made.... Why can I not go? [Because] There is a certain quota. Let us say, there is a quota of 20 people; When it is full, other teachers cannot attend (T4).

Hizmet içi eğitime de herkes gidemiyor. Yani “benim şuna ihtiyacım var ve ben gitmek istiyorum” dediğim noktada gidemiyorum. ... Böyle olunca da yapılan yenilikleri tam kavrayamıyorum.... Neden gidemiyorum? Sayı belli. Atıyorum 20 kişilik bir kontenjan var; dolunca diğer öğretmenler gidemiyor.

Teacher education issues

Teacher education emerged as the basic indicator of teacher quality, and it covered both the teacher’s educational background in teaching and her/his training on the new policy she/he was to practice. That is, if the teacher had been well-educated in her/his profession and if she/he was informed/trained properly on the new policy, she/he would doubtlessly implement it successfully. However, the data revealed the perception that the majority of teachers in Türkiye were not well-educated and they were almost never informed properly about new policies or changes.

An academician informed about this issue stressing that the origins of the matter dated back to nearly 70 years ago and criticized the short-term unqualified teacher education programs:

We trained teachers in 45 days after the Village Institutes had been replaced by Teachers Schools. As teachers we assigned the people who would do their military services. In the early 80s, we appointed non-teachers as teachers. Now we are appointing teachers with certificates (A4).

Köy Enstitüleri Öğretmen Okulları tarafından yer değiştirildikten sonra 45 günde öğretmen yetiştirdik. Askerliklerini yapacak olanları öğretmen olarak aldık. 80lerin başında hiç öğretmen olmayanları öğretmen olarak atadık. Şimdi sertifikalarla öğretmen atıyoruz.

Another academician emphasized the importance of teacher education and its priority over curriculum or textbook:

We have to deal with fundamental problems. I mean, actually, our teacher training system must primarily be handled properly too. Because we are dealing with superstructure programs without completing the infrastructure, see. However, whatever the programs and the [course] books are, they are useless unless you train the teachers in a qualified manner. If you raise the teacher with [high] quality, *put just a chalk in his/ her hand* [emphasis added] and she/he will do wonders. Nothing else is needed (A2).

Temel sorunlara eğilmemiz lazım. Yani, aslında öğretmen yetiştirme sistemimizin de öncelikle iyi ele alınması lazım. Çünkü alt yapıyı tamamlamadan üst yapı programları ile uğraşıyoruz bakın. Halbuki program ve kitap ne olursa olsun öğretmeni kaliteli yetiştirmediğin sürece bir işe yaramıyor. Öğretmeni kaliteli yetiştirirsen *eline bir tebeşir ver* [vurgu eklendi], o harikalar meydana getirir. Başka bir şeye gerek yok.

The same academician pointed to another significant issue that many teachers had not been educated in line with their discipline or branch:

Teacher participation should be ensured while making the program and education policy; however, the suitability of the teachers to the profession and to the field should be ascertained properly. Unfortunately, there is such a problem in our country [in this context]. I saw this while I was having one of my PhD students conduct a research for his thesis: 27 % of the teachers who were teaching Turkish classes in Ankara were *not* Turkish teachers (A2).

Program ve eğitim politikası yapılırken mutlaka öğretmen katılımı sağlanmalı; ancak öğretmenlerin de mesleğe ve alana uygunluğu iyi tespit edilmeli. Maalesef ülkemizde böyle bir sıkıntı da var. Ben bir öğrencimin doktora tezi için araştırma yaptırdığımda şunu gördüm: Ankara'da Türkçe dersine giren öğretmenlerin %27'si Türkçe Öğretmeni *değildi*.

An academician – formerly a school teacher – referring to the roots of the teacher quality issue stemming from faculty education, judged the attitude of many academicians at faculties of education, who were neither efficient for nor dedicated to their profession:

The vast majority of fellow academics working at these [education] faculties are not among those who came here step by step on the path of teaching. For example, a research assistant colleague takes her/his doctorate, passes the language exam, and is appointed as an Assistant Professor; but she/he does not know [enough about] classroom management, does not know [enough about] communication with the student, does not know the basic structure of the National Education, and she/he teaches here but says "I do not know the structure of the National Education" now she/he is here as a lecturer like me. ... She/he is *in aspiration of* becoming an associate professor and professor as soon as possible. For her/him, the student is not important. In her/his relations with students, instead of striving to train the students, she/he has an understanding [approach] of "how can I please the student, how will he be contented with me?". ... Moralities are evaluated locally and ethics are generally evaluated at a universal level. We have to confer them. ... Think of a teacher without student love in her/his soul, how can she/he offer quality education? (A1)

Bu fakültelerde görev yapan akademisyen arkadaşların büyük çoğunluğu öğretmenlik yolunda süzülüp gelip adım adım çıkanlardan değil. Mesela, araştırma görevlisi arkadaşımız doktorasını alıyor, dil sınavını veriyor, Yrd. Doç. olarak atanıyor ama sınıf yönetimini bilmiyor, öğrenci ile iletişimi bilmiyor, Milli Eğitimin temel yapısını bilmiyor, burada ders veriyor ama “ben Milli Eğitimin yapısını bilmiyorum” diyor, şimdi o da öğretmen burada Öğretim Üyesi, ben de... En kısa zamanda ben nasıl doçent ve profesör olurum *sevdasında*. Onun için öğrenci önemli değil. Öğrenci ile ilişkilerinde de öğrenciyi yetiştirme çabası yerine 'öğrenciyi ben nasıl memnun ederim, benden nasıl hoşnut olur?', anlayışı var. ... Ahlak yerel, etik de evrensel düzeyde değerlendirilir genelde. Biz onları vermek zorundayız. ... Ruhunda öğrenci sevgisi olmayan bir öğretmen düşünün, nasıl kaliteli eğitim versin?

A highly-experienced retired official asserted that teacher quality, as a result of faculty education, was rather high in the past compared with the present:

Here, the [so-called] quality of education speaks for itself! The teachers we train today are not qualified either. In fact, I would claim that the graduates of former Education Institute, Higher Teacher School and even the graduates of Primary School Teachers' College at secondary level are/were more qualified than today's teachers; because they [prospective teachers] were trained very well (O3).

İşte eğitimin kalitesi ortada! Ne de yetiştirdiğimiz öğretmenin kalitesi var bugün. Hatta ben iddia ediyorum yani eski Eğitim Enstitüsü mezunları, Yüksek Öğretmen Okulu mezunları hatta orta dereceli ilk öğretmen okulu mezunları bugünkünden çok kaliteli; çünkü çok iyi yetiştiriliyordu.

One teacher sarcastically compared a teacher to a housewife in terms of teacher quality and professional education: “There is a problem with teachers too in our country... How are our teachers trained? Indeed, who is the person that you ask [for views]? Whom to ask? Will you ask Aunt Ayşe? Will we ask the teacher who happened to come to school while she is supposed to stay at home [as a housewife], though? (T5). (“Öğretmende de sorun var bizim ülkemizde... Nasıl yetişiyor bizim öğretmenlerimiz? [Fikir] soracağınız kişi kim yani? Kime soracaksınız? Ayşe Teyze'ye mi soracaksınız? Evde oturması gerekirken okula tesadüfen gelmiş öğretmene mi soracağız yani biz?”).

Another teacher highlighted the positive correlation between teacher quality and the quality of school education:

I think the teacher is very determinative and effective in practice. Teacher quality is very important. When we check other countries, [it is seen that] the quality of teachers in countries with good school education is very high. Even though technology, content and methods change, there is something that does not change: You educate human beings; Human beings educate human beings. ... Therefore, your way of selecting and training teachers is very determinative. Therefore, I think that as teacher quality improves, education quality improves. Because those children are in our hands as teachers and we shape them (T12).

Ben öğretmen uygulamada çok belirleyici ve etkili olduğumu düşünüyorum. Öğretmen kalitesi çok önemli. Diğer ülkelere baktığımızda eğitimi iyi olan ülkelerin öğretmen kalitesi çok yüksek. Teknoloji, içerik, yöntemler değişse de değişmeyen bir şey var: Siz insanı eğitiyorsunuz, insan insanı eğitiyor. ... Dolayısıyla sizin öğretmen seçiminiz ve yetiştirmeniz fazla belirleyici. O yüzden, öğretmen kalitesi yükseldikçe eğitim kalitesinin yükseleceğini düşünüyorum ben. Çünkü o çocuklar öğretmen olarak bizim elimizde ve o çocukları biz bu hale getiriyoruz.

(A5) drew attention to teacher quality related to curriculum implementation: “[Suppose] you have made an excellent curriculum; if the teacher is not so qualified as to implement it, the application result is zero. Or, when you choose the wrong method to use, it means that the curriculum is sunk” (T12). (“Sen mükemmel bir müfredat yapmışsın; öğretmenin onu hakkını vererek uygulayabilecek kalitede değilse uygulama sıfır. Ya da kullanılacak yöntemi yanlış seçtiğin zaman müfredat da battı demektir”).

c) Ethical criteria for prospective teachers

To ensure teacher quality, the participants laid stress on ethical dimensions in selecting and assigning (student) teachers. It was underscored that teachers should have those basic qualities (Category 3).

Category 3

Ethical dimensions regarding teacher quality are noteworthy for selection and assignment of student teachers

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Sense of duty/mission	11	8	10
Feeling of responsibility and dedication	10	8	11
Teachers' discrimination/bias about working conditions	7	5	8

The most prominent ones were listed as “sense of duty/mission and feeling of responsibility and dedication towards teaching profession. It was implied that lack of these virtues would defect teacher quality and accordingly, selecting and assigning teachers who lacked them would most probably put the policy practice at risk as well as damage the whole system. In this context, by some informants, some sort of discrimination or bias prevailing among teachers about some difficulties due to the nature of teaching job was signified and was exemplified through the most common one: preferring to work in big towns avoiding working in Eastern Anatolia. They warned that teachers with such an attitude should not be selected or assigned. Pointing to the ethical and humanistic aspects too, importance of teaching as a profession that required dedication was emphasized by an experienced official as:

First of all, the teaching profession is a very sacred profession, well, I do not even need to tell you, dear Mustafa. And teachers must be "mücehhez" [equipped with] I say in Arabic, human values; 'I earn money here, I educate these children, they are my sons, daughters, my kids'. So, if she/he acts according to these values, okay. But, as soon as the bell rings, if she/he wears her/his coat and leaves the student, it is another thing (O10).

Bir kere öğretmenlik mesleği çok kutsal bir meslek Mustafacığım yani size söylememe gerek bile yok. Ve öğretmenler insani değerlerle, Arapça söylüyorum, mücehhez [donanımlı] olması lazım; 'Ben buradan para kazanıyorum, ben bu çocukları yetiştiriyorum, onlar benim oğlum, kızım, evladım'. Yani bu değerlerle hareket ederse tamam. Ama, yani zil çalar çalmaz öğrenciyi bırakıp, haydi mantoyu alıp giderse ayrı şeydir.

Meritocracy

Again, closely related to the ethical dimensions of the profession, but, this time, regarding the bureaucratic/governmental sides of the matter, it was deemed that meritocratic attributes should be prioritized for teaching profession so as to contribute to improving teacher quality (Category 4).

Category 4

Meritocratic attributes should be prioritized for the teaching profession

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Deserving/merit/worth	11	7	7
Meritocracy for selection, appointment, assignment (MNE)	14	8	9
(No) favouritism/nepotism/partisanship	13	8	9
(No) frequent change (of MNE personnel)	9	7	10
Records/registry (for achievements, failures and attitudes)	8	8	13
Restoring esteem for the teaching profession	12	8	11
MNE's (re)gaining its lost respect	9	7	9

Initially, by most teachers and academicians including half of the officials, it was stressed that authorization for student teaching must be granted to deserving, meritorious and worthy teacher candidates in regard to the profession, then, they should be student teachers. Governmental offices of MNE were expected to select, assign and appoint teachers observing and considering primarily meritocracy while their records of achievements, failures and attitudes were evaluated. In line with these, the participants insisted that there should be no favouritism, no nepotism, and no partisanship in governmental applications at all. On the other hand, MNE personnel in bureaucratic positions should not be changed so frequently, especially soon after the changes of higher bureaucrats.

Making teachers great again! – Paradise regained!

The participants thought that the educational environment in the country 40-50 years ago had been much more meritocracy-led and they expressed their desire to return to those days with the help of meritocratic revival; thereupon, esteem for the teaching profession could be restored in the country as well. Accordingly, the MNE could regain its lost respect through its meritocratic approaches and practices.

In line with such an expectation, the participants offered several fundamental formal criteria and principles for official selection and assignment of graduate teachers regarding teacher quality (Category 5).

Category 5

(Recommended) basic formal criteria and principles for official selection and assignment of student teachers regarding teacher quality

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
University degrees	8	7	10
Professional attributes: talent/knowledge/achievement	11	8	12
Special cognitive, pedagogical, psychological and personality tests	8	9	9
Recommendations, intents, CVs, portfolios	8	8	9
Committee approval	9	8	11
Intellectual adequacy	9	8	9
Inefficient MNE inspectors/supervisors	10	7	8

Firstly, most participants defended that a university graduation degree, GPA over 3 out of 4 – over 75 out of 100 must be demanded for immediate assignment as a practice teacher; others should go through extra training and tests. Teacher candidates were expected to have professional attributes like talent, knowledge, achievement and sufficient practical teaching experience supervised and approved by experienced teachers as well as tested by MNE. According to the informants, prospective teachers also ought to possess a satisfactory level of special cognitive, pedagogical, psychological and personality test scores during and after internship. They recommend that special expert committees, evaluating the recommendations, intents, CVs, portfolios that the student teachers submitted, must interview, try and approve them in regard to their aptitude for instruction and pedagogy, and intellectual adequacy for the teaching profession. However, the participants regretfully presented their perception that most MNE inspectors, who were expected to test and assign student teachers, were themselves inefficient in professional knowledge, attitude and assessment concerning teaching profession.

d) Politicization in schools

Participants insistently warned that practitioners, namely teachers and school administrators, should never be politicized; having participated in educational policy-making would not mean they could get involved in politics

[concerning ideology imposition] indeed. It was implied that politicization in schools would result in damage to teacher quality (Category 6).

Category 6

Politicization of practitioners (must be avoided)

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Politicization of teachers	9	6	8
Involvement of political ideology, partisanship	10	7	8
Sided governmental/political attitude	8	7	9
(Influence of) politicized unions	8	7	6
Fatality of politicization of teachers	12	8	10

The informants, however, agonizingly worried that teachers had been politicized, involved in political ideologies and partisanship had been prevailing in the schools. The reasons for the spread of that kind of *plague* were mainly: 1) sided governmental/political attitude, through which teacher employment was abused as a political instrument for vote collection, and 2) influence of politicized educational unions and modes of membership in them. As an overall outlook, the participants expressed their highest anxiety alarming about the fatality of politicization of teachers for the whole educational system. In close connection with theme 6, “An inevitable need for the constitution of a common uppermost ideology of education over (and excluding) all other political ideologies” as well, an academician disapproved of the ideological attitude of the teachers, which damaged and diminished teaching quality, leading the system toward a *quagmire*:

Our teachers have not had a unity of ideals. ... We need to look at the teachers of the students who protested against Prof. XXX. Most of these teachers are teachers who take sides in political thought. However, there must be no politics [i. e. ideology imposition] in education, judiciary, mosques, and military.... Now, when we look at the teachers who are appointed, we see that mostly, teachers connected with Islamic sciences are assigned and, in the interviews, teachers are selected according to political views. As the result of this [attitude] there is a quagmire and sheer carelessness in the education system (A4).

Öğretmenlerimizin arasında bir ideal birliği olmadı. ... XXX Hoca'yı protesto eden öğrencilerin öğretmenlerine bakmamız lazım. Bu öğretmenlerin büyük bir çoğunluğu siyasal düşüncelerde taraf olan öğretmenler. Oysa, eğitimde, adalette,

camide, askerlikte siyaset olmamalı.... Şimdi, atanan öğretmenlere baktığımızda daha çok İslami ilimlerle ilgili öğretmenlerin atandığını, mülakatlarda siyasi görüşe göre öğretmen seçildiğini görüyoruz. Bunun sonucu da eğitim sisteminde bir çıkmaz ve aymazlık var.

e) Most widespread teacher quality concerns

Participants listed main teacher quality issues in regard to education policy implementation, which, they notified, had to be handled and settled urgently (Category 7).

Category 7

Basic teacher quality issues in regard to curricular policy implementation

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Teachers' lack of proper professional knowledge	10	7	11
Incompetent teachers	8	7	10
Inadequate background knowledge	9	8	9
Comparing old and new teachers	8	8	11
Questionability of teachers' views and suggestions	8	7	10
<i>Disease of teaching to the test</i>	13	8	13
Lack of interest in the theory of education	9	8	11
Lack of sufficient self-confidence	10	6	11
<i>A mission for teachers (voluntary participation in policy-making)</i>	9	7	9

It was informed that incompetent teachers *abound* in schools and have a tendency to increase. More clearly, those teachers' lack of proper professional knowledge of education and their lack of interest in the theory of education would impair the practice of policies, besides, their inadequate background knowledge hindered them from comprehending the new policies, let alone implementing them properly. Therefore, in terms of participation in education policy-making, teachers' views and suggestions were significant but questionable as well. Furthermore, it was a huge mistake that teachers had been *only teaching to the test* and preparing students for exams (LGS and YKS, and the like). On the other hand, teachers' lack of sufficient self-confidence to express views would hamper their performance even if they had the capacity and competence. Meanwhile, some informants insistently attempted to compare the

teachers in the past and today; longing for education in Village Institutes, which, they defended, had raised much more competent teachers in many ways. As a final remark, a piece of advice was promoted: Presenting views in her/his field and participation in policy-making should be admitted as a *mission* for teachers so that they could improve themselves in a motivated manner.

f) Self-criticism by practitioners

Concerning teacher quality, as a powerful factor affecting the implementation of educational policies, perceptions of self-criticism were revealed by the teacher participants about themselves *approved* by academicians and officials – as being formerly teachers and/or immersed in the profession in any way (Category 8).

Category 8

Self-criticism by teachers themselves in regard to teacher quality

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Pretence	9	3	8
Need for self-improvement	12	7	10
Inadequate professional competence	9	8	10
Almost no reading habits	9	2	8
Lack of dedication to teaching	8	3	12
Lack of professional discipline	8	2	9
Lack of effort to improve knowledge	7	5	9
No regular pursuit of curricular regulations	10	2	12
Lack of interest in the theory of education	9	9	10
Submittance (a cultural issue)	8	4	7
Laziness for view presentation	9	5	8
Lack of self-confidence	8	4	11
“We, teachers, cannot say we are not informed enough”	9	8	13
No shared ideals among teachers	9	3	10
Teachers are politicized	9	6	8
Obedience to the political authority	8	2	7

Primarily, either plainly or by alluding, they admitted that “we, teachers, are aware of everything, but pretend not to know”, pointing to the shortcomings in practice due to their personal attitudes. As inferred, they confessed: “We need to improve ourselves; we should spare more time for following educational

improvements and news”; “Inadequate professional competence prevails among us, teachers”. They *harshly* criticized themselves that they lacked the effort to improve their knowledge although they were really aware of all these faults (e. g. “sparing more time to personal unscientific activities like Facebook than to field learning”). They sorrowfully emphasized that “most teachers have almost no reading habits”; furthermore, they conceded that teacher quality would not improve because of their lack of dedication to teaching, lack of professional discipline, and lack of interest in the theory of education. Another *unbecoming* sort of attitude was, they signified, that they would not regularly follow curricular regulations of MNE; thus, they made a clean breast of it indicating “We, teachers, cannot say ‘I am not informed enough by the MNE’ as technology is used so effectively”. Later, their self-criticism moved towards democratic aspects and participation issues in educational policy/decision-making: “We, teachers, consent that some other people decide instead of us and we apply (a cultural/traditional issue of submissiveness)”; this perception was supported by them again informing that teachers had an attitude of (almost) unconditional and absolute obedience to the political authority. Closely related to this context, concerning view-sharing in policy processes, the teacher participants openly stated that they would find it difficult/tiresome/needless to present any views; neither would they have the self-confidence to make suggestions. Their final remarks came in an alarming tone: There had been no shared ideals among teachers and teachers were politicized.

That teachers, themselves, would not spare enough time to comprehend new policies by reading the documents sent by the MNE or by investigating them themselves through the internet and the like, appeared in the data as some other sorts of self-criticism on the side of the teachers. Related to this context, one teacher argued:

Rather than blaming anyone else, we should behave ourselves. That is to say, as teachers, in such an advanced technology [environment], we do not have the luxury to say “I did not know about it [any information]”. Actually, we are aware of everything. Instead of spending three hours a day on Facebook, you can use that time to improve yourself. You can take online courses. For example, I know that the ministry provides some network environments like

EBA. ... But being aware of this, the teacher has to follow them without waiting for a mandatory assignment, in this age/era.

Just blaming the ministry is not a solution, blaming the teacher is not a solution, either; But as for a teacher, it's not just a task that will end up by just being physically present in the classroom. You should always renew yourself and check your improvement. There is a modern process in which you can be involved in the decision-making processes by writing and/or sketching, if necessary, without any request from you [by the authorities]. It might not have been like this in the past, but now even if you are a village teacher, you can make a difference despite all the impossibilities.

... A teacher with just an internet connection can access any trainings. She/He can follow such trainings; even a teacher who is currently teaching in Muş can follow. There are teachers who do it there too. Teacher's desire to improve herself/himself is very important (T3).

Başkasını suçlamaktansa kendimize de bakmalıyız. Şöyle ki, bu kadar gelişmiş teknoloji içinde öğretmen olarak bu konuda benim haberim yoktu deme lüksüne sahip değiliz. Aslında her şeyden haberimiz var. Günde üç saat Facebook ta geçirmek yerine, o vakti kendinizi geliştirmek için de kullanabilirsiniz. Online kurslar alabilirsiniz. Mesela bakanlığın birtakım paylaşım ortamları sağladığını biliyorum EBA gibi... Ama öğretmenin de bunun farkında olarak zorunlu bir görevlendirme beklemeden kendisinin bunları takip etmesi gerekiyor bu çağda. Sadece bakanlığı suçlamak da çözüm değil, öğretmeni suçlamak da çözüm değil; ama öğretmen olarak da bu iş sadece sınıfta fiziksel olarak var olmakla bitecek bir iş değil. Sizin her zaman kendinizi yenilemeniz, takip etmeniz gerekir. Karar alma süreçlerine gerekirse sizden talep edilmeden yazarak çizerek dahil olabileceğiniz bir süreç bu devirde. Geçmişte böyle olmayabilirdi, ama şimdi köy öğretmeni de olsanız tüm imkansızlıklara rağmen fark yaratabilirsiniz...

Sadece internet bağlantısı olan bir öğretmen her eğitime ulaşabilir. Bu tür eğitimleri takip edebilir; şu anda Muş'ta olan bir öğretmen bile takip edebilir. Orada da yapan öğretmenler var. Öğretmenin kendini geliştirme isteği çok önemli.

Another teacher indicated that teachers do not pay due attention to understanding new policies saying “when documents introducing new policies are sent to schools for the teachers to read, most of them only sign the signature check list pretending to have read them without even taking a look at them” (T12).

Officials, too, criticized teachers for their indifference towards new policies:

I witnessed it while I was working as an administrator in secondary education; Most of the teachers, but not all, would sign the Journal of [Ministry] Announcements or related documents as ‘I have read’ without reading it. ... Sometimes they do not even notice the change of policies or programs, let me

speak up openly! If the textbook directs her/him, then it seems alright; otherwise, the teacher is not aware of the matter at all (O13).

Ben ortaöğretimdeki yöneticiliğimde gördüm; öğretmenlerin hepsi değil ama çoğu okumadan 'okudum diye' imzalıyor Tebliğler Dergisini veya ilgili belgeleri. ... Bazen o politika veya program değişikliğinin farkına bile varmıyorlar, açık söyleyim! Ders kitabı yönlendiriyorsa yönlendiriyor; yoksa kendisi olayın hiç farkında bile değil öğretmenin.

Academics shared similar views to the teachers' as they also stressed that teachers were *not competent* enough to realize new policies due to their backgrounds; therefore, they could not respond appropriately to them in implementation. Officials also accused teachers that their reactions to policies were not proper; an official who was also a Physics Teacher said:

Teachers blame the Ministry in case of program failure. They speak and criticize, but they do not write a single report, criticism or suggestion to the Ministry in such studies or something; Because she/he has no self-confidence at all, even she/he does not know whether what she/he tells is true or not. ... *indolence and professional illiteracy* of the teacher! She/he gets the student to have a test for preparation for the university [entrance exams]; she/he does not want to do an experiment, indeed; [because] firstly, doing experiment exercises is burdensome for the teacher, and secondly she/he does not know about it (O9).

Öğretmenler program başarısızlığında bakanlığı suçlar. Konuşur, eleştirirler ama böyle çalışmalarda falan da bir tane yazı, eleştiri ve öneri yazmazlar bakanlığa; çünkü kendine de güveni yoktur, dediği doğru mu değil mi, kendisi de bilmez. ... *öğretmenin üşengeçliği, bilgisizliği*. Öğrenciye üniversiteye hazırlamak için test yaptırıyor, deney de yapmak istemiyor; deney yapmak öğretmene bir, külfetli geliyor, iki bilmiyor.

The issue was also handled as a two-sided matter concerning the lack of communication between teachers and the MNE:

Even if ideas and suggestions are asked for, not all teachers respond. They themselves are uninterested, though. Then, when you ask them, they say "they do not listen to us anyway, they do whatever they like". So, I think, the problem is two-sided. It is very difficult to communicate in such a large system (A5).

Zaten fikir ve öneri sorulsa bile öğretmenlerin tamamı cevap vermiyor. Kendileri de ilgisizler. Sonra sorduğunuz zaman "nasıl olsa bizi dinlemiyorlar, bildiklerini okuyorlar" diyorlar. Yani ben sorunun iki taraflı olduğunu düşünüyorum. Büyük bir sistem içerisinde iletişim kurmak çok zor.

A retired higher-level official who had been appointed to BED while he was a history teacher, who also had worked as a member and higher-level officer of BED for over 30 years, also indicated that the teacher quality was low:

In fact, while inviting to the councils [NECs], you have to choose among the teachers who are distinguished, prominent in their field, and who have written articles/books; but you cannot always find them among teachers. You cannot find teachers who can suggest useful ideas and make criticisms. Our teacher quality is *low* (O3).

Aslında şûraya davet için tabii alanında sivrilmiş, öne çıkmış, işte eserler yazmış falan öğretmenler arasından seçmek lazım; ama bunu her zaman bulamıyorsunuz öğretmenler içerisinde. İşe yarar fikir sunacak, eleştiri yapabilecek öğretmen bulamıyorsunuz. Öğretmen kalitemiz *düşük*.

In an overall manner, data revealed that teachers were also blamed for not accomplishing their profession duly. An official said

Actually, perhaps in some circles, the milieu with whom I speak get furious [with my views]; however, I don't think that the teaching profession is done and maintained very well in our country right now. Teachers – there are many teachers around me, I have close contact with them – constantly say that “I wish the class were over and I could go home, so, I would sit and chat with friends, have tea”, etc. Thus, there appear situations such as creating some free time for *themselves* rather than using that spare time in the classroom very well (O6).

Esasen, belki birtakım çevreler, konuştuğum çevreler çok kızıyor ama şu anda ülkemizde öğretmenlik mesleğinin çok iyi yapıldığını yürütüldüğünü düşünmüyorum. Öğretmenler – çevremde bir çok öğretmen var – hakikaten çok haşır neşir oluyorum – “yaa ders bir bitse, eve bir gitsem arkadaşlarla otursak sohbet etsek, çay içsek” vb. derler sürekli. Bir takım boş alanı *kendilerine* yaratma ve sınıftaki alanı çok iyi kullanmama gibi durumlar söz konusu oluyor.

An official, accusing teachers seriously, indicated that

Teachers do not pay enough care to the official requirements demanded by the ministry and by the teaching profession. For instance, let alone comprehend and digest new programs, most of them do not even take a look at them. What they do is just to follow the textbooks. How come will they contribute to the development of curricula? (O9).

Öğretmenler bakanlık tarafından istenen ve öğretmenlik mesleğinin gerektirdiği şeylere yeterince dikkat etmiyorlar. Mesela, bırakın yeni programları anlayıp hazmetmeyi, o programlara şöyle bir bakmıyorlar bile. Yaptıkları tek şey ders

kitabını takip etmek. Bunlar nasıl olacak da program yapımına katkıda bulunacaklar?

Teachers blamed both themselves and the formal governmental offices ironically:

You want to train a teacher but is that person ready to get the training? Does she/he want it? Or, first you [the ministry] set principles but the soonest you contradict them as an authority ... moreover, you spend a lot of time and money ... It will be tragic, indeed, if you constantly tell a person, who does not know *what* to tell, how to tell something (T10).

Öğretmene eğitim vermek istiyorsun ama ancak o kişi eğitim almaya hazır mı? İstiyor mu? Ya da, önce ilkeler koyuyorsun ama o ilkelere önce sen ters düşünüyorsun yönetici olarak ... hem dünya kadar zaman ve para harcıyorsun, *Ne* anlatacağımı bilmeyen adama siz sürekli nasıl anlatacağımı anlatırsanız trajiktir bu yahu.

On the other hand, perceptions exposed a significant point related to school administrators' submissiveness mixed with the intent of preserving the status quo; they usually refrained from conveying (negative/critical) feedback from the teachers to the higher authorities, as criticized in these lines:

Teachers report their complaints to the principals at schools, but here, too, [on the side of the principals] there is the anxiety of (their) official displacement, reservation for conveying problems to the higher institution, concern for not disturbing the existing order [status quo], uneasiness for the feeling that "if I cause such a problem, I may lose my position" ... People have so many concerns (A6).

Öğretmenler şikayetini müdürlere bildiriyorlardır ama işte burada da yerinden olma kaygısı, üst kuruma sorun getirmeme kaygısı, mevcut düzeni bozmama kaygısı, "eğer ben böyle sorun çıkarırsam, makamımdan olabilirim" kaygısı... Bir sürü kaygıları var insanların.

Closely related to the findings and matters mentioned in this part, motivation of teachers appeared as a significant theme which would affect teachers' performance in implementation as well as their professional quality, and accordingly, quality of the overall educational system.

4.2.4. Teacher motivation as an influential component of practitioners' performance

Motivation is regarded as one of the most effective stimuli in educational activities at school both on the side of the student and the teacher. In this study, concerning teachers, this theme strongly appeared in almost each part; but most prominently in policy implementation context as an influential factor, which would damage educational practice if the teachers did not have enough (dose of it!). Metaphorically, by one teacher (T7), it was compared to the power of fuel of a vehicle that activated teachers' inside machinery of instruction as a spiritual power; when it was lacked or was insufficient in the mechanism, teachers' capacity for exertion and endurance would be impaired. On the whole, data in this research exhibited that teachers seriously lacked motivation in almost every platform of their profession, especially in the practice of educational policies (Category 1).

Category 1

Teachers' motivation is low; this causes serious issues in the implementation of policies

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Lack of interest and willingness	10	5	9
Lack of dedication and commitment	11	6	10
Loss of self-reliance	9	3	10
Lack of critical thinking attitude	9	7	7
Teachers' submissive attitude towards top-down authority	11	6	9
Lack of appreciation from the authorities	12	6	9
Negative influence on student education	8	4	7
Negative influence on student motivation	10	8	11

In this context, firstly, it was detected by the respondents that teachers themselves admitted their lack of proper interest in educational activities, which, accordingly brought about lack of dedication and commitment together with loss of self-reliance regarding the teaching profession; however, closely related to the theme of participation in policymaking process, they defended that such attitudes

stemmed from teachers' belief that their views would not ever be considered by decisionmakers in education policy formulation:

At the beginning of the semesters, subject group meetings are held in the town and the head of school subject groups attend those meetings representing their schools. There, as the conditions are not organized according to the teachers either, everybody frequently looks at their watches [due to their indifference and boredom] wishing the meeting should end soon; because they regard such meetings as futile desiring "it should end at once and we could go home". But, on the contrary, if such meetings are *healthy*, or if the decisions we take in those meetings or the suggestions [we present], which we register as minutes, are evaluated seriously, perhaps teachers will say "Oh! We have talked about these and what we have mentioned has arrived at a target; some people have paid attention to them" (T4).

Sene başında zümre toplantıları olur ilçede ve o zümre toplantılarına okulun zümre başkanları katılır ve temsil eder. Ha orada da, yine maalesef koşullar öğretmene göre hazırlanmadığı için herkesin gözü saatinde, bir an evvel bitsin diye; bunlara angarya olarak bakılıyor çünkü, "bitse de biz evimize gitsek". Ama onun dışında *sağlıklı* olmuş olsa ya da bizim o zümre tutanaklarına geçirdiğimiz, almış olduğumuz kararlar ya da temennilerimiz ciddi anlamda değerlendiriliyor olsa belki öğretmenler de "Aaa! diyecekler, biz bunu konuştuk ama gerçekten konuştuklarımız da bir yere vardı; birileri bunu dikkate aldı" diyecekler.

On the other hand, concerning the relations and interaction of teachers with school administration and MNE, the participants expressed their annoyance about teachers' lack of critical thinking attitude due to their dread of governing bodies and in line with it, about teachers' submissive attitude towards top-down authority. Some reasons for refrainment and fear by practitioners were stated by an academician through these words:

Teachers do not offer any suggestions because they are worried that they might be regarded as opposing the system, the status quo, and as trying to distort orders. They are also anxious about being blacklisted and accordingly being appointed to some other schools if they offer suggestions (A4).

Öğretmenler öneri getirmiyor çünkü sisteme, kurulu düzene karşı çıkıyormuş gibi, talimatları çarpıtıyormuş gibi değerlendirilmekten çekiniyorlar, Aynı zamanda, öneri yaptıkları takdirde, kara listeye alınmaktan ve sonrasında başka okullara tayin edilmek konularından endişe duyuyorlar.

This point was also handled within the context of the codes concerning self-criticism by teachers for teacher quality issues. Related to this context, – also relevant to inducing teacher submissiveness – another academician believed that the situation of presenting views or criticisms would end in frustration and fear: “When you criticize through a written document, then you will be admonished or blacklisted in a way. If you criticize in words, no one hears. I do not think things (will) change as a result of your ideas or reactions; you only take a risk ...” (A1). (“Yazılı şikayetinizi ettiniz mi hakaret yiyorsunuz zaten. Ya da bir şekilde mimleniyorsunuz. Sözlü şikayet etseniz zaten kimse duymuyor. Ben hiçbir değişiklik olduğunu zannetmiyorum sizin fikir veya tepkilerinizle; sadece risk alırsınız...”). In accord with such an approach, a teacher complained in a sarcastic manner: “The one who criticizes actually grumbles/mumbles indeed; [laughing cynically] Whom to tell? Who will listen? Nobody!” (T9). (“Eleştiri yapan da içinden söyleniyor; [şüpheli şekilde gülerek], kime söyleyecek ki? Kim dinleyecek ki? Hiç kimse!..”). (The issue of teachers’ refraining from criticizing and/or suggesting any views handled here was shown by the results to be closely related to the thematic findings presented under the title “Avoidance of giving feedback/view presentation by two key stakeholders; teachers and academicians”; thus, these parts can be evaluated together as well by the reader). A consequential predicament, stemming from these unfavourable teacher attitudes was alarmed by the informants since they would reflect upon the students negatively: “When a teacher does not believe her/his views will be appreciated and refrains from presenting views, how can she/he educate students who will present views courageously?” Finally, as implied by these statements, it was warned that these would result in as negative influence on student motivation as well. Lack of due appreciation of teachers from the administration and MNE was underlined as one of the most influential factors hurting teachers in terms of motivation.

Combining ethical themes with the ones addressed here concerning the factors which affected teachers’ motivational attitude negatively, one teacher condemned her/his colleagues for pretence and fraud in regard to practice:

At the end of the year, everyone is preparing his/her year-end report. Here is what it says: “My program in accordance with the curricula that have been assigned between the specified dates has been completed” even though it has not been not completed, even though the students have not learnt. ... In fact, a teacher who has not finished [the scheduled program] does not bravely report “I could not finish it due to the following reason”. The system directs that “you have had enough time, others have finished, you also have to finish it, colleague!” even if the student has not learnt well. However, actually, the others have not finished rightfully, but they have *finessed* the situation (T4).

Sene sonunda herkes yıl sonu raporunu hazırlıyor. İşte ne diyor? “Belirtilen tarihler arasındaki verilen müfredat programlarına uygun programım tamamlanmıştır” deniyor, tamamlanmasa bile, öğrenci öğrenmese bile. ... Zaten bitirmeyen bir öğretmen de oraya kalkıp da “ben bunda şu nedenden dolayı bitiremedim” yazmıyor. Diyor ki sistem, yeteri kadar zamanın var, diğerleri bitirmiş, sen de bitireceksin arkadaş. Öğrenci iyi öğrenmese bile. Oysa diğerleri de hakkını vererek bitirmemiş ama durumu *idare etmiş*.

On the other hand, the participant group of officials (especially the retired ones), too, perceived that teachers would abstain from presenting their personal opinions and/or criticism to MNE:

Nobody reports suggestions or opinions. Yet, for example, it is remarked that Darwin's Theory in Biology was removed [from the textbooks], right? Now, it is expected that all Biology teachers will come together and submit a report to the Ministry of Education, indicating that "this is a theory, and this theory should also be told to children, and this is not an absolute law of science". Should it not be so! But, no, there is no such thing, no one; What all the teachers do tell me: “Why should I get into trouble [myself]?” Teachers do say so, and academics do say so, too. ... Well, if most of the teachers report all together, they send those reports not only to the ministry, but also to the press and media, non-governmental organizations, that is, they can get the contributions of the NGOs on this issue, however, there is no such inclination, they are *cowered*, they are afraid (O13).

Kimse öneri ve görüş bildirmiyor. Oysa ki, mesela, deniliyor ki Biyoloji de Darwin Teorisi kaldırıldı, değil mi? Şimdi bütün Biyoloji öğretmenleri toplanarak “Bu bir teoridir, bu teorinin de çocuklara söylenmesi gerekir, bu kesin bir bilim yasası değildir” diye, toplanıp ME Bak.lığına bir rapor sunacakları beklenir, değil mi? ama böyle bir şey yok; hiç kimse, bütün öğretmenler bana ne diyor: “Başımı niye belaya sokayım!”, diyor. Öğretmenler de böyle diyor, akademisyenler de böyle diyor. ... Valla, öğretmenlerin birçoğu, hepsi birden raporlarsa, o raporları sadece bakanlığı göndermekle kalmazlar, basın yayın kuruluşlarına da gönderirler, sivil toplum örgütlerine de gönderirler, yani STK nin bu konudaki katkılarını alabilirler ama böyle bir temayül yok, sinme var, korkma var.

a) MNE's attitudes towards teacher motivation; examined postmortem!

In regard to teacher motivation and quality in implementing policies, the MNE was accused rather hard by the participants of its applications and manners. An ironic conceptual expression was deduced from the interviews as *what is lacking on the side of the MNE in regard to motivation is what teachers need!* (Category 2)

Category 2

What is lacking on the side of the MNE in regard to motivation is what teachers need!

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Support/incentive/stimulus/impetus	12	5	9
Appreciation/value/honour/respect/deem	12	2	8
Professional, moral and motivational in-service training	11	4	8
Transparent, meritocratic and fair regulations	11	3	7
Promoting teachers' participation in policymaking	12	8	12
Persuading practitioners why their suggestions have not been applied	10	6	9
Avoidance of political ideologies	9	7	8
More initiative, less top-down control	10	8	8
Belief in the sincerity of the MNE	10	8	9
Negative effects of State Personnel Law No: 657	5	2	3
Meritocratic and fair assignments/appointments	9	7	7

For a start, the so-called noxious attitude of the MNE toward teachers in general was portrayed through the lack of these (mostly spiritual!) expectations by them: Support / incentive / stimulus / impetus and appreciation / value / honour / respect / deem toward teachers. Since teachers perceived that the MNE did not meet such anticipations of theirs in this category, they supposed that the MNE would *not value* them at all. Neither did they think that the MNE provided them with professional, moral and motivational in-service training. They were not happy with MNE's application of rules and regulations in its administration because it had not been transparent, meritocratic and fair; thus, it was far away from enhancing teacher motivation. In a similar vein, teachers reported their unrest about involvement of political ideology which would, according to them,

distort entire educational processes. Another bureaucratic practice that disturbed the teachers was that assignments in and appointments to MNE offices and schools were not meritocratic and fair: They had usually been the “yes men” who would absolutely obey the authorities without any questioning or criticizing. The informants concluded that such a situation was one of the results of very strong top-down control in the bureaucracy; however, what teachers hoped was less top-down control and more initiative for themselves. In terms of participation in policy-making, teachers would always expect to become associated with any policy-making phases and decision-making mechanisms. They would envisage their views and suggestions to be appreciated; more importantly, they would hope to be informed clearly about the changes, and furthermore to be convinced why their suggestions and indications had not been put into practice (when/if so). The respondents thought that promotional modes of teacher participation could enhance and maintain their motivational attitude. As a conclusion, the participants implied that the fulfilment of these expectations would yield and feed the perception of “belief in the sincerity of the MNE”, which, according to the teachers, was required as a support for their motivation. One extraordinary deduction was obtained through the statements of several participants and it was valued by the researcher: State Personnel Law No: 657 had negative effects on the performance of the practitioners that a teacher from state schools or offices could hardly be discharged even though she/he would not work properly. Therefore, the policies could not be implemented as required because there were a lot of teachers who did not do their job duly, and who did not deserve to continue teaching. It was also recommended that contracted teacher employment system would work better in state schools and offices as it did in private education sector.

Concerning this issue of teacher motivation concerning MNE, there emerged striking quotes in the interviews: one teacher put forward her/his criticism by emphasizing the heavy pressure and stress on the teacher exerted by MNE, school administrations, parents and the students, as well as loss of old initiative power, which would devour and terminate her/his motivation, and accordingly her/his willingness and dedication:

Teachers have almost no motivation, and an unmotivated teacher cannot be efficacious. The love [for teaching] and the idealistic stance that we had when we first graduated are no longer there today. ... Now there is so much pressure on the teachers. There is the pressure of the administration, the pressure of the National Education, the pressure of the parents, the pressure of the student; under so much pressure. In such a situation, teachers try [only] to complete the 40-minute [their class] *safe and sound* and go home; then they *thank God*. Today, things are happening like this [in the school environment] because many initiatives - we had lots of initiatives once upon a time - are taken away from the teachers; now, teachers are deprived of all those initiatives. Thus, teachers became helpless. Their motivation is almost over, and their enthusiasm has died away (T4).

Öğretmenin motivasyonu yok denecek kadar az ve motivasyonu olmayan bir öğretmen yararlı olamaz. Artık, hani o bizim ilk mezun olduğumuz zamanlardaki aşk, ilk mezun olduğumuz zamanlardaki o idealist duruş şimdi yok. ... Şimdi o kadar baskı var ki öğretmenin üzerinde. İdarenin baskısı var, Milli Eğitimin baskısı var, velinin baskısı var, öğrencinin baskısı var; dünya kadar baskı altında. Öğretmen de aynı şekilde aman *kazasız belasız* ben 40 dakikayı halledeyim, gideyim, *oh şükür*. Artık bu hale geldi her şey; çünkü öğretmenin elinden birçok inisiyatif – ki zamanında bir dünya inisiyatif bizde vardı – o inisiyatiflerin hepsi alındı şu anda. Alınınca öğretmen çaresiz kaldı. Motivasyonu bitti neredeyse, hevesi kalmadı.

The same teacher also mentioned the negative influence of curricular time pressure together with the heavy burden created by exam stress (University entrance Exams and High Scholl Entrance Exams) on the teacher, both of which again seriously caused lack of dedication to teaching profession, implying the ethical dimensions of the issue as well:

It does not matter if children learn well or not; the curriculum has been covered, okay, just for the sake of formality. The teacher does not make a great effort to teach well. After all, the student gets additional support from outside the school; maybe from the family maybe from special courses, maybe from the private tutoring from here, or from there because there is a reality of [high school and/or university entrance] exam. In order to be successful in the [environment of the] exam reality, the child already completes all these and then comes to school. As teachers, we, too, approve of their getting support from outside [of schools]. Well, those students who come to school without outside support are the ones who do not have a goal anyway! (T4)

Çocukların iyi öğrenmesi falan önemli değil; müfredat yetiştii, tamam. Adet yerini bulsun. İyi öğretmek için büyük bir çabası yok öğretmenin. Nasıl olsa öğrenci okul dışından ek desteği alıyor; ama aileden ama dershaneden ama kurstan ama şuradan ama buradan, çünkü bir sınav gerçeği var. O sınav gerçeğinde başarılı olabilmek için çocuk zaten bunları tamamlıyor ve okula öyle

geliyor. Öğretmenler olarak biz de onların dışarıdan destek almasını onaylıyoruz. Ek destekle gelmeyenler zaten bir hedefi olmayan öğrenciler!

Some teachers like T3 complained that they lost their motivation because, customarily, they had not been consulted for the curricular changes, (again referring to the theme of participation in decision-making); they preferred to be passive – actually as a reaction:

For example, let us say, now, there will be changes in the curriculum again. I have not ever checked that it will change the following year; however, if I were asked for my opinion on this, I would go investigate it as for what I would do. I would start to get prepared for it right now. [However] I do not need this for the time being; I am not curious about the changes made either, I am not enthusiastic [about them, though]. I am waiting, I will implement it when it arrives (T3).

Ben şu an mesela hani müfredatta yine değişiklik var. Şu an önümüzdeki yıl değişecek diye oturup bakmadım ama benim bununla ilgili bir görüşüm istense ben onu oturur araştırırım, ne yapacağım diye. Şimdiden başlarım ön hazırlığına. Şu an buna bir ihtiyaç duymuyorum; yapılan değişiklikleri merak da etmiyorum, heveslenmiyorum. Bekliyorum, gelince uygulayacağım.

b) What teachers should do ...

Once the participants had evaluated the influence of low teacher motivation on policy practice and the shortcomings on the side of MNE, they presented their suggestions for the teachers to improve their motivation and quality (Category 3).

Category 3

In order to improve their motivation and quality, teachers should ...

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
have an altruist and sincere approach	11	8	12
value education of virtues	11	6	10
be a model for new teachers and students	14	8	12
conduct democratic attitude	11	7	8
follow justice at school	9	7	7
have competence in both instruction and <i>humanism</i>	10	8	9
be <i>courageous</i>	8	8	8
voluntarily participate in policy-making	11	8	11
avoid accusing others	8	7	9

Teachers, having an altruist and sincere approach to education, were advised to value education of virtues: “Look at teaching profession through the eyes of a mother/father” (T11). Next, it was underscored specifically that they (especially senior teachers) should be models for new teachers and for students by conducting democratic attitude towards students and colleagues and by following *justice* at school at all costs. Having improved themselves in regard to competence in both instruction and *humanism*, they were recommended to have the courage for presenting their views on any related occasions; thus, having equipped with what was needed, they would voluntarily participate in policy-making processes. Lastly, in this context, the informants warned the teachers against blaming administrators, parents, and/or students for inconveniences in practice; (rather, they encouraged them they could find remedies themselves).

It needs to be restressed that, according to the findings, nearly all the points evaluated under the title of “teacher quality” also seem to be connected with the concept of “participation” in the policy formulation process. That is, if the stakeholders, namely teachers in this context, participated in the former stages of policy making, they would perform much better in practice with more motivation, willingness, and dedication, which could strengthen teacher quality. As the gist of this context, T12 insisted that “teachers should not be regarded as solely the practitioners of *others’* decisions derived from *others’* views; teachers themselves, too, should be esteemed as view producers and decisionmakers”. She/he also summarized significant findings mentioned in previous parts: a) If the teacher participated/contributed to the policymaking and decision-making process, she/he would adhere to it well in the implementation of it. (Besides emphasizing the theme of policy ownership through participation, stressing the democratic nature of pluralist democratic approach in decision-making as well, she/he compared this situation to decision-making process about settling classroom rules; if you determined the rules together with the students, they would truly possess those rules and apply them better in the classroom). b) If the teacher did not participate in decision-making in policy formulation, her/his motivation, willingness and dedication for its practice would be very low

regarding the policy as an extra burden of trivia. Therefore, she/he would either pretend to be implementing the policy or resist it in practice. She/he said:

If the teacher has contributed to the previous processes, – decision making and formation [of policies] – of course, this will have a much more positive effect on the implementation; the teacher feels more dedicated. This is always the case; Educationalists and psychologists tell us that you should set the rules in the classroom together with the children, then you will see that the children will adopt and obey these rules better. It is always the case in a small workplace when making decisions, – it is the same with children, it is also the same within the family – well, when you ask for other people's opinions and listen to them while making decisions, and when you determine your decisions in accordance with their views, they will, of course, possess and support them better in practice. If the teacher does not participate in decision-making processes, she/he will consider policy changes and new practices as menial tasks, and an additional burden for her/him. That is why it will not suit her/his book to practice the change by internalizing it; in this context, she/he will pretend to have understood and pretend to be applying it or she/he will show resistance (T12).

Öğretmen katkıda bulunduyorsa önceki süreçlere, karar verme ve yapımına, tabii ki bunun uygulamaya çok daha olumlu etkisi olur; öğretmen daha çok bağlanır. Bu her zaman böyledir; bize eğitimciler, psikologlar derler ki sınıftaki kuralları çocuklarla beraber belirleyin, göreceksiniz ki çocuklar bu kurallara kendileri daha çok sahip çıkacaklardır, uyacaklardır. Her zaman karar alırken, küçük bir işyerinde de öyledir, – çocuklarla da böyledir, aile içinde de böyledir – yani, kararı alırken başkalarının fikirlerini sorduğunuzda ve onları dinlediğinizde, kararlarınızı buna göre belirlediğinizde uygulamada bunlara tabii ki daha çok sahip çıkacaklardır. Eğer öğretmen karar verme süreçlerine katılmazsa, politika değişikliklerini ve yeni uygulamaları kendisi için bir angarya, bir ek yük olarak görecektir. Bu yüzden yeniliği özümseyerek uygulamak işine gelmeyecektir; bu bağlamda anlamış ve uyguluyormuş gibi yapacaktır ya da direnç gösterecektir.

4.2.5. Association between teachers' capacity building and teacher quality with regard to policy practice

Related to teacher quality as well, the informants in the study indicated that educational policy-making process should also be handled as an instrument of *capacity building* for the practitioners. That is to say, it was exposed, for instance, if teachers were asked for their views and let participate in formulation of policies, they would feel the need of investigating about the issues relevant to those policies, meditating and reflecting on them in order to be prepared to express ideas; and this effort would improve their knowledge about the policies

as a process of their professional capacity building, as T8 stated: “If I desire to add something to the program, I would like to improve myself. I mean, if they esteem me [my views], of course, I would like to present them something right and proper. For this, I can try to improve myself with extra study” (“Programa bir şeyler katmak istiyorsam kendimi geliştirmek isterim. Yani beni önemsedilerse, tabi ki ben de onlara düzgün bir şeyler sunmak isterim. Bunun için kendimi ekstra geliştirmeye çalışabilirim). To contribute to this proposition, restating some part of T3’s quote above can be useful: “... if I were asked for my opinion on this, I would go investigate it as for what I would do. I would start to get prepared for it right now”. (“... benim bununla (müfredat değişikliğiyle) ilgili bir görüşüm istense ben onu oturur araştırırım. Ne yapacağım diye. Şimdiden başlarım ön hazırlığına”).

a) Betterment of policy practice through teacher capacity building

In accordance with the information above, strong relation among three concepts “capacity building, teacher quality and policy practice” was determined by the respondents: (for practitioners), capacity building efforts would improve teacher quality, and in a parallel manner, teacher quality would improve policy practice (Category 1).

Category 1

Capacity building; The betterment of teacher’s capacity and quality leads to the betterment of educational policy practice

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Relation between teacher’s capacity and quality	12	8	11
Lacking professional and moral capacity	9	6	10
Decline in teachers’ capacity in time	6	4	5
Self-improvement	12	7	12
Broadening visions of teachers	10	7	8
Capacity and performance relationship	11	8	9
Participation in policy-making	12	8	11
Capacity and courage	9	8	9
Use of bottom-up approach	9	7	8
Mental and ethical capacity	10	8	10
Support from universities	11	9	10
Support from the MNE	13	8	8

As the first resolution by the participants, the strong direct relation between teacher's capacity-building and teacher quality was emphasized that high capacity of teachers would improve their professional and mental quality. However, it was perceived that teachers did not have efficient professional and moral capacity as there had been an ongoing dramatic decline in teachers' potential capacity in time (e. g. after the abolishment of Village Institutes, which contributed a lot to teachers' capacity building development). Teacher participants, supported by the other groups, *unconditionally* admitted that they had to improve their capacity as a requirement of professional responsibility. It was underscored that teachers' striving for capacity building would broaden their visions, and one effective way of enhancing capacity building efforts was determined as *teachers' demanding* participation in policy-making. An important outcome of such efforts was deduced as a factor which would encourage voluntary presentation of views and suggestions. To highlight the positive influence of capacity building on policy practice, the informants stated that the higher the teacher's capacity was, the better her/his policy implementation performance could become. On the other hand, in order to encourage capacity building activities, the informants notified that down-to-top decision-making mechanisms should be promoted and supported. As well as professional capacity building, the participants believed that, teachers' mental and ethical capacity building should also be fortified: "sense of duty, virtues, personality, self-reliance, and self-criticism". Support from two responsible institutions was expected by the informants: master academicians at the universities were to conduct and sustain proper educational interaction with the teachers, and MNE was to provide teachers with what they needed for their capacity building exercises.

b) MNE's support for teachers' capacity building (pursuit)

The participants remarked that the MNE surely would like to employ and consult high-capacity teachers; then, it should assist and support them to improve

their capacity so as to have the policies formulated and practiced properly (Category 2).

Category 2

MNE prefers high-capacity teachers to employ and consult; thus, it should help them to improve their capacity

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Professional and motivational support	14	9	13
In-service training	13	8	9
Rehabilitation and redemption aid	8	7	8
Economic assets	10	8	11
Amelioration in school conditions	11	8	12
Valuing teachers' views	12	8	10
Promoting teachers' participation (in policy process)	13	8	9

In the most general manner, they expected the MNE would support teachers both professionally and motivationally. Besides its generic support, they recommended the MNE to provide implementers with professional, moral and motivational in-service training and also with aid for rehabilitation, revival, redemption when needed or demanded. More specifically, practitioners hoped to have better economic opportunities and assets. On the other hand, they would watch for continuous and sustainable amelioration/betterment/amendment in school conditions for teachers. In regard to participation in policy processes including decision-making mechanisms, the participants emphasized their expectations about two occasions: 1) The MNE should *properly* take teachers' views in determining the educational policy issues as the teachers believed it would contribute to their capacity building: "As they ask for my views, I should prepare and improve myself to present *informed* opinions". 2) The MNE would promote teachers' participation in policy formulation which could surely benefit their capacity building efforts: "As I am let participate in policy-making, I must enrich my capacity to contribute properly".

As for some remarkable quotes from the interviews, it was repeatedly highlighted that teachers' participation in policymaking and decision-making,

would contribute to the overall professional and attitudinal improvement of the teacher (capacity building), as T6 enlightened:

Well, if my views are to be appreciated, or, when the Ministry or any educational institution, organization asks for my views, what shall I do? Well, necessarily, I will review my opinions. “What do I know about this issue, indeed?” Possibly, what I know will not suffice for me. What will I do? I will start an investigation. I will check upon myself: “I am not competent enough, though. I will present views, but my background knowledge is not sufficient. What shall I do?”. [Then] I will investigate some resources, I will research on the Internet, examine certain studies. Therefore, this is a self-improvement process for the teacher. That is, when we mention teacher training, well, it should not be like that “let us offer a course of 2, 3, or 5 hours”, but if we [teachers] maintain such a process, actually, I, too, as a teacher, will have reached an ideal point of developing myself (T6).

Yani şimdi benim görüşüm dikkate alınacaksa, ya da bakanlık ya da herhangi bir eğitimle ilgili kurum, kuruluş benden bir görüş isteyeceği zaman ben ne yapacağım? Yani ister istemez kendi fikirlerimi şöyle bir gözden geçireceğim. “Ya ben bu konu hakkında ne biliyorum?” O bildiklerim bana yetmeyecek muhtemelen. Ne yapacağım? Ben bir araştırma içerisine gireceğim. Kendimi sorgulayacağım: “Ya yeterli değilim ben. Bak ben fikir sunacağım ama alt yapım yeterli değil. Ne yapacağım?” Bir takım kaynakları karıştıracağım, İnternette araştırma yapacağım, çeşitli araştırmalara bakacağım. Dolayısıyla bu aynı zamanda öğretmenin de kendini yetiştirmesi. Yani biz öğretmen yetiştirmek derken, “işte hizmet içi kurs verelim 2 saat, 3 saat, 5 saat” değil de, bunu sürekli bir hale getirirsek, zaten ben de öğretmen olarak kendimi yetiştirmek adına ideal bir noktaya geçmiş olurum aslında.

An academician contributed to this result by connecting three highly-significant concepts, which were participation, meritocracy and capacity building: “The more participation in policymaking, the more the teachers’ horizons are broadened, and they are provided with new visions. This also contributes to meritocracy for teaching profession” (A4). (“Politika yapımında ne kadar fazla rol alırlarsa, öğretmenlerin ufukları o kadar genişler ve böylece yeni vizyonlar edinmiş olurlar. Bu aynı zamanda, öğretmenlik mesleğindeki liyakate de katkı sağlar”).

Related to this point, participant perceptions revealed another important point: Teachers should be *willing* to improve their capacity all the time because this capital or asset (improved capacity) could not be managed by force or through orders with top-down approaches. However, mostly according to the

perception of the officials in the study, it was also revealed that teachers were not so volunteer to participate in policymaking by presenting views, which would develop their capacity. One official ironically signified that teachers would not agree on certain points among themselves indeed, let alone submit ideas to the ministry; however, even solely discussing issues with colleagues would contribute to their capacity development:

You cannot take a stick in your hand [to intimidate the teachers] and say “why do you not present your views?”. So, it means that they have no ideas/views. Perhaps this task should be undertaken by school principals. ... In fact, most teachers cannot even agree among themselves, let alone participate [together] in the studies of the ministry... Even if they cannot agree, at least they should discuss; even this will contribute to their capacity building (O9).

Ele sopa alıp niye görüş bildirmiyorsunuz denmiyor; demek ki fikri yok yani. Belki de bu işi okul müdürlerinin üstlenmesi lazım. ... Aslında çoğu öğretmen kendi aralarında bile anlaşamıyorlar, değil bakanlığın çalışmalarına katılmak... Anlaşmasalar bile, en azından tartışsınlar; bu bile onların kapasitesini geliştirmeye katkı sağlar.

One point concerning the relationship between the teachers and the MNE in terms of teachers' capacity should be touched on as well: The respondents informed that teachers, themselves, were not happy with their capacities either, and despite this, generally, they would not try to improve themselves. Therefore, they could easily become targets for blame. For instance, MNE would accuse teachers of not being able to conduct policy practice due to their own lack of professional capacity. One teacher stressed this perception by criticizing her/his colleagues:

Teachers have to improve themselves. Now, we find it difficult even to read books, I mean, generally speaking. We should read books so that the students read. ... I wonder how many teachers are carrying books in their bags! ... Teachers should improve themselves so that they can have suggestions and contributions. ... In this way, if their ideas are considered in decision-making, the capacity of the teachers will surely develop, so the quality of the teachers will change [improve] a lot. And then, I am sure that, instead of finding fault with teachers, we can start to focus on the students. Because [the Ministry of] National Education thinks as follows: Our system is excellent, our students are also excellent. The issue is concerned with the teacher who cannot practice the system, she/he is the guilty one, his/her capacity is insufficient (T14).

Öğretmen kendini geliştirmek zorunda. Biz, şimdi, kitap okumak bile bize şey geliyor, zor geliyor, hani genel söylüyorum. Biz kitap okuyalım ki öğrenci kitap okusun. ... Çantasında kitap taşıyan kaç öğretmen vardır ki!... öğretmen kendini geliştirecek ki önerileri ve katkıları olabilsin... Bu şekilde, karar vermede fikirleri alınır, öğretmenin kapasitesi gelişir tabi ki, yani bence öğretmenin kalitesi çok değişir o zaman. Ve o zaman eminim öğretmende suç bulmak yerine öğrenciye inmeye başlarız biz. Çünkü Milli Eğitim şöyle düşünüyor: Bizim sistemimiz mükemmel, öğrencilerimiz de mükemmel. Olay sistemi uygulayamayan öğretmende, suçlu o, kapasitesi yetersiz.

It was repeatedly noted that involving teachers in policymaking would contribute to teachers' capacity building and thus, as A7 declared in the following quotation, help them grow *self-actualization*; and this would lead to their *happiness* too. Related to the context, she/he also warns (the MNE) against ideological discrimination:

Unquestionably, teachers' involvement in policy making makes a great contribution to their capacity development. Moreover, it would be a project in terms of their self-realization/self-actualization as well. ... So, when we open all of these doors, we create an environment where the teacher can actualize herself/himself and thus be happy; Being able to realize oneself means being happy. Then, we will have created and opened the space where she/he can be happy. It is a very valuable space. The participation of every teacher in this thing, at least their presence in discussion environment, may not be as much as we expect; however, in consequence, those environments in which they discuss together are highly valuable though the contribution of some of them might be less while that of others' may be more. Oh, are such environments created? Well, again, unfortunately, we cannot do this indeed because we infect everything with politics [i. e. ideology imposition] and our fight due to our habit of being at the poles of our political thought. After all, a group in which people who think the same way act together and another group in which people who think differently act together, are living at the *Poles*. However, life is very hard at the Poles. It is very cold there. That is why the people at the Poles should move toward the equator gently and benefit from the abundance, richness, vegetation and beauty there. But, if you separate [people] as "us and them" every positive thing comes to an end there (A7).

Hiç tartışmasız olarak öğretmenlerin politika yapımına katılımı onların kapasite gelişimine büyük katkı sağlar. Dahası, onların kendini gerçekleştirmeleri anlamında bir proje de olur. ...Demek ki bu kapıların hepsini açtığımızda öğretmenin kendisini gerçekleştireceği dolayısıyla mutlu olabileceği bir ortam sağlarız; kendini gerçekleştirebilmek demek mutlu olmak demek. Mutlu olabileceği bu alanı da ona yaratmış ve açmış oluyoruz. Çok değerli bir alan. Her öğretmenin bu söylediğimiz şeye katılımı, en azından tartışma ortamında bulunması bizim beklediğimiz ölçüde olmayabilir ama sonuçta hep birlikte kimisinin az kimisinin çok katkı sağladığı ama hep birlikte tartıştıkları bu ortamlar son derece değerli olur. Ha bu ortamlar yaratılıyor mu? Yani, yine

maalesef her şeyimize siyaseti, siyasi düşüncemizin *kutuplarında* bulunma alışkanlığımızdan dolayı kavgamızı bulaştırdığımız için bunu da yapamıyoruz. Sonuçta, kendisiyle aynı düşünenlerin birlikte hareket ettiği bir grupla kendisinden farklı düşünenlerin birlikte hareket ettiği grup kutuplarda hayat sürüyor. Oysa kutuplarda hayat çok zor. Çok soğuk oralar. Onun için kutuplardakilerin usul usul şöyle ekvatora doğru gelip oradaki bolluktan, zenginlikten, yeşillikten, güzellikten faydalanması gerekiyor. Ama “biz ve onlar” diye ayırırsan, her olumlu şey son buluyor orada.

Through these metaphorical expressions, it is significant that she/he disapproved of the involvement of extreme political ideology and discrimination in the educational environments, which unfavourably influenced teacher participation in decision-making and this condition would consequently harm the development of teacher capacity and accordingly teacher-MNE relations.

4.2.6. Expectations and recommendations for proper implementation of new policies

This last theme emerged as summarizing participants’ expectations and recommendations for better policy implementation. It is composed of (technically separated) two categories; the first one includes the codes defining the expected and/or recommended qualities in regard to the approach of the policy practice while the second category comprises the ones regarding the principles of implementation. Since the concepts *approach* and *principle* are quite similar and interchangeable in terms of their contents, meanings, and functions in the particular context of the theme, they are presented together as a whole without any categorical distinctions for the sake of unity and coherence. On the other hand, it was found out that many of these codes corresponded to a great extent with those in the previous parts, namely, identification of issues that require a new policy or policy change and policy formulation. Therefore, in this section, the (outstanding) ones which were stressed the most were handled in two categories. The first category included the expectations in relation to the approaches to policy implementation (Category 1).

Category 1

Implementation of new policy/policy change can be successful when/once the policy-making process has been ... (Qualities concerning the approach)

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
participatory and democratic	13	9	10
transparent and meritocratic	13	8	9
excluded from political ideology	11	7	8
based on trust	10	8	8
based on bias-free approach	9	7	7
based on harmonic collaboration	12	8	13
considerate to opposing ideas	9	8	10

The second category comprised the expectations in relation to the principles of policy implementation (Category 2).

Category 2

Implementation of new policy/policy change can be successful when/once the policy-making process has been ... (Qualities concerning the principles)

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
consensus-centred	10	9	9
reconciliation-focused	9	9	8
accountable for deficiencies	8	6	7

The informants in the three groups most notably highlighted, as a leitmotif in this section too, that new policies could be implemented appropriately only when all stakeholders had *participated* in the policymaking processes in *meritocratic* and *democratic* manners, excluding any sort of *ideological involvement*. Concerning such expectations, covering most of the codes in the first category, a teacher claimed that

Participation [in policy making] must be democratic, it must be fair, every idea must be listened to and appreciated, ideological views must not be involved; Definitely, there should not be any approaches like “she/he favours *that* [ideology], let us not listen to her/him; she/he favours *this* [ideology], let us not listen to her/him”. Only then the implementation will be successful, though (T13).

[Politika yapımında] katılımın demokratik olması lazım, hakkaniyetli olması lazım, her fikir değer verilerek dinlenmeli, ideolojik fikirler işin içine girmemeli. ‘*O şucu*, onu dinlemeyelim, *o bucu*, onu dinlemeyelim’ kesinlikle olmamalı. İşte o zaman, uygulama da başarılı olur.

In this context, it is noteworthy to indicate that, like this teacher, most of the participants concluded that “only then the practice of the educational policies would be successful and sustainable”. To achieve such a successful policy practice, findings seemed to sketch an outline of axioms as follows:

a) Every stage of policymaking processes must be *transparent*, establishing *trust* among all stakeholders. Participants declared that, due to lack of transparency, they would not be aware of how policymaking process was functioning and how the decisions were being made. They hoped that the process should be conducted in front of the stakeholders through long discussions when needed:

Education policy and curriculum studies should be transparent and be discussed sparing ample time as you want to steer the education policies of the country. It is very wrong to evaluate such issues within [only] two to three days, and it is not right to keep them secret, though. Extending over a period of time, issues concerning each program can be discussed for many hours and/or days in front of all stakeholders (A2).

Eğitim politikası ve program çalışmalarının şeffaf olması ve yeteri kadar zaman tanınarak tartışılması gerekir, çünkü ülkenin eğitim politikalarına siz yön vermek istiyorsunuz. Bunlar iki günde üç günde tartışılması çok yanlış şeyler, gizli tutulması da doğru değil. Biraz zamana yayılıp her bir programla ilgili, bazen saatlerce, günlerce bütün paydaşların gözü önünde tartışılabilir.

The general perception was that educational decisions were believed to be taken in secrecy behind closed doors by the politicians. Closely related to this matter, lack of mutual trust among the stakeholders appeared as another significant issue that caused poor practice; the academicians and teachers hardly ever trusted the officials, mostly accusing them of being under heavy pressure from the political governments, while the officials did not trust the professional competence of both academicians and teachers. It was also inferred that there was almost no mutual trust between academicians and teachers concerning

professional aspects of education: Teachers doubted academicians' experience about the field because they isolated themselves from the practical world of education while academicians thought that teachers did not pay due attention to the valuable theoretical world of education. Therefore, it seemed rather difficult for them to rely on each other's views to collaborate for educational progress. Concisely, data explored the common expectation of the three groups that, in any case, they should always cooperate with mutual trust in a transparent manner.

b) Policy makers, decision makers and all the actors involved should always maintain a *bias-free approach* to educational policymaking. Teachers, academicians and officials should immediately stop disgracing each other by getting rid of their respective prejudices. By the other two groups, especially by teachers, at a level of settled bias, academicians were highly criticized for not knowing about the conditions of teachers in school environment, nor would they want to learn and understand. Again, teachers seemed to be strongly convinced, rather prejudiced, that academicians' views were only theoretical, far away from the realities of schools. In this context, several academicians also admitted, as self-criticism, what teachers asserted. One academician declared like a confession:

We do not go see the actual conditions at schools; yet, we are *talking through our hats* here at our desks, and we are criticizing teachers for not being able to provide ideal education. We also say that the quality of students coming from high schools [to faculties] has been falling more and more every year, they are so *lousy*... But we have to ponder why this is the case and go see the schools in person! (A1)

Gidip okulların halini görmüyoruz; ondan sonra buradan, oturduğumuz yerden *ahkâm kesiyoruz*, öğretmenleri eleştiriyoruz ideal eğitim veremiyorlar diye. Ayrıca diyoruz ki liseden gelen öğrenci kalitesi her sene daha fazla düşüyor, çok *berbatlar*... Ama düşünmeliyiz ve gidip okullara bizzat görmeliyiz, neden durum böyle!

Another academician's words also sounded to evoke a regretted confession:

I do not see the solution to these problems in the academic world anymore, since universities have become an environment isolated from society, far away from

doing something good for their society, comprising academicians who have transformed into people [just] pursuing their academic titles (A7).

Üniversiteler toplumdan kopmuş, toplumu için bir şeyler yapmaktan uzaklaşmış, daha çok akademik unvanlarının peşinde koşan insanlar haline gelmiş akademisyenlerin bulunduğu bir çevre haline geldiği için, bu sorunların çözümünü artık akademik dünyada görmüyorum.

Therefore, surmounting their biases, teachers and academicians were expected to be always in touch professionally and exchange ideas. The participants recommended that academicians should support teachers with knowledge from the theoretical field, literature and research on education while teachers ought to provide academicians with valuable knowledge from the practical environment. Meanwhile, the officials were advised to support these groups with bureaucratic and logistic assistance. Briefly, an environment of *collaboration* and *cooperation* in harmony among the three groups of stakeholders (pillars of education) was visualized by the participants.

c) *Consensus* should be sought in every stage of the process with a *pluralistic* understanding. As a provision of basis for this approach, data brought about the expectation that all *opposing ideas* and critiques should always be considered and appreciated because they would help improve the policies by providing basis for problem solving and/or establish preventive measures for better implementation. In this context, an academician gave an example about a popular issue:

A few years ago, it was revealed openly that the questions of these exams had been stolen [before the exams]. It was claimed that there had been certain algorithms, logarithms, systematic patterns, [which provided] unfair individual benefits to selected examinees. They asked wondering “how could 100 examinees get 100 points?”. They were not considered at all, the official authorities in charge did not listen to them; Did you notice that they always defended [the exam systems], objected, and refused [the criticisms]. However, if they had listened to them, maybe then they would have taken precautions. But what happened later? Denunciations turned out to be true. Now, they have realized it was a failure, but it was too late. I recommend that, whatever your opinion may be, you should listen to the dissenting opinions. If the authorities had listened to them [in the abovementioned instances], they could have taken precautions for further problems. [Actually], there may not be an atmosphere of compromise, there may only be discussions, or *you can also fight at a certain*

level; but I believe that discussions will help greatly even though there is no reconciliation in the end (A9).

Birkaç yıl önce bu sınavlarda hırsızlık oldu diye ayyuka çıktı. Algoritma dediler, logaritma dediler, sistematik var dediler, kişilere özel haksızlık yapıldı dediler. “100 kişi nasıl 100 puan alır?” dediler. Hiç dinlenmedi. Hiç dinlemediler yetkililer. dikkat ettiniz mi? Hep savundular, itiraz ettiler, reddettiler. Halbuki dinleselerdi, belki o zaman önlemini alacaklardı. Ama ne oldu? Doğru çıktı ihbarlar. Şimdi hata olduğunu anladılar ama iş işten geçti. Ben diyorum ki fikriniz ne olursa olsun karşıdaki fikirleri de dinleyin. Eğer dinleselerdi sonraki sorunlar için önlem alınırdı. Bir uzlaşma ortamı olmayabilir, sadece tartışma da olabilir. *Kavga da edilebilir belli bir seviyede*; ama sonunda uzlaşma çıkmasa da tartışmaların faydası olacağına inanıyorum.

Academicians and teachers perceived that opposing ideas were not so much appreciated in policy formulation though they would have significantly contributed to the process: “I don't think opposing ideas are evaluated much, but opposing opinion is the one that strengthens my own opinion. So, if there were no dissenters, how would I find my flaws in my opinion? I cannot ever find them” (T8). (“Karşıt fikirlerin ben çok fazla değerlendirildiğini düşünmüyorum ama muhalif fikir benim fikrimi güçlendiren fikirdir. Yani muhalif olmasa ben fikrimdeki kusurlarımı nereden bulacağım? Bulamam ki”). However, the officials asserted that opposing policy views were usually considered by the authorities and that they were believed to be beneficial (as a higher-level official stressed):

We also consider opposing ideas. Thus, doing this in a dialectical conflict [management] will ensure the dynamism of the society. Because where there is sameness, you are the same and I am the same, there occurs no difference. There is no dynamism where there is no difference. *Stagnant water stinks [in time]*. So here is what needs to be done; rather than saying that your ideology was reflected here, it is more appropriate to say that my ideology may also be reflected as follows... I correct the term ideology and say again: Instead of saying that “your philosophy, your idea was reflected here”, it is proper to say that “my philosophy, my idea is like this as well” (O1).

Muhalif fikirleri de değerlendiriyoruz. Dolayısıyla burada bunun bir eytişim yani bir diyalektik çatışma [yönetimi] içinde yapılması toplumun dinamizmini sağlayacaktır. Çünkü aynılığın olduğu yerde, sen aynısın ben aynıyım, bir farklılık oluşmaz. Farklılık olmayan yerde de bir dinamizm olmaz. *Duran su kokuşur*. Onun için burada yapılması gereken şey şudur; Senin ideolojin buraya yansıdı demek yerine benim ideolojim de şöyle yansıyabilir şeklinde konuşmak daha doğrudur... İdeoloji kelimesini tekrar düzelterek söylüyorum: Senin

felsefen, fikrin buraya yansıdı demek yerine benim felsefem, fikrim de şöyle demek lazım.

Another official, a member of BED, signalled that

I really do not approve of people looking through that single window: [One says] “I told them [but] they did not do it”, etc. Hey man, they may not have done it today, they may not have done it ten times, but one day they will do it if it is right. Considering the structure of the current ministry, I really would have been expelled, [because] I oppose so many things, indeed. But I am still here, and each time, I oppose again in a happy manner because people hang on my every word regarding the points I predicate on (O6).

Ben o tek pencereden bakan insanları gerçekten tasvip etmiyorum: “aa ben söyledim, yapmadılar” vb. bugün yapmamış olabilirler, on kere de yapmamış olabilirler, ama günün birinde yaparlar doğru bir şey ise. Şu anki bakanlığın yapısına bakıp hakikaten benim çoktan atılmış olmam gerekirdi; o kadar çok şeye muhalefet ediyorum ki ben. Ama duruyorum burada ve her seferinde yine mutlulukla muhalefet ediyorum, çünkü, dayandırdığım noktaları insanlar ağzı açık dinliyorlar.

In the findings, it was, once more, warned that taking into account opposing views would also decrease resistance to new policies in implementation as the owner of the opposing views would witness that her/his views had also been evaluated to an extent, though not applied directly. Thus, such practitioners would be convinced about the use of the policy easily, which would enhance its practice through their promotion by this way as well. On the other hand, it was mostly believed by the academician and teacher participants that the policymakers knew about almost all opposing views; however, they did not appreciate them intentionally though those views would contribute to better formulation of the policy. As another significant perception concerning opposition, an academician (former official) pointed out that the opposition in educational field was not qualified and served only the status quo:

Today, the opposition in the field of education does not have any oppositional features other than its topicality or popular characteristics. Not authentic. Since it is not authentic, it has no equivalent in life scene. ... The economy determines the structure [status quo] and the opposition. This [sort of] opposition is the opposition needed for the survival of the existing structure [status quo]. In other words, the current opposition appears to be the nutriment for maintaining the current structure [status quo] (A6).

Bugün eğitim alanındaki muhalefetin aktüalite ya da pop karakterinin dışında bir muhalefetliğı yok ki. Sahici değil. Sahici olmadığı için yaşam sahnesinde bir karşılığı yok....Yapıyı da muhalefeti de ekonomi belirliyor. Bu muhalefet mevcut yapının yaşaması için ihtiyaç olan muhalefet. Yani, şu anki muhalefet mevcut yapıyı sürdürmenin ilacı olarak karşımıza çıkıyor.

It was signified that, even though absolute consensus would not emerge, there should be *reconciliation* to a great extent among the views and suggestions; moreover, even there was no reconciliation, the efforts to achieve it might help the sides to develop a feeling of tolerance and empathy towards each other by acquiescing. One academician stated that

There should be compromise [among stakeholders]. There may not be a complete compromise; at least an environment for discussions. Even though a compromise may not be attained as a result of the discussions, there arises a [sort of] *tolerance* in people's minds towards other ideas; because there will be a brainstorming then, questions and answers [session]. Something like this will occur in people's minds: "She/he thinks that way, yet against my opinions, yes". I think that, instead of rejecting [other views] completely, a question mark containing alternatives will flourish in people's minds. Therefore, there arises a sight that ideas different from their own may not be too bad, though. In other words, there may not be absolute consensus, but direct refusals will also disappear, and even if not like-minded, a [kind of] reconciliation in the form of conceding shall emerge (A4).

Uzlaşma olması lazım. Tamamen uzlaşma da olmayabilir; en azından tartışma ortamı. ... o tartışmanın sonucunda mutlaka uzlaşılmasa da kişilerin kafasında diğer fikirlere karşı bir *tolerans* oluşur; çünkü orada bir beyin fırtınası olacak, soru cevap olacak. Kişilerin kafasında şöyle bir şey oluşacak: "Benim düşünceme karşı ama evet ya, o da öyle düşünüyor". Hiç olmazsa tamamen reddetmek yerine kişilerin kafasında alternative içeren bir soru işareti uyanacağını düşünüyorum. Dolayısıyla, kendininkinden farklı fikirlerin de pek kötü olmayabileceği kanısı oluşur. Yani tam uzlaşma olmayabilir ama doğrudan reddetmeler de ortadan kalkar, hemfikir olunmasa da kabullenme şeklinde bir uzlaşma oluşur.

d) Policymaking actors should honestly and unquestionably *admit the deficiencies* of the policy, especially in its implementation phase, as part of the accountability principle, so that genuine amendments could be realized immediately. When related people from all three groups of main stakeholders of education handled in this study participated in policymaking process appropriately the policies would surely be possessed and implemented in a

proper manner, and thus, the deficiencies would be accounted for fairly, and accordingly, policies would soon be improved to better levels through required modifications.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, perspectives deduced from the findings of the research are portrayed together with prospects that are delineated for consideration in educational practice and further studies in similar areas. After the themes/categories presented in the “Findings” chapter are reminded in regard to their gist, they are discussed concisely in order to reflect significant, meaningful and functional inferences, referring to related literature when regarded necessary. Accordingly, suggestions are posited for future practice and research. The presentation is confined to the scope of the research questions as much as possible.

The findings in the study, in an overall sense, led to the evolution of a broad-gauge theme that can be depicted as “quality in educational policy-making process”, and the general approach of the presentation in this part is shaped mainly by principles of quality. The need for (and utilities of) such a mindset are usually emphasized in governmental documents, such as those of the OECD’s, MNE’s, and universities’, in the related literature and the media especially concerning regulatory/policy-making processes, putatively with the aim of conducting effective and efficient governing procedures. In particular, the OECD (2020) stresses that member countries have acquired serious interest and they show great effort to apply principles and methods of policy quality – in a broader sense including educational regulations:

Today, quality regulation is crucial for government effectiveness. Member countries have, as a consequence, increased their attention to the quality of regulatory instruments. ... Governments are emphasizing a variety of quality standards: user standards such as clarity, simplicity, and accessibility; design standards such as flexibility and consistency among rules and in application; legal standards for structure and drafting; and analytical standards such as benefit-cost and cost-effectiveness tests (p. 8).

As underlined in this quotation, various standards of quality in regard to certain processes of both development and practice of regulations/policies are highlighted in the related literature (specific references are presented within discussions and interpretations). In this context of policy quality, certain themes together with their categories and codes are discussed by concentrating mainly on contributions of the findings to educational policy-making and policy implementation.

5.1. Discussion

This part contains discussions of the results covering three phases of the Policy Cycle Model as the basic scope of the study: “Identification of policy issues”, “Policy formulation” and “Policy implementation”. Because the themes concerning the first two phases converged to a remarkable extent, they were dealt with under the same category. Thus, this section is presented under two main headings: a) Discussions regarding “Identification of policy issues” and “Policy formulation” phases and b) Discussions regarding “Policy implementation” phase.

5.1.1. The phases of “identification of policy issues that require policy change” and “policy formulation”

Analyses of the participants’ perceptions concerning these two phases of policy cycle engendered three basic thematic topics for discussion: 1) participation of main stakeholders in issue identification and policy formulation, 2) political and ideological approach to educational policymaking, and 3) expectations for ideal application of issue identification and policy formulation stages.

5.1.1.1. Participation of main stakeholders in issue identification and policy formulation

When the findings of the study were evaluated and interpreted, in regard to the context of policy-making quality, “democratic participation of stakeholders in issue identification and policy formulation” emerged as the primary motif of consideration. This kind of thematic inference is also identified in the related literature and current political conjunctures as well. For instance, in the document named *Civil participation in decision-making processes, an overview of standards and practices in Council of Europe Member States prepared by the European Center for the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) with a view to preparing guidelines on civil participation in political decision-making processes*, European view of participation of stakeholders in policy-making is presented as:

The right to participation has been emphasised in numerous binding and nonbinding documents, and **the international standards clearly reinforce the notion that participation is a right that should be regulated and implemented, rather than left to the whim of decision-makers. ... any interested individual, directly or through an organisation should be able to contribute to development of policies and legislation** (ECNL, 2016, p. 45).

One point signified in the quote is exceptionally important in the context of this study as also perceived by the informants: Participation of education stakeholders in educational policymaking is their *right*; thus, its enforcement and practice ought to be guaranteed through official regulations. The OECD (2005) too, forcefully supports this sort of citizen participation for better governing emphasizing the significance of the feedback from it as a source for policy issue identification: “Stronger government-citizen relations encourage citizens to spend time and effort on public issues. It uses and values citizens’ input as a resource” (p. 18). It seems proper to admit this institution’s extra indication that while governments foster participation of stakeholders, they should also show that their feedback is officially appreciated and valued; otherwise, the

stakeholders will not take part in further invitations, which will most probably end up with frustration on the side of the government too:

When governments involve citizens in policy-making, they create expectations. Governments need to demonstrate to citizens that their inputs are valuable and that they are taken into account when making policy. If they fail to do so, citizens may prove unwilling to spend their precious time responding to future government invitations.

...

When governments and their officials do not consider the citizens' perspective, they can easily develop unrealistic expectations of citizens' reactions. Very often, the result is disappointment (OECD, 2001 p. 93).

Participation of stakeholders in policy processes is usually acknowledged as an integral part of evidence-based policy-making (EBP) and regulatory impact assessment/analysis (RIA): "Information exchange with stakeholders provides basis for assessing regulatory impact. The Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) method believes that probable impacts of the proposed regulation cannot be assessed at the desk" (Güngör and Evren, 2009, p. 47-48). ("İlgililerle bilgi alışverişinde bulunma, düzenleyici etkinin ölçülmesi için temel oluşturmaktadır. Düzenleyici Etki Analizi (DEA) metodu, önerilen düzenlemenin muhtemel etkilerinin masa başında ölçülemeyeceği inancına sahiptir"). As emphasized in this quote, it is absolutely agreeable that the probable impact of a policy cannot be estimated or assessed without referring to the stakeholders' participation, both with their views and their active involvement.

Three phases of citizen participation in policymaking acquired and recommended by the OECD are *information*, *consultation* and *active participation*. In this part of the study, the first two stages, namely information and consultation, are basically dealt with and referred to in the context of the phase of policy cycle called "identification of the issues that require a new policy or policy change" while active participation stage of the OECD is mainly interpreted in the context of policy formulation. Issue identification is regarded as the first and most important stage of policymaking since it is technically the starting point of the process; therefore, the subject of participation in this phase can be appreciated as important as the stage itself.

a) Participation in issue identification

To decide to make a new policy or a change in a policy, there must be a serious issue or need that requires such a process. The most influential factor for the emergence of an issue is its source(s), which can best define *where* and *why* dimensions of the formulation. In this context, the participants in the study expressed their perceptions that, while identifying the policy issues, *government's participation(!)* through its peculiar sources emerged as the most influential one among all stakeholders. In line with the perceptions of the informants, it is required to be against such a strong influence of governmental sources compared with other sources that will be presented later in this part.

Governmental influence; participation or manipulation?

As an overall interpretation, it was indicated that governments influence educational policymaking processes in the direction of their political ideologies through their plans and programs together with their agendas as sources, most of which the politicians have already created before the elections. Therefore, this sort of involvement cannot be considered a proper kind of participation but shall obviously be regarded as a certain kind of *manipulation*. Often such manipulative applications become tools for conducting *propaganda* utilizing hidden methods; usually reflected unto education through curriculum, instruction and other school policy applications being put into action by way of hidden agendas. Similar issues have been severely handled in the related literature as well (Akin & Arslan, 2014; Arar et al., 2019; Boostrom, 2010; Kocabaş, 2008; Kridel, 2010; Pinar, 2004; Schubert, 2010; Short, 2007; Yıldız & Yıldız, 2016; Yirci & Karaköse, 2010). The researcher discerns that, what is most *depressive* and *tragic* is the prevalence of this governmental attitude for more than 40 years – as stressed in the literature review chapter and other parts with references – fixed as a habit of political culture in the country, which may lead to similar practice in future as well. Moreover, as a remarkable number of participants in this study (3 teachers, 1 academician and 10 officials) stressed, it can be claimed

that many Turkish citizens acknowledge and admit this unfortunate motif as a *natural* practice by politicians; Bakioglu (2013) presents similar views through the metaphor “soldier”, as portraying (Turkish) man who becomes a *soldier of economy* and a *soldier of ideology* through education. Analogous perceptions were implied by most speakers in the International Education Forum III – Uluslararası Eğitim Forumu III (TEDMEM, 2013) and people often express similar views in the media (Kocabaş, 2008; Önder, 2020; Rothbard, 1999). Such a mindset in society does hinder the progress of democratic manners in policymaking processes in a pessimistic manner among people. Apart from this political party-level ideological influence, there is also a serious issue at the individual level concerning the governing bodies: Arbitrary personal wishes with highly-limited visions under the influence of private backgrounds (of many politicians in power) do affect educational decision-making. This effect is usually neither scientific nor ethical and is heavily under the ideological manipulations of ruling governments. Similar issues are referred to in the related literature as Levin (2007) does within the context of curriculum:

An individual in a key position can either shape or hold up decisions if determined enough. For example, a powerful cabinet member or political advisor may be able to insist that a particular element be added to or dropped from a proposed curriculum (p. 16).

Impact of international tests and models

International testing systems like PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS are appreciated as high-quality ones among their classes and they really deserve that status. They are scientifically proven ranking exams that compare student scores at international level rather fairly. This view is also adopted by decision/policy-making authorities in Türkiye as well; however, the results of those tests – which indicate that the scores of Turkish students have been quite poor and the country has always been ranked among the last a few countries – are usually evaluated with an improper approach which focuses mainly on the question types of the tests. Such question types are called by the education and testing environments

in Türkiye as “new generation question types” (yeni nesil soru tipi), which were labelled so, along with the transition – due to the low scores in such international tests – to developing and utilizing such question types in the national exam named LGS (Öğrenci Doktoru, 2020). That type of test questions is the last trend nowadays, which is believed to be prepared minding basically the relation of the question to the real life, in a rather long narration format. As declared by the OECD (n.d.) PISA formally tries to assess “students’ ability to apply knowledge and skills and to analyse, reason and communicate effectively as they examine, interpret and solve problems ...[and their] skills such as collaborative problem solving and global competence. ... [and] creative thinking.” (What does PISA assess and why?). It is true that PISA test questions investigate the degree of students’ capacity/competence of preparedness for social life centring on the ability of interpreting the information rather than their aptitude for or capacity of theoretical subject knowledge (Güçlü, 2019; Kaplan, 2020; Kaya, 2019; Sarvan, 2004; Yavuz, 2019). In other words, the PISA tests examine to what extent the schools prepare their students for their future life. However, as the findings of this study explored, MNE, getting the low scores of Turkish students in such exams as an issue source of policy studies, concentrates on making curricular policies and regulations which try solely to instruct students for *getting used to* the question types of the PISA tests so that they will be successful in the exams. They mostly ignore real causes of such failures like unfavourable learning environments, teaching and teacher quality, local differences and inequalities, and more specifically, instruction based on rote-learning or memorization and the settled habit of teaching to the test etc (Kaplan, 2020; Sarvan, 2004). Coinciding with what the participants of this study perceived, this is highlighted by Sarvan (2004): “The revelations emerged from the results of the examinations made show that this kind of question formats do not match the Turkish student profile trained according to the education system in our country, and hence, according to the ‘rote learning’ system” (p. 15). (“Yapılan incelemeler sonucu ortaya çıkan tablo, bu tarz soru konseptlerinin ülkemizdeki eğitim – öğretime, dolayısıyla “ezberci” sisteme göre yetiştirilen Türk öğrenci profiliyle örtüşmediğini göstermektedir”). Since the Turkish education system is still

suffering from such major problems and lack of efforts for finding out the causes behind such failures, dealing with only PISA *question types* and preparing for its exams and working on policies in this route will not amend any actual problematic concerns in any way as approved by Sarvan's (2004) study.

On the other hand, although new types of questions of PISA-like tests ("a mixture of multiple-choice questions and [open-ended] questions requiring students to construct their own responses (OECD, n. d., What are key features of PISA 2018?) had been discovered around 2004 and it was obvious that required changes in the system should have been made immediately, remedial preparations were delayed till such type of questions were asked in LGS and YKS exams in 2017-2018 academic year (Yavuz, 2019); In this sense, this criticism accords with that of the participants in this study as the researcher interprets. As the last point of concern in this context, consideration of international test results should be considered as a secondary source of information, not as a major source, which ought to be derived from the peculiarities of the country at the national and local levels. It is suitable that foreign educational systems and researches should be followed closely in order to utilize in policymaking, especially in regard to curricular ones as informed by the ministry:

During the studies of curriculum renewal ... related literature was reviewed. For this purpose, the curricula of many countries (Canada, Australia, India, New Zealand, America, Uganda, Thailand, England, Malaysia, etc.), brochures and publications prepared by the European Union and UNESCO, and academic articles on education published in Türkiye and abroad were examined. (TTKB-MEB, 2017, p. 10).

Müfredatların yenilenmesi çalışmaları sırasında ... literatür taraması yapılmıştır. Bu amaçla birçok ülkenin (Kanada, Avustralya, Hindistan, Yeni Zelanda, Amerika, Uganda, Tayland, İngiltere, Malezya vb.) müfredatları, Avrupa Birliği ve UNESCO tarafından hazırlanan broşür ve yayınlar, yurt içi ve dışında yayımlanmış eğitimle ilgili akademik makaleler incelenmiştir.

Utilizing foreign educational system models as a source of policy issue identification is beneficial as long as high-quality ones are examined and evaluated in an eclectic manner in which peculiarities are observed nationwide

and at the local levels if borrowings are made; however, it cannot be the single or the most influential factor for deciding a policy change.

Feedback from teachers

In order to determine the issues that require a new policy or policy change, in this study, feedback from teachers was appreciated as the most significant and most valuable source because it was the information obtained directly from the real arena, the actual field of educational research – from the policy practitioners at the schools. This perception is also supported in related literature as signified in Keser-Aschenberger’s (2012) research on policymaking – comparing cases in the U.S. and Türkiye:

This study also showed it is salient that those who are affected by central decisions should have a voice in decisions. Ozga (2000) considers teachers as the strategic partners in educational policy making and she fosters the idea of using teachers as sources of policy ideas (p. 301).

This sort of view, in a similar manner in the related literature, is portrayed as bottom-up information flow which can be utilized as a very useful issue identification source for policymaking (Sabatier, 1986). In this sense, as cited by Cohen et al. (2007), Richard Elmore, (1979/1980, p. 603), drawing on related research argues that policy should be made by ‘mapping backward’ from practice “to rest policy design with the needs of practitioners” (p. 65). Correspondingly, Cohen, Moffitt and Goldin (2007) also reflect through the arguments of some other researchers underscoring the significance and benefits of bottom-up approach in policymaking and they severely dispraise the customary governmental attitude of top-down approach (p. 65). This kind of viewpoint accords with the related themes of the study conducted by Arar et al. (2019) underlining the need for bottom-up initiatives from schools in the Turkish context of education policymaking. However, as this study explored, the feedback from teachers is almost the least appreciated source in issue identification in Turkish mechanisms of educational policymaking. It seems to

be a big dilemma that hinders the proper preparation of infrastructure for policymaking: You plan to make education policies; but you do not consider the views and suggestions of the teachers – who are to implement them in person – properly in determining the policy issues.

According to the findings obtained from the teachers' and academicians' perceptions in this research, there are some other issues to be mentioned concerning the utilization of teachers' feedback in issue identification: Decisionmakers rarely consult teachers, or rather pretend to be consulting them – as a formality – but teachers' feedback is not evaluated properly and is not put into practice unless it overlaps or rather supports the related political strategies/tactics in the governments' agendas. Some pretentious consulting with them is conducted by the policymakers in a deceiving manner with a populist approach *after* the policies have already been made. In this context, T2 said: "... all of our [teacher] colleagues told their opinions ... everything was discussed in detail; ... But still, the first draft plan came out as it had been, without making the changes we had suggested [in it]". ("... bütün öğretmen arkadaşlar fikirlerini söylediler, ... detaylarıyla her şeyiyle tartışıldı, ... Ama yine de ilk taslak plan olduğu gibi çıktı sonuçta, bizim önerdiğimiz değişiklikler yapılmadan").

On the whole, according to the findings of this study and the knowledge from the related literature, it looks clear that decisions of issue identification are taken without proper consideration of teacher feedback. Therefore, it is a true determination that there is a strong top-down approach to policy issue identification in the Turkish educational system, apparently unlike the bottom-up applications appreciated and recommended in the literature, which should definitely be acknowledged. This viewpoint is approved by the retired officials in the study as well together with the teachers and the academicians; but the actively-working officials insistently claimed that MNE properly consults teachers in issue identification and appreciates their views and suggestions appropriately. At this point, the researcher had an impression that those officials seemed to present such views under the pressure of being government employees, and thus, what they said concerning this context would not be quite sincere. This interpretation of the researcher was supported by the views of

retired officials, which were very similar to those of the teachers' and the academicians' and those participants' perceptions seemed sincere and meaningful since during their careers before retirement they had also worked in the same offices as the active officials in the study. So, it can be deduced that government officials can express their perceptions more freely after retirement. This condition may seem understandable to an extent though it should not be approved in any way. In a similar situation, according to the inference obtained from the findings, it was customary that teachers who were working in the MNE offices as government officials, especially in BDE, were perceived that they did seem to be supporting any policies and regulations during the period they had been assigned there; however, just after they were appointed to schools, they would start to criticize most of those deeds of MNE's. This hypocritical attitude must be deriving from the *bureaucratic fear* of losing the seemingly prestigious position in the ministry and of the superiors' blotting their official records. It should be asserted that such a timid attitude does never *become* teachers who are expected to educate students who should express their views bravely with a critical thinking approach.

On the other hand, the officials in the study perceived that teachers' views were rather questionable to be utilized in issue identification because their professional and ethical capacities were not sufficient to produce suggestions. Then, it might be inferred that this kind of mentality, firstly, seems to be an outcome of top-down and autocratical procedures of bureaucratic MNE culture, whose set claim is that authorities at superior offices know better, and secondly, it connotes a kind of self-criticism on the side of teachers since those officials, themselves, who had such a mindset were also teachers. Thus, this perception may underline the belief that teachers do trust neither their own nor their colleagues' capacity/competence for participation in policymaking. Another point concerning teacher capacity handled here was acknowledged mostly by academicians and officials in the study: The utilization of feedback from teachers with post graduate degrees is an asset for the policy processes. This perception highlights the significance of post-graduate education of teachers in the eyes of academic and bureaucratic milieus as they might actually appreciate information

coming from that source while despising the capacity of teachers with no post-graduate education. However, teachers themselves do not volunteer so much to go on with post-graduate education as the study showed that only less than a third of teacher participants from the schools shared this view. Drawing upon the personal experience of the researcher as both a teacher and administrator, together with the interpretation of the participants' views in this study, that most teachers do not appreciate teachers' post-graduate degrees might also be a sign of feeling of "professional jealousy [or] career envy" (Kalning, 2015) towards the *rare* teachers who have such degrees. Concerning this topic, Dammani (2019) investigates the kinds, symptoms and causes of such emotions in her study named "A study of the professional jealousy among teachers".

As another point in the context of getting teacher feedback implied by most participants pertaining to modern technology, it might be reasonable to comment that there could be no excuse on the side of MNE that they cannot reach teachers to obtain information about their views and suggestion since communication technology has become so powerful and efficient; MNE should get in touch with any teachers in the country, even in the farthest parts, in order to get their feedback for utilizing in issue identification. If teachers do not voluntarily present their views on educational issues, MNE should develop methods to get them. A high-level BDE official's (O1) expression, portrayed as a quotation in the Findings part of the study should particularly be evaluated in this context. She/he compared the lack of voluntary participation of teachers to the acquisition of "learned helplessness" feeling, which teachers developed in years as a biased reaction due to believing that their views were never to be appreciated by MNE. Actually, she/he told these in order to criticize teachers claiming that teachers always have so many mechanisms to convey their views to the authorities; however, they do not do it sincerely, and when they do present any (so-called) views – e. g. forced to present – they do not go beyond a formality. This viewpoint should be interpreted as a tragic self-confession by the authority rather than a critique of teacher behaviour. It is natural that teachers do not desire to present any views after so many times of negligence or discarding without any reasonable explanations; actually, it might be a normal reaction in

order to avoid repeated aversive stimuli, which should be dealt with by the MNE as a clue for an existing problem to be settled so as to improve interaction with the practitioners. In their comparative study, regarding this context, Akpınar and Aydın (2007) present the successful reform in Finland as a paragon in terms of esteeming teachers and their participation in all educational processes while criticizing the lack of such an attitude in the Turkish case – the 2004 curricular reforms – which, they regard, was an important cause for the implemental failures.

Feedback from academicians

As the findings of this study yielded, academicians are commonly accepted as researchers and producers of valuable theoretical knowledge, and thus their views and feedback are significant sources for issue identification as well as other stages of policymaking. However, their posture and their knowledge are criticized for several fallacies or wrongdoings. The researcher agrees with most of such criticism: As underlined and criticized by a remarkable number of the participants from the three groups in this study, academicians' feedback on school education is too theoretical for policymakers and practitioners, mainly because academicians do not properly visit and work in schools, the real arena of policy practice; and therefore, they do not know about the practice well enough to combine theory and practice. So, abusing this condition as a pretext most of the time, governments determine the policy issues according to their agenda discarding academic data and implications. It may be applauded as an honest approach of the academicians in the study that this perception is also admitted by them (as self-criticism) as well as enunciated by teachers and officials; but they should immediately take action to correct this situation since they are aware of the matter. On the other hand, that academicians pay more attention to their personal matters concerning their academic career studies than national educational issues and that the knowledge obtained from the universities is mostly irrelevant because they lack scientific quality are two other dimensions of criticisms; but, having deduced that such issues can soon be

overcome by the faculty once they are spotted duly and honestly, the researcher does not fully concede these interpretations though most academicians in the study did.

Function/participation of the National Education Council (NEC)

Although National Education Councils could have been quite an important body in the Turkish educational system for nearly 100 years (the first one was held in 1921 under the name *Education Congress – Maarif Kongresi*), as the results in this study revealed, especially for the last 40-50 years, they have not been utilized as they should ideally have been, mostly because they have usually functioned as the *spokesman* of the governments. In such a condition, as the participants indicated, it is obvious that the topics to be discussed in the NEC sessions are also predetermined by the government without consulting any stakeholders of education in the field. Therefore, it seems quite vain to expect proper participation of NECs in issue identification phase of educational policymaking. Actually, NECs are legally assigned as a powerful advisory body with a democratic structure and (should) function so as to propose and recommend on any kind of educational matters in Türkiye. Similar points are portrayed by Kaya-Kaşıkçı (2016), who specifically underlined the expected function of the NECs as a representative committee of stakeholder participation and more widely, “community involvement” in educational policy-making (p. 129). However, as indicated by the same researcher in line with the findings of this study, the role of the NECs in educational policymaking is not seen in the whole process but in issue identification and agenda setting phases; but nevertheless, the issues presented by NECs are the ones dictated by the political government, not the ones obtained from the stakeholders in the field. More precisely, as also emphasized by her, it can be argued that NEC decisions are used, or rather abused by the governments for the legitimization of their presupposed/predetermined decisions, not for obtaining independent data for issue identification:

Regarding these findings, it is seen that NEC functioned as an agenda formation rather than policy formulation tool that could be aligned with the issue definition and agenda setting step of the policy-cycle approach.

...

Most importantly, the results indicated that the role of the NEC transformed from policy formation tool to legitimization tool used by the government and MoNE (Kaya-Kaşıkcı, 2016, p. 131).

Consequently, it can be concluded that NECs should be more influential on policy issue identification, providing an opportunity for to present views from various educational sectors/stakeholders with more democratic participation in committees and meetings. Their session topics and agendas must not be determined by the unilateral government bureaucracy but by the multilateral/pluralistic participation of all educational stakeholders. NEC decisions must be taken freely by the members of the councils, should never be led by political/ideological approaches of the governments and should never be utilized as a governmental legitimization instrument for their predetermined policy decisions. Finally, concerning the decisions taken in NEC meetings, as emphasized in Kaya-Kaşıkcı's (2016) specific study in accord with the findings of the present research and as deliberately promised by the Minister of Education after the 20th NEC meeting through these words "I assure you that personally I will be following the [execution] of the decisions taken here, whether they are taken by unanimous vote or by majority vote. ... you will have seen to what extent your suggestions are realized in the field too" (Kasap & Şahin, 2021, para. 4 and para. 6). ("Sizleri temin ederim ki burada alınan kararlar, ister oy birliği ile ister oy çokluğu ile olsun birebir takipçisi olacağım. ... sizlerden gelen önerilerin ne derecede sahada gerçekleştiğini sizler de görmüş olacaksınız."), it can be asserted that NEC decisions should not stay only as advice; they must be put into practice following a further unbiased examination by the stakeholders in a scientific manner.

Refrainment from participation

It seems natural that stakeholders of education might be reluctant to participate in issue identification for policymaking for several reasons or they refrain from such engagements due to some excuses as indicated by the OECD (2001):

In fact, many citizens are often reluctant or unwilling to engage in information, consultation and participation activities launched by government. They might decide that it is not worth their time. They might leave it up to the government, parliament and other citizens to follow the issue. They might also mistrust the government's information or its motives in approaching and engaging them (p. 93).

In this study, the findings spotted that teachers and academicians refrain from participation in educational policymaking, particularly in issue identification, due to their firm belief that government decision-making authorities do hardly appreciate their views and suggestions in the processes as T2 critically underlined in a sorrowful mood through her/his statements quoted just above on page 313. Therefore, they perceive that such efforts are mostly waste of time and energy, and recurrence of MNE's ignoring their feedback seriously damages their motivation too. Either prior to or after the policymaking process, policymakers pretend to be appreciating stakeholder feedback; but unfortunately, such engagements often stay as a governmental formality or a populist political discourse. This habitual application is exemplified by Keser-Aschenberger (2012),

Recent 4+4+4 reform altering the structure of basic education received several and serious reactions and oppositions from several stakeholders as unions and higher education institutes, but they did not pay attention to any of the reactions and passed it in the way they planned. ... the participative policy making will always remain in the official discourse (p. 300).

On the other hand, by overcoming their refrainment, if the stakeholders provide feedback or present opinions without being asked for, even though it is a kind of complaint or harsh criticism, the policymakers can obtain very precious

information that may help them a lot to avoid possible failures in future, or to be able to make critical amendments. This point is underscored by the OECD (2001) as well: “**Unsolicited feedback** from citizens may contain valuable information for government. ... Suggestions might feature useful propositions for consideration by policy-makers. Complaints may point to necessary adjustments of public policies” (p. 56). In this context, in line with such OECD recommendations, the findings of this study strongly emphasize that teachers and academicians must present views and suggestions without being asked for and it should be a habit of democratic culture sustained traditionally.

As another significant point, it might be revealing to warn against a risky probability: When the participators perceive that their suggestions and/or views are not appreciated, and such events abound in time, they may increase the degree of their reactions uniting as large groups, even sabotages might appear. Yerlikaya (2015), referring to two authors, alerts to a similar threat: “‘Demands that are not reflected in the policies as a result of participation may tend to consolidate and radicalize with the effect of participation practice’ (Breindl & Francq, 2008, p. 28), and this may cause segregations in the society” (p. 24). “Katılım sonucunda politikalara yansımayan talepler, katılım pratiğinin etkisi ile güçlenerek radikalleşme eğilimi gösterebilir (Breindl and Francq, 2008, p. 28). Bu da toplumda ayrışmalara neden olabilir.” Therefore, such a condition may jeopardise the practice of the policy seriously. To avoid such risks, official policymakers should evaluate each piece of feedback meticulously, and explain clearly the reasons why some of them are *not* put into practice. The OECD (2001) depicts this sort of application as a kind of accountability conduct in the process that should be practiced by the government:

Governments have an obligation to account for the use they make of citizens’ inputs received – be it through feedback, public consultation or active participation. To increase this accountability, governments need to ensure an open and transparent policy-making process amenable to external scrutiny and review.

To apply this principle in practice

Give clear indications on the timetable for decision-making and how citizens can provide their comments and suggestions (e.g. through information brochures, public hearings) and how their input has been assessed and

incorporated in the decisions reached (e.g. with a summary report or final briefing session) (p. 88).

By this way, both the risk of probable reactions/resistance can be eliminated and the participators will not be discouraged from giving further suggestions. Like O1, O5 highlighted a similar perception in her/his interview in this study (the majority of other informants expressed nearly the same opinion): “In fact, if our teacher colleague believes that her/his views and suggestions are taken into consideration, she/he will participate more”. (“Aslında, eğer öğretmen meslektaşımız fikir ve önerilerinin kâle alınacağına inanırsa, daha fazla katılır”).

On the other hand, government officials insist that participation of stakeholders in issue identification is properly encouraged and ensured, giving the example of the 2017 curricular change process:

- 175,342 feedback and contribution messages arrived in response to our forms in the address “mufredat.meb.gov.tr” during the 27-day suspension process that we conducted to receive public opinion and contributions over the draft curricula.
- During the same period, 8.850 e-mails concerning the issue were sent to our e-mail addresses.
- 91,487 views and 31,268 interactions took place on our Facebook account.
- 530 million views and 19 million 100 thousand profile visits were made in our Twitter account.
- 360 academics and teachers worked only to evaluate these opinions and prepare them for the negotiations of the commissions.
- Our Board of Education and Discipline, consisting of 11 people including its chairman, led the entire process (TTKB-MEB, 2017, p. 13).
- Taslak müfredatlar üzerinden yapılan 27 günlük kamuoyu görüş ve katkılarını almak üzere yürüttüğümüz askı sürecinde “mufredat.meb.gov.tr” adresindeki formlarımıza 175.342 geri bildirim ve katkı mesajı geldi.
- Aynı süreçte e-posta adreslerimize konuya dair 8.850 mail geldi.
- Facebook hesabımızdan 91.487 görüntüleme ve 31.268 etkileşim gerçekleşti.
- Twitter hesabımızdan 530 milyon görüntüleme ve 19 milyon 100 bin profil ziyareti gerçekleşti.
- Akademisyen ve öğretmenlerden 360 kişi sadece bu görüşlerin değerlendirilmesi ve komisyonların müzakerelerine hazırlanması için çalıştı.
- Başkanyla beraber 11 kişiden oluşan Talim ve Terbiye Kurulumuz tüm süreçte liderlik yaptı.

Although this sort of statistical information seasoned with detailed numbers seems quite impressive, two points interpreted from the perceptions of the participants enlighten that it was almost no use to publicize the draft curricula and get feedback: Firstly, such consultation should have been conducted with the primary stakeholders at the issue identification and policy formulation stages before, not after, the drafts were prepared, (officials asserted that it was also done prior to the drafts; but teachers and academicians did not admit it believing that it was not properly carried out at all). MNE, as a preventive/proactive action, would have spared time and energy by previewing probable shortcomings and defects determined by the *actual* theoreticians and practitioners – academicians and teachers; but it did not. Secondly, it is perceived that such publicizing is solely a populist political show-off and formality – as it was in 2017 – since the so-called collected feedback as a *perfunctory* formality was not appreciated appropriately, and hardly any suggestions were acknowledged and realized.

Recommended precepts for issue identification

Having evaluated and interpreted the related findings, in agreement with the informants, essential codes of conduct for issue identification in sum can be recommended as follows:

- The basic source for identification of educational issues that require a new policy or policy change must be the views and suggestions of teachers and academicians, who cooperate in a harmonic, scientific and democratic manner. Their participation based on meritocracy is vital.

- Plans and programs of the governments might be another source for issue identification; but they must be free from one-sided political ideology as much as possible and the process should include pluralistic approaches in any phases, unconditionally appreciating and utilizing opposing views too. In this context, there should be an utmost ideology of education covering the principles that are led by science and democracy, not by any doctrinal conduct of any political party.

- The results of international tests and foreign country education system examples should not be the sole rationale behind a policy change; they could only be instruments that might assist the stakeholders' decision-making processes after being adjusted to the needs and realities of the country.

- National Education Councils must be operated in more democratic and scientific manners, free from political ideologies, and the decisions taken there should be utilized more fruitfully in issue identification and they should not stay as mere advice.

b) Participation in policy formulation

Among the stakeholders of education concerning policymaking, teachers, academicians and government officials are regarded as the most integral ones and their democratic participation in policymaking in a harmonious manner will surely contribute to producing sustainable high-quality policies. When handled singly, teachers' participation becomes more vital than the other two groups.

Teachers' participation

The most outstanding factor why teachers are the primary group among the three is that teachers directly work face to face with the targeted group of all educational systems in the field, namely the students at schools. Therefore, they personally and concretely experience significant issues concerning educational policies in the real environment of practice. This condition of theirs, beyond and over any other factors, proves that teachers can best observe, understand, evaluate and interpret the issues so as to provide the policymaking process with the most beneficial knowledge and experience. The related literature mostly supports this view. For instance, in the context of curricular studies, Beauchamp (1975) highlights the contribution and significance of teachers' involvement:

It [the effectiveness of curriculum decision making] will be improved because of the recency of experience of the teachers in classrooms and because teachers will be able to exert leadership in implementation ... (p. 149)

... Research has established that teachers who have participated in curriculum planning are more apt to use the curriculum ... and to be more willing and enthusiastic to do so (p. 206).

In their study that compares Türkiye's 2004 educational reform to Finn, Japanese, Korean, Australian, Danish and Norwegian educational reforms, Akpınar and Aydın (2007) stress the importance of teachers regarding the success of any educational process referring to an interview in *The Independent* (2006): A Finnish authorized official was asked a question like "What is the cause behind the success of the Finn's education system?". He answered "teachers, teachers, teachers" (Frassinelli, 2006).

"Bring me someone who has fallen from a donkey instead of a healer"

Nasreddin Hodja

Referring to famous Nasreddin Hodja who was a wise hero, with a high sense of humour, in satirical didactic stories conveyed from the 13th century onward, Ekrem Sorucuoğlu, in his article dated 5th July 2015 indicates that, during the last 30 years, 17 MPs from diverse political parties presided over the Ministry of National Education, and only one minister had a professional faculty education background of teaching – and taught at primary, secondary and/or high schools; the other 16 ministers were from various professional origins – there were even engineers (a construction engineer indeed) among them (Sorucuoğlu, 2015). Reminding the lesson in the anecdotal story, in which the Hodja was hurt having fallen from his donkey and asked for, *instead of a doctor*, the treatment of someone who had experienced the same incident, claiming that such a person would know its cure better than anyone else, Sorucuoğlu (2015) definitely asserts that the MNE ministers must be from teaching backgrounds, who have had the actual experience in the field. (In fact, in the more plausible version of the story, Nasreddin Hodja falls from a rooftop and is injured needing medical help; however, that donkey version is rather popular as well. On the other hand,

concerning his donkey-falling, it is also told that when Hodja fell from his donkey, he said “In fact, I was just about to dismount it, indeed” meaning he did not *literally* fall down!). Sorucuoğlu (2015) adds that only a minister who is a professional teacher can best comprehend and solve the issues of education and teachers; otherwise, the problems will remain unsolved. In line with this approach, assuming also that problem-solving is an integral part of policymaking, it can be claimed that teachers’ participation in all stages of policymaking process is vital, as highly emphasized by the participants of all the three groups in this study with the highest acknowledgement among the codes – “whom the policy interests the most should primarily participate in its formulation”. In a little more detailed manner, teachers’ participation should be concrete and in person, not solely through (remote) feedback or bureaucratic formalities, and the scope of participation should cover all areas of educational policymaking, not (just) exclusively curricular and/or instructional issues. So, with the information and experience coming from the *fountainhead*, the *cradle* – the schools – which are reflected through the practitioners’ perceptive vision with a from-down-to-top (bottom-up) information-flow approach, policies can have better chance of successful implementation as well as supporting both formative and summative evaluative processes. Here, it should be reminded how the 41-year-experienced teacher, who personally suffered the *pains of teaching*, like Nasreddin Hodja, interpreted a policy or curriculum developed without active participation of teachers:

The whole problem is this; Those, who make the curriculum or education policy, primarily because they do not teach in classrooms, because they do not know the pain ... they produce dreams ... That is, unless you reach the teacher, none of the curricula you develop are valid. You pretend to develop them and they always cause trouble (T10).

Bütün sorun da şu; eğitim programı veya politikası yapanlar en başta bunlar derse giren kişiler olmadığı için, acıyı bilmedikleri için... hayal üretiyorlar ... yani öğretmene siz ulaşmadıkça, yaptığınız müfredatların hiçbirisi geçerli olamaz. Yapmış gibi olursunuz ve onlar daima sıkıntı yaratır.

He also alerts to the risk of *certain* failures in practice when teacher participation is neglected.

Academics' participation

As revealed through the perceptions of the participants in the study and stressed emphatically by T4 “Policymaking is not possible without academics' participation” “Akademisyenler olmadan olmaz”, the researcher credits that academics, too, must participate not only in curricular policymaking but in all policy making processes. However, they are usually excluded from participation in many cases conducted by MNE as underlined in Keser-Aschenberger's (2012) research:

The missing link between the teacher training institutions and MoNE is a well-known fact. This study also showed that higher education institutions stayed as outsiders and forgotten players in the formation of CLT. This link should be restored as soon as possible and MoNE and teacher training institutions should collaborate on analysis for policy as well as analysis of policy (p. 303).

Similarly, Coşkun Yaşar and Aslan (2021), regarding the 2005 curricular change adopting constructivist approach, underscore that “... the curriculum was prepared without consulting the curriculum development faculty members” (p. 249) with reference to Gözütok, (2013a and 2013b).

Academics' basic contribution may be considered as scientific filtering of educational decision-making basically concerning theoretical areas of education with respect to both universal and national/local aspects. Their sustainable collaborations with the other stakeholders, especially teachers, officials and students are vital. But academics are usually criticised specifically for being too theoretical, for not effectuating cooperation with teachers in schools, and for refraining from participation in policymaking for *fear* of interaction with politicians as this study explored. Hussman (1978) uses rather harsh and pejorative terms to depict the fear of the academics such as “academic cowardice” and “professorial fear and trembling” while describing their togetherness as “toothless committees of cowering/spineless professors”. It should be highlighted as significant that the participants in this study also voiced such strong criticisms specially recommending the academics to be braver to

(scientifically) *fight* the politicians when required – against abuses of education for political ends – using the power of their area knowledge.

Related to the context above, the term “academic freedom” is emphasized by Casper (2014) representing the free activities of “the teacher or research worker in higher institutions ... without interference from political or ecclesiastical authority, or from the administration officials of the institution ...” (p. 134). However, one cannot be sure about and cannot generalize the academicians’ so-called ego-centric attitude for which they are criticized as they prioritize their personal academic career over their efforts for improving education, e.g., sparing more time for personal deeds than the needs of their students at the faculty. These were harshly voiced by the teachers and officials; but it is remarkable that this criticism was also approved by most of the academicians’ participants in the study. On the other hand, according to the researcher of this study, the criticisms toward academicians by the teachers and officials that education in faculties is not qualified enough and is inefficient, and that mechanisms of student selection to education faculties are not appropriate, should not be made directly and only to academicians since such are the issues which are mostly within the decision-making scope of higher authorities in MNE. However, academicians should insistently convey such matters to those authorities through proper channels and the issues must be settled through bi-lateral cooperative policy-making studies between MNE and universities. In the process, while universities provide scientific information, MNE should conduct political procedures to produce required policies. Similar suggestions are presented by Keser-Aschenberger (2012) in her study:

It is important to underline that teacher training institutions need to adopt a more aggressive and active role in policy making process in the educational arena to provide a scientific background for the policies. On the other hand, MoNE has to incorporate higher education institutions as inherent decision makers (p. 303).

Actually, the researcher of this study does not have sufficient information about the education quality in the education faculties, but, in regard to student selection, he seems to agree that only university entrance exam scores should not

suffice for a student to be able to enter an *education faculty*; there should be extra criterion-based mechanisms to test the appropriateness of the candidate students for teaching profession such as personality and psychological examinations.

As the final point of discussion in this part, concerning the main theme of participation, it should be recurrently noted that, whatever the reasons for yielding to it, academic/intellectual *cowardice* must be overcome in all levels of schooling and among all actors from the most senior chairs of the faculties to the most junior desks in the classrooms because academic courage/bravery is an indispensable posture prerequisite for academic progress as underlined by the participants in this study overlapping with diverse educational environments (Berger, 2017; Grollman, 2019; Novais, n. d.). Courage is accepted as one of the 6 fundamental values of academic integrity together with honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility by many universities and other organizations (Fishman, 2012; ICAI, 2021).

Participation of (government) officials

In order to grasp the issue thoroughly in a dialectical manner, it is necessary to find out how the government officials as policy making actors, who are deemed in this study as constituting one group of the three *pillars of educational policy*, perceive the concept of participation and how the other two groups perceive the officials' participation. Actually, in educational environments in Türkiye, officials are viewed as the *antagonistic* force on one side of the table – the governmental side – on the other side of which there are the teachers and academicians (in this scene, teachers are usually attributed *heroic* traits). In this regard, the informants in the study from the teacher and academician groups together with all retired officials clearly believed that officials exercise policymaking activities under the heavy influence of political governments, which behave in untransparent, undemocratic, partisan, nepotistic manners with a (unilateral) political and ideological approach and often with a murky rhetoric and too-slow performance. Furthermore, a very critical point for

the researcher, which was mentioned by the participants but *unfortunately* only by around half of them, is that although many stakeholders are aware of the antidemocratic and antimeritocratic operations in MNE, they keep silent/indifferent and seem to submit/consent to those authorities. The officials in charge are obviously accused of not struggling to solve the real problems though they are aware; here, the main reason for such an attitude is portrayed as that officials try to keep their so-called prestigious positions and offices in MNE through mild and submissive attitude towards the government instead of doing what is right. It should be asserted that it is no right of any responsible person in any official position to be nonresponsive to wrongdoings; every MNE official must approach such matters with a constructively critical understanding by leading democratic action within the borders of official and professional courtesy. Closely related to this point, informants in the study drew attention to an ironically tragic attitude of the officials: They would keep silent and submissive to their superiors and maintain intolerance to criticism towards governmental applications during their assigned period in the MNE; but as soon as their employment ended in MNE offices, they would themselves begin to criticize the MNE in an ambidextrous manner. This double-dealing attitude is unacceptable. It was also perceived that officials, most of the time, would oppress teachers and academicians through formal domination methods with an intolerant approach – like hidden *legitimized mobbing* – in order to silence them. The researcher admits these critical commentary reviews having acknowledged similar occasions through his personal experience as well; yet, like most of the participants, he is optimistic that such attitude of officials shall be amended in time towards a more democratic culture of policymaking with a more participative approach and progress of cooperation with other stakeholders of education. Within the scope of this mindset, it also seems reasonable to expect fairer and more meritocratic applications untainted by political and religious ideologies from the MNE in the selection and assignment of officials to schools, MNE offices and policy-making bodies (e. g. committees and councils). In this context, the BDE, as a powerful educational decisionmaker, must be more independent freeing itself from being the arbitrary, high-handed, “tyrannical”

tool of the government's decision-making mechanisms so as to serve for improving an integral mechanism of decision-making that *balances* top-down and bottom-up hierarchies.

As another particularity concerning officials' participation, the informants perceived that officials should only handle the bureaucratic and red-tape requirements of policymaking and just provide cooperative environment and logistics for the environment without intervening in decision-making while the teachers and academicians deal with the essence of the policy issues. Teachers, academicians and most of the officials shared this view assuming that officials could not behave at their own discretion being under the influence of the politicians as their superiors; however, several officials defended that such accusations or doubts were only biases, and therefore, they should also participate in every phase of the process because they were also from school-teaching backgrounds. Actually, It should be suggested that the anxieties about officials' behaviour should stay at the level of bias or presumption and thus, officials should participate properly like the other two groups. Another significant point is that officials should never be let possess a *patronizing* attitude toward policy stakeholders' participation, as the OECD (2001) defined in a more inclusive manner naming citizen participation; otherwise, it may be a great risk: "Public officials may, in turn, develop a condescending attitude towards citizens. This lack of respect is likely to aggravate, rather than improve, their relations" (p. 93). OECD (2001), under the title of "What general capacities to develop?", clarifies the tasks and roles of government officials concerning policymaking, stressing the coordination functions while emphasizing the significance of the support from political leaders and higher administrative authorities:

Efforts by public officials to inform, consult and engage citizens in policy-making can only be effective if top leadership supports them. Commitment by political leadership and top management thus is essential. In practice, this requires leadership to take an active interest in and provide visible support to these activities. At the same time, leadership needs to ensure that the inputs received from citizens are indeed incorporated into decision-making – and this means also for the officials in charge of these activities (p. 38).

...

Co-ordination

Initiatives to inform citizens, request feedback from and consult them should be coordinated across government. ...

To apply this principle in practice

Strengthen co-ordination capacities: Through instruments such as a dedicated Internet site, ... Guidelines and training...

Build networks of public officials responsible for information, consultation and participation activities within the administration...

Encourage innovation... (p. 88).

To conclude briefly, concerning the issue of officials' participation in educational policy processes in the Turkish context, the implications highlighted by Yıldız and Yıldız (2016) correspond with the ones in this study: "Bureaucracy should have a structure providing the educationalists with practical solutions to issues rather than creating problems" (p. 39).

Degree of participation

As the researcher coincides with to a great extent, the informants metaphorically compared the participation of the three groups in policy process to the structure of a trivet, each of the three legs of which is indispensable for its regular standing and function. All the policy-making process will be crippling if any one leg of the trivet falters. As a generic perception, it is accepted that degree or percentage of participation of the three groups is not significant – and it is rather difficult to determine/to speculate certain percentages; but the *quality* of participation is significant in their collaborative studies. For assuring quality, first of all, democratic/fair participation is vital. To reach consensus among the groups in decision-making processes is ideal; however, if absolute consensus cannot be obtained, the sides should strive to reach reconciliation through the power of rational convincing mutually.

Despite the perception that degrees of participation among the stakeholders were not so crucial, as the researcher recognizes, the requirement of weight on teachers' participation was underlined: The number of teachers (from schools) should constitute the majority in decision-making, particularly concerning curriculum and instruction, since they are the final implementers of

policies, and naturally have more (valuable) knowledge and experience about the whole process. Accordingly, the informants suggested several degrees of participation, all of which promoted teachers' portion at least 50% and over. The researcher's evaluations in this context are similar to the majority of the informants, favouring the degrees of participation as "70 % teachers, 20 % academicians and 10 % officials".

Participation of other stakeholders

Besides the three groups in the study, participation of other stakeholders of education is recommended by the informants because multiplicity/diversity of perspectives – especially the richness of opposing views – creates a big opportunity for discovering possible variations and modifications that can lead to remarkable improvement in policy processes as well as for taking preventive measures against probable hindrances in advance. In addition to their provision of heterogeneous sources of information, this kind of multi-participative approaches back up governments with acquiescence to policies by larger groups of citizens as emphasized by OECD (2001): "By enlarging the circle of participants in policy-making, government gains access to new sources of information. By giving all interested parties the chance to contribute to policy-making, governments increase the chance of greater voluntary compliance (p. 20). Such a pluralistic environment does also help avert the unfavourable conditions due to imposition of dominant values on minorities.

In regard to other stakeholders, participation of students in policy processes should be paid special attention to, as highlighted by the assertive finding in the study: Students' participation is as valuable as teachers'! As in Sorucuoğlu's (2015) reference to Nasreddin Hodja's comparison of an experienced person (with substantial practical knowledge) to *a person who fell off while riding a donkey*, namely implying teachers, in this context, participation of students in policymaking processes can be analogized to that of teachers because students also undergo a very similar experience in the same real educational environment. In accord with this understanding, Collins (2011)

emphasizes that “collaborative consultation with young people is vital for the elaboration of effective public policy” (p. 4) and details the substantial benefits of children’s participation in policy-making, which contributes to exploring real needs and interests of the young, also stressing its contribution to the attitude of democratic citizenship through these lines:

Authentic [emphasis added] participation by young people on issues that concern them gives them the opportunity to shake up the movers who are making decisions about them so that planning and programming will respect their rights and serve their best interests. With better understanding of children’s knowledge and experiences, decision-making can be more responsive to the reality of children’s lives. Furthermore, collaborative consultation has a positive impact on the children and youth who engage in it. ... Moreover, participation provides the basis for democratic citizenship (pp. 5-6).

The word “authentic” in the lines above is highly critical and must always be realized in practice in order to avoid *futile* exercises that may not go beyond formality. Moreover, such *authentic* student participation in policymaking does help the personal improvement of children – as they witness that their views are appreciated – for their future social life: “One of the most effective routes to becoming a responsible adult is to be granted respect as a child and to learn that one’s opinions and feelings are taken seriously and have value” (Lansdown, 2010, pp. 24-25; also cited in Collins, 2011, p. 6). In Turkish education policy literature, student participation in educational decision-making is also handled and suggested – both for improving instructional activities and for enhancing democratic education policy culture (Yırcı & Karaköse, 2010). In the particular context of curricular studies as well, this point is emphasized: Referring to Kilpatrick (1918), Coşkun Yaşar and Aslan (2021) underline that “the learner should take part in curriculum planning” (p. 245).

There are other examples from the world which promote children’s participation in decision-making stages of the matters affecting them, through which parallels can be drawn to the theme of “students’ participation in educational policymaking”. The applications of Canadian governmental bodies regarding the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which was adopted by the United Nations in 1989 can be a proper example: “Canadian courts and

legislatures have recognized the CRC, and the rights of children embodied in Article 12 in particular” (Government of Canada, 2019, I. Introduction: Scope of Paper). Collins (2011) highlights Canada’s official attitude concerning children’s rights of participation, through their views and suggestions, in decision/policy making:

By ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, Canada formally accepted the obligation, articulated in article 12, to “assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age of the child” (p. 3).

The offices enlarged the scope of applications of decisionmakers’ consultation for children’s views depending on the significant presumption of *a child’s efficient capacity* for engendering opinions: “Article 12(1), for example, does not limit the matters on which children should be consulted... the Committee suggests that states *presume* a child has capacity to form views” (Government of Canada, 2019, II. Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child). The U. N. committee clarified the content and duration of children’s substantial participation in decision-making and policy-making through items 12 and 13:

12. The views expressed by children may add relevant perspectives and experience and should be considered in decision-making, policymaking and preparation of laws and/or measures as well as their evaluation.

13. These processes are usually called participation. The exercise of the child’s or children’s right to be heard is a crucial element of such processes. The concept of participation emphasizes that including children should not only be a momentary act, but the starting point for an intense exchange between children and adults on the development of policies, programmes and measures in all relevant contexts of children’s lives (United Nations, 2009, p. 5).

It is also underscored that in regard to research and policy development operations it is imperative to include “children’s voices in legislative and policy-making processes” by “taking steps to improve children’s participation in matters – both legal and policy – that affect them” (Government of Canada, 2019, Article 12 of the CRC and Children’s Participatory Rights in Canada).

As enlightened in the literature and by the findings of this study, the researcher also fervently supports students' participation in any regulation or policy issues concerning them at any degree in every environment, from the small classroom in a Şırnak village to the halls of Grand National Assembly in Ankara. Similarly, Lambert (n. d.), as a teacher, suggests "keeping the student in the room as decisions are being made" (Data does not fuel our passion, para. 6.) and prescribes that there should be "a student at the center of every meeting, from the elementary school's weekly staff meeting up to the United States Department of Education" (Keeping the Child in the Room, para. 11.) underlining the importance of students' participation and influence at any level.

NECs' participation

The common perception of NECs in the literature, in this study and in the researcher's mind is that, on the whole, an NEC is an ideally functional institution in theory or contemplation; however, it is almost entirely an inefficacious entity in practice, which is operated in a manner mostly contrary to its constitutional principles and expected functions. In her study investigating the function of NECs in educational policymaking, Kaya-Kaşıkçı (2016) explored that "... the negative sides of the NEC outnumbered its positive aspects according to the participants' experiences of the NEC" (p. 129). As this study pointed out too, there are several fundamental reasons leading to this unfavourable condition: First of all, NECs are strictly dependent on the current political government's authority, by which they are misused and abused for its political ends. While it is required to set the NEC agendas according to scientific results obtained from educational institutions, they are determined almost totally in accordance with ruling party's (parties') political and ideological agendas, plans and programs. Secondly, NEC attendees and committee members are selected/determined by the politicians according to the main criterion of *being close to political government and its ideology* (including related union members), violating the vital principle, "meritocracy", while many stakeholders who should definitely attend such meetings are not ever invited, indeed. In this

context, Kaya-Kaşıkcı (2016) presents a specific example referring to an outstanding civil educational organization's evaluation of an NEC: "TEDMEM (2014) states that there are no principals or educators in school security commission of the NEC, although they are the main actors of the school setting" (p. 130). She stages one other sample from the comments of another recognized educational organization: "ERG (2010) criticized the number of participants from [the] ministry [offices] since it was more than other participants" (p. 130). Another point from her research is that "Similarly, teachers during the councils could not voice themselves..." (p. 137). Unfortunately, this heavily-politicised structure of NECs, which does not allow really-deserving stakeholders to participate in its formation, has been in effect for more than 40 years. Thirdly, the decisions in NEC meetings are also taken under the influence of political and ideological oppression of the government that directs, rather *manipulates*, the flow of the sessions and decision-making mechanisms in conformity with their presupposed resolutions, and accordingly, decisions taken can be put into regulatory/policy-making process through a *so-called* legitimized procedure with the *seeming* approval of the NEC. Thus, there shall be almost no reaction/resistance to the decisions that, in fact, have *already* been made before the NEC sessions are held. This is supported by Kaya-Kaşıkcı's (2016) research:

The current study revealed that the applicability of these decisions depends on two factors; being suitable for the government or ministry and being suitable for agenda. ... Furthermore, they perceived that the government and ministry used its power in implementation of these decisions (pp. 134-135).

She also gives a striking example about a significant curricular policy affecting the entire system:

This education system, 4+4+4, is the embodiment of how the decisions of NEC are implemented as a policy based on the government's and MoNE's agenda. Participants of this study perceived this policy as not a result of 18th NEC but 18th NEC as a tool of this policy (p. 135).

On the other hand, when there are any decisions different from the ones in the scope of governments' impositions made in an NEC, they are doomed to

remain as only pieces of “advice”, which can never be practiced. Then, all these are imposed easily as they *seemingly* accord with legal requirements, which are actually ways of contriving or shifting in bureaucracy. Kaya-Kaşıkcı (2016), who investigated the matter deeply, states that these sorts of perceptions and interpretations and more are portrayed and illustrated in the related literature (Carpenter-Kılınç, 2007; Dağ; 2013; Göktürk, 2006; Karataş, 2014; Toprak & Külekçi, 2014) as approved by the researcher as well. She concludes that “As a result, the dominant group had the power of influencing both the process and the decisions, which is a natural outcome of homogeneous and ideological formation of the councils” (p. 131). She also summarizes the common perception of NECs in literature that they are not structured properly and they are ineffective in regard to educational policymaking:

There [are/were] also other studies which indicated that NEC does not have a clear position in this process and it is not effective in the policy-making process (Aydın, 1996; Aslaner, 2008; ERG; 2014). Aslaner (2008) found out that NEC was not effective in the Turkish education system while Aydın (1996) evaluated the impact of NEC in policy-making process as limited. Furthermore, ERG (2014) emphasized that the role of the NEC during this process is not clear (Kaya-Kaşıkcı, 2016, p. 132).

On the other hand, one of the leitmotifs in this study, the *quality* issue, appears once more in this part to point to the lack of quality in NEC structure and its decisions as referred to in the literature as well:

Another debated issue of councils is the quality of the decisions made during this process. Nearly most of the participants of this study evaluated NEC’s decisions as non-scientific, non-pedagogic, political, ideological ..., which is consistent with other studies in the literature (Aydın, 1998; Eğitim-Sen, 2015; ERG, 2010; ERG, 2015) (Kaya-Kaşıkcı, 2016, p. 136).

What is urgently expected is that NECs must return to their properly-structured, efficient and prestigious old days when, again, they can be conducted appropriately so as to support educational policymaking with their high-quality decisions and *advice* in a meritocratic, apolitical and democratic manner. Accordingly, as highlighted by Yıldız and Yıldız (2016), the decisions taken in

those councils should not stay as advised presented for formality; but should be put into action depending on their quality.

c) Other significant issues of participation

There are a number of issues in regard to participation in policymaking, most of which are discussed in the related parts; however, some other important ones are going to be discussed in this section briefly while some points are to be talked over once more. Initially, it is vital to acknowledge that timing of the stakeholder participation in policymaking process is supremely crucial. Broadly mentioning, it is required that participation of stakeholders must start as early as possible and continue in each phase of the policymaking process so as to ensure an articulate formulation utilizing a variety of actual options and to enhance a stable and sustainable implementation. In this context, under the title of “Putting principles into practice!” the OECD (2001) emphasizes the significance of time/timing in policymaking:

4. Time

Public consultation and active participation should be undertaken as early in the policy process as possible. This allows a greater range of policy solutions to emerge. It also raises the chances of successful implementation. Adequate time must be available for consultation and participation to be effective. Information is needed at all stages of the policy cycle.

To apply this principle in practice

Start early in assessing information needs and identifying appropriate tools for engaging citizens at each stage of the policy-making process. Plan for public information and involvement early in the policy cycle (p. 86).

Correspondingly, the importance of timing is stressed in regard to proper applications of RIA (like in the extract above, it was also hinted that there should be no hurry; adequate time should be allowed for efficient participation):

TIMING - CONSULT EARLY

Timing is another important issue for consultation. First, you should consult as early as possible and if possible at various stages of the process of preparing regulation so that the results can be used effectively in RIA and, potentially, lead to changes in your regulatory proposals. Second, you should make sure that

you allow enough consultation time for the groups you are consulting to participate effectively (OECD, 2008, p. 21).

One extra point should be reminded here that the OECD (2001), while recommending to start the policymaking process by taking the stakeholders' perspective, it also strongly suggests appreciating the views of citizens (stakeholders) apprehending their capacity. Prescribing *tips for action*, it basically underscores policymakers' commitment to **“start from the citizen's perspective; consider the citizen's perspective first and treat them with respect** (p. 93) and it states that “Engaging citizens in policy-making rests on a couple of conditions. First of all, government needs to recognise the **autonomous capacity of citizens** to discuss and generate policy options” (p. 36). Interpreting this approach within the scope of this study, it should be highlighted that we ought to trust and appreciate the capacity of teachers and academicians, believing in their experience, expertise and common-sense. If we do not, then it means we admit that we have not been able to educate our teachers and academicians well; and this situation takes us into a turbulence of vicious circle. However, as this study explored in similar direction to the researcher's opinion, academicians and especially teachers do really believe that neither their views are appreciated properly by MNE nor they are let participate in policymaking in an appropriate manner. They usually suspect the sincerity of the official attitude concerning participation, and this lack of trust impedes the required interaction and collaboration between them, and distorts if there is/are. This unfortunate situation was expressed in the study by one of the highest-ranking officials in the MNE, (O1), who compared such depressive perception of teachers to “learned helplessness”, as a mental disorder or illness – due to the belief that their views would be ignored no matter how many times they would try to present – (and he *blamed teachers* for it). This utterance of hers/his signifies that this matter was known by the authorities for a long time and it had not been solved. Then, how come they can expect actual contribution from teachers to policy processes, which, for sure, cannot go beyond formality if there comes! As quoted above, she/he also indicated that teachers would more

voluntarily participate in policy processes if they believed their views were appreciated. With these words, O1 confessed, in a sense, that they, as officials of the MNE, knew the solution too; then, why would they not try to persuade teachers to trust that their views were taken into consideration by the MNE! If, still it is not done, it can be interpreted that the MNE does not really want genuine participation of teachers. On the other hand, as done by the officials who were actively working, that highest-level official accused teachers of their avoidance of presenting views due to their perception of MNE's humiliating negligence. Then, there arose several questions to evaluate the situation: Were teachers really guilty in this sense? Were their views appreciated properly? Were they informed about how their participation was valued and contributed to the policy process, or why their views were not put into effect? Did any authorising entity ever try to convince and motivate them for further participation? and so on. If we seek a guilty side, was it the group of teachers and/or academicians or the governmental or bureaucratic institutions? (O1) also asserted that teachers in the schools could present their views in the subject group meetings at schools, and the administrators would convey them to the authorities. Should teacher participation in policymaking be limited to those small meetings whose topics are never policy issues, but minor specific technical issues concerning a particular subject? One extra detail appeared to be meaningful here: If the highest official levels claim that these lower levels (groups from the schools and the faculties) are consulted regularly and encouraged for participation but yet the teachers and academicians perceive that these are not done appropriately, is there not a serious problem with the middle levels (administrators), which are responsible for mediating and conducting relations between them? She/he also indicated that the administrators at the middle levels would prepare synopses or inventories to transmit the feedback from schools to the MNE; do those documents really include all the feedback or do the administrators eliminate the ones which may not accord with what is expected by the governmental authorities? (This point was stressed and/or implied by several informants in the study, claiming that the administrators and managers usually conveyed the messages, views or suggestions from schools that would coincide with what the

MNE desired to hear – “You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours!” (O7) (“Al gülüm, ver gülüm!”) interaction. In order to eliminate the risks stemming from such conditions and also to strengthen government-citizen relations the OECD (2001) forcefully suggests that governments inform citizens clearly that their views are always appreciated, stating “**Meet citizens’ expectations that their views be considered.** Seeking out and including citizens’ input into policy-making, governments try to meet citizens’ expectations that their voices be heard, and their views be considered” (p. 20), while warning them to avoid pretence: “Just pretending to take citizens’ views and input into account and not doing so is likely to be counterproductive – leading to less trust in government and democracy” (p. 23). In the Turkish case, this sort of trust has been lost and so-called participation has remained as a formality. This issue is also presented as a serious matter through the eyes of European Center Not-for-profit Law (ECNL) authorities: “... the Secretary General’s report correctly finds that in some countries *‘the model works reasonably well. In others, the model and the institutions for public consultation and participation lack effectiveness and often exist as a formality’*” (ECNL, 2016, p. 2). Accordingly, the sustainability of proper participation for overcoming the risk of staying as a formality basically depends on this trust and the participants’ belief of esteem by the authorities: “In the longer term, people will only continue to participate in consultation if they see it as worthwhile. This means that they must be able to see that their views have been considered seriously in reaching regulatory decisions” (OECD, 2008, p 21). Methodologically, it is useful to let the stakeholders know about the results of evaluation of their views, especially by publicizing them through the most common forms of communication: “Providing feedback to people who have participated in consultation can be helpful in this context. Ideally, the consultation document and the public responses should be published on the internet, together with details of the government’s reactions to the issues raised” (OECD, 2008, p 21).

One point should be emphasized concerning the “mediating” function of school principals between the governmental offices and the teachers – since this issue is referred to within the topic above: In fact, the school principals

themselves are not properly allowed to participate in educational policymaking either; therefore, how come they are expected to mediate between them as reconciliation agents! Correspondingly, this point is stressed by Arar et al. (2019) in their study investigating school principals' perceptions of governmental education policies: In regard to participative concerns, they indicate that "... enforced educational reforms originating from governments do not include grass roots policy making that includes the principals who will be implementing the policies" (p. 296). Concerning the relation between their participation in policy processes and their mediating role, these researchers also stress that "In many cases, school principals do not play any role in the design phase of these changes. However, these agents have to convince the school level agents (teachers) to implement these changes" (p. 297).

Not to be unfair towards the MNE, the researcher felt the need of referring to MNE's assignment of teachers (and sometimes academicians) to work on regulatory curricular activities like: "During the 2017-2018 Academic Year, workshops will be held for our teachers to examine the programs of their branches and to produce documents for implementation." (TTKB-MEB, 2017, p. 14). ("2017-2018 Eğitim-Öğretim Yılı boyunca öğretmenlerimizin kendi branşlarına dair programları incelemeleri ve uygulamaya yönelik dokümanlar üretmeleri için atölyeler yapılacaktır"). However, such tasks are usually given as program evaluations to be conducted at the practice stage after the programs have already been made; teachers are rarely let participate in the development stage of the curricula. Then, teachers rightfully maintain that "how can I be expected to evaluate a program which I have not made, or taken part in its creation?" as the findings of this study explored. Actually, in such a condition, for a teacher, implementation (and/or evaluation) of that curriculum must be rather painful. What should be done is that, with a holistic approach, teachers should be let participate properly in each phase of the development of curricula, then implement them, and then they can evaluate them in a more fruitful manner, without any *grudge* or *bias*, but with high motivation and ownership towards any curricula and/or regulations. A similar case to this issue – underappreciated stakeholder opinions – is also reported by Akpınar and Aydın (2007) who

underline that, prior to the 2004 education reforms, views and suggestions were taken from teachers and other stakeholders; however, they were not analysed, evaluated and utilized properly and the reforms were made in a hurry. On the other hand, another type of *so-called* teacher participation is revealed as the task of redacting coursebooks as an official stated in the interview that “one teacher found a lot of spelling errors in the coursebook” (O6), championing her/him. She/he also underlined that such substantial feedback was always welcome and added that the authorities cared about it so much that they invited her/him to the ministry. She/he concluded by emphasizing that “... We accept such kind of any suggestions and views, written or sketched; we are incredibly sensitive [about such matters]!” (O6). (“... o tip yazılı çizili ne öneri, görüş varsa alırız, [o konularda] inanılmaz hassasız!”). The sensitivity they showed was toward the error, not toward the democratic participatory rights of the teacher; this is tragically ironic and/or ironically tragic! Actually, it is the task of the firms which print/publish the coursebooks to correct spelling errors not of the implementing teachers. Thus, it shall be criticized that considering this sort of a trivial technical activity by teachers as participation in policymaking should be regarded as *humiliation* towards teachers.

When we look at the matter of lack of proper participation on the side of teachers once more in this study, common perception and reaction were summarized by a teacher as “If/when a teacher does not participate in decision-making processes, she/he will consider [the procedures of] policy changes and new practices as drudgery, an additional burden; [Then] she/he will pretend to have grasped and to be applying, or she/he will show resistance” (T12). (“Eğer öğretmen karar verme süreçlerine katılmazsa, politika değişikliklerini ve yeni uygulamaları kendisi için bir angarya, bir ek yük olarak görecektir; anlamış ve uyguluyormuş gibi yapacaktır ya da direnç gösterecektir). Another noteworthy comment by that teacher, drawing parallels between teacher participation and student participation concerning regulatory decision-making, was that students in a classroom could own and better obey the classroom rules which were determined by their respective participation; thus, in a comparative manner, teachers’ participation in educational policymaking would certainly lead to better

implementation by them. Another significant inference here is that, in this way, the students who are trained by a democratic teacher in a democratic classroom atmosphere will surely intend to behave in similar manners in their lives. This interpretation hints that, in educational environments, democracy should be practiced in the classroom – in the lowest scene – as well as in the minister’s office – in the highest setting. This point can be summarized by referring to the norms/principles of “reciprocity” and its golden rule, “treat others as you want to be treated”, which is found in any teachings and/or doctrines concerning especially social psychology. Thus, it is natural when a teacher asserts that “if you value me and my views, I will value you and your policies” (the word *you* standing for policymaking/decision-making authorities).

In such policymaking atmospheres, in which participative understanding diverges, avoiding or refraining from participation by teachers and academicians is a critical issue that should be handled recurrently. One of the interview questions in this study inquired into the attitude of the participants towards “expressing views on educational issues without being asked for”, and the results showed that neither of the groups had such an attitude. They said that only very occasionally they presented some views to related offices. Similarly, the interview question which probed “whether the participants had ever been asked for their views (even one time) for educational issues” revealed that only the officials were consulted to a considerable extent while the participants in the other two groups, teachers and academicians, were hardly referred to in the first phases of policy processes. Actually, with such sort of rather closed-ended questions, this part of the interview schedule had a similar aspect to quantitative research tradition construct. In that manner, although the sample is far lower than the required number so as to produce valuable results in terms of frequencies, it can be claimed that the numerical findings here have significant meanings in the interpretative sense: The participants in this study were composed of the professionals selected purposively among the information-rich colleagues in their areas of education and their participation and/or feedback would be very precious to be utilized in decision-making; however, only 1 out of 15 distinguished teachers and 1 of high-quality academicians had ever (been invited

and) participated in a policymaking process while, again only one teacher and none of academicians had ever (been invited and) attended an NEC meeting. On the other hand, almost all of the informants in the group of *officials* had a role in both events. This finding may give us an impression that policymaking processes are usually carried out by government officials without required participation of teachers and academicians. Thus, this situation also implies that policies are made by being deprived of the actual information and feedback from the field of academia (faculties and schools), from the stakeholders who affect the implementation of policies and whom are directly influenced by them. In a similar manner, while presenting information about transformation of dershanes (private teaching institutions which – claim to – prepare students for higher training institutions) to Basic High Schools in her study, Yıldırım-Taştı (2019), referring to Şanlı (2015), indicates: “the administrators claimed that they were not adequately informed about how the transformation would be completed, and they were excluded from the decision-making process” (p. 352).

Lack of democratic approach to participation seems to be the common theme in all issues of participation. In this sense, in the study, teachers who gave examples of classroom management in terms of determining the classroom rules together with students signified an important expectation by them: As teachers conduct classroom activities in their schools caring for democratic manners in terms of participation in decision-making, they hope that the MNE should behave in the same way while making education policies. Teachers are absolutely right and such a mindset implies that teachers are several steps ahead of the MNE in regard to democratic attitude, in fact, it should be vice versa; The MNE should go in the front as *avant-garde*, leading the other stakeholders of education including teachers.

In a condensed manner, other serious issues of participation can be listed as follows: Multi-level cooperation, collaboration and coordination among teachers, academicians and officials are vital for policy-making; but do not exist in a proper manner. Even, these three groups do not share common ideals for education. Especially, theory and practice cannot work together in a harmonic manner due to poor interaction between education faculties and schools. There

always appear mutual/respective accusations and conflicts among the three groups of stakeholders. In such an environment, what should be done immediately is: The MNE must (re)design proper environments for coordination among the stakeholders and all groups must collaborate in a democratic and participative manner without blaming one another. In this study, the group of government officials (the working ones not the retired ones) claimed that MNE always did what was required for such an ideal environment in that sense; but such a perception was ridiculed by the other informants and labelled as a “myth”. The researcher infers that the assertions of the officials in this direction – claiming everything is properly being conducted – mostly stemmed from their fear of the higher authorities because they were still working for MNE at the time of the interviews. The researcher felt most of the insincerity in their expressions to an extent, evaluating their actions, body language and voice tones and the like during that part of the sessions. It must be declared openly that such an attitude like theirs is never acceptable since they should have been courageous to tell the truth in a scientific interview, which was fundamentally based on rapport, goodwill and secrecy. Perhaps, that sort of behaviour could be tolerable on some other occasions; but the researcher regards that purposefully selected participants on such occasions (as having prominent informative personality and position) must tell their genuine perceptions all the time as the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates indicates repeatedly in his works that if a *state* (government) is true, then the citizens are true. Socrates also emphasizes (in his “Apology” and in “Crito” written by Plato) that truth (and justice) must be chosen when given as alternatives to whatever choices, even though they stand between life and death. (Plato, 2019; Plato, 2020). In the context of this study, government officials, as representatives of the *state*, must always be true in any educational process and environment so that the stakeholders will be true too, and here, in such situations, there is no risk of life and death dilemma for them, indeed. However, their (dauntless) behaviour is so vital; because the “true” education of children is a matter of life and death for a nation, those government representatives must always select the true and just course among alternatives and express their perceptions in a democratic manner for the future of the nation.

Giving Socrates's approach as a paragon of comparison, the researcher tries to state his expectations about the attitude of state officials toward expressing their views on educational issues. Just illuminating these views, Irvine (2008) interprets Socrates's understanding as follows:

Socrates felt compelled to express his views, openly, regardless of the consequences. As a result, he is remembered today, not only for his sharp wit and high ethical standards, but also for his loyalty to the view that, in a democracy, the best way for a man to serve himself, his friends, and his city—even during times of war—is **by being loyal to, and by speaking publicly about, the truth** (p. 19).

Similarly, it is befitting to refer to two leaders who have always influenced the understanding of the terms “truth and justice” in Turkish (educational) culture: The first one is the Islamic Prophet (Hazreti) Muhammad, who, through his hadiths, is believed to have prescribed to tell the truth unquestionably all the time except for the condition of being a slave to the enemy so as not to inform, for instance, about positions of national military troops (Çağrıç, 2013; Sorularla İslamiyet, 2020). The second one is the founding leader of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who is believed to have said “Justice is the foundation of the State” (Adalet mülkün temelidir). This saying, as an Atatürk quote, is also translated into English as “Justice is the infrastructure of proprietorship” by Gazi University (Gazi Üniversitesi, 2015); but the general view is that by the word “mülk” the “state” is meant (Milliyet, 2021). So, also in the light of universal, intellectual, historical, national and cultural virtues, it should be highlighted that state officials must always tell the truth and behave fairly in a brave manner; accordingly, the MNE can get rid of such accusations of its officials' improper attitude.

On the other hand, against teachers' and academicians' complaint that their views were not appreciated properly by the decision-making authorities, and they were not suitably let participate in policymaking, the officials in this study fervently insisted that the MNE usually had them participate in the processes through several ways. For instance, in the interviews, they recurrently gave the example that teachers had participated in the studies of curricula

development in 2016-2017. This was underlined in the MNE System of Monitoring and Evaluating Curricula (MEB Öğretim Programlarını İzleme ve Değerlendirme Sistemi) as *responses to frequently asked questions* (T. C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı. n. d.):

3. Who carried out the task of developing draft curricula?

... The curricula were prepared by the commissions of representatives, teachers, education specialists and academicians under the coordination of the related general directorates. This way, together with the officials of the Ministry of National Education, teachers, parents, school administrators and experts from across the country provided input for developing the programs. Drafted programs were prepared for the suspension period following their examination and evaluation by the Board of Education and Discipline. After the suspension process, in line with the feedback to be received from the stakeholders, they will be evaluated by the Board of Education and Discipline, and the curricula will be finalized and approved (Sıkça sorulan sorular, para. 3).

4. Did the teachers participate in the preparation of the curricula?

Yes, teachers have played important roles in each phase of curriculum development. Teachers who were competent in their fields, working in different levels and grades under our Ministry, have holistically handled the curricula and drafted the programs (Sıkça sorulan sorular, para. 4).

3. Taslak öğretim programlarının geliştirme çalışmaları kimler tarafından gerçekleştirildi?

Öğretim programlarını geliştirme çalışmaları Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın ilgili birimleri ile koordineli bir şekilde gerçekleştirildi. Öğretim programları ilgili genel müdürlüklerin koordinatörlüğünde temsilciler, öğretmenler, eğitim uzmanları ve akademisyenlerden oluşturulan komisyonlarca hazırlandı. Bu şekilde programların geliştirilmesi için Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı yetkilileriyle birlikte öğretmenler, veliler, okul yöneticileri ve ülke genelindeki uzmanlar girdi sağladı. Hazırlanan programlar Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı tarafından incelenip değerlendirilerek askı süreci için hazırlandı. Askı süreci sonrasında da paydaşlardan alınacak geri bildirimler istikametinde yine Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığınca değerlendirilerek öğretim programlarına son hâli verilip onaylanacaktır.

4. Öğretmenler programlarının hazırlanmasında görev aldı mı?

Evet, öğretmenler programların geliştirilme sürecinin her aşamasında önemli roller almışlardır. Bakanlığımıza bağlı farklı kademe ve sınıflarda görev yapan alanında yetkin öğretmenler öğretim programlarını tümüyle ele almış ve öğretim programlarının taslağını oluşturmuşlardır.

İsmet Yılmaz, (Milliyet, 2017; T. C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2017), the Minister of National Education (2016-2018), also indicated that every stakeholder had been invited and offered chances to participate in those

curricular studies with their views and suggestions before the drafts were legitimized:

For one month from today till Friday, 10 February 2017, we are waiting for the opinions and suggestions of our teachers, parents, and everyone who say "I have a word, I have an opinion regarding education" or who has examined the drafts submitted. In addition, we will deliver these formally to our teachers, universities, public institutions and organizations, and non-governmental organizations. They will also be able to present their contributions either through this site or by e-mail. We call all our people to share their views with us, without any restrictions or manipulations (2017a, Eğitimde demokratikleşme, Para. 8.; Milliyet, 2017, para. 12.).

Bugünden itibaren bir ay süreyle 10 Şubat 2017 Cuma gününe kadar öğretmenlerimiz, velilerimiz, 'Eğitim konusunda sözüm, görüşüm var' diyen veya sunmuş olduğu taslakları inceleyen herkesin görüş ve önerilerini bekliyoruz. Ayrıca öğretmenlerimiz, üniversitelerimiz, kamu kurum ve kuruluşlarımız, sivil toplum kuruluşlarımıza da yazıyla bunları iletacağız. Onlar da gerek bu site üzerinden gerekse de e-maile katkılarını sunabileceklerdir. Bütün halkımızı hiçbir kısıtlama ve yönlendirme olmaksızın görüşlerini bizlerle paylaşmaya davet ediyoruz.

Press and Media Announcement by the MNE declared seemingly remarkable numbers of activities concerning those studies:

The process that started in the 2016-2017 academic year was conducted in a highly intense and participatory manner.

- Primarily, decisions of the Council, election manifestoes of the Parties and government programs were examined together with 350 different documents and reports produced by various institutions and individuals.
- 72 curriculum development meetings, 18 introduction and discussion meetings, 15 trainer training meetings, 15 teacher training study meetings were held. Altogether, 120 meetings were conducted.
- Nearly 100 thousand teachers and parents participated in the fieldwork conducts and surveys.
- 7.742 teachers and academicians attended these meetings held at various times and in different venues.
- 1,738 teachers and academic specialists participated full-time in the program development process. (TTKB-MEB 2017, p. 12).

2016-2017 eğitim öğretim yılında başlayan süreç son derece yoğun ve katılımcı bir şekilde gerçekleşti.

- Şûra kararları, Partilerin seçim beyannameleri ve hükûmet programları başta olmak üzere, farklı kurum ve kişilerce üretilmiş 350 farklı doküman ve rapor incelendi.

- 72 program geliştirme toplantısı, 18 tanıtım ve tartışma toplantısı, 15 formatör eğitimi toplantısı, 15 öğretmen eğitimi çalışma toplantısı yapıldı. Toplamda 120 toplantı yapıldı.
- Yapılan saha çalışmalarına ve anketlere 100 bine yakın öğretmen ve veli katıldı.
- Değişik zamanlarda ve farklı mekânlarda yapılan bu toplantılara 7.742 öğretmen ve akademisyen katıldı.
- 1.738 öğretmen ve akademisyen uzmanımız program geliştirme sürecine tam zamanlı olarak katıldı.

Concerning the example of decision-making/policymaking processes of 2016-2017 curricular studies mentioned, on the one side, the MNE offices, including the Minister, signify that proper participation of stakeholders was encouraged and conducted as it should have been; however, on the other side, the academicians and teachers do not approve that. Similar conflicts were exemplified on other occasions in the study, and there have always been many samples in practice in the country. This kind of contradictory perception basically shows that there is apparently a serious lack of proper interaction between the MNE and other stakeholders. In regard to reasons, it can be deduced that neither of the parties can express themselves clearly enough to understand and convince each other. They should pay special attention to this point by being more clear and sincere so as to understand each other. Actually, academicians and teachers strongly feel that the MNE does not really let them participate in policymaking appropriately; it only pretends to be doing so because, even though they send many views and suggestions to the MNE offices, the MNE does hardly appreciate and utilize any of them in the practice of decision-making and policy formulation. Furthermore, they assert that the MNE does not make any reasonable and satisfying explanations about/for why their suggestions are not realized. Moreover, they blame MNE for working in secrecy and seclusion as a “closed box” (as A6 called it) under the absolute command of inflexible top-down decision-making mechanisms. All these unfavourable conditions negatively affect the interaction and collaboration among the stakeholders. In the light of these perceptions, it can be concluded that suitable conditions must be created for genuine interaction and cooperation among them in sincere, transparent and democratic manners from all sides without pretence and with

mutual understanding. And in this direction, the leading force should be the ministry itself.

Another point concerning participation is that the officials retort to the criticism for their negligence of teacher participation by stressing that teachers are not so qualified as to participate in policymaking through their informed contribution. This may be a partly justifiable comment and teachers should definitely improve their theoretical professional capacities continuously as assets for their practical field experience. In this context, to portray that such a situation is also a traditional issue, it might seem noteworthy to refer to what a distinguished educationalist signalled nearly half a century ago:

It has often been said that teachers are not qualified or capable of participating in curriculum planning, and in many cases, teachers have expressed a similar feeling of inadequacy. Quips have been made that teacher involvement in curriculum planning is essentially a process of *pooling of ignorance* [emphasis added] (Beauchamp, 1975, p. 161).

There seems to be a big dilemma here, that teachers are not let participate in educational activities, such as in curriculum making in particular as stated by Beauchamp; however, they are assigned to apply them in the classroom. This is also underscored and questioned by him as well: “Yet those very same teachers are expected to have the necessary insight to take a curriculum planned by someone else and implement it intelligently in their classrooms” (Beauchamp, 1975, p. 161). The practical solution might be twofold: while the teachers ought to strive to improve their professional capacities themselves, the authorities should train them and involve them in such activities. Similarly, academicians should improve their field experiences at schools as assets for their theoretical knowledge. All these efforts will make great contributions to the progress of interaction among educational stakeholders by better understanding each other.

5.1.1.2. Political and ideological approach to curricular/educational policymaking

To start with, it is necessary to inform that in many parts of the study, quite a number of thematic indications concerning this topic were obtained. As gist of them, firstly, the findings revealed a common perception that political ideologies heavily impact educational policy processes at all levels. Then, as a widespread reaction to this phenomenon, there explored a strong emphasis on the need that political ideologies should not affect educational policies at all, and politicians should not participate in educational decision-making if they are to involve their political ideology in it. Actually, in relation to the particular topic of curricular design and policymaking, as Beauchamp (1975) states, it is true that “Goals, or objectives and related culture content for schools are political decisions...” (p. 201); however, they should not be in the form of ideological impositions addressing to certain ideology groups. Participants in the study also regarded as reasonable that educational policies can be changed, varied or modified as long as they are not influenced and led totally by *one-sided* political ideologies, namely those of the current governments. Ideally, these changes, variations and modifications should be made in accordance with the views of the teachers and academicians and suggestions from them via their active participation.

In the related literature, the linkage between political ideology and education is widely dealt with and the prevailing interpretation is that ruling bodies utilize education for their political ends:

The dominant idea concerning the bond between the state and the education can be summarized in the famous quote of Althusser; “education is an ideological apparatus of the state” (cited in Kazamias, 2009, p. 166). This common idea is rooted in the central role of the state in the education sector. Kandel’s (1933) assertion that “every state has the type of education that it wills” (p. 274) simply demonstrates the power of the state in determining the educational systems and defining goals (Keser-Aschenberger, 2012, p. 1).

Parallel to this sort of interpretation, reflecting the shared opinion in this study, an informant pointed to the premeditated political applications of the government in educational policymaking: “There has always been an ideological template behind the [policy] drafts and that template does not ever change according to feedbacks or views from the shareholders and others” (A1). (“Her zaman bu taslakların arkasında ideolojik bir şablon vardır ve bu şablon paydaşlardan alınan dönütlere veya görüşlere, vb. göre asla değişmez”). This assertion overlaps with the findings of Coşkun Yaşar and Aslan (2021), who present and highlight “the ideological reflections on the curricula” (p. 251) both in the USA and Türkiye. Pinar (2004) criticizes a similar situation in the US through these words: “The political problem of teachers today – our scapegoating by politicians ... politicians’ manipulation of public education as a political issue ... (p. 8). In her study on the transformation of *dershanes*, Yıldırım-Taşçı (2019) portrays a similar sort of attitude in decision-making exhibited by the politicians who were in *no relation* with education:

In this context, the participants of the present study revealed that the transformation of *dershanes* was a top-down policy decision. During the personal conversations, the Head of Philosophy teachers critically uttered that: “*Politicians who have never touched a chalk; have never shared the same environment with the students; even do not have educational identity have made education a toy.*” “*Eğitimi eline tebeşir almamış, öğrencilerle aynı havayı solumamış, eğitimci kimliği bile olmayan politikacıların eline oyuncak ettik.*” (p. 352).

Similar views are underscored by Yıldız and Yıldız (2016) who particularly notified that the contents in the curricula should not be utilized as an instrument for [propagating] political ends; they must be solely scientific and up-to-date in essence.

Heavy influence of governments’ ideologies always leads to corruption in the educational system, and what is worse is that such an attitude creating a dirty environment is not a new condition in Türkiye; it has been a traditional *political disease* as a cultural motive for more than 50 years. This unfavourable custom has evolved into its highly-matured position of today over a long time; but it should be abolished in a much quicker period as a comprehensive amenable

revolution or a radical reformation. Inaugural conduct for such a movement must be *the* consensus, or at least *the* reconciliation among all political parties in the country to construct an ideology of education based on scientific evidence and feedback from stakeholders with a democratic approach. Actually, when we refer to the related literature, we witness such a phenomenon is similar in other countries too, and is portrayed through rather harsher statements; for instance, Pinar (2007) in his article named “Curriculum theory since 1950”, referring to (Kuhn, 1962) highlights critically that “With its traditional *raison d’être* – curriculum development – *hijacked* [emphasis added] by politicians and their *academic allies* [emphasis added], the field went into crisis, forcing a paradigm shift (p. 493). In his depictions, he also uses pejorative terms like *bureaucratized curriculum development*, *political curriculum theory*, *ahistorical* [historically inaccurate or ignorant (Merriam-Webster, n. d.)] and *atheoretical* [not based on or concerned with theory (Merriam-Webster, n. d.)] *curriculum* due to the politicized character of educational policymaking (Pinar, 2007).

In fact, as some of the informants in the study highlighted, it might be natural and acceptable to see the effects of governments’ political ideology on policymaking processes. This is mentioned by Hallsworth et al. (2011) referring to “The Modernising Government White Paper” published in Britain (by the Whitehall) in March 1999, which “set out the existing government definition of policy making: *the process by which governments translate their political vision into programmes and actions to deliver ‘outcomes’ – desired changes in the real world*” (p. 22). But, as Hallsworth et al. (2011) emphasized later, “The Cabinet Office then fleshed out the White Paper’s principles into a model of ‘professional policy making’” (p. 23), through which policymaking was planned to be more visionary, evaluative, inclusive and evidence-based; simply more scientific and democratic rather than solely ideology-based. Corresponding views are stressed by other authors in literature valuing evidence (including stakeholder feedback) over political ideology: “Evidence tends to be portrayed as an a-political, neutral and objective policy tool. ... policy will now be shaped by evidence; thereby implying that the era of ideologically driven politics is over (Nutley, 2003, p. 3 as cited in Sutcliffe & Court, 2005, p. 3). These

interpretations are mostly set out in the literature to depict the modernising needs and efforts for policymaking. Matching implications, concerning our country in particular, are presented by Keser-Aschenberger (2012) in her case study comparing Turkish and American manners of policymaking, like: "... Türkiye requires comprehensive, well-planned, and systemic reforms that are not politicized ...” (p. 302).

Consequently, it can be wrapped up that *light* reflection of political ideologies on policymaking can be tolerated to an extent unless the process is highly political ideology-led; fundamentally it should be scientific, evidence-based and inclusive, and fed by stakeholder feedback and steered by democratic approaches. To be discussed in this context, the most explicit impediments to realizing this sort of refined educational policymaking can be listed as follows: Frequent changes of education policy and education personnel/cadre, poorly structured personnel/cadre regime (partisanship, nepotism and lack of meritocracy), imposing ideology through education (policies), and (incongruous) attitude towards opposing views.

Frequent changes of education policies and education personnel/cadre

Closely connected with the *traditional disease* of politicized education, actually, one of the outcomes of it, changing policies too often has been a serious issue that distorts policymaking practice in Türkiye since the beginning of the 19th century. As mentioned in part 1. 1. (Background to the study), the negative impacts of frequent policy changes were strongly emphasized by Atatürk. His words that portrayed the miserable situation should be reiterated here: “Each Minister of Education, [or] Deputy, had his respective program. The education has become *awful* due to implementation of various programs in national education” (Akyüz, 2009, pp. 337, 338). (“Her Maarif Nazırının, Vekilinin birer programı vardı. Memleketin maarifinde çeşitli programların uygulanması yüzünden öğretim *berbat* bir hale gelmiştir”). After the completion of Atatürk’s reforms in the mid-1930s, rather stable education policies prevailed till the 1960s; however, after the 60s, especially the 70s, corruption caused by frequent

policy changes due to ideological approaches distorted the system. Therefore, today, frequent changes of education policies are still being criticized. In this context, Kocabaş (2008), referring to several columnists and educationalists, indicates that every political party in government since the last periods of the Ottoman state, has used education as a tool for their political aims and there has always been dissatisfaction with the educational systems as a whole. In connection with this matter, frequent changes in the official cadres and of official personnel contributed to the muddling of the problematic environment. The ridiculous metaphorical/allegorical and ironic expressions by the participants in this study are noteworthy to be referred to in this context, like: “When a government changes, the mom-and-pop grocery changes” (T11). (“Hükümet değişince bakkal değişiyor”) implying the changes made by the governments in line with the demands of voters as well as the governmental ideology. Another one is “When the minister changes, the office boy changes” (“Bakan değişince çaycı değişiyor”) (A7) mocking with frequent changes in official cadres. In this context, what Arar et al. (2019) determine corresponds with the claims in this study: “... frequent and uncalculated impositions of change on schools undermine the sustainability of educational change interventions” (p. 296). Briefly, it should be stressed that such changes influence the whole education system negatively, and long-lasting and sustainable policies formulated in accordance with the independent ideology of education are required to stop such changes and to stabilize the entire educational ecosystem.

On the other hand, the changes are usually put into practice without proper piloting as expressed by the informants in this study and as exemplified by Keser-Aschenberger (2012): “Implementation and evaluation of many policies were not completed. Some reforms were implemented without any pilot study such as the 4+4+4. National tests at the lower and upper secondary level were altered three times.” (p. 302); therefore, implementation and evaluation phases of many policies are not finalized successfully. Again, referring to the 4+4+4 system, Coşkun Yaşar and Aslan (2021) underline that “There was no existing pilot scheme for the new structure” (p. 250). In connection with this issue, utilization of scientific data in policymaking (EBP and RIA) is mostly

neglected in policymaking processes in Türkiye. Again, Keser-Aschenberger (2012) illustrates this serious weakness through the main subject matter in her study: "... the findings of this study demonstrated that CLT [Regulation on Career Ladder for Teachers in Türkiye] was not part of a comprehensive or systemic reform and was not placed in any scientific, theoretical or practical framework and it was not supported by evidence or data" (p. 301). Thus, it is critical to ensure that policymakers must adopt and stick to these two standards, evidence-based policymaking and piloting of the (devised) policy. These points accord with the implications of the study by Yıldız and Yıldız (2016) as well.

Poorly structured personnel/cadre regime (partisanship, nepotism and lack of meritocracy)

The reasons for frequent changes of the MNE personnel were revealed to have depended on two factors: The first one is that as soon as a political party wins an election and possesses governmental power, its authorities dismiss the active officials in MNE offices, especially the decision-making staff, even though they are qualified personnel who work well deserving those positions; and accordingly, they select and assign the ones who are close to their ideologies and/or who are the relatives of higher-level politicians in the party, without ever caring for the principles of meritocracy. The second one is that politicians immediately change the personnel who do not submit to their political and ideological demands in policy processes, and assign others who are [their] *yes-men*. Thus, nepotism and partisanship become prioritized over professionalism and meritocracy. It should be reminded that this condition is also a kind of culturally and traditionally *sick* phenomenon having been influencing Turkish educational ecosystem for decades. As stated by the informants in this study and supported by the related literature in the Turkish context, such an approach is also observed as a serious issue of NECs because the attenders of the NECs are not selected among the people who professionally deserve, but among the ones who share (or pretend to be sharing) the same ideology as the current government (Kaya-Kaşıkçı, 2016).

Imposing ideology through education (policies)

With the politically *suitable* policymaking cadres (!) depicted above and bureaucratic environment in the ministry, the governments impose their ideologies through education policies. Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, there have been contradictory issues between conservative (right-wing) political parties and socialist (left-wing) political parties in regard to educational policy. Either of them utilized (used, abused and misused) educational matters according to their ideologies as emphasized in the study. As striking examples, the termination of village institutes in 1954, the transition to compulsory uninterrupted 8-year-primary education system in 1997, decreasing the number of Imam Hatip Schools in 1997, (which was executed under the *apparent* influence of the military), and – as a reaction to it – passage to 4+4+4 system and the (re-)rise of Imam Hatip Schools in 2012 are underlined in the study. Regulation of dress code for the girls at schools – in particular the freedom of wearing scarf and turban – which is still a topic of dispute, might be another example that was not much highlighted in the study. (Meanwhile, it should be underlined that freedom of dress, including turban, should be regarded as a universal human right, and freedoms should not be presented as issues of political ideology). On the other hand, imposition of (religious) ideology through courses/elective courses like The Life of Prophet Muhammad / The Life of Our Prophet (Hazreti Muhammet'in Hayatı / Peygamberimizin Hayatı) and through hidden curricula by which, as the informants in the study hinted, Islamic ideological aspects are infiltrated, such as mentioning *iftar* meal as dinner in language class, buying half a kilo of *dates* together with two kilos of apples in an arithmetic question or organizing trips to *mosques* together with museums as extracurricular activities and so on. Corresponding discussions are presented in the related literature too: The fact that curricular changes are made in the direction of the *dominant ideology* in the Turkish context is also underlined by Coşkun Yaşar and Arslan (2021). In a broader sense, Arar et al. (2019) underscore the dictation and/or enforcement of “a particular ideology or social system” (p. 296) by the governments in Türkiye as well as in other countries.

Akın and Arslan (2014) portray similar views concerning Turkish education system drawing parallels with the educational environment in the world.

(Incongruous) attitudes towards opposing views

Concerning this topic, it should be noted that the researcher definitely shares the same views as the participants who claimed that opposition is precious in policy processes and the feedback obtained from opposing ideas conveys valuable information to be utilized so as to take precautions against probable conflicts in the practice of the policy. With this mindset, in other words, it can surely be interpreted that governments get the most benefit from the opposition in this sense. Accordingly, it is also reasonable to comment that when there is no opposition, the policy is/gets *lame*; it cannot be improved, it cannot be sustained in a healthy manner either. However, in actuality, government authorities do not appreciate diverse opinions, furthermore, trapped by biased approaches, they even do not bother/prefer to take a look at them. Most of the time, government sides readily tend to fight the opposition before listening to any diverse or contradictory ideas because, in a presupposed attitude, they regard opposition as *enmity* without any tolerance or empathy. Therefore, they do not ever seek consensus or any means of reconciliation; and more pathetically, this attitude is also the retention of a conventional approach similar to the other political diseases.

5.1.1.3. Expectations for ideal applications of issue identification and policy formulation stages

Having evaluated, in the light of the related literature, the solutions to the problems offered by the participants and their suggestions about other issues and conditions, the researcher determined the essential expectations for ideal applications of issue identification and policy formulation stages, and collected them under two groups: a) expectations concerning participation (of

stakeholders) and b) an overarching expectation concerning the entire system: an uppermost ideology of education.

a) Expectations concerning participation (of stakeholders)

Proper participation of stakeholders should primarily be accepted as an essential policy. The OECD (2001) conceives the issue in a similar manner and in its “Tips for action”, rightfully warns that

Develop a coherent policy

Remember: Strengthening government-citizen relations is itself a policy. – not more and not less. It is a useful support for government decision-making and for the process of democracy. ... Understanding that information, consultation and active participation is a policy has its implications. ...Whatever approach they choose: governments need to realise that it is the way the policy is carried out that counts (p. 100).

As recurrently indicated by the OECD, governments should create a strong and sustainable culture of citizen participation in policy-making – this is itself a policy; however, in Turkish educational system, such an environment has not ever been developed, mostly due to inflexibly top-down central authoritative governmental structure as highlighted by Keser-Aschenberger (2012):

This study showed that highly central and rigid bureaucratic administrative structure of MoNE has an inhibiting effect on the policy making process. Thus, this centralized red tape bureaucratic structure has to be redesigned in order to allow more transparent and collaborative policy making process (pp. 299-300). ... necessary regulations and changes should be conducted to assure educational personnel’s participation in policy making process (p. 301).

Then, as she prescribes, it should be affirmed that the MNE structure should be reformed in line with the principles handled in this section. So, in order to conduct these two stages of policy-making appropriately in regard to participation, and accordingly by contributing to the reformation in the system, the following principles, among many others, should be particularly devoted to by all policy actors: democratic attitude, transparency/openness and accountability, (seeking) consensus and/or reconciliation, meritocracy, proper

interaction, cooperation and mutual training, aloof from respective accusation. For sustainable success in practice led by those principles, this prescription should be the guiding axiom: “**Ensuring balance and fairness**: Because of its strong influence on decision-making, a balanced and fair process is critical for active participation tools” (OECD, 2001, p. 63).

Democratic attitude

Concerning participation of the stakeholders in education policy process, any effort will linger “fruitless” unless the participation is democratic at each level. It can be asserted that democracy in every environment of civilized education, from the pair-work in the classroom to the sessions of education policy making in the Parliament is the sine qua non. Having blossomed with the Renaissance and the enlightenment era mainly in the 17th century, and later, many outstanding philosophers and authors like John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Tolstoy and so on, later, sociologists, politicians, psychologists, anthropologists, educationalists, and curricularists, like Bobbitt, Tyler, Taba, Schwab, Durkheim, Russell, Dewey and others, then, more contemporary figures like Bourdieu, Foucault, Apple and others have emphasized the importance of teaching “democracy” in schools handling the theme from similar or diverse angles. In the context of this study, their main purposes have been to equip students with a strong notion of democratic values and to enable them to practice in social life what they learn at schools in order to be a “good human being” and a “good citizen”. To achieve this, an emancipatory instructional environment concerning both educational goals and instructional methods is needed so that students’ rights are recognized and their voices are heard as properly as the other stakeholders; and accordingly, the conflict resolution on decision-making occasions should depend on mediation, reconciliation and consensus among them. However, this question gets more meaningful when we handle the issue on the side of the teachers: While having been striving for ages to manage this profound purpose of education for students, that is, democracy education, have sufficient efforts been made to provide the teachers with such democratic rights –

by which they can voice their perceptions and present their views – that will enhance their students’ democratic education? If not, does it not lead us to another “vicious circle” that we expect democracy education from the teachers whom we do not let voice themselves in the issues within their professional realm democratically? In other words, will it be fair to expect democratic attitude from people who are not behaved democratically? Therefore, while, it is expected that, students demand democratic participation in activities and decision-making processes at classroom and school level, may the teachers (not) expect democratic participation in educational decision-making processes at the administrative and/or governmental level? If they do participate satisfactorily, might it support better implementation of the policies? These queries/assertions should also be valid for academicians’ participation since they are the educators of teachers.

It is commonly accepted that participation of citizens in decision-making and policymaking is required as accrediting governments’ democratic attitude: “A certain degree of individually defined civic capacity is necessary for the existence of democracy, as citizens’ presence in the public sphere and their influence on the decision-making processes are the key elements of a regime’s democratic legitimacy” (Letki, 2018). Then, while the participation of *plain* citizens should be valued as a requirement of democracy, participation of significant stakeholders of education – namely teachers and academicians – must be valued at the highest degree; however, as emphasized by Keser-Aschenberger (2012) “... studies in the area of civil society and democratic participation indicated that Türkiye still needs time to reach that level” (p. 301). Similarly, in this study, the findings yielded corresponding deductions. So, what should be done to meet the expectations of main stakeholders in this context? Initially, democratic and unbiased approach by the MNE in policymaking is required as a general fundamental attitude – as an indispensable prerequisite *constitutional* principle. As a culture of democratic attitude, a strong understanding of plurality in appreciating views from all stakeholders, respecting every opinion should lead decision-making mechanisms. Minority opinions and opposing views should be cared for with comprehensive mindset and methods. Once more it is right to

emphasize that involvement of one-sided and biased political ideologies should be eschewed carefully in educational decision-making/policy-making.

Transparency/openness and accountability

In this study, the stems of most of the critical findings that have negative connotations are revealed to trace back rather far in Turkish educational history, like lack of transparency/openness and accountability. The OECD (2005 and 2001) highlighted years ago that it was alike in many countries and such attitudes must be replaced by the culture of “openness”, which is quite *young*, and a **balanced** condition between secrecy and transparency should be constituted:

The history of openness in government is recent, while the history of secrecy is centuries old. Balancing the need to protect legitimate national security concerns and to ensure public scrutiny of government activities has always been a challenge and is even more so today (2005, p. 3).

They [governments] will have to stand up to explain and give reasons for their decisions on who they informed, consulted, engaged and how. Transparency, accountability, responsibility and the need for oversight apply in this, as in any other, field of policy (2001, p. 100).

The requirement of such principles, supported by proper stakeholder participation, has been underlined again by the OECD on almost every occasion and within the documents it publicized, especially since the beginning of this century as seen in the policy documents from 2001 till 2020: “Information, consultation and active participation makes government more transparent and more accountable” (2001, p. 18). In the following documents the principles are reflected as follows:

The principles of good governance – transparency and accountability; fairness and equity; efficiency and effectiveness; respect for the rule of law; and high standards of ethical behaviour – represent the basis upon which to build open government. (OECD, 2005, p. 1).

... consultation must remain sufficiently “open” to allow participants to raise their own concerns. This will make the process more acceptable to participants

but will also, in many cases, alert you to issues and problems that you may not have considered (OECD, 2008, p. 20).

And finally, in 2020, the document labelled “Recommendation of the Council on the OECD Legal Instruments Improving the Quality of Government Regulation” indicates as recommendation no: 1 that

Member countries take effective measures to ensure the quality and transparency of government regulations by steps such as: Integrating decision-making principles for efficient, flexible, and transparent regulation into regulatory policy processes at all levels of government (OECD, 2020 p. 4).

Likewise, in ECNL’s document named “Civil participation in decision-making processes, An Overview of Standards and Practices in Council of Europe Member States prepared by the European Center for the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) with a view to preparing guidelines on civil participation in political decision-making processes” European view of democratic participation is reflected in these lines:

The most relevant principles concerning participation addressed in the reviewed documents include:

- Participation in terms of collecting and channelling views of various members and concerned citizens via NGOs organisations to input the political decision-making process;
- Trust and openness, as honest interaction between actors and sectors;
- Accountability and transparency, from both NGOs and public authorities at all stages (ECNL, 2016, p. 46).

In the related Turkish literature, this matter is also handled seriously both in classical sense of policymaking and in regard to evidence-based methodologies including RIA: “Consultation with wider public is also congruent with the principles of transparency and openness of the public administration process. In addition, transparency of the preparation process is also useful in combating corruption” (Güngör and Evren, 2009, p. 47-48). (“Geniş halk kitlelerine danışma, aynı zamanda kamu yönetim sürecinin şeffaflığı ve açıklığı prensipleri ile de uyumludur. Ayrıca, hazırlık sürecinin şeffaflığı, yolsuzlukla mücadele etmek adına da yararlıdır”). Underlining that lack of transparency and

secretly conducted decision-making process by a small group are among the significant causes of citizen reaction to public policies, Yerlikaya (2015) suggests stakeholder participation as a solution to this issue:

One of the important reasons for the reaction of individuals and society against public policies is the reflection to the public of only the decision made, owing to the closedness of the decision-making process, and the fact that background studies, discussions and evaluations are known only to a limited number of people. Participation in policy process shows society that policies are not momentary decisions and results, but the products of comprehensive studies that have material [substantial] foundations and deal with the details of the issue, and [participation] moderates individuals' reactions (p. 24).

Kamu politikalarına karşı bireylerde ve toplumda oluşan tepkinin önemli nedenlerinden biri de, karar oluşturma sürecinin kapalılığı nedeniyle kamuoyuna sadece oluşturulan kararın yansımaları, arka plandaki çalışma, tartışma ve değerlendirmelerin sadece kısıtlı bir kesim tarafından bilinmesidir. Politika sürecinde katılımcılık, politikaların anlık bir karar ve sonuç olmayıp maddi temelleri olan, konunun detaylarının ele alındığı kapsamlı çalışmaların ürünü olduğunu topluma gösterir ve bireylerin tepkilerinde ılımlaşmayı sağlar.

On the other hand, it shall be particularly stressed that a stable governmental attitude of transparency/openness and accountability realized by way of proper stakeholder participation, supports the legitimacy of government policies to a great extent; and this is what Turkish governments need much. The use of such an administrative attitude is highlighted well below:

Information, consultation and active participation give citizens the chance to learn about government's policy plans, to make their opinions be heard, and to provide input into decision-making. This involvement creates greater acceptance for political outcomes. Government shows **openness**, which makes it more trustworthy for the citizen – the sovereign in any democracy. By building trust in government and better public policies, strengthening government-citizen relations enhances the **legitimacy** of government (OECD, 2001 p. 18).

As a sample of openness in our country, the publicity of the 2017 draft curricula was applauded and praised much; however, it was discovered later that, though a lot of feedback was obtained, hardly any pieces of it were appreciated and practiced. So, such a good application of transparent policymaking in the initial phase of the process (publicizing the drafts) turned out to be vain in the resulting phase (due to no proper utilization of the feedback) since many highly-

reacted/protected/resisted changes, such as the removal of the “evolution theory” from the related contents and inclusion of too many religious elements, either directly or hidden, and the like were applied. On the other hand, no satisfactory explanations were made why so many suggestions had been completely ignored. Consequently, that trial lost its quality of openness, and was buried in the history (of curricular education policy-making) as another *failure* as usual.

As a final comprehensive interpretation in this context, it can be sharply recommended and *rightfully* expected that a culture of transparent, clear and limpid policymaking should be developed instead of the half a century-old-culture of opaque, cloudy and muddy policymaking influenced and led by partisanship and nepotism. This kind of practice is prescribed by the OECD (2001) under the title “**Internal awareness and open communication culture**”, indicating that the governments and public administration institutions should engage related stakeholders in policymaking by raising internal awareness of legal obligations, opportunities and tools for strengthening relations with them and adding that “This way, governments may aim at developing a general culture of transparency, openness and communication within government (p. 39).

Consensus and/or reconciliation

In close connection with the other forms of expectations, the participants expressed their strong hope for building/creating/finding consensus and/or reconciliation among differing views; in this sense, the researcher wholeheartedly shares similar views and expectations to theirs. This is a great expectation because, always remaining in words of forgotten promises, such applications (attempts) have not ever been realized properly in the Turkish case of policymaking due to neglecting views other than those of the ruling power: “... policy making process in Türkiye appeared to be ... closed to multi-perspectives and participation of educational interest groups and other stakeholders (Keser-Aschenberger, 2012, p. 299). In order to meet this sort of expectation, it is required to obtain public approval of the policy before its formulation and implementation. In one of its recent documents, the OECD

(2020) recommends that “Even after the most rigorous decision-making process inside the administration, regulation has yet to pass the most demanding test of all – the public must agree to comply with it (p. 13). The real influence of a policy or any regulation can be realized only when the people concerned (primarily the major stakeholders) have been convinced about the value and quality of it and complied with its stipulations: “... Regulation will obviously only have any impact to the extent that people comply with its requirements. In practice, there is a high non-compliance rate with much regulation” (OECD, 2008, p. 21). The issue of non-compliance that is common in the OECD countries is frequently observed in Türkiye as well. The way of overcoming this issue and other hindrances to the practice of consensus and reconciliation is to create environments for prolific dialogue and cooperation among the stakeholders with various/diverse views. Further, the conditions and executions must be fair and transparent for any sides, and should be conducted with a sincere approach of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance so as to meet on common grounds. Also, it is significant to admit that constructive and qualified opposition, as long as properly presented, welcomed and appreciated, leads to progress of the entire process broadening the horizons of the policy actors. Accordingly, this practice, as a preventive measure – similar to RIA, will help prevent unforeseen predicaments. In this context, O1 portrayed the value of different ideas, which supply dynamism to the inert process of decision-making torpified by the *idée fixe* of the same, unchanging ideological thinking: “Still water stinks” (duran su kokuşur); so, it is required to provide the process with the stimulation of *fresh water* conveyed by differing views through a dialectic(al) approach. Above all, consensus and reconciliation naturally help diminish resistance to decisions taken at any stage of the policy cycle, facilitating and catalysing policy formulation and implementation in particular.

In the study, the researcher liked and approved several simple discourse techniques in regard to seeking reconciliation offered by the participants. For instance, as A8 hinted “instead of saying ‘how come you know about it’, saying ‘what do you think about it?’ is better (“Sen ne anlarsın? yerine ‘sen ne diyorsun?’ demek”); as T13 emphasized “instead of labelling people like she/he

is an epigone/partisan of this side, let us not hear her/him; the other one is from that side, let us not listen to her/him ('o *şucu*, onu dinlemeyelim, o *bucu* onu dinlemeyelim'), we should listen to everybody from any sides"; and as A7 indicated metaphorically that "life is very difficult at the poles, it is too cold there; it is better to move towards the equator and utilize the wealth and beauty there", instead of separating the people as "us" and "them" pushing them to the poles, it is better to meet in-between, compromising on somewhere near the *equator*. Thus, – the researcher sincerely insists – it should be often recalled that each movement towards the extremes, the *poles*, – left or right – will take the system to a fascistic position. Then, it is clear that any effort to reach consensus, or *at least* reconciliation, among various views in policymaking shall surely be a step toward a more democratic status; and it really deserves striving for. In one context of American educational policymaking the significance of the efforts for reaching consensus is exemplified as follows:

The notion of civic capacity as a community feature was popularized in the United States in the late 1990s by researchers from the Civic Capacity and Urban Education Project who studied how local communities tackle the issue of educational reform. They focused on two major issues: how various agents with diverse interests and preferences develop the means for identifying common goals and what strategies they chose to pursue these goals. The formal and informal ways of reaching consensus and overcoming collective-action problems, which constitute a community's civic capacity, may therefore become a key determinant of policy agenda (Letki, 2020).

With a similar approach, consensus and reconciliation can be utilized for balancing different interests in the political arena so as to make accurate and sustainable decisions; this point is recommended by the OECD (2001) as a "tip for action":

Balance different interests.

Master the political challenge of balancing divergent inputs.

... what happens when government receives conflicting input from different sides? ...If governments bet on the sentiments of the broad public, they might overlook the needs of important groups or other policy areas. Which public to follow? ... They [governments] need to take general and diffuse interests, as well as organised interests into account. They need to *balance* [emphasis added] interests, allowing for continuity and change at the same time. ... Information,

consultation and active participation may lead to a broad accommodation of interests and broad consensus. However, they can also reveal divergent views and raise open questions from different sides. What strengthening government-citizens relations does, is to foster understanding and clarification of a policy issue, to provide citizens and interested parties with the opportunity to have their voices heard, to provide their input and to share it with others. This way, it gives the chance for consensus to form in the first place. And it provides government with a broader view of opinions and interests, a way to *balance* [emphasis added] them, and a better basis for decision-making (p. 97).

Without this sort of balance, hardly any policies can survive because policymaking will fall into the trap of unilateral decision-making, depicted by the OECD (2009) as “regulatory capture”:

Regulators may also be vulnerable to regulatory capture, responding to the **one-sided** [emphasis added] demands of interest groups; they may take an overly short-term view, or make reactive decisions and fail to consider the effects of their regulation on another part of government. These factors increase the risk that regulation will fail to achieve its goals and potentially reduces the coherence of government policy (p. 16).

Consequently, since the findings in this study revealed as the expectation of the participants and the related literature strongly supported, it should be underlined again that, in order to secure a proper, democratic policymaking process, decisions must be taken once the stakeholders with different views have reached consensus – which “is based on the values of equality, freedom, cooperation and respect for everyone's needs” (Seeds for Change, 2020, p. 5) – or at least have reconciled as harmonically as possible, and the transparent environment required for such a mechanism must be provided by the government as recommended strongly by Keser-Aschenberger (2012): “MoNE has to embrace a real deliberative and open process with stakeholders to reach consensus to achieve a democratic policy making process (p. 300).

Meritocracy

One of the most commonly referred concepts in this study is meritocracy, which is handled in this part as an expected quality in regard to participation of

policy actors in the processes. First of all, it was discovered that, both in the related literature and in this study, the notion of meritocratic approach in the Turkish context of educational policymaking emerged as a *high-calibre dignified attribute*, having been longed for a lot during the past 40-50 years. Furthermore, such a strong desire for meritocratic environment and practice in so many other areas of governmental operations has been so commonplace that it should be regarded as a prerequisite for any policy applications. In particular, for policymaking practice of the MNE, the most expected meritocratic operations are fair selection, assignment and rotation of teachers, administrators, academicians and officials to schools and MNE offices, paying special attention to the criteria of professional qualifications like field expertise, talent, skill, competence and vision. The same procedures should be applied in any participatory selection for policymaking processes. A similar sort of assertion is supported by Casper (2014) concerning meritocratic issues in appointment of teachers and academicians in the American context, referring to Horowitz's "Bill of Rights":

All faculty shall be hired, fired, promoted, and granted tenure on the basis of their competence and appropriate knowledge in the field of their expertise and, in the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts, with a view toward fostering a plurality of methodologies and perspectives (p. 139).

On the other hand, once the personnel are assigned properly, they should not be changed frequently in accordance with the changing government or governmental high-level bureaucrats. There must not ever be any signs of nepotism and partisanship. In this context, there is a misconception concerning the understanding and usage of the terms "reference" and "favour", especially in political attitude: Mediating for or giving a good *reference* for somebody's assignment to an office or a post mentioned above can be meritocratic if they really deserve while *favouring* someone for partisan and/or nepotistic causes is antimeritocratic. But unfortunately, favouring is very popular in our culture substituting for referencing. It should be firmly avowed that this attitude and

mindset must be completely dismissed from our policymaking tradition immediately as well as in other areas of social life.

Proper interaction, cooperation and mutual training among key stakeholders, aloof from respective accusation

Within the scope of this study, the researcher definitely agrees with the interpretation that one essential requirement of qualified policymaking in democratic manners is the provision of proper and sustainable interaction and cooperation among teachers, academicians and officials. Common platforms should be established among all stakeholders of education so as to exchange views and visions enlightened by multiple perspectives. Meanwhile, this assertion should be clearly supported: Teachers should be given more voice in decision-making concerning policy practice, school environment and classroom instruction while academicians' views should be more influential on theoretical aspects of the issues. The third group, government officials, had better handle organizational and bureaucratic procedures and other deeds to ensure harmonic collaboration and proper participation. The MNE and (education) faculties should always be in close and continuous interaction with schools; in particular, academicians should often visit schools in person and work with teachers, students and administrators. In order to avoid *poisonous* discriminatory effects of *deadly diseases* that would distort their prolific interaction, no ideologies (political, religious and others) other than the *uppermost educational ideology* should ever be involved in the relations among them. Actually, as far as MNE informed, the activities how the draft curricula of 2017 were determined, stressing the importance of unity of aim and progress in the participative studies among stakeholders, can be a good example in this context:

Working groups were formed out of teachers and academics who work in different types of schools in various provinces of Türkiye, evaluating the references and recommendations. Trainings on working methodologies were carried out in order to ensure the goal and step cohesion among the working groups (TTKB - MEB, 2017, p. 6).

Türkiye'nin farklı illerinde ve farklı okul türlerinde görev yapan öğretmen ve akademisyenlerden, referanslar ve tavsiyeler kullanılarak çalışma grupları oluşturulmuştur. Çalışma grupları arasında hedef ve adım birlikteliği sağlamak üzere çalışma usulü eğitimleri yapılmıştır.

On the other hand, in the study, members of all three groups expressed their sorrow and regret for not having had good interaction among them for years and they criticized themselves sincerely. The researcher really appreciates such self-criticism and considers this attitude as the first step to amend the relations among stakeholders of education. On the other hand, like demonstrating the virtue of self-criticism, it is highly expected that they should stop accusing each other through statements such as: “Teachers do not know education theory / academicians do not know about the education practice at schools / officials work clumsily and slowly, teachers and academicians do not apply the formal procedures properly, and the like”. In this context, it can be emphasized that criticism is useful; but accusation is not. The best way for avoiding destructive accusation seems “to be prepared for probable criticism”, especially on the side of the government (officials), as recommended by the OECD (2001) as a *tip for action*:

Be prepared for criticism

Criticism and debate are part of democracy. Consulting with and engaging citizens in policy-making rarely results in a standing ovation for government. Especially if citizens have seldom been given the chance to be heard, they might use their first opportunity to air their anger or frustration. ... The golden rule in information, consultation and active participation is: if you invite citizens to say what they think then do not be surprised if they end up doing exactly that. And be prepared to find that their ideas might not fit at all with your own. After all, the goal is to get input from citizens – not a round of applause. Information, consultation and active participation do heighten the chances of constructive debate, better policies and more trust in government. They do not, however, give any guarantee against criticism and conflict, as these are simply part of democracy. (p. 98).

Here, in this quote, the officials are advised to keep prepared for criticism and debate as a proper governmental attitude to enhance trust in government; however, it may be suggested that the other stakeholders should also acquire this sort of *patient* behaviour considering it as a requirement of democratic manners

and as a beneficial type of conduct for utilizing *constructive debate* that can refine policymaking process. Then, it is expected that members of each group should sincerely strive for training others within their scope of professionalism: Seminars, conferences, briefings and in-service training, and the like can be provided by the experts of each group to others (e. g. theoretical information by academicians, practical information by teachers and procedural information by officials), frequent professional visits to each other's areas can be conducted. So, proper interaction and collaboration among them can be ensured, applied and sustained. Yet, if these stakeholders do not share common aims, strategies and principles that are effectuated in proper coordination and harmony, the efforts will not yield expected outcomes. Such an example of frustration in the Turkish context was portrayed in the Report of National Teacher Strategy Workshop – Draft: "... However, these efforts of different institutions, which were not coordinated and which were based on different goals and strategies unfortunately fell flat" (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, n. d., Giriş, p. 5). ("... Fakat farklı kurumların eşgüdümlü olmayan ve farklı amaç ve stratejilere dayanan bu çabaları ne yazık ki sonuç vermemiştir").

To conclude, it can be stated that the essence of the solutions to those issues, a fundamental step for establishing robust grounds for proper interaction and cooperation among the stakeholders can be the constitution of a *common uppermost ideology of education*, which is presented in the following part.

b) An overarching expectation concerning the entire system: an uppermost ideology of education

Once the findings concerning the identification of educational issues and policy formulation phases were evaluated and interpreted in a holistic manner, it was discovered that the ideal application of these stages required, in a sense, the *perfection* of all criticized points. Hence, as the researcher's views coincide, the participants envisaged that a common uppermost ideology of education over (and excluding) all other political ideologies should be constituted immediately. In a similar sense, TEDMEM highlights the significance of a common,

sustainable platform constituted on consensus for education to progress smoothly, without any unilateral approach:

When education is conducted according to the opinions of a certain person or persons, it cannot follow its own course. What is vital in education is to reach common grounds and social consensus. The fact that everyone tries to inject their own views into the system spoils the nature of education. The education [system] will flow in its own course only when we find a common and sustainable ground (2014, p. 1).

Eğitim birinin ya da birilerinin görüşlerine göre yapıldığında, kendi mecrasını bulamamaktadır. Eğitimde hayati olan, ortak paydaya ve toplumsal mutabakata ulaşmaktır. Herkesin kendi görüşünü sisteme sokmaya çalışması, eğitimin tabiatını bozmaktadır. Ancak ortak ve sürdürülebilir bir alan bulduğumuzda eğitim kendi mecrasında akacaktır.

It can also be inferred from this implication that certain regulations suitable to the *universal* nature of education should be established to lead decision-making and policymaking. On the other hand, the OECD (2001) prescribes that participative policymaking procedures must be regulated sturdily within the legal frames: “Citizens’ rights to access information, provide feedback, be consulted and actively participate in policy-making must be firmly grounded in law or policy” (p. 85).

In the light of such information from literature and the findings of the study, the researcher strongly advocates the development and promulgation of an “uppermost ideology of education” in Turkish national education ecosystem, which will function as an umbrella ideology. This umbrella should include multiple perspectives of education while protecting the system from the harming influence of political ideologies and unethical approaches. In agreement with the perceptions and suggestions of the participants, it can also be claimed that, as the fundamental quality, this unique education ideology must be led by universal education principles obeyed as the *unchangeable* items of a Constitution. It should be developed through democratic participation of all stakeholders with a holistic approach driven by the professional (scientific and meritocratic) and ethical conducts of multi-lateral cooperation, pluralist understanding, reconciliation and consensus. In particular, it should be emphasized that

policymakers and practitioners must always stick to this uppermost ideology whatever the political environment is. Changing governments shall not change the education ideology but the policies may be altered, modified or amended according to the changing conditions, provided that every step must always be in accordance with the education ideology. This attitude should be established as a cultural code of conduct possessed by each education stakeholder ensuring democratic approaches in every environment, from the core habitat of education, that is, the classroom/school, to the larger ambientes at the universities and in government offices. In the similar context of comprehensiveness of education of policies without any discrimination, corresponding views are adopted in the related literature, such as by Short (2007), who determines, due to curricular policy research, that there is dissatisfaction with the policies because of "... the perception that the interests of the public and of many students are not being served well by these policies" (p. 422) and highlights what Reed (1999) reminds: "because public educational institutions are public institutions they must avoid serving only partisan or special interests and serve the general or public good and should rest on *policies* that foster the general welfare of all, not just some of the public or some of the students" (p. 422).

Then, in order to produce good quality, sustainable, long-term educational policies, as accentuated by Yıldız and Yıldız (2016), all education policymaking and decision-making processes must be conducted meticulously congruent with the umbrella ideology: They should be operated in proper collaboration with all stakeholders reaching common decisions through democratic and humanistic manners; they must be carried out through scientific, professional and meritocratic methods. So, the policies produced will be defensible, accountable and justifiable as well as they are compatible with conditions of the country and the locality (when needed). Technically, there should be no hurry in processes and incremental modifications are more advisable than radical and sudden changes (even the governments change). Consequently, it will be ensured more easily that the policies will be sincerely owned by all stakeholders and properly implemented. Accordingly, in that way,

policies will be sustainable too and more useful feedback will be obtained to improve them.

In order to ensure, improve and secure proper application of policymaking process under the robust umbrella of the Uppermost Ideology of Education (including its establishment and sustainability) the vital method is to utilize (scientific) research in each phase of the policy cycle.

5.1.2. Use of research in education policymaking; evaluation, EBP and RIA

When the themes of this study are interpreted in a holistic manner, this significant topic of discussion clearly comes to light: A policymaking process must be research-led and evidence-based. In accord with the findings of this study, such an approach is valued much in the literature in regard to all policy processes that are expected to be scientific and democratic. In England, for instance, the Blair administrations of 1997 and 2001 regarded EBP as a required government machinery for conduct of their higher plans, programs and agendas:

Part of this modernisation and reform has been a commitment to evidence-based policy. The Modernising Government White Paper (Cabinet Office 1999a), for instance, stated that government policy must be evidence-based, properly evaluated and based on best practice (Davies, 2004, p. 2)

The popularity and uses of EBP are portrayed by some authors depicting it as a widespread trend or movement: “Such calls for policies to be evidence-based have proliferated so widely in the past few decades as to become a movement unto itself, with calls for increased EBP heard within government bureaucracies, academic institutions and the media alike” (Nutley, Powell & Davies 2013, cited in Parkhurst, 2016, p. 4).

In Türkiye, though prescribed through regulations and academic studies, and it is really needed, EBP (led by scientific research) is not applied properly in governmental environments in terms of educational policymaking.

Corresponding with the findings of this study, one example is presented by Keser-Aschenberger's (2012) study:

The findings of this study indicated that research evidence and data were not utilized in the policy making. It is crucial for Turkish educational policy makers to adopt evidence and research-based policy making, especially on policies directly effecting students such as 4+4+4 and piloting have to be a must for appropriate policies to be able to measure the potentials of them (p. 302).

Similar conclusions are presented by Arar et al. (2019): "Changes introduced to education systems in many countries [including Türkiye] continue to be political rather than *evidence informed* [emphasis added], logical and ethical" (p. 296).

EBP should be conducted in all stages of policy cycle; but it is vitally significant that scientific evidence must basically be obtained and utilized before the implementation phase through regulatory impact analysis/assessment (RIA), preferably together with evaluation of piloting, if possible. This way, the findings of RIA, which mainly cover the research evidence from stakeholders – as affected/will be affected parties in particular – shall provide basis for required modifications, variations and/or changes in the drafted or proposed policy in a proactive manner; thus, the policy actors will have the chance of taking preventive measures in advance, helping save time, energy and economic resources while helping minimize the amount of probable resistance. Although RIA is mostly preferred in policymaking processes concerning economy, employing quantitative methods of assessment, it can and should be utilized in educational policymaking processes fruitfully as well. The OECD vigorously prescribes using RIA in policymaking, particularly in the handbook it published in 2008:

RIA should be integrated with a public consultation process, as this provides better information to underpin the analysis and gives affected parties the opportunity to identify and correct faulty assumptions and reasoning (p. 3).

The adoption of RIA as an approach to decision-making favours the use of rational approaches to policy (p. 23).

RIA programs can and should be progressively developed over time and will yield increasing benefits in terms of better regulatory quality if this is done (p. 24).

It should be notified that while this document lays stresses on how *rational* approaches to policymaking can be developed by RIA, the 2002 OECD regulatory policies document emphasizes RIA's contribution to *quality* aspects of the process through interpretations of probable *authentic* effectiveness: "...RIA's most important contribution to the quality of decisions is not the precision of the calculations used, but the action of analyzing – questioning, understanding real-world impacts and exploring assumptions" (p. 47). Specific to this study, comparing it to an RIA research, the *real-world* impacts of an anticipated education policy were captured by evaluating the perceptions of *real-world* stakeholders – teachers at schools in particular at the first level, and academicians and officials at the second level of authenticity. That is, data and findings pertaining to teachers are more meaningfully significant than the other stakeholders. In the context of EBP, this grading of the researcher may remind Nutley, Powell and Davies's (2013) echelon: "We also see the embrace of so-called 'hierarchies of evidence', which have been seen as ways to rank or prioritise different types of evidence for policy consideration" (cited in Parkhurst, 2016, p. 4). Briefly, it can be concluded that, in regard to educational policymaking, evidence from teachers must be prioritized over others.

Meanwhile another benefit of RIA application should be mentioned here: It contributes to ensuring compliance with the proposed policy through rather accurate estimation, according to which the required modifications can be made. This is indicated by the OECD (2008) as done frequently:

An important element of assessing regulatory impacts is making a realistic assessment of the likely rate of compliance with the proposed regulation... This will lead you to a consideration of whether aspects of the regulation can be changed in ways that will improve compliance (p. 21).

RIA can also allow opportunities to handle non-compliance and it facilitates making decisions about advancing in the process:

In general, if voluntary compliance rates are likely to be low, it is essential to be able to detect and deter non-compliance through enforcement actions. If you are not confident that this can be done, regulatory failure is likely to be the result. This implies a need to reconsider your proposed regulation. Is any alternative approach to the problem likely to be more effective? If not, should policy action proceed? (OECD, 2008, p. 22).

When/if RIA interpretations scientifically point to the question “Is it likely to be a case of regulatory failure?” (OECD, 2008, p. 21) and if the answer is “most probably yes”, the policy actors will have the chance of giving up the policy – before its practice. It is much better and far less expensive to stop the process than to terminate a policy after it has been implemented, even for a short period. However, as the researcher agrees, it is widely admitted that, the risk of failure is high if governmental methodologies like RIA are not conducted properly: “... This illustrates that without the oversight of good governance arrangements like those that are in a good RIA system, governments are more vulnerable to the problem of generating regulation that is excessive, unnecessary or poorly designed” (OECD, 2009, p. 16).

RIA arrangement is also appreciated in Turkish policymaking literature as well; mostly its benefits that offer a great opportunity for proactive and/or preventive action against probable setbacks in policy implementation were valued. For instance, Demir (2011) explains basic qualities of evaluations like RIA conducted before implementation through these words: “**Ex ante (pre-implementation) evaluation** precedes decision making, and aims to anticipate and evaluate in advance the impacts and consequences of planned or defined policies and actions ...” (p. 116). (“**Ex-ante (uygulama öncesi) değerlendirme**, karar vermeden önce gelir, ve planlanan veya tanımlanan siyasetler ve eylemlerin etkileri ve sonuçlarını öngörmeyi ve önceden değerlendirmeyi amaçlar...”). Similarly, Yerlikaya (2015) highlights the significant benefits of such preliminary studies, and he also stresses the vital importance of participation in policymaking as it provides the required data to eliminate the problems of implementation beforehand: “With participation, the probability [risk] of a policy instrument’s being changed and/or withdrawn due to the reasons such as false assumptions or insufficient information is reduced. Such shortcomings are

noticed at the very beginning of policy design” (p. 19). (“Katılım ile bir politika aracının yanlış varsayımlar ya da yetersiz bilgi gibi nedenlerle değiştirilmesi ve/veya geri çekilmesi olasılığı azaltılır. Daha politika tasarımının başlangıcında bu tür eksikliklerin farkına varılır”). This connection between participation of stakeholders in policymaking and estimating or exploring the shortcomings of the policy before its implementation is one of the most important points in this study. In this context, pointing to the benefit of participation of stakeholders, who will be affected by policy change or new policy, Keser-Aschenberger (2012) emphasizes the significance of RIA-like applications in every stage of policy process, referring to experts:

Sidney (2007) also suggests that “innovation will emerge from attention to the voices that contribute to the policy dialogue” (p. 81). Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004) underline that “change requires inviting those who will be affected by the change to participate in planning, design and implementation” (p. 245) (p. 301).

Consequently, it can be asserted that efficient and effective participation of would-be-affected actors in the policymaking phases before implementation, shall contribute much to the efforts of RIA; actually, engagements like RIA may not be needed at all, once the *stakeholder participation* is duly ensured from the very beginning to the very end of the process.

On the other hand, as implied by the findings in this study, combined with the power of policy evaluation conducted after implementation, arrangements employed before implementation like RIA shall contribute to the sustainability of the policy. Methodologically, such evaluative analyses made before and during the implementation of policies can serve mostly formative (evaluation) purposes whereas the ones conducted after the policy practice can serve for both formative and summative (evaluation) aims. One point concerning the use of time and timing should be emphasized here: There should be *no hurry* in application of both participative and evaluative arrangements. This is insistently reminded by the OECD (2001), especially in prescribing tips for action:

Tip 4 – Watch timing

Stronger government-citizen relations need time to be built and to show effects. Information, consultation and active participation activities need time – there is no quick fix. ... Nor are citizens able to contribute to policymaking without having had time to become familiar with the issues and to develop their own proposals. Activities geared towards strengthening government-citizen relations need time to be implemented and time to show results (p. 95).

Also related to the context of RIA, as one of the leitmotifs in this study, the researcher insists on the need to stick to the OECD's (2001) recommendation of a *tip for action*, "**Prevention is better than cure.** ... Be proactive and use existing opportunities. ... Do not delay action until you have to deal with a crisis" (p. 101) to take precautions to eliminate probable policy problems prior to implementation. All evaluative activities before and after implementation, help the policy to get matured in a progressive manner with the support of stakeholder participation.

With a more holistic approach, the OECD, from the 1990s onwards, insistently recommends and supports the utilization of RIA promoting it as both a valuable technical tool for decision making (policymaking) and, perhaps more importantly, as a means of change in administrative *culture*:

Implementation of a fully functioning RIA system is a long-term task. It must involve the progressive development and dissemination of specific expertise, the refinement of implementation and control mechanisms and the achievement of change in administrative culture. A culture that supports an approach to policy-making based on expert inputs and the goal of social welfare maximisation must be firmly embedded in the administration, at the political level and among stakeholders outside government (OECD, 2002, p. 51; also referred to in OECD, 2009, p. 14).

Inspired also by the extract above, as final remarks in this part, the researcher expresses his appreciation of two holistic approaches: The first one is that evidence-based policy-making including regulatory impact analysis, fed and led by *scientific* research, should be constituted as a *culture*, upon which (all) governmental, non-governmental and *oppositional* bodies reconciled and internalized as a policymaking *tradition* in Türkiye. Accordingly, this culture should be an integral part of the highly envisaged "utmost educational ideology"

free from any political ideologies. The second approach is that the MNE, in terms of an educational policymaking organization with all of its actors, should always be a *learning organization*. Harvard Business Review presents David A. Garvin's (1993) valuable views enlightening this context: "A learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights" (What Is a Learning Organization? Para. 11). He depicts the competencies a learning organization should have:

Learning organizations are skilled at five main activities: systematic problem solving, experimentation with new approaches, learning from their own experience and past history, learning from the experiences and best practices of others, and transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently throughout the organization (Garvin, 1993, Building blocks, para. 15).

These quotations emphasize the significance of research-based structure of an ideal policy process, which comprises the utilities of policy evaluation. In particular, the terms "others' experiences", "transferring knowledge" and "modifying behaviour" emphasize the importance of EBP, RIA and stakeholder participation in the policy cycle. Portraying the contribution of citizen participation in policymaking to enhancing government-citizen relation, the OECD (2001) also supports these views about learning organization: "At all stages of development in strengthening government-citizen relations, countries can learn from the experience of others" (p. 101). Giving the example of the Norwegian government, it stresses that "governments can learn from the evaluation and modify their activities or policies" (p. 66). In regard to (the value of) experiences/views of others, this saying can be reminded: "The cheapest experience is the one that others live".

In view of the knowledge in the literature about research-based policymaking, the uses of evaluation, piloting, EBP and RIA, the educational environment in Türkiye is rather far from such a policymaking culture mentioned above while the civilized systems strive for it. This unfortunate condition is revealed in this study too as it is portrayed by Keser-Aschenberger's

(2012) study implications on Regulation on Career Ladder for Teachers in Türkiye, focusing on evaluative shortcomings:

As this study indicated, appraisal phase of policy making in the case CLT is missing. Thus, an extended *appraisal phase* filled with necessary research seeking evidence to build a solid basis and scientific framework is utmost important for the policy development and implementation. (p. 303).

She strongly recommends EBP in her study:

Education Research and Development Directorate [EARGED] should increase conducting and funding research on the policy proposals and implemented policies to complete the policy cycle and to see the effectiveness of the policy at the school level. In other words, analysis *for* policy, *policy advocacy*, should be conducted to provide scientific information to support and provide a base for policies and to propose recommendations (pp. 302-303).

Advocating similar views to hers, once more, the vitality of research data for educational policymaking obtained by scientific evaluation, EBP and RIA in each stage of the process should be highlighted.

5.1.3. Policy implementation phase

As highlighted clearly by the findings in this study, it is commonly accepted that policies which are not implemented properly are mostly useless; thus, they are neither sustainable nor long-lasting. Calling such policies as “flawed policy” (p. 422), Short (2007) regards the financial and human resources utilized in their implementations as *wasted*. Concerning the gap between educational policy and practice, in the particular context of curriculum, Levin (2007) asserts that “there is a large gap between producing a curriculum and the experience of students in the classroom” (p. 20). In order to avoid implementation failure, first of all, during the entire policymaking process, from the very beginning – when the policy is in mind as a hypothesis or assumption, or even just a speculation – to the very end, the practice of it should be reckoned and figured in detail and should be improved steadily through (pre-)formative

evaluations. As it does in OECD (2020), the OECD insistently highlights this point and clarifies its uses:

Implementation should be considered at all phases of decision-making, rather than left to the very end. ... one policy instrument is more attractive than another that appears more effective on paper, but is likely to be more difficult to implement.

...Continuing efforts to evaluate and improve implementation strategies will assist in detecting problems early and in adjusting implementation strategies, or regulations themselves, to improve effectiveness (p. 14).

This sort of methodological approach has two basic benefits: One is that preventive measures against probable challenges can be taken beforehand, and the other is that strategies can be adjusted or modified according to the feedback obtained in each step concerning implementation so as to make required amendments. So, we can say that implementation designs and redesigns policy until it is matured at the desired level. This view is supported by Cohen, Moffitt and Goldin (2007), who through a considerable number of research analyses, strongly emphasize that “practice shapes policy” referring to McLaughlin (1991) who warns policymakers *not to mandate* or *prescribe* for practitioners. McLaughlin’s warning here takes us to the other vital issue of policy implementation that the informants underscored: If teachers have not participated in prior phases of policy cycle properly, it is highly probable that the implementation phase will suffer serious setbacks. Therefore, instead of *mandating and/or prescribing*, it is always better to determine the route to follow by making policy decisions together with the teachers, who are the actual practitioners of the policies made. Most of the time, teachers are the only agents who have the opportunity to implement the policy – particularly concerning curriculum and instruction – tête-à-tête with students; and this is so important because this interaction is the occasion for the first-hand conveyance of the essence of the policy and its messages. Referring to many educationalists and studies, Cohen, Moffitt and Goldin (2007) repeatedly stress that teachers’ motivation is a key to implementation and policy decisions must be made with a bottom-up perspective (influential ideas should be generated by teachers to move

to the higher-level bureaucrats and minister to be appreciated) because teachers have a lot more valuable knowledge about the practice environment than governmental policy actors can ever have. The participants also shared similar views to these authors in regard to the relation between policy and practice.

This issue is regarded as significant and widespread in Turkish educational system as well, and similar ideas for coping with and overcoming the flaws in implementation are portrayed by Turkish educationalists. In this study, one academician participant (A7) said that “If you cannot reach something [an objective] in the classroom, there is nothing you have changed” (“Bir şeye [hedefe] sınıfın içinde ulaşamıyorsan değiştirdiğin hiçbir şey yok.”). With this statement and her/his other views, she/he meant that the basic aim of education – in particular, of instruction in the classroom – is to change the behaviour of students in line with the objectives/desired outcomes; if you cannot manage it in the classroom context, that is, the real field, it is mostly useless. The implementation may seem on the documents as fulfilled; but it is only a pretentious formality, not a real implementation. Then, she/he gave the example of “performance homework/task/project” in schools, which, in implementation, caused *ridiculous* and also *tragicomic* occasions among students, families and teachers, calling it as “chaos” because, in time, the parents began doing the homework instead of the students; even some projects were made by professional craftsmen (the researcher also witnessed many suchlike occasions both as a teacher and a school principal too). She/he (A7) also said sarcastically that “parents were perished” (“aileler helâk oldular”) because of this sort of classroom task. It seems clear that the main reason for this policy failure was that policymakers had not taken any views or suggestions from the teachers in the classrooms while they were generating the policy to create such a homework type; they simply thought that, affected by theories and foreign applications, hands-on activities would improve learning and performance homework was just suitable for this purpose. In the particular context of this application, the significance of informing, training and convincing teachers exactly and sincerely prior to a policy practice is emphasized in the media too: “... There comes out the meaninglessness of putting on the impression that we are modernizing,

through pretentious show seminars, without telling the teacher what the performance task means, the necessity for it and how to apply it, without *convincing* [emphasis added] the teacher about this subject” (Demirel, 2014, Para. 4). (“... öğretmene performans görevinin ne demek olduğunu, gerekliliğini ve nasıl uygulanacağını anlatmadan bu konuda öğretmeni ikna etmeden göstermelik seminerlerle çağdaşlaşıyoruz görüntüsü vermenin anlamsızlığı ortaya çıkıyor ...”). Some novelties might seem appropriate in theory; however, if you do not have sufficient knowledge, feedback, piloting results, and similar information about implementation conditions, then such disastrous results will seem natural and expected.

In this context, an impressive and recent example among the ones in the literature, is Kaya’s (2018) study, the findings of which pointed clearly to the issues of implementation of a curricular policy. He evaluated the 8th grade English Language Course curriculum and revealed that there were significant problems with the implementation of the curriculum rather than other parts of it, also citing similar findings of various studies:

Therefore, it is possible to say that the curriculum was not implemented as planned from the very beginning. In other words, there was incongruence between the planned curriculum and the implemented curriculum as reported in the studies of Erkan (2009), Kaya, Ok and Ürün (2015), Kırkgöz (2008), Kozikoğlu (2014), Ocak, Kızılkaya and Boyraz (2013), and Tekin-Özel (2011) (p. 182).

He, referring to similar studies in the literature as well, determined that the overall policy failure was the result of implementation failure:

As concluded by Kırkgöz (2007b) in her study, the present study revealed that communicative language teaching proposed by MoNE did not seem to have made a real and expected impact on teachers’ beliefs or on classroom practices, and that a gap between the objectives proposed by the curriculum and the actual classroom instructional practices of teachers existed.

... further explanatory findings showed that the reason behind this failure was not the curriculum, but the implementation of the curriculum as suggested in the studies conducted by Kırkgöz (2008), Kozikoğlu (2014), Kaya, Ok and Ürün (2015), and Mersinligil (2002) who found that there was incongruence between the planned curriculum and the implemented one (p. 188).

Apart from his study in the Turkish context, Kaya (2018) portrays similar views from foreign educationalists who reached the same findings in regard to policy implementation:

As stated by Shapiro (1985), depending on the results of an evaluation study, a policymaker would either have to develop a new program to attain the given goals or modify the goals in terms of feasible outcomes for a given conceptual program model; program failure, in contrast, does not imply the need to modify program conceptualization or goals; rather, the problem is one of implementation (p. 188).

As a gist of his curriculum evaluation study, he recommends that “Instead of changing only curriculum so rapidly, it is necessary to focus on the implementation process of the curriculum (Kaya, 2018, p. 6).

In light of the results of such studies and this study together with their interpretations, it can be inferred that poor implementation of a policy distorts the whole process though the other phases seem to be appropriate; however, with a holistic approach, it can be elucidated that if the implementation of a policy cannot be conducted properly, there must have been faulty applications in the other or former stages as well. In this context, as the findings of this study recurrently explored, the most prominent mistake is the lack of proper participation of teachers – as policy implementing actors – in the two stages of policymaking, namely issue identification and policy formulation. Thus, in the particular context of curriculum and instruction, it can be claimed that unless teachers’ classroom experiences and feedback are utilized properly in decision-making, most probably there will be a “gap and/or incongruence between the planned curriculum and the implemented one” (p. 188) with Kaya’s (2018) expressions and Shapiro’s (1985) interpretation. When/if you do not regulate the policy details in accordance with the feedback from these *battlefield fighters* in the real *arena* – teachers in the classrooms – you can never win the *battles* in the classrooms, the *campaigns* in schools at the town/district level, and accordingly the *wars* at the nation-level. Therefore, frequently making new policies or modifying the existing ones will mean nothing as long as the question of appropriate stakeholder participation is settled. Concerning this study, apart from

the strong influence of teachers' participation in policy practice, dissemination of the new policy, teachers' attitude toward the policy (also closely related to participation), and teacher quality are three significant factors affecting the success of policy implementation, and these are going to be discussed in the following part.

5.1.3.1. Dissemination of the new policy

As portrayed in the example of performance homework/project above, which teachers could not practice properly because they had not comprehended its essence well, the policies cannot be implemented duly when/if they are not disseminated congruously. As the findings highlighted, on the side of the government – the MNE – basic shortcomings of policy dissemination that hinder teachers' comprehension might be unclear instructions, untimely (or late) announcements without prior notice, lack of organization and follow-up, neglecting pilot studies and poor (or no) formative evaluations. To illustrate the significant relation between the comprehensibility of the policy and its implementation concerning the dissemination stage, the OECD Checklist for Regulatory Decision-Making in the document named Recommendation of the Council on OECD (2020) Legal Instruments Improving the Quality of Government Regulation with the title “Better policies for better lives”, like a slogan, prescribes the following:

Question No. 8: Is the Regulation Clear, Consistent, Comprehensible, and Accessible to Users?

Regulators should assess whether rules will be understood by likely users, and to that end should take steps to ensure that the text and structure of rules are as clear as possible. This step in the decision process can improve not only the text of regulations, but can reveal unexpected ambiguities and inconsistencies. Clear and precise language also reduces the costs of learning about rules, *minimizes disputes during implementation* [emphasis added], and improves compliance. ... Finally, the strategy for disseminating the regulation to affected user groups should be considered (p. 7 and p. 13).

Governments are persistently warned by this institution that even the best policies cannot be implemented successfully unless they are comprehended

efficiently by the people they address, especially by their practitioners: “They [Governments] realise that they will not be able to conduct and effectively implement policies, as good as they may be, if their citizens do not understand and support them (OECD, 2001, p. 18)”. Nearly the same warning is seen in the document publicized 4 years later: “Governments increasingly realise that they will not be able to effectively implement policies, however good they are, if citizens and business do not understand and support them (OECD 2005, p. 5)”. Such tenacious reminding has been being announced for years; this shows that the OECD pays special attention to this issue. As another significant detail, it recommends that the policy should be purely understood by the related people at the proposal level as a draft so as to stimulate more effective participation: “***How can I improve the effectiveness of consultation?*** People will participate more effectively in consultation if they have a clear understanding of the regulatory proposal and of the underlying problems it is trying to resolve” (OECD, 2008, p. 20). One also witnesses that the OECD promotes the use of EBP, particularly RIA in order for the stakeholders to comprehend the rationale behind the policy decisions so that they will approve them and back up their application: “The results of RIA are published to inform stakeholders so they understand the reasons for a particular decision and to help promote acceptance of, and support for, the regulatory choice that has been made” (OECD, 2008, p. 22). In this context, regarding curricular policy issues, Pinar (2007), under the title “From Curriculum development to understanding curriculum”, emphatically refers to Slattery and Rapp’s (2002, p. 96) enunciation: “Understanding sets free what is hidden from view by layers of tradition, prejudice, and even conscious evasion” (p. 492). Adapting the message of this strong statement to this study’s topic related to curriculum and instruction, it should be underscored that implementers’ clear understanding of educational policies – through transparent manners – helps secure their appropriate implementation. In light of these prescriptions, in a broader sense, it can be deduced that for proper dissemination of a finalized policy, clear comprehension of the policy – and its rationale – by the stakeholders should be ensured in each stage of the policymaking cycle.

In the Turkish context, as this study revealed, dissemination of a policy (change) cannot be conducted properly, and accordingly, teachers as policy practitioners do not comprehend it well enough to implement it in an expected manner. Similar points are reported in regard to curricular reform in 2004 by Taşpınar and Aydın (2007), who claim that “the biggest obstacle hindering the success of the reform implementation is that, the education workers, primarily the teachers, the parents and the society do not have enough knowledge about the subject” (p. 87). (“Reformun uygulamada başarılı olmasının önündeki en büyük engel ise, öğretmenler başta olmak üzere eğitim çalışanları, veliler ve toplumun bu konuda yeterli bilgiye sahip olmamasıdır”). On the contrary, the MNE usually claims that policy changes are disseminated exactly and understood duly by the implementers. In regard to 2017 curricular changes, the MNE’s media announcement of “Main Changes, Novelties and Restorations Made in the Renewed Curricula” (Yenilenen Müfredatlarda Yapılan Başlıca Değişiklik, Yenilikler ve Yenilemeler) related as the first item, “1. Renewed curricula have been designed prominently to be plain and understandable” (“1. Yenilenen müfredatların sade ve anlaşılır olması ön planda tutulmuştur.”) (TTKB - MEB, 2017, p. 9). This crucial point was also underscored by the OECD, too, through an example of a country: A systematic approach to identifying compliance issues adopted in the Netherlands in the 1990s is presented in a table in the OECD Handbook, 2008. In this document, among the factors affecting voluntary compliance, the importance of proper dissemination of policies/regulations to implementers is highlighted as the *first* item again: “How well aware of the rules is the target group and how well do they understand them?” (p. 21), and accordingly, the degree of their acceptance is underlined: “To what extent does the target group accept the rules as appropriate and legitimate?” (p. 21). By these questions, technically, the vitality of proper dissemination of the policy change is stressed, its direct relation to the acceptance and ownership by the practitioners is emphasized by linking all those efforts to the success of policy implementation. In this context, several points by an academician, (A2), in this research are noteworthy to dwell on: The academic participant, namely A2, firstly emphasized that the language of a new policy, regulation or a program

must be in a form that the implementer – the teacher, the practitioner – can understand plainly. Secondly, the teacher must also comprehend the essence and the rationale of the policy together with the issues it addresses to resolve. What she/he demanded is agreeable to a great extent: she/he stressed that the language and the rationale of the policy should convey to the teacher the *spirit/soul/psyche/esprit – ruh* in Turkish – of the policy/program, which comprises the meanings and the messages behind the words as well. Then, the main ideas/messages of the information and experiences presented through the details of the curricula can be conveyed by the teacher to the students; She/he (A2) exemplified this assertion by highlighting the messages transmitted by hidden curricula. Consequently, she/he claims that, once these prescriptions have been fulfilled, a teacher owns and internalizes the policy/program and accordingly implements it properly. Otherwise, the program will be doomed to stay just as a “booklet” (as labelled by A2), and the teacher will ask others around her/him who seem to know, and finally will move her/his own way. This issue corresponds with what Taşpınar and Aydın (2007) determine:

Insufficient and/[or] lack of information about the novelties [changes] may lead the teachers to the ‘delusion of resemblance’. Then, the failure will be inevitable because the teachers, who do not comprehend the novelties, will try to understand and implement those novelties by simplifying them to the level of their potential knowledge (p. 85).

Yenilikler hakkındaki eksik ve yetersiz bilgi, öğretmenleri ‘benzerliğin yanılgısına’ düşürebilir. Bu durumda yenilikleri anlayamayan öğretmenler, bu yenilikleri mevcut bilgilerine indirgeyerek anlama ve uygulama çabasına gireceğinden, başarısızlık kaçınılmaz olacaktır.

On the whole, concerning this matter, what should be done by the MNE is to clearly inform the related people about the policy (updated punctually), and all teachers even in the remotest part of the country should be provided with any pieces of information timely utilizing technology. In that way, one of the most crucial prerequisites for ensuring effectual policy practice can be fulfilled.

In connection with this issue of dissemination, again in the Turkish context of the 2017 curricular change, it should be reminded that the MNE also implied that they were cautious about clear dissemination of the novelties. For

instance, they indicated that the contents had been streamlined in a proper manner so that teachers and students could conceive more easily and better (compared to the past). They underlined that all curriculum development activities had been conducted in cooperation with teachers and academicians. So, in a sense, it was announced that the requirements of *information, consultation and participation* principles were fulfilled. Then, teachers would be able to clearly understand the curricular changes and practice them well. However, just like this study's results, Kaya's (2018) findings of 8th grade English curriculum evaluation exposed contrary claims to this assertion of the MNE emphasizing that teachers did not comprehend the changes well and they should have been given in-service training or the like to make up:

The findings indicated that the teachers are not well-informed about the new curriculum. Nevertheless, they have not tried to learn about it. Therefore, the new curriculum has led to no change in their teaching styles. It is recommended that before a newly developed curriculum is implemented, the policy makers are recommended to provide the teachers with opportunities like in-service training so that the teachers can learn about the curriculum and implement it as planned. Otherwise, even the best curriculum cannot bring about the expected outcomes (p. 190).

Kaya (2018) insistently underlines that even the best curricula cannot be implemented suitably to reach the objectives unless they are well comprehended by the teachers – the implementers. Bongco and Adonis (2020) support Kaya's views and the results of this study arguing that the success of curriculum implementation depends largely on how teachers understand and implement curriculum policies (p. 19). Another significant point in the quotation above is that Kaya criticizes teachers for not trying to learn about the new curriculum. Similarly, in this study, on the side of teachers, it was exposed that dissemination failures may also stem from teachers' lack of background knowledge in the field, e. g. (almost all) teachers' ignorance of constructivist curriculum, lack of experience (especially young teachers'), and indifference by the teachers, e. g. not following announcements properly. So, this sort of interpretation takes one to another significant issue: attitude of teachers towards the policy changes.

5.1.3.2. Teachers' attitude toward the new policy

Keeping in mind the common interpretation that however excellent a policy is, it shall be almost a piece of trash if it is not implemented properly, the attitude of teachers (as implementers) toward a new policy must be treated meticulously. Answers to such significant questions, like Cohen, Moffitt and Goldin's (2007), should be sought: "Do implementers respond by ignoring, evading, or attempting to buffer themselves from policy?" (p. 68). Accordingly, it must be investigated whether there is any conflict between policy makers and practitioners. Concerning this issue in the Turkish context, pointing to the importance of the perceptions of school principals of education policies, Arar et al. (2019) warn that "... it is very important to understand the dynamics behind imposed policies and examine the reactions of policy implementers...". In this study, in regard to teachers' attitude toward the policy, the following emerged as noteworthy conceptual topics to discuss: resistance, ownership and accountability.

Resistance to the policy

As this study revealed, teachers' unfavourable attitude toward the implementation of new policies primarily manifests itself as resistance in the implementation phase. Related to this issue, Kaya (2018) highlights how impeding teacher resistance can be to a policy practice:

However, "no matter how desirable language policies may be, unless they are backed by the will to implement them, they cannot be of any effect" (Bamgbose, 2003, p. 428), because teachers' resistance to change is one of the most important obstacles hindering a curriculum's success (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017) (p. 7).

One of the main reasons for resistance is that teachers do not comprehend the essence, rationale, strategy and methodology of the policy properly so as to implement it appropriately; this revelatory issue is discussed in other parts, especially concerning dissemination, and will be mentioned again in the

following parts. Concerning this issue, in the particular context of curriculum, Levin (2007) warns: “One danger in curriculum development then is the production of curricula that are not readily usable by ordinary teachers” (p. 17). Another basic reason for resistance is the lack of efficient and satisfactory teacher participation in policymaking; this highly-significant topic is also discussed in related parts, especially concerning participation, and is referred to when needed. In the particular context of curriculum, in parallel with what is found in this study, Beauchamp (1975) regards that “a necessary prerequisite for curriculum implementation is the commitment by teachers to use the curriculum... (p. 166) and referring to a number of educationalists’ research and views, he contends that teacher participation in curriculum planning processes can enhance the strength of that commitment: “Involvement, in effect, leads to follow through” (p. 166). In this context, some challenging assertions implied by the teacher informants in this study, similar to *slogans* or *war cries* were meaningful: “If I participated as a policymaker, I would not resist as a practitioner”, “I know better than those policymakers”, or “My policy is better than theirs” and others (These statements are not verbatim quotations by each of the participants, but presented as common expressions formed by their similar implications). It was revealed that some reasons for resistance might stem from personal traits and/or perceptions of teachers; while some teachers consider the change as extra burden/workload, some others may feel disturbed by the changing conditions due to their personal traits, and so on. Similar reasons are determined by Beauchamp (1975) as well. Such considerations mostly affect negatively the senses of motivation and dedication of teachers and often cause the appearance of an unfavorable behaviour led by indifference. These are also discussed in the following parts in relation to the terms “willingness” and “ownership”.

Handling, reducing and/or removing policy implementers’ resistance are vitally significant issues to be discussed. The first and best way of managing such concerns is to take preventive measures at the very beginning of the policymaking process so as to block, discourage or *cushion* the resistance *proactively* in advance. The best methodological measure should be, again, to

ensure proper participation of all stakeholders in the process in a scientific and democratic manner. In this way, contrary to resisting, the implementers will own the policy defending it and feel accountable for it, try to amend and improve it, surely believing that *they have made the policy*. The second way of managing resistance to policy implementation is the exact and faultless dissemination of it together with continuous informing and in-service training when required in later stages; by this way, the implementer will both clearly understand the rationale behind its formulation and methodologically learn how to practice it duly. Then, having comprehended the gist and the application method of the new policy, the implementers will accomplish what is expected of them. The mentality for this attitude might be that people tend to dislike and resist things about which they do not have sufficient knowledge. Another influential factor is that teachers should be trusted and given more initiative to be *flexible* in policy practice. On the other hand, as expressed by the officials in the study, the MNE usually blames teachers for the failure of policy implementations, implying that the policies are good but their practice is not well-conducted, even resisted or sabotaged by teachers; and, in time, the MNE has begun to lose esteem toward teachers and vice versa. In such a conflicting condition, the solution is not so complex, indeed: If MNE disseminates the policy appropriately and provides teachers with the proper environment to grasp the gist and application methodology of those policies, the risk of poor practice and suspicion of implementer resistance will mostly disappear; and by this way, the desired atmosphere of respective esteem between the MNE and teachers will be regained. We should also emphasize that, having fed up with accusations, teachers really need appreciation and praise from their administrators; and this will surely pay back.

As a seemingly controversial point to what has been said so far about resistance, the participants' views implying that resistance is needed when the demands/orders of the authority concerning educational policies are against the nature of the profession of teaching and universal principles should be appreciated and encouraged. That is, the practitioners should have the courage to resist and react against such (illegitimate) policies in legitimate manners and like parts of *civil disobedience*. Here, again the argument arrives at the idea of the

uppermost education ideology that is needed to regulate the decisions in accordance with universal, professional and ethical principles.

Consequently, it should be sharply warned that resistance by teachers might be fatal for the policy's future as notified in the findings and should be managed duly so as to secure proper implementation. In accordance with the assertions in this study, this point is underscored emphatically, in the context of curriculum implementation, by Kaya (2018) referring to Ornstein and Hunkins (2017): "Teachers' resistance to change is one of the most important obstacles hindering a curriculum's success (p. 7)

Resistance due to lack of professional knowledge or lack of willingness

Concerning teachers' attitude toward a new policy, the findings showed that the reasons behind teacher resistance to its implementation might also be their lack of sufficient professional knowledge about it or their lack of willingness to change because of several factors. Most of the time, these two reasons coincide and exert joint influence in the implemental process.

A noticeable interpretation is that many teachers do not have enough professional knowledge about the new educational applications/policies directly related to their area, and furthermore, *unfortunately*, they do not seem to be willing to learn; however, they *do* perform teaching at schools, or rather, they pretend to be teaching. The incidents reported concerning the implementation of 2005 curricular change as a passage to constructivist curricula were rather common and remarkable: Hardly any teachers knew about the constructivist approach well enough to utilize it in instruction although they were believed or assumed (by the MNE and other stakeholders) to have been rightly teaching constructivist curricula for years; actually, they were just *unconsciously* following textbooks led by this approach. As a specific experience in this context, a teacher, (T1), in the study told an anecdote: One teacher was complaining about the *weird* methods of the textbook, which were actually the ones required by the constructivist approach (e. g. instead of multiple-choice questions that required one true answer, the book was concentrating on open-

ended questions that sought for several true answers from students); it was a tragic betrayal by herself/himself that she/he did not know anything about the approach at all. In this regard, A4's anecdote was rather impressive too: "One teacher in a training session in the faculty of education came and told in a panic that 'Professor! there came something called course-passing credit system, what shall we do?'" ("Hocam! ders geçme kredili sistem diye bir şey gelmiş, biz ne yapacağız?"). It is rather absurd that a teacher may depict a radical systematic educational change as "something called..." and A4 stressed that many teachers like her/him did not know anything about that system even after it had been put into practice. Then, how can one expect such a teacher to implement this regulation properly? Another striking example in the study was told by T8: "A new subject was added into the Math curriculum and most of the Math teachers did not know what it was because they had not ever studied it at the faculty. Then, young teachers, who had learnt it in the faculty as the subject was added to the curriculum in their academic year, taught it to the older ones, who had not known it at all". This was done during the *implementation* of the new curriculum at the school (not in advance through in-service training) *by chance* that newly-graduated teachers who had learned the topic at the faculty were appointed to that school. T8 also said that the teachers would usually first see the changes in the new programs and other new regulations just in the month of *September*, when the schools began, and they would discuss the novelties while implementing them, not beforehand. How healthy and fruitful could curricular implementations be in such conditions! As stated by other participants in the study, there must be many occasions illustrating such issues confronted due to either improper dissemination/promotion of the change or unfavourable teacher attitude. Correspondingly in the related literature, similar reasons/points and more are distinguished by Beauchamp (1975), especially in the context of "evaluation of teacher use of curriculum" (p. 170).

On the other hand, in the context of lack of willingness, in the study, A7's perception of the teacher attitude toward the changes is noteworthy too: "The teacher states that the new program does not ever interest her/him; she/he believes she/he knows better and goes on with her/his own way, there is no

change for her/him”. Accordingly, A7’s emphatic assertion should definitely be admitted that “no change is an actual change unless it is conveyed to the classroom, and real progress primarily depends on the *will* [emphasis added] of the teacher”. Another interesting point in her/his interpretation should be noted as well that, sometimes, when a teacher refuses the change, she/he gets strong support from the students and parents: “Our teacher is a good teacher because she/he does not give performance assignment”, praising the teacher’s disobedience to the rules and regulation; a big dilemma, a big irony! Therefore, it is urgently needed to create occasions to make a teacher believe in the change through certain strategies, the most effective of which is teacher *participation* in the policy change process. A teacher’s positive belief in the change creates the *will* in her/him, which is highly required for good implementation and instruction.

Willingness is closely related to motivation of the teachers and when teachers lack them, policy implementation is in serious jeopardy. One powerful factor decreasing teacher’s will and motivation emerges as the perception of the change as an extra burden and/or more workload on teachers brought by the policy and its formalities, and this issue becomes a target of criticism of the MNE by teachers. The OECD (2020) also refers to this issue in terms of citizen perception of policymaking in a more comprehensive manner: “Complaints are voiced throughout the OECD area about ‘regulatory inflation’, rising compliance costs, and burdensome administrative formalities...” (p. 8). More specifically, Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) dwell on the educational sides of the matter also mentioning time pressure factor: “Teachers frequently view change as simply signalling more work—something else to add on to an already overloaded schedule for which little or no time is allotted” (p. 308-309). The best remedy for overcoming such a mindset of teachers (and more broadly of the citizens) is that they should be convinced to acknowledge the requisiteness of the change, and the best way for convincing them is their actual and active participation in the entire (policymaking/change) process. By this kind of conduct, possessing the willingness that feeds teacher motivation, the practitioners will own the policy to a great extent so as to implement it better.

Policy ownership

The term “ownership” can be used for either the whole policy, regulation, program or a change in them, and as inferred from the findings of this study, the adoption of a policy-owning attitude by the practitioners is vital for the future of the policy in terms of its efficiency and sustainability. Thus, the governmental bodies must ensure the provision of suitable environment for policy ownership by all policy actors and stakeholders. This view is also highlighted by Keser-Aschenberger (2012) within the implications of her study on comparison of Turkish and American policymaking processes: “MoNE is required to create a policy making context where the policy proposal is owned by both the policy makers and policy implementators through inclusion of all stakeholders” (p. 301). She insistently puts stresses on the significance of ownership in the policymaking processes: “‘Policy ownership’, which can be identified as the ownership of the policy makers and policy implementors, can greatly influence the policy formulation and implementation. Policy makers’ ownership is crucial to ensure a solid and well-designed policy” (p. 301). In educational policymaking, the concept of ownership usually focuses on the teachers’ attitude as implementing actors. In this context, in terms of ensuring the success of a policy, an academician participant emphasized that “specifically the practitioners must own the program so that the power and energy for execution will come from the foundation, the grassroots, the real field of implementation” (A2). Here, again, the theme of effective participation in policymaking involves in the issue as Keser-Aschenberger (2012) underscored: “Teachers’ inclusion in the policy making, even in agenda setting process will lead to higher ownership of the policies and better implications” (p. 301). The positive effects of teacher participation in education policymaking studies, – in particular, here, curriculum studies – on implementation is rather significant and confirmed in the related literature:

... curriculum implementation is greatly facilitated if only through *the identification of the classroom teachers with the curriculum* [emphasis added] as well as their *dedication* [emphasis added] to use it because they feel that curriculum to be the result of their own labors [attitude of ownership]. Again, this proposition is a generalization from existing research (Beauchamp, 1975, p. 206).

To sum up, sincere ownership of an education policy by implementing teachers can greatly support proper practice of it; moreover, it shall depress the degree and influence of resistant attitude of other practitioners who have not owned the policy. Additionally, ownership shall empower, endorse and *steel* the policy's sustainability. As a support for *steeling* the policy's future in this sense, it can be an asset to cement its edifice with the power of "accountability" that is buttressed by the strength of ownership.

Accountability (for policy failure)

Once the related findings in the study are interpreted, it is inferred that good comprehension of a policy, belief in a policy, ownership of a policy and accountability for a policy can be appreciated as the integral parts of a policy implementation mechanism like the rings of a chain, vulnerable to knock-on effect. If they are strong and they function in a harmonic manner in policy processes, there will be little resistance in implementation. In this regard, accountability as a principle should be strictly possessed in policy implementation as well as in other phases utilizing its potential for *cementing* the process to strengthen its posture and to guarantee its sustainability. With a similar approach, Göngör and Evren (2009) imply the significance of accountability for a state in terms of policymaking while presenting the aims of the state for utilizing RIA as a tool: They present a list including an item as "(4. Increasing the accountability [level] of the state: RIA improves the accountability of decision-making at both ministerial and political levels.... It does not prioritize policies that only serve a particular group" (p. 7). (4. Devletin hesap verebilirliğinin artırılması: DEA hem bakanlık hem de siyasi düzeyde karar alma sürecinin hesap verebilirliğini iyileştirmektedir. ... sadece belli bir

gruba hizmet eden politikalara öncelik vermemektedir.). In a similar context, in order to enhance the relationship between the governments and the citizens through trust and rapport, the OECD (2001) prescribes policy evaluations and accordingly recommends publicizing the results as a demonstration of appreciating accountability: “Governments may also choose to **publish** the evaluation reports, thereby contributing to higher transparency and accountability” (p. 66). Furthermore, it suggests conducting such applications in a *compulsory* mode exemplifying from Netherlands and Spain. The concept of accountability in regard to governmental concerns is dealt with more elaboration drawing parallels with transparency/openness in the section named “Expectations for ideal applications of issue identification and policy formulation stages”; thus, here what is to be focused on in this part will be its significance concerning policy implementation and teacher attitude. In this context, T7’s perceptions precisely reflect the epitome of the issue. What she/he told can be summarized with these words: “When/If there are setbacks during policy implementation, the Ministry can get a teacher to account for them if she/he has participated in its formulation; but, since they [the government administrators] make those policies by themselves excluding the teacher’s participation, the implementer (teacher), then, has the right to bring the administration to account for the mistakes they have done”. The three groups of participants wholeheartedly seemed to concur with what this teacher claimed. A detail should be reminded here: emotional factors may affect a teacher’s sense of accountability to a great extent; therefore, it is a suitable conduct to exactly inform the teachers, whose views and suggestions have not been applied in a policy process, about the reasons and rationale for their elimination. So, the governmental message conveyed will be that *related offices evaluated and appreciated your views; however, they have decided to utilize other suggestions due to some/these reasonable factors and conditions*. This attitude will appease the *frustrated* teacher though she/he may not be convinced completely; thus, she/he most probably will not resist the policy practice and still feel accountable for its outcomes despite her/his relatively low motivation. As the last point in this part, in line with what the participants in the study advised, it should be

emphasized that all stakeholders of education, not only the groups in this study but also the others like parents, students, unions and so on, should develop a culture of accepting failures, as much as owning successes, in order to improve the *sacred* habit of accountability establishing a professional and ethical tradition in the educational ecosystem and culture.

5.1.3.3. Teacher quality in regard to policy implementation

In regard to teacher quality, it is commonly stressed in the literature on education policy that human factor or “people factor” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017, p. 257) – implying the vital role of teachers – is usually ignored or neglected, and accordingly, most education policy practices result in failure especially concerning curriculum implementation because the authorities usually concentrate on changing or modifying the program or the process instead of improving teacher quality (Kaya, 2018, p. 7; Bongco and Adonis, 2020, p. 21). As the study explored, similar conditions are witnessed in the Turkish context. National Teacher Strategy Workshop Report, 18-20 January 2011, states that the influence of teacher quality on student success is 30 %, emphasizing the importance of teacher quality as an integral component of the system:

Research shows that student success depends on her/his genetics to an extent of 50%, and on teacher qualifications to the extent of 30% (Hattie, 2009). The remaining 20% is distributed among other factors. In this context, the assessment approach adopted and teacher qualifications stand out as significant components of the system (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, n. d., p. 4).

Araştırmalar; öğrenci başarısının %50 genetik donanımına, % 30 ise öğretmen niteliğine bağlı olduğunu göstermektedir (Hattie, 2009). Geri kalan %20 lik dilim ise diğer faktörler arasında paylaşılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda benimsenen değerlendirme yaklaşımı ve öğretmen nitelikleri sistemin önemli bileşenleri olarak ön plana çıkmaktadır.

Since thirty percent is quite a high portion, teacher quality issues must be handled with far more special care in educational policy processes with the aim of enriching teacher qualifications so as to improve student success parallelly; this point was recurrently highlighted by the informants in this current study on

certain thematic occasions as well, while there are a considerable number of studies in the related literature that produced similar findings like Yıldız and Yıldız's (2016), which underlined the significance of the quality of school administrators at the same time. Most of such studies also highlighted the significance of teacher education to improve teacher quality in relation to education policy issues like Akar & Erden, (2010); Karaman, (2016); Yaman's (2018).

The 2011 MNE report quoted above also points to several significant issues like "perception shift in the society concerning teaching profession" (p. 34) ("... toplumda öğretmenlik mesleğine ilişkin var olan algı kaymasını...") and "strengthening social prestige of teaching [profession] based on tradition" (p. 35) ("Öğretmenliğin geleneğe dayanan toplumsal saygınlığının güçlendirilmesi..."). As referred to in that report and resentfully expressed by the informants in this study, it is tragically obvious that, in Türkiye, the profession of schoolteaching has lost its old high respectability and teachers are no longer as prestigious as they were 40-50 years ago. The same report (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, n. d.) also emphasizes that the reforms and other efforts conducted to ameliorate the matters actually deteriorated the situation: "... While the reforms and the searches for a model did not go beyond the quantitative expectations, they neglected the expertise power of the teaching profession based on its professional competencies and eroded the social status of the profession (p. 5). ("... reformlar ve model arayışları, niceliksel beklentilerin ötesine geçemediği gibi, öğretmenlik mesleğinin mesleki yeterliklerine dayalı uzmanlık gücünü ihmal etmiş ve mesleğin toplumsal statüsünü de erozyona uğratmıştır).

There are a lot of indications that illustrate this *miserable* situation of teachers, far away from their respectable social status that was traditionally demonstrated. Their knowledge is questioned, the exams they conduct are not credited and grades they give are not trusted, and so on. And accordingly, parents do not, anymore, say in a funnily serious tone that "Mr/Ms Teacher! This is my kid, your student, her/his flesh is yours and bones are mine!" entrusting the teacher with her/his dearest child's education. On the other hand, as implied in the study, nowadays, children have begun to interpret their feelings of self-

confidence and right to speak in a fallible manner which may lead astray their attitude to a high level of impudence towards teachers. This is seen mostly in private schools, in which teachers are usually forced by the administrations to act as *servants* of students and parents. It can be inferred that one of the fundamental factors that have led to such attitude toward teachers and such perceptions of them is the doubt about the quality of teachers and, accordingly, the belief among the stakeholders of education that teachers are no longer as qualified as they were once, has been prevailing for over 40 years. In line with the findings of this study, it should be acknowledged that teacher quality is a very powerful factor affecting policy implementation and the basic causes for the lack of teacher quality can be handled twofold: Governmental concerns and personal concerns (of teachers).

a) Governmental concerns affecting teacher quality

Teacher quality is naturally directly related to education of teachers at the faculty and their further training. In Türkiye, proper accomplishment of these vitalizing conducts has been questionable and this problematic condition has been prevailing for a long time. In a corresponding manner with this study's findings, as underlined by the National Teacher Strategy Workshop Report-2011 (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, n. d.) "Teacher education ... is a comprehensive, multi-dimensional problematic issue having been prevailing nearly 35 years (p. 5). ("Öğretmen yetiştirme ... sorun çok kapsamlı, çok boyutlu ve yaklaşık 35 yılın sorunudur"). In this context, on the side of government, initially it must be stressed that there are serious problems in regard to procedural and functional running of education faculties, and two of them are more remarkable than the others: The first one is the *inefficient* system of student admission (selection and acceptance) to education faculties, and the second one is the question of education quality in the faculties including (in-service) teacher training provided by them.

Student (prospective teacher) admission to education faculties

Concerning the system of student selection and acceptance to education faculties, the participants criticized that just certain scores of a multiple-choice-question-format-based university entrance exam of several sitting hours can be appreciated as neither sufficient nor fair for selecting future teachers properly. (Actually, a small percentage of weighted high school GPA is added to the exam score as contribution of *so-called* secondary school performance to obtain the final score). The criteria must be reformed: First of all, ideally, not only high school GPAs but also all school grades from kindergarten to high school should be included in the final score calculation. Then, as references, opinions and evaluations of all teachers, administrators and school counsellors, with whom the students interacted closely during their whole school life, should be appreciated and/or be turned into quantitative scores scientifically to be co-evaluated with their grades and exam scores. On the other hand, in line with the views inferred from the findings, there should be more than one university entrance exam in a year to give students more chances and options so that they can get prepared in a better and fairer manner. There are many samples of such performance/admission exams which you can take several times a year, for instance, TOEFL can be taken/retaken every 3 days without a yearly limitation, you can take/retake GRE tests every 21 days and 5 times in a year, and GMAT every 16 days, 5 times a year and so on. As a very significant inference, it should be highlighted that this frequency flexibility of university entrance exams will also help decrease the huge stress and strain of *life-and-death matter* caused by one-time-a year exams on the students (and on their families); and, in time, university entrance exams should be completely abolished and the score calculation system should be replaced by student's overall performance score (not only the scores of exams but also by other performances/competencies/portfolios including extracurricular activities) of *all* education life and references of the related personnel, namely teachers, counsellors and administrators. Once required scores are obtained, the student candidates should be approved by a committee composed of faculty professors;

then they must pass special pedagogical and psychological tests trying the candidates' cognitive and mental appropriateness to the teaching profession (perhaps conducted by an authoritative hospital, especially for psychiatric medical examinations).

12-year multilateral evaluation or 3-hour unilateral evaluation

In this context, antagonists to these views must present rational answers and plausible scenarios to such concerns as *which is better and healthier*:

- to select faculty students according to the criteria of the score of *one* multiple-choice entrance exam or according to the findings from both quantitative and qualitative assessments and evaluations obtained during the 12-year education covering the scores of hundreds of tests as well as views and perceptions of teachers, administrators, counsellors, parents and other stakeholders?

On the other hand, as clarified by the informants in this study, the opponents of such an approach put forward such concerns as that some teachers might inflate student grades because of pressure from administrations, parents or other influential factors, and this will create the issues of inequality among students. Such arguments can be responded to with two counter-arguments: The first is that no qualified teachers inflate or lower student grades in an unfair manner; teachers must be trusted. Even a few of them do, such unfair gradings can be tolerated and almost get meaningless within so many fairly-conducted grades; on the other hand, such unfair gradings can be eliminated through some techniques such as omitting the highest and the lowest scores in the calculation, or so. Another strong counter-argument can be that while you suspect teachers might behave unethically in this crucial context of student grading, how can you entrust those *wicked* teachers with the education of *dear* students during long periods of instruction? Among many uses of stopping university entrance exams becomes prominent the topic of materialistic saving – might be labelled as hard saving – that the entire country, both the state and the nation, will definitely get rid of the *unnecessarily vain* expenditures of these exams forever. The parents

shall be disburdened of the substantive captivity of preparation for this exam, and further be unchained from the psychological enslavement by it, while the governments – the state – can escape and recover from so many problems created by this exam. The most important of all is that the Turkish education system can begin to breathe! Briefly, it should be asserted that this exam system is serving nothing useful, and all efforts are for producing *garbage* – it should not be regarded as an exaggerated interpretation at all! – because the materials bought to prepare students for this exam will soon become trash including most of the knowledge they obtained by *memorizing* during the period. Overall process seriously causes waste of big amount of money (billions of Liras with which the state can build hundreds of schools and/or spend for real needs of education while parents can save a lot of money and the private sector can invest in other required areas of education), time, energy and *vigour*. On the other hand, the stress created by the process of such exams, including the high-school-entrance exam (LGS), influences the psychology of students and parents to a remarkably hazardous extent; what is worse is, checking the number of students who enter such exams one can infer that, every year, there emerge more than 10 million Turkish people (around 3,5 million students and 7 million fathers and mothers (parents) – even not including the annoying grandparents and/or close relatives, teachers and others) – who have distorted psychology to an extent, suffering greatly from depression and exam anxiety. This is really tragic; and what is more pathetic and pathologic is that, this number is repeated each year while the people affected are changing in turn. Thus, nearly every 8 to 9-year period, nearly the entire population becomes psychologically paralyzed by these exams! If the evaluation of student success and/or performance to obtain proficiency scores for faculty admittance is spread over 8-12 years, instead of one (or two) sitting exam period of 3-6 hours, then, that great exam stress can also be spread over that long period; thus, it can be softer, smoother, less damaging, thus manageable. The term *tragic* is specially used because, as in classical tragedy, we, *ourselves* – the educational milieu and the nation – created this exam system and we, *ourselves*, suffer greatly from it. Establishing this exam system has been our *tragic flaw* and we have become the *tragic hero(s)* –

in the classical manner in the modern age. In other words, more concretely, what we have been experiencing can be defined as the tragic consequences on the education system caused by the miscalculations or judgemental errors of policymakers, who played the role of the *protagonists* – *but, in fact antagonists*; but the results have been harming other education stakeholders much more than those policymaking actors. A further metaphor from the classical tragedy would be that we, the entire society, might be the audience, in whom *pity and fear* were aroused and who are also tragic heroes/heroines suffering from the tragic flaw. Then, all together we need the *catharsis*, the purification from wrongdoings, namely this university (and high-school) entrance exam system, through a radical restoration and reformation process led by *enlightenment* like that of the Renaissance awakening. To begin this movement, a first step might be to standardize all high school types within two categories: standard high school and vocational high school, removing the systems which separate the schools and education, such as science high schools and Anatolian high school, classes of Math-Science, Turkish-Math, Turkish-Social Sciences and the like, then, reorganizing the homogenous classroom student composition (gathering together only the high-achievers or slow-learners and the like) or OMIT into heterogeneous structure, which comprises students from all success levels. This application will also put an end to the unfortunate discussion of discrimination among schools as *good school-bad school* (iyi okul-kötü okul) while contributing to parents' selection of the nearest schools to their homes. Accordingly, through a *ripple effect*, this will help overcome many other problems of far schools, such as school bus service concerns, which also create an intense traffic problem, and students' lunch, parent-school interaction issues and so on. So, the parents can send their children to the nearest schools without any bewilderment or confounding obeying the principle that *the best school is the nearest school* (En iyi okul en yakın okuldur) utilizing many other benefits in this context, out of the scope of this study as well. One last point concerning admittance to universities is that, following the removal of the entrance exam of today, one small scale exam can be arranged for the candidates who finished high school years ago, not addressing the students who recently finished high

school. Details of such a system can be discussed on other occasions and platforms.

Education quality in faculties of education

In regard to the issue of education quality in the faculties of education, as reflected through the findings in this study, the commonly admitted perception is: Teacher education at faculties is neither sufficient nor efficient. Correspondingly, Kaya (2018), who explored teachers' incompetence as one of the reasons for curriculum implementation failure in his curriculum evaluation study on 8th grade English course, emphasizes how the inefficiency of faculty education of teachers was reflected to their instruction:

To illustrate, such teacher-related factors as teachers' lack of knowledge about the curriculum and CEFR, their incompetence in the target language cause the teachers to spend most of the time on grammar and reading skills ignoring listening, speaking, and writing skills. They preferred to teach English in this way because they learnt English similarly while they were students, which shows that their university education or the new curriculum has caused no change in the way they teach (p. 187).

There is a serious need for high-quality curricula for education faculties which can equip future teachers with the proficiency, capacity and competence encompassing their dimensions required by both theoretical and practical areas of education. In this context, the widespread perception in the study seems quite agreeable: Since academicians do not frequently study in the K-12 schools - the real environment for their faculty students' practical experience in the future - they themselves do not know enough about the educational practice there; so, how come the academy can be expected to teach practical aspects of school education to students! It is true and natural that academicians shape teacher candidates – by instructing the (*would-be*) instructor. Thus, the education faculty students are doomed to remain as *half-shaped* teachers under these conditions, that is, only the theoretical side of their education may be complete; the practice side is *hoped* to be shaped on the job while teaching, and this will cause to

sacrifice first students of those young teachers till they acquire the required field experience (let alone the depressive period on the side of the teacher due to lack of implemental knowledge). The best solution to such chain-like successive matters is that academicians should work in the schools more often in a collaborative manner with the school personnel so as to observe and acquire, then, accordingly, they can better teach education practice to their faculty students. Related to this issue, it should be noted that ethical and motivational virtues must also be cultivated in the minds of faculty students to create willingness and dedication to teaching profession, which will greatly support faculty's theoretical and practical education in a holistic manner. Moreover, such comprehensive professional education and ethical cultivation should be sustained through in-service training and life-long training and the like later. However, in-service training applications also lack in Turkish systems; even, in-service training for completely new curricula is neglected:

... the teachers who were interviewed did not participate in any in-service training about the new English language curriculum, so they had insufficient knowledge about the curriculum, and they had no knowledge about CEFR. This finding indicates that these teachers had to implement the curriculum without any change in their preferences of strategies, method, and techniques (Kaya, 2018, 176).

These findings correspond with Akpınar and Aydın's (2007) research results, which reveal that teachers and administrators were not trained properly for acquainting with the 2004 curricular changes – “But, after the amendments, the trainings of teachers and administrators were virtually glossed over” (p. 86) (“Ancak, reform sonrası, öğretmen ve yöneticilerin eğitimi adeta geçiştirilmiştir”); thus, such a situation might jeopardize their practice. Kaya (2018), in this context, reminds the indispensable need for in-service training for new applications, severely criticizing that “the teachers who were interviewed did not participate in any in-service training about the new English language curriculum, so they had insufficient knowledge about the curriculum, and they had no knowledge about CEFR” (p. 176). As he also referred, Ornstein and Hunkins (2016) highlight similar views:

If the new curriculum is to enable improvement in students' learnings, it must be maintained and supported over time. ... Teachers must become highly knowledgeable about the new curriculum content; they must perfect new instructional approaches; they must know how to manipulate the educational environment, ... Such support often takes the form of in-service training or staff development (p. 260).

Concerning academic personnel at education faculties, three significant points underlined by the participants in the study are worth mentioning: The first one is that academic staff in education faculties are not as qualified as they should be; many of them lack professional and ethical qualities, and also the virtue of dedication to teaching profession and science is rather far away from them. The second one is that academicians, though they are professors, mostly prioritize their personal academic careers over teaching their faculty students. It is quite hard to have a clear idea about these two issues criticized, and also it is rather a tender subject that may hurt academicians as they include harsh accusations; however, since the academician participants in the study also criticized themselves in similar direction, it was considered proper to mention them. (Meanwhile, it is necessary to exclude the academicians who perform their duties properly from this sort of discussion). The third point is the issue that must be considered more significant than the others: In the faculties, teacher candidates are educated to instruct their *would-be* students mainly for preparing for university exams (not for life or for improving mental and intellectual capacity building); thus, the overall instructional strategy of the young teachers following graduation is usually based on "teaching to the test". Actually, this is one of the greatest problems in the entire system in Türkiye; in almost all levels of educational structure, which is *invaded* by exam-focused mechanisms, *teachers are teaching to the test!* Actually, teachers are *seemingly* right and justified because they have to do it in order to accord with and conform to the system, especially regarding student selection requirements for further education (major ones are university entrance exams and high school entrance exams like LGS-TEOG with many minor ones such as free public boarding schools, military schools and other school types). This condition creates a big pressure on the

entire system causing irreparable damages as stated by (Türk Eğitim Derneği, 2010):

Turkish Education System is captured by exams. From primary education to higher education, all types and levels of education are under the pressure of exams in the transition from one level of education to another. Education in schools has become exam-oriented, and subjects and courses that are not included in the exam contents are not studied in the classroom anymore. Students directed themselves to private tutoring, dershanes and special courses [outside schools] more than ever in the history of the Republic of Türkiye. Exam preparation activities outside the schools have superseded the education and training in the schools. This conjuncture is not sustainable for the Turkish Education System. If sustained, it is inevitable that it will result in disastrous consequences for our future. It is because we cannot expect a generation that we have educated by focusing solely on testing to add value and contribute to [the progress of] the society and economy (p. iii.)

Türk Eğitim Sistemi sınavlara mahkûm olmuş durumdadır. İlköğretimden yükseköğretime kadar, eğitimin her tür ve düzeyi bir öğretim kademesinden diğerine geçişteki sınavların baskısı altındadır. Okullarda eğitim öğretim sınav odaklı hale gelmiş ve sınavların kapsamında yer almayan konular ve dersler işlenemez hale gelmiştir. Öğrenciler Türkiye Cumhuriyeti tarihinde daha önce hiç görülmediği kadar özel derslere, dershanelere ve kurslara yönelmiştir. Okul dışında sınava hazırlık çalışmaları okuldaki eğitim ve öğretimin önüne geçmiştir. Bu durum Türk Eğitim Sistemi açısından sürdürülebilir değildir. Sürdürülmesi halinde ise geleceğimiz açısından felaket olarak nitelendirilebilecek sonuçlar doğurması kaçınılmazdır. Çünkü yalnızca test çözmeye odaklanarak yetiştirdiğimiz bir kuşaktan topluma ve ekonomiye artı değer katmasını, katkı sağlamasını bekleyemeyiz (2010, p. iii.)

In this context, another striking implication is portrayed in Kaya's (2018) study in regard to 8th grade English course instruction: "The factors behind the teachers' frequent focus on grammar were found to be TEOG exam... The main factor leading to too much focus on reading skills was found to be TEOG exam again, as it mainly measured students' reading comprehension" (p. 184). So, it was hinted by this study's findings that three language skills (listening, speaking and writing) out of four (plus reading) are neglected in English language teaching due to the pressure of TEOG-LGS exams. In such an educational environment, how can the students be expected to learn the English language properly? Related to this issue as well, one other significant point in that study needs to be emphasized: Teachers also have to cope with time pressure to cover all topics of objectives in the curriculum before the exam dates; in fact, they

complain about the insufficient time allotted in the entire semester. Having to ignore/eliminate some parts in the instruction is attributed to this issue, as underlined in that research: “The factor behind their rare focus on vocabulary was the limited time, in other words, the anxiety to keep up with the curriculum hindered much focus on vocabulary” (Kaya, 2018, p. 184). Similarly, a quite *outspoken* teacher participant in this study, too, underscored the *tragic* situation caused by both the exam-focused approach and time pressure:

It doesn't matter if the children learn well indeed; If the program has been completed, it is all right. Just for the sake of formality! The teacher does not make a great effort to teach well. After all, the student gets additional support from outside the school; either from the family, or from the dersane, or from the private course or from there and here, because there is the [bitter] reality of exam. (T4)

Çocukların iyi öğrenmesi falan önemli değil; müfredat yetişti, tamam. Adet yerini bulsun! İyi öğretmek için büyük bir çabası yok öğretmenin. Nasıl olsa öğrenci okul dışından ek desteği alıyor; ama aileden ama dershaneden ama kurstan ama şuradan ama buradan, çünkü bir sınav gerçeği var.

Here, meanwhile, the issue of lack of teacher participation in curriculum development is also involved because sufficient time would be allotted to cover all topics if teachers' feedback were considered in the processes properly.

As a radical solution to such problems as teaching to the test, blunting creativity in students through testing with multiple-choice questions, causing excessive stress on students and parents through one-time, short-period-sitting university entrance exam (YKS/ÖSS) and high-school admittance exam (LGS), evaluating students by only quantitative methods in an exaggerated *positivistic* manner, so-called objective(!) selection, and the like, the decisionmakers must appreciate and utilize the ways of evaluating and selecting students for further education levels through *interpretative appraisal* of their overall previous performance of 9 years or 12 years (or at least last 4 years of their schooling in the transition period). This way will be much more sagacious, more accurate and fairer. In other words, It should be discerned that it is far better to evaluate and select students according to the multifaceted criteria obtained within a 9 to 12 years' period from a variety of sources (including people and materials) than the

criterion of 2-3 hour-exam, which can never be replaced, corrected, reconsidered, re-evaluated or compensated by make-ups. It is witnessed in the related literature that some initiatives have been taken by the highest authorities; however, almost no progress can be made. For instance, in 2014, Funda Kocabıyık, a former Director General of Basic Education in MNE, delivered an impressive speech heralding projections that would lead required improvements mentioned above; but the time passed – more than 7 years – has not produced any fruitful policy regulations or at least any attempts in the directions she pointed. She said:

Obviously, it is required to abandon the positivist approach and its elements in the system, which, in the evaluation processes, classify, rank and categorize the students and label them as the successful or the unsuccessful, and waste human resources by determining the unsuccessful ones as "casualties of education". Additionally, I think that, instead of multiple-choice type central exams, it is needed to promote a competency-based, process-oriented [assessment] system that focuses on learning outcomes, and centres on multiple assessment (Demirel, 2014, para. 9).

Değerlendirme sürecinde, öğrencileri sınıflayan, sıralayan, kategorilere ayıran, başarılı ya da başarısız olarak etiketleyen ve başarısızları kendine göre ‘eğitim zâiyatı’ olarak tanımlayarak insan kaynaklarını israf eden pozitivist yaklaşım ve onun sistemdeki unsurlarının terk edilmesi gerektiği açıktır. Ayrıca, çoktan seçmeli merkezi sınavlar yerine, yeterlik temelli, sürece dayalı, öğrenme çıktılarına odaklanan, ve çoklu değerlendirmeyi merkeze alan bir sistemin ön plana çıkarılması gerektiğini düşünüyorum.

As portrayed emphatically in this section two times in accord with the findings of this study and the information from the related literature, the present system of proceeding with further education through current entrance exams in Türkiye has been causing serious unfavourable conditions especially both for student admission to education faculties and for overall instruction in schools and faculties. Therefore, this system must be reconsidered, reconceptualized and restored immediately in the direction of the comments presented above, before further irreparable damages are inflicted.

Other significant issues emerge when young student teachers are selected and appointed to schools by the government following their graduation. In this

process, there are certain points that should be discussed concerning the selection and appointment of new teachers and their further professional training.

Selection and assignment of teachers

Concerning the governmental part of teacher quality issue, the mode of selection and assignment of teacher candidates who are newly graduated from the faculties is revealed as quite an important matter in the study. If this process is not appropriately conducted, teachers who are not well-qualified for the teaching profession might be assigned to teach in schools; then, while poor instruction harms education, those *so-called* teachers will be unsatisfied and many of them will frequently change schools and quite a lot of them will leave the profession causing deranging and unbalancing the personnel management and regime of the ministry as well as wasting time and money. The article titled “Why Our Teachers Are Leaving” illustrates this problematic situation in the USA; the messages it conveys should be appreciated as warnings against similar conditions in other countries:

Teacher retention: It’s a problem. If you haven’t thought about leaving the profession before, statistically, you will. Not only are our educators exiting the profession difficult for students, schools actually lose between \$1 billion and \$2.2 billion in attrition costs yearly from teachers switching schools or leaving the profession altogether. And although teacher recruitment numbers are steadily increasing, the data tells us that over the next five years, almost half of those teachers will either transfer to a new school or give it up completely. What are the stories behind these numbers? Many speculate, analyzing education trends, teacher prep programs, and national surveys, with some curious outcomes. Men tend to leave the profession more than women. About 15.7% of educators leave the field every year, while around 40% of those with undergraduate education degrees never even enter the classroom (Lambert, n. d. para. 1).

Two implications in this quotation are particularly noteworthy: Firstly, the last statement “... around 40% of those with undergraduate education degrees *never* even enter the classroom.” underscores that the system of student selection and acceptance to the education faculties has been failing seriously; therefore, the game is lost at the beginning due to choosing (or letting) *wrong*

students to have the education of teaching profession at faculties as the participants in this study criticized. This condition engenders multidimensional harms, two of which are influential on the two groups of students; the (wrongly-selected) ones who have the education of teaching profession, and the ones who really deserve to have that education but cannot have it. Secondly, the information in the extract that men tend to leave the profession more than women emphasizes that the selection system must be rather detailed and meticulously conducted caring about any details like gender qualities. Another significant point related by Lambert (2020) is that student teachers must be supervised properly at the beginning of their career: “New teachers with first-year mentors do, however, tend to stay longer than those without”. It is proper to claim that the longer the supervision or internship period is, the higher the quality of the teacher will be; its duration should be no less than one year, like in Germany and in most Scandinavian countries, perhaps 3 years including certain training levels and variations. In Türkiye, in addition to wrong faculty student selection, another vitally/fatally wrong application concerning both governmental attitude and faculty education is asserted by A2 in the study, referring to a doctoral dissertation research: "27% of the teachers who taught Turkish courses in Ankara were not Turkish teachers". (“Ankara’da Türkçe dersine giren öğretmenlerin %27’si Türkçe Öğretmeni değildi”).

The following implications emerged in the study regarding governmental concerns related to faculty graduates should be taken into consideration too: In order to improve teacher quality, ethical dimensions should be cared for in selecting and assigning student teachers. They should be particularly expected to have a strong sense of duty/mission, a powerful feeling of responsibility and dedication without any geographical or other discrimination of working place and/or conditions. Governments must always prioritize meritocratic professional and ethical attributes unconditionally keeping away from antimeritocratic and antidemocratic conducts, especially from favouritism depending on partisanship and/or nepotism. In this context, what Casper (2014) underlines referring to David Horowitz’s “an Academic Bill of Rights” corresponds with what is inferred in this study: “No faculty shall be *hired* or *fired* or *denied* [emphasis

added] promotion or tenure on the basis of his or her political or religious beliefs” (p. 139). It is sure that such proper governmental attitudes will help *restore* and improve the esteem for teachers and teaching profession while helping develop the urgently-needed respect towards MNE. In this context, this slogan-wise hope born out of the findings, “making teachers great again” should be soon realized by adding it the more comprehensive hope of “making the education system great again”. The formal criteria and principles for selecting and appointing (student) teachers suggested in the study should be applied, especially the requirement of committee approval for student admission to education faculties. Additionally, as a vital repetition, in order to select and educate high-quality prospective teachers the need of abrogating the university entrance exams should be notified again. With this reform, also the devastatingly-high psychological and economic pressure and stress the exam creates on a number of stakeholders, mainly the students and parents can be alleviated. The last point to be touched on in this part as reflected in the findings is: “MNE inspectors are inefficient in professional knowledge and attitude”. MNE inspectors do not properly perform their inspections; they just either seem to be inspecting or inspecting only as a formality. What they mostly check is the documents and paper, not the real classroom instruction or the *live* instructional environment. The reason for their such conducts might be that they are neither well-qualified for teaching profession themselves, nor equipped with competence for inspecting or evaluating teachers. Many teachers ridiculously told that inspectors from other branches inspected them; for instance, language teachers were inspected by the inspectors who did not speak that language, Math or Physics teachers were evaluated by inspectors whose branch was Social Sciences, and the like. In this context, another significant point is that inspections should be conducted without informing the institutions and the teachers (to be inspected) about the process and its dates in advance; they must be unannounced so as to check the environments and performances in their natural and authentic conditions, not as synthetically devised show-environments or show-performances. One extra point here is that the data of instructional inspections/supervisions in schools must also be enhanced by the data obtained

from the perceptions of students, who know and are able to evaluate teachers' competence and attitude in a realistic manner, much better than that of a *role-playing* inspector; and besides, the results of inspector's evaluation must be appreciated and interpreted together with the findings from student and peer (colleague) perceptions of the teacher. This sort of inspection/supervision, at least, eliminates the risk of totally subjective, one-sided evaluation by one inspector; however, unfortunately, this risk prevails in the present mechanisms.

Apart from the governmental aspects of the teacher quality issue, personal concerns about the matter on the teacher's side include significant points to discuss.

b) Personal concerns (of teachers) affecting teacher quality

Teacher quality, basically shaped by a teacher's personal traits and attitudes, can be considered the key determinant of a policy's potential implemental success; thus, issues concerning this context should be evaluated as rightly as possible. To be able to discuss this matter with this mindset, the findings of the study are interpreted and discussed especially concentrating on the ones that reflect teachers' self-criticism referring to the implications in the related literature.

First of all, it is commonly perceived that there are quite a number of incompetent teachers who do not have a good command of their professional area knowledge, and who do not properly prepare for new applications; therefore, they cannot comprehend new education policies that they are expected to practice. In his curriculum evaluation study Kaya (2018) reached similar results:

... the teacher to implement any curriculum has to know almost everything about this curriculum first, however these teachers had very limited knowledge about the curriculum they implemented. ... Furthermore, they made no preparation before entering the classroom except for following the teacher's guide book (p. 177).

Accordingly, due to their poor professional background, *dearth* of required competence and interest both in theory and practice, they also lack the self-confidence to participate fittingly in the policy processes: They cannot express views and provide suggestions in the initial stages of policy-making, and most importantly they cannot properly implement the policies. Kaya (2018), referring to Kırkgöz (2008, p. 1860), emphasizes the background readiness of teachers for implementation: "... teachers' understandings of the principles of an innovation and their background training play a significant role in the degree of implementation of a curriculum innovation" (p. 7). What is to be criticized the most is that teachers do not have sufficient background knowledge; but still, they are not willing to learn. Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) criticize teachers for not following the improvements in the field: "Often, teachers have not been able or willing to keep up with scholarly developments" (p. 308). In this context, what T10 stated in the interview when answering a question with a question is noteworthy: "You want to train the teacher but is that person ready to receive the training? Does she/he want it?" ("... öğretmene eğitim vermek istiyorsun ama ancak o kişi eğitim almaya hazır mı? İstiyor mu?"). In connection with these issues, Kaya (2018) frequently accentuates "teachers' incompetency" and "teachers' reluctance to implement" in regard to curriculum implementation:

Teachers' incompetency to prepare tests to assess these skills ... the teachers' reluctance to implement those methods and techniques (p. 186).
... such teacher-related factors as teachers' lack of knowledge about the curriculum and CEFR, their incompetence in the target language ... (p. 187).
... a curriculum with even these characteristics have [sic] no chance of bring [sic] about better results than the older curriculum considering incompetent teachers... (p. 189).

He, in an ironic manner, even *overemphasizes* the seriousness of the matter to the point of suggesting the policymakers to develop curricula according to the quality of the teachers' capacity and quality (rather than according to scientific requirements!) indicating that "the policy makers are recommended to make a decision about whether to develop a curriculum which is applicable by the available teachers and conditions ..." (p. 189). To him, actually, the teachers

are themselves aware of their inadequacy and believe that they should make sincere effort to learn the new policies and educational developments; on the other hand, he underscores that it is also the mission of the policymakers to have a role in managing those issues:

It was found that the teachers were aware of some of their incompetence such as failure to express themselves, failure to apply some standards of the curriculum, and they were aware of the fact that they needed to develop themselves with the changing time. Therefore, they need to be provided with opportunities by the policy makers to cope with their incompetence, otherwise, these problems found by the present study will never end (Kaya, 2018, p. 177-178).

Portraying the issue with a more specific exemplification, Kaya (2018) also refers to the inefficiency of the faculty educations and highlights that, when teachers notice they are incompetent for implementing the novelties, they try to conform by turning to the traditional methods of their elders instead of learning and applying the requirements of the new program:

Indeed, they [teachers] admitted that they even did not know how to apply communicative approach and they were not so good at these skills due to their insufficient pre-service university education. Therefore, they had to find their own way mainly by taking their previous teachers in middle school or high school as models. In other words, they were used to teaching in the way they were taught years ago with grammar teaching as reported by the interviewees. ... the present study showed that the teachers have not left their old habits while implementing the curriculum (p. 177).

Similar perceptions were also related in this study, mainly underscoring the matter as teachers' self-criticism: *We need to improve ourselves; we should spare more time for following educational improvements and news*. And it was sarcastically asserted that teachers must spare time for their self-development as much as, *at least*, they spare for "Facebook" (T3). Related to this issue, another significant point was highlighted by all the officials ($f=14$) in the study that "Teachers cannot say 'I am not informed enough by the MNE' about the new policy as technology is used so effectively nowadays", and it is meaningful that this assertion is shared by the majority of the teachers and academicians as well. The suggestion in the study that feedback provision by teachers for education

policy development must be enforced as a formal regulation should be supported; actually, it is expected that teachers should feel and internalize this democratic participatory activity as a “professional mission” for themselves.

The last matter of discussion in this part is *politicization* of teachers, which is criticized by officials and academician participants in the study as well as by the teachers themselves. When political matters are involved in educational issues, even if politics (concerning ideologies) stays only at a surface level of conversation of social interaction in the school environment, the focus on proper education usually gets diverted to unfavourable conflicting ideological areas both among the teachers and students. Therefore, the politicization of teachers and education should always be avoided by internalizing the somewhat-sloganized statement which A3 stressed in the interview session, “[There should be] no politics [i. e. ideological issues] in schools, in mosques and in (military) barracks” (“Okulda, camide, kışlada politika olmaz”) since politics (concerning ideology) has the potential to distort the proper nature of these three environments. It would also be recommended that politics – involving in imposition of political ideologies – should be avoided in the university environments as well, especially among students. Furthermore, it could be suggested that the right to elect and be elected should be raised to the age of 21 again; and formally, students, including university students at any age are not to vote. In the context of this section, it can be claimed that exclusion of *ideological* politics from educational systems as a principle shall contribute to the improvement of teacher quality; but still this principle must be supported by the applications of governments through their unquestionably-depoliticized approach to both educational policies and bureaucratic procedures like selecting and appointing teachers. In line with the perceptions of the participants in this study, what is rightfully expected is that, in Türkiye, an apolitical attitude in the education ecosystem should be adopted incontrovertibly and maintained as an integral *doctrine* of education culture led by the “ideology of education” so as to guard against the fatal risk of *toxic* politicization.

Motivation

Motivation is an integral part and revelatory determinant of teacher quality, which directly affects the practitioner's performance in policy implementation. To emphasize teachers' motivation in implementation, in line with the perceptions of the informants in this study, Cohen, Moffitt and Goldin (2007) assert that teachers' *will* (motivation) to implement a policy "is crucial to its success" (p. 65). In the related literature, while quite a number of foreign studies and documents (e. g. Han & Yin, 2016; Pelletier & Rocchi, 2016; UNESCO, 2021) accord with how significant teacher motivation in educational policy implementation is, there are hardly any related studies conducted in the Turkish context; Turkish studies on teacher motivation mostly deal with the factors affecting their motivation (Barın et al. 2018; Gültekin & ACAR, 2014; İpek & Kanatlar, 2018).

Willingness is a common concept used for defining and determining motivation. In this context, as the participants stressed, lack of willingness does deteriorate greatly teachers' both attitudinal quality and instructional quality. In regard to overall teacher quality, positive accumulation of such attributes as willingness, enthusiasm, eagerness, and the like, fed and led by deep interest and professional knowledge in respective areas, equip teachers with the high virtue labelled as *dedication* or *commitment*. Thus, concerning the implementation phase of educational policies, this concept has special importance: Low level of *dedication* of teachers (to their profession) would seriously decrease the quality of teaching. Evaluating the findings of the study in a holistic manner and reviewing the related literature, it can be determined that, without teacher's dedication, almost all educational efforts would become futile; that is, in the particular context of this research, how exactly the education policies are created, it is the teachers' dedication in implementation that makes them useful and meaningful.

On the other hand, one should acknowledge the general view which argues that teachers' motivation in Türkiye is low and this causes serious matters in implementation of policies. There seem to be a number of reasons for

motivation deficiency; concerning teachers' conditions in policy practice, some of the corresponding reasons and results of low motivation are worth mentioning. Lack of interest and willingness, depending on the context, can be regarded as both/either cause and/or outcome of low motivation. But, stronger concepts like *dedication and commitment* should be considered within the result or extent of teacher motivation degree. That is to say, in line with this mentality, it can be claimed that the higher a teacher's motivation is, the more her/his dedication and commitment to teaching profession will be. In the related Turkish literature, there are studies that emphasize the significance of these concepts concerning teachers in parallel manners. For instance, Ural's (2021) study underscores that "... teacher commitment is of great importance for continuance in the profession in a qualified and effective way" (p. v). There are also studies that have some degree of parallelism to this study (Balyer et al. 2016; Yayık, 2020); however, most of the studies in regard to commitment concentrates on the issues of organizational commitment rather than professional commitment of teaching. A concluding comment in this context can be that without the dedication and commitment of teachers, it is impossible to carry on instructional activities suitably; thus, it is hardly plausible to expect a proper educational policy implementation with low teacher motivation.

In this context, a comparatively minor point is that lack of duly teacher appreciation by the school administration and MNE (concerning their views and/or performance) can usually be an influential factor to lessen teacher motivation and their self-confidence; naturally, vice versa is possible and advisable. This point accords with Koçak's (2002) study in the context of teacher motivation in primary schools. Related to the context of appreciation, it is needed to draw attention to the point that all stakeholders of education expect teachers to raise students who have a proper sense of self-confidence and self-expression. This sort of competence can mainly be developed by students who are motivated by the appreciation of their (motivated) teachers. But, how can one expect this sort of student education from the teachers who, themselves, do not have self-reliance and avoid expressing their views due to lack of appreciation from their managers – a condition that causes loss/fall of teacher motivation? So,

it becomes pretty clear that low teacher motivation has negative influence on student motivation concerning their education as supported by Han and Yin (2016); and in a more generalizable manner such a condition cripples educational policy practice in the field.

Once more, the recurrent motif of *participation* is involved in this part concerning its relation to motivation: As revealed in this study, teachers usually accuse the MNE offices of causing loss of time, energy and motivation by engaging them with meetings in which none of the teachers' views and suggestions are appreciated. Thus, they draw parallels between lack of their *meaningful participation* in policy process and lack of their *motivation* in educational activities. Concerning both the governmental and personal dimensions, the correlation between teacher motivation and their participation in policy-making is crucial. Within the context of teachers' implemental motivation, emphasizing teachers' participative contribution to policy practice coming from the real field – *the broad base* – Cohen et al. (2007) quote from McLaughlin and Berman (1978, p. 21) as “projects begun with broad-based support were not only more likely to have been implemented in a *mutually adaptive way*, but they also stood a better chance of attaining stable continuation” (p. 65) in regard to the results of one of their studies in which they portrayed teachers' motivation as a *key* to implementation. By the phrase “attaining stable continuation”, they signify the sustainability of the policy through *practitioners' buttress* in a reciprocally conciliative manner between the makers and implementers of policies.

Another crucial point is that, like a chain reaction, teachers' condition of low motivation and poor knowledge leads to low self-reliance, and accordingly, teachers can hardly possess a critical thinking attitude toward adverse governmental applications; rather, they internalize a submissive attitude all the time. As inferred from the findings, instead of courage, *fear* dominates the educational environments; thus, no progress at the desired level can be attained concerning educational policy-making and implementation. In such an atmosphere, democratic approaches and mentalities cannot grow either. Therefore, *courage*, which is bred by competence and motivation, is another

significant quality for teachers as implementers to express views with a critical approach, even to the highest authorities, and to follow justice with an altruistic, sincere and democratic mentality of education. This viewpoint accords with Kocabaş's (2008) key statements he obtained from the teachers' answers to the question in his study, "What are the most fundamental problems concerning Türkiye's educational issues?": "The issues regarding that the education must get emancipated, it must be qualified and it must *overcome fear* [emphasis added]" (p. xxii). He refers to the *historic* assertion of İsmail Hakkı Tonguç, an educationalist who worked in influential MNE offices after the establishment of the Turkish Republic till 1954: "The biggest victory that man can win is the one which he can obtain by beating his fears" (p. xxii). He told this in relation to the topic of educational reforms while he was establishing the foundations of Village Institutes (Kocabaş, 2008).

As another point of discussion in regard to teacher motivation, it should be highlighted, in accordance with the inferences from the findings, that there is a simple but very robust tie between a teacher's happiness (obtained through self-actualization) and her/his motivation. In this sense, it is suitable to refer to A7's *telling* statement in the study: "... then we can set an environment in which the teacher can actualize herself/himself so as to be happy; self-actualization means being happy...". ("... öğretmenin kendisini gerçekleştireceği dolayısıyla mutlu olabileceği bir ortam sağlarız; kendini gerçekleştirebilmek demek mutlu olmak demek..."). Similarly, what T2 said was tragically meaningful to be highlighted once more: "... All the colleagues have told their ideas, ... everything was discussed in detail, it was very nice, we liked it though. But still, the first draft plan came out as it was, without any changes we had suggested". ("... Bütün öğretmen arkadaşlar fikirlerini söylediler, ... detaylarıyla her şeyiyle tartışıldı, çok da güzeldi, hoşumuza da gitti doğrusu. Ama yine de ilk taslak plan olduğu gibi çıktı sonuçta, bizim önerdiğimiz değişiklikler yapılmadan"). Several significant points deduced from this quotation should be evaluated and underscored again: Consulting and discussing educational matters with teachers make them happy, and a happy teacher is surely able to offer successful and effective instruction in the classroom in a highly-motivated manner. That is

wonderful; however, she/he underlines that, the teachers noticed that on such occasions, some *pretentious* consulting was applied by the policymakers with a populist approach *after* the policies had already been made. Then, in a general sense concerning similar occasions, when such happy teachers discover and perceive that their views are not considered at all and furthermore, as if *to add insult to injury*, there is no rational explanation for that obvious negligence, the teachers naturally become frustrated and they lose their motivation completely. Then, it is questionable how successful or harmful a frustrated and demotivated teacher can be in her/his classroom instruction! Such negative emotions definitely damage teachers' professional performance and more importantly, as Sutton (2007) infers, students might be "the immediate target of the anger and frustration" (p. 259) of the teachers. Moreover, teachers' resentment due to the perception that their suggestions are only referred to usually on trivia (e.g., as revealed by the findings, only asking for finding spelling errors or grammatical mistakes and the like in the books, not any other points or policy issues – only using teachers as proof-readers or editors – is noteworthy because it also impairs the quality of instruction. What can be extrapolated from such expressions and perceptions is that if the teacher is *happy* and *motivated* she/he can perform her/his teaching profession efficiently, and/or vice versa. Therefore, all efforts should be made by any related actors including administrative authorities, parents, students and so on, to provide teachers with happy instructional environments – physical and mental – in which they can teach efficiently with high motivation.

A key word in A7's quote above is *self-actualization*, which is a famous concept located at the top of Maslow's hierarchy of needs list (if we ignore "transcendence needs" that Maslow added later). Just before this need in the pyramid, there is the concept of "esteem needs" that is connected with the context of this study: The *lower esteem* (recognition and appreciation by others) part of this need can be related to appreciation of teachers' views and suggestions as part of participation in educational policymaking – requiring official effort – while attributing the *higher esteem* (recognition and appreciation by the self) part to teacher quality in terms of improving self-competence and

self-confidence – requiring teacher’s own effort (Maslow, 1980; Interaction Design Foundation, n. d.). Since it is accepted that effort and motivation are correlated in regard to human (teacher) behaviour, teacher’s motivation depends on efforts both from the administration and the teacher herself/himself. Accordingly, with satisfied needs comes *the* esteem for the teacher that leads to happiness and high motivation, and the way to self-actualization is open for the teacher to serve her/his (very) *self* and *others* (students and the system).

Capacity building

Regarding the effects of teacher quality on policy implementation, mostly improper types of teacher behaviour – which are criticized even by themselves – are revealed and dealt with in the study. Then, accordingly, suggestions to refine them were presented mostly handling the issues in the frame of the concept of *capacity building*. In order to eliminate or at least minimize the unfavourable kinds of teacher behaviours, teachers should change their conventional attitude toward policy implementation (trying to practice without grasping the essence of the policy/program through their own way not the route the policy actually required) and improve their present capacities. Moreover, they should develop new capabilities to adapt to (and adopt) new policies as indicated by Cohen, Moffitt and Goldin (2007). One can agree with their assertion that “policies require practitioners to acquire new capabilities, and [sometimes] to unlearn present capabilities” so as to minimize the dilemma between policy and practice (p. 522).

The concept of capacity building/development within the context of teacher quality can be handled twofold: One is at the personal level, the other is at the community level (this also comprises organizational capacity building). There are certain fundamental problems in regard to each of these types in the Turkish education system. Concerning teachers’ personal capacity issues, their professional, intellectual and technological incompetences are explored, evaluated and criticized by the informants. In accordance with the findings in this study, Kaya (2018), in his research, detects (English) teachers’ deficiencies

in terms of both curriculum and instruction basically due to lack of subject knowledge and skills, and he witnesses that the teachers are aware of them:

In the present study, it was found that the teachers were aware of their incompetence in the target language, in preparing achievement tests to measure especially students' listening, writing and speaking skills; however, they could not find any opportunity to improve those skills (p. 190).

Then, implying the urgent need for capacity building, he recommends that teachers must be competent enough to implement the curricula properly; if not, it will be a failure due to their lack of capacity:

A newly developed program should not be put into practice unless sufficient practitioners with necessary qualifications are supplied. Otherwise, it will be very difficult to find congruence between the planned and the implemented curriculum as the present study showed (p. 190).

In this present study, the majority of the informants also underlined the lack of teacher capacity. Harshly criticizing teachers' indifference to their profession as well, O6 blamed many teachers for their technological incompetence at the lowest technical level: "... these are teachers in Ankara, think of them. Still, there are teachers who do not know how to check e-mails in the centre of Ankara; 'actually, I am not so into [technology]', or so. ... but there are so many of them." ("... ki bunlar Ankara'nın öđrt.leri düşünün yani. Daha mail bakmayı bilmeyen öđretmen var Ankara'nın göbeğinde; 'ama ben çok ilintili deęilim' falan. ... ama, miktar o kadar çok ki"). There emerged other specific criticisms like this in the study. As a suggestion to cope with these issues in a broad sense, an academician informant contributed by connecting three highly-significant concepts, "participation, meritocracy and capacity building": "The more participation in policymaking, the more teachers' horizons are broadened, and so they acquire new visions. This also contributes to meritocracy for teaching profession" (A4). ("Politika yapımında ne kadar fazla rol alırlarsa, öđretmenlerin ufukları o kadar genişler ve böylece yeni vizyonlar edinmiş olurlar. Bu aynı zamanda, öđretmenlik mesleğindeki liyakate de katkı sağlar"). As indicated in the findings section, the connection among these three

thematic concepts of this study is meaningful: When teachers are invited to **participate** in educational policymaking, they will feel the need and positive pressure to develop their **professional capacity** in order to contribute to the process by presenting informed and learned views and suggestions. Accordingly, with the motivation of self-confidence that they obtain through the power of knowledge (high capacity), they can be more sensitive towards **meritocratic** aspects of the profession and governmental applications with a critical approach in a courageous manner; A teacher will be able to say “why not me but that person is assigned for that mission! I am more competent, I have assets for that job, I deserve it more...” contributing to democratic culture by forcing the bureaucracy. A similar mentality of drawing parallels between participation and capacity building was also portrayed by T6 who said

Well, if my views are to be appreciated, ... Possibly, what I know will not suffice for me. ... I will present views ... I will investigate some resources, I will research on the Internet, examine certain studies. Therefore, this is a self-improvement process for the teacher. That is, when we mention teacher training, well, it should not be like that “let us offer a course of 2, 3, or 5 hours”, but if we [teachers] maintain such a process ...

Yani şimdi benim görüşüm dikkate alınacaksa,.. O bildiklerim bana yetmeyecek muhtemelen... ben fikir sunacağım ... Bir takım kaynakları karıştıracam, İnternette araştırma yapacağım, çeşitli araştırmalara bakacağım. Dolayısıyla bu aynı zamanda öğretmenin de kendini yetiştirmesi. Yani biz öğretmen yetiştirmek derken, işte hizmet içi kurs verelim 2 saat, 3 saat, 5 saat değil de, bunu sürekli bir hale getirirsek...

With this approach, instead of frequent extra training from outside, teachers can develop an attitude of capacity building, including methods of “learning to learn” and “life-long learning”. Such a teacher attitude, minimizing the need for in-service teacher training, can also contribute to the progress of new educational conditions created by today’s environment of the pandemic in terms of self-learning. Kaya (2018) recommends teachers to behave in a similar manner without waiting for any outside support: “Being aware of their incompetence, the teachers should seek for ways to develop themselves even if the policy makers cannot provide them with any opportunities” (p. 190). Within the context of this issue, here, a specific point originated from the words of A7 in

the study should be emphasized: “Beyond dispute, teachers' participation in policy making makes a great contribution to their capacity development. Moreover, it becomes a project in terms of their self-realization...” (“Hiç tartışmasız olarak öğretmenlerin politika yapımına katılımı onların kapasite gelişimine büyük katkı sağlar. Dahası, onların kendini gerçekleştirmeleri anlamında bir proje de olur. ...”) While signifying the connection between participation and capacity building, A7 depicted the process as a “project”. It may seem as a rather *odd* term sounding that capacity building or development is an organized process to be tried by applying on/to teachers as a procedural activity; however, it would be better for a teacher that such efforts for improving capacity should be perceived, possessed and internalized as a professional and intellectual life style rather than a short-term transitory project application.

On the other hand, it is significant to underline the finding of this study indicating that teachers’ *pedagogical* and *ethical capacity* development should also be fortified and tested periodically. Including this kind, in order to realize teachers’ capacity building of all sorts and test them duly, substantial support from universities and MNE is needed; this can be practiced best through proper interaction between academicians, teachers and government officials. While bolstering from the universities can be mainly based upon training in terms of professional and pedagogical assistance, support from the MNE can be involved in more materialistic areas, which can be exemplified as economic opportunities and assets, amelioration in school conditions as well as rehabilitation, revival, redemption aid for teachers when needed. All these endeavours for capacity development will broaden the visions of teachers and accordingly the outcomes will be reflected on instruction positively. Therefore, an inference can be made depending on the findings: The higher the teacher’s capacity is, the better her/his policy implementation performance becomes. Furthermore, teacher participation in policymaking with *improved capacity* will contribute to the fortification of *from-down-to-top* information flow mechanisms for healthier and more sustainable policy production.

The participants in this study share similar views to those of Kaya’s (2018) in regard to evaluating teachers’ professional competence periodically.

He suggests that the MNE should test English language teachers' four language skills to ascertain their deficiencies so as to support them to improve themselves (p. 190).

As a consequent comment concerning the topics in this part, with the expectation of seeing that all stakeholders of education should constitute an environment of capacity building both personally and collectively by following the principles of "learning to learn", as a prolific component of educational culture, one should appreciate and affirm David A. Garvin's (1993) interpretation of Peter Senge's views on learning organization:

Peter Senge, who popularized learning organizations in his book *The Fifth Discipline*, described them as places "where people continually **expand their capacity** [emphasis added] to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually **learning how to learn together** [emphasis added]". To achieve these ends, Senge suggested the use of five "component technologies": systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning (Meaning, Management, and Measurement. Para. 4).

The significant methodological concepts Senge – who is renowned as one of the most outstanding strategists of the century, and whose book on management "The Fifth Discipline" is regarded as a masterpiece – offered above can be compared to similar concepts obtained from the findings in this study: Senge's "systems thinking" and "shared vision" may associate with the *common uppermost ideology of education* – as a product of "collective aspiration" concept; his "personal mastery" with "teacher's capacity building", and his "team learning" with "community capacity building". In this way, it can be expected that the application of the principles "learning to learn" and "capacity building" will encompass the entire education family with all stakeholders at both personal and community levels, and accordingly will be established as a firm and stable component of Turkish education culture.

Meanwhile, it should be indicated that the literature concerning teacher capacity building in the Turkish context is quite poor. Through searches, only one lightly-relevant title was found: A master's thesis named "The effect of

teacher leadership on the development of the leadership capacity of the school” (Özçetin, 2013).

5.1.4. Discussion on the commonalities and differences among the perceptions of the three groups of participants

Participants from three groups of educational stakeholders with regard to policymaking process attended this study: teachers, academicians and government officials. Their perceptions are analysed, evaluated and interpreted as appropriately as possible in terms of scientific and ethical requirements. Meticulous care was paid to the approach in the study in order to be fair and unbiased toward each group as Creswell (2007), referring to Lincoln and Guba (1989), lays stress on “establishing the criteria of ‘fairness’ (a balance of stakeholders’ views)” (p. 212) in the research process and also to the methodology to be as fruitful and useful as possible observing particularly the principles of *pragmatic* validity. In this context, Stake’s (1995) indications also guided the researcher to explore *multiple realities* as a qualitative case researcher:

Ultimately, the interpretations of the researcher are likely to be emphasized more than the interpretations of those people studied, but the qualitative case researcher tries to preserve the *multiple realities*, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening (p. 12).

While expressing their views and perceptions in the interview sessions, on the whole, the three groups of participants seemed quite comfortable to speak freely with the help of sincere atmosphere and the rapport between the researcher and the participants. The commonalities and differences among the perceptions of the groups are presented in the findings part and they are underlined and emphasized while handling the themes in the discussion part within their respective contexts in detail. But still, we can summarize the main similarities and diversities as topical statements:

5.1.4.1. Commonalities

In regard to the identification of policy issues that require a policy change, all participants in the three groups expressed that feedback and suggestions from the stakeholders must be the main source rather than governmental and political agendas and/or the impacts of international systems. Concerning all phases of policymaking, they believed that political ideologies should not be involved in educational decision-making; instead, an utmost ideology of education must be established to lead all educational activities in a scientific manner. This ideology should contain democratic, meritocratic, humanistic and ethical principles based particularly on plurality, transparency, consensus, reconciliation and accountability. Closely related to this context, the significance of fair and effective participation of stakeholders is recurrently highlighted by all informants. On the other hand, close and continuous cooperation among the stakeholders is highly recommended. They also hinted that properly following these principles shall help create long-lasting and sustainable education policies. All of them stressed the special/unique position and importance of teachers in education policy processes, especially in implementation. Thus, they put emphasis on appropriate dissemination of new policies and strategies for developing the teacher attitude of policy ownership, accountability and motivation in practice. They once more highlighted the vitality of teacher participation in policymaking for ensuring proper implementation and sustainability of policies also by reducing the probable resistance. As the final essential topic, all three groups dwelled on teacher quality and capacity building focusing on the quality of faculty education of prospective teachers and their in-service training during their career. It can be concluded that these common views, suggestions and expectations should be acknowledged and supported by all interested parties in the entire educational ecosystem.

5.1.4.2. Differences

The differences among the views and perceptions of participants are also presented in the findings and discussions sections under their respective thematic examination; however, the topical ones are worth mentioning here too:

Teacher participants objectively criticized themselves, especially on the issues concerning teacher/teaching quality. They severely accused academicians of several points. Academicians admitted some of those accusations as their own self-criticism, such as not frequently visiting schools to collaborate with teachers. The core of the matters between academicians and teachers centred on the differences between theory and practice. This can be regarded as natural to an extent depending on their professional areas; however, these two groups must continuously collaborate and mutually train each other so as to harmonize theory and practice. Teachers also blamed government officials, actually the MNE, for a number of matters, especially concerning the procedural limitations on teacher participation, political approach to issues and related unfavourable procedures. In this context, the views and perceptions of the officials differed between the ones who were still working in MNE offices at the time of the interviews and the ones who had retired. The actively working officials avoided any criticism against the governmental applications, actually defended them, while the retired officials bitterly criticised them. Thus, it can be deduced that the working officials felt the heavy pressure of their positions and they were afraid of being punished or losing their posts. In fact, as detailed in the previous parts, the active officials must be courageous enough to have a critical approach to matters so as to explore, evaluate and amend the problems; otherwise, there will be hardly any improvements in the system. There were some minor differences among them, which are not worth mentioning here as main matters; indeed, they were notified in their contexts in the related previous parts.

Consequently, in line with the discussions on the findings of this study presented above, it can be concluded that educational policymaking processes, on the whole, are not conducted properly in Türkiye according to the perceptions of teachers, academicians and government officials. There are several basic

dimensions of this issue, which can be handled within two main contexts again: a) the ones concerning the identification of policy issues phase and policy formulation phase of the policy cycle, and b) the ones in regard to the policy implementation phase of the policy cycle.

Pertaining to the first group, initially, there revealed certain drawbacks in regard to determining the sources of educational issues that require a new policy or policy change. In this context, the most severe problem appears as that educational decision-making and policymaking processes are influenced negatively by one-sided political and ideological approaches (and manipulations) of governments, which lead to undemocratic and unethical applications. Next, also related to the second context, is the fact that there are serious flaws concerning participation (of stakeholders) in educational decision-making and policymaking conducts. Lastly, it is rather obvious and unfortunate that National Education Councils are not productively and appropriately utilized in educational policy processes.

Concerning the second context, firstly, dissemination of new policies to the implementers is not appropriately conducted, and this defect results in poor realization of the essence of the policy by the practitioners, which leads to poor practice. Secondly, policy practitioners' attitudes – namely teachers' – towards new policies are often unfavourable, mostly demonstrated as/by resistance in practice. Thirdly, and perhaps more importantly, it is concluded that teacher quality is not as efficacious as it should be so as to implement the policies properly; there are certain defects and shortcomings on the side of both teachers and the governments.

5.1.5. Conceptualization of the findings and the study's (expected) contribution to the theory/model/literature

A technical point

As the generic framework of the study, three stages of Lasswell's (1971) policy cycle/process model that was reformulated by Theodoulou and Kofinis

(2004) are utilized: problem/issue identification, policy formulation and policy implementation. During the data analysis process, it was revealed that the findings related to the first two of the stages got converged to a large extent as they bore and reflected remarkably similar points; thus, they were handled and presented as one group under one heading. So, a considerable number of repetitions that could be tiresome for the audience were avoided. Accordingly, interpretations, discussions and implications were mostly portrayed in the same manner. In further similar studies, such an application can be employed to facilitate the processes in a reader-friendly design.

Points concerning conceptualization/ theory/related literature

The perceptions of the teachers, academicians and government officials have led to the perspective that the current educational policy-making in Türkiye is executed basically with an institutionalist(ic) approach since policy as a governmental output is, to a great extent, created and enforced by legislative, executive and judicial organs in a monolithic and authoritative manner. Additionally, organizations often produce policies and apply changes in order to meet social expectations and align with external environments, not to increase their efficiency to attain professional and ideal goals. On the other hand, the values and ideologies of (certain) groups are appreciated while those of (other) individuals are almost ignored (Heck, 2004; Hill, 2005; Anderson, 2006; Dye, 2008).

In regard to other common theories of and approaches to policy-making, Turkish educational policy-making has some peculiarities of the group theory because the process is often exposed to struggles among interest groups which have their respective values and ideologies oppressive on their members. What governments do is to collaborate with some of the groups, either for ideological or other reasons, providing them with unfair advantages against the others; the government is not neutral, and the society is not equal. Though the other label of this theory is known as pluralism, the term only stands for indicating the existence of a variety of groups that struggle to overpower others, not handling

the issues in a multi-lateral democratic manner with pluralistic approaches. The power is not dispersed as opposed to what is claimed by the theory (Aypay, 2015; Barry, 2013; Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004). This is the situation in the Turkish case as well. Also, it is noteworthy to underline that such a political attitude has been adopted by the governing bodies for almost 40-50 years and has become a long-lasting national, traditional and cultural pandemic in the country.

Another parallel can be drawn between some traits of the elite theory and the Turkish policy-making case in line with the findings of the study. As highlighted in the literature review section and the related parts of the study, the members of the ruling class as the *élite*, monopolizing power, possessing status and prestige are at the head of the political structure. On the other side, there is a large passive class (mass) that is ruled over and excluded from political affairs, especially concerning decision making. The sources of elitism can be wealth, ideology, traditional roots, religious milieu and the like. One major aim of the system is to preserve the status quo and accordingly reproduce the society (with rare incremental change) with all its subsystems and elite values (Heck, 2008; Dye, 2008; Barry, 2013). “Change and innovation can only result from the elites’ redefinitions of their own values and preferences when events threaten the system or elites act to reform for the sake of the mass” (Keser-Aschenberger, 2012, p. 31). The picture portrayed here reflects profoundly the governmental/managerial environment of the Turkish educational policy-making case.

In view of the image attributed to the Turkish educational policy-making system through the interpretations of the participants’ perceptions as stakeholders views, the following suggestions as literary and/or methodological contributions can be appreciated and utilized for bettering the process: Firstly, though any versions of the policy cycle/process model in the literature may be employed in such operations, Theodoulou and Kofinis’s 7-stage reformulation of the model can be recommended more as it might be regarded as an eclectic one among the others. It is 1. problem identification, 2. agenda setting, 3. policy formulation, 4. policy adaptation, 5. policy implementation, 6. policy evaluation,

and 7. policy termination or policy change (2004, p. 83). However, the criteria, or rather principles that have been particularly picked from among the ones set by Lasswell (1971) must be properly applied: While the criteria which are requisite for all stages are “money economy, technical efficiency, honesty, loyalty and skill of official personnel, complementarity, effectiveness of impact, flexibility and realism in adjusting to changed circumstances, deliberateness and responsibility in decision making and execution”, the ones that should be selectively employed to a/several stage(s) are “dependability, comprehensiveness, openness, integrativeness, timeliness, non-provocativeness, balance, ameliorativeness, independence and continuity” (Lasswell, 1971). On the other hand, the significant point alerted by the contribution of Brewer who improved Lasswell’s model and introduced the term “policy cycle” should be paid special care: Policy process continues by evolving within each stage and among the stages through the feedback obtained anytime in a circular/cyclical manner rather than a linear mode; thus, the new model acquainted the definition and understanding of policymaking process with a transition from “the mechanical to the organic” (Howlett et al. 2013).

Secondly, utilizing certain understandings of the approach of incrementalism can be beneficial to conduct educational policy-making, especially in the Turkish context since the basic assumption of this approach is that “major change is most likely to occur through a series of smaller steps... public policies necessarily evolve gradually through a pluralistic and highly conflictual process ...” (Hayes, 2001, p. 3). As underlined in the discussion and implications section, required major changes in the overall Turkish system should better be changed gradually in an evolving and maturing manner by taking time; because the problems began 40-50 years ago and have gotten worse for a very long time, it would be unrealistic to expect them to be resolved immediately. Another advantage of the approach might be that the quality of the policy can be raised since incrementalistic conducts provide the policy actors with chances to correct the mistakes or lessen adverse impacts through modifications: “... policy is an ongoing process and mistakes in policy action should be mitigated where possible” (Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004, p. 90). In

regard to the particular context of this study, it is also agreeable that the incrementalistic methods help create more realistic policy phenomena while it reduces cost and saves time (Hayes, 2001). In close connection with this view, utilization of evidence-based policymaking (EBP) and research impact analysis/assessment (RIA) guidance can be highly beneficial in terms of both gaining qualified knowledge from the scientific research and saving time, energy and money as well as strengthening the process through the superiority of preventive measures provided by them.

Thirdly, some methods and approaches of Sabatier's (1998) "Advocacy coalition framework" selectively can be utilized by evaluating the valuable knowledge obtained from the views and suggestions of certain groups defending certain points on a policy issue. At a symbolic and very micro level, the three purposefully-selected participating groups in this study might be regarded as coalition groups in some aspects.

Fourthly, propositions, dispositions and strategies of the "Critical theory" should be evaluated and utilized, particularly the ones concerning the influence – or rather abuse – of ideologies and culture on the policy-making process in order to realize and take action against the probable risks on educational environments: "... ruling groups maintain influence by imposing repressive structures on key organizations such as educational institutions" Corson, 1996 as cited in Heck, 2004, p. 167). Prompted by this issue, it can be stated that the study's findings can also be evaluated from another standpoint; regarding the perspectives on the impact of culture on educational policy-making.

Influence of culture on educational policy-making in relation to the findings

Davies (2004) lists the factors that influence policy-making in government, placing habits and traditions, values and judgement among them. These are significant elements of the culture and, in this study, they appeared as affecting determinants on policy decisions in the Turkish context as well. While some of them function as governmental and/or bureaucratic social behaviour,

some others operate as individual attitudes; however, both affect the policy processes to a remarkable extent, and often many of the traits can be witnessed playing roles in both categories. Within the first category, the noticeable ones are political ideologies and judgements, religious values, customs and traditions, extreme conservatist and/or nationalist approach, rigid top-down decision-making tradition, separatist and polarizing attitude, partisanship, politicization, nepotism, favouring, inferiority complex towards international failures, and aspiration for foreign educational systems. Together with them, many lacks, such as lack of fairness, justice, transparency, meritocracy in government, and the lack of mutual trust between people and the government appear as extra management deficiencies of cultural behaviour. The marked personal traits affecting policy-making as a reflection on social behaviour are (often absolute/never-questioning) submissiveness toward authority; low sense of cooperativeness and dialogue-building; heavy damaging senses of jealousy, cowardice and biases; disrespecting opposing views; lack of mutual trust among people, low level of internalization of democratic values, lack of feelings for compromise, responsibility and accountability; lack of professional dedication and sense of duty; lack of self-confidence (to offer views and suggestions) and critical thinking; lack of positive sense of (multiple) participation.

Trowler (2003) mentions the processes of “policy encoding” as the policy formulation process that includes the intentions of the policy-makers and “policy decoding” as the way of policy implementer’s understanding the policy often by selectively interpreting. In these two operations, if the actors’ cultures of policy do not possess commonalities to a certain extent, a big gap between policy and practice may emerge which will surely distort the whole process. In order to eliminate such a catastrophic risk, the suggestion presented in this study, labelled as the “utmost ideology of education”, may, hopefully, contribute to the creation of a common cultural background (founded upon idealized integrative comprehensive principles) for educational policy-making processes.

The uppermost ideology of education – an umbrella ideology

The study offers the establishment of a common utmost education ideology over (and excluding) all other political ideologies, which can function as an umbrella built up in line with universal educational principles and national/local dynamics and structures. Its qualities are listed, interpreted and discussed in the related parts of the study. The fundamental ones are democratic and pluralist approaches (both in the classroom and in the Parliament); no (imposing) involvement of any political and/or religious ideologies; sticking to scientific, meritocratic, ethical qualities, and multi-lateral cooperation conducts. Additionally, in order to ensure sustainable, long-term educational policies, the ideology's principles require continuous search for common grounds, consensus and/or reconciliation; stakeholders' internalization of policies, feelings of ownership, fidelity and accountability for them. As the OECD frequently emphasizes the significance of creating a certain culture on any occasions concerning policy-making, this way, the governments may develop a culture of proper curricular policy-making.

It is greatly expected and hoped that this study can contribute to the related literature, help solve the problems of educational policy processes, and ignite prolific actions through its implications, just as stated in these lines: "A problem develops over a long period of time, largely unnoticed by the public. Then comes public discovery, usually triggered by some key event" (Heck, 2004, p. 102).

5.2. Implications

In parallel with the inferences, there emerged remarkable implications from the findings. They are presented under two headings: "Implications for educational practice" and "Implications for further research."

5.2.1. Implications for educational practice

In this part, the study's implications related to educational practice are portrayed under two main categories that are designed according to the phases of the policy cycle as in the previous parts.

5.2.1.1. Implications regarding the identification of policy issues phase and policy formulation phase of policy cycle

1. Feedback and suggestions from teachers and academicians should be the primary source for identification of policy issues that require a policy change or a new policy. These two groups of stakeholders should voluntarily present their views, by being encouraged by administrators and by being motivated through their professional knowledge and experience. Information about foreign education systems/models and results of international tests may only be sources of secondary importance provided that they are adapted locally. Government plans, programs and agendas about education policies should never constitute sources unless they accord with the sources of stakeholder views/feedback and research with a scientific approach and without any one-sided influence/manipulation of political ideologies.

2. Inflexible and biased ideological attitudes by governments in educational decision-making and policy-making must be avoided; transparent, meritocratic, pluralistic and democratic approaches in search for consensus and/or reconciliation should be adopted while the traditional cultural diseases of partisanship and nepotism must definitely be relinquished.

3. Proper participation of stakeholders of education, primarily the teachers', must be ensured in all sorts of policymaking processes. Academicians, government officials and teachers should always collaborate by adding their respective professional expertise in the collective studies, appreciating opposing views as valuable opportunities for taking precautions to prevent probable shortcomings and resistance in further phases of policy processes. Participation

of other stakeholders like students, parents, NGOs and the like should be appraised duly as well.

4. In all phases of policymaking, especially the issue identification and policy formulation, scientific methods and knowledge should be utilized such as evidence-based policymaking (in particular, regulatory impact analysis/assessment (RIA) as well as unquestionably caring for ethical dimensions of policymaking. Such an attitudinal conduct does help improve qualified policy production through preventive measures taken in advance for averting future shortcomings while assisting to ensure proper policy practice and sustainability.

5. The tradition of top-down decision-making should be balanced with – if not replaced by – bottom-up decision-making mechanisms; actually, bottom-up procedures should be preferred, especially in regard to curricular processes because primarily teachers' views ought to be appreciated as they are in the field.

6. For a high-quality policymaking system, all authorized personnel in educational offices of the MNE, including the Ministers, should be from teacher/teaching backgrounds who have personally taught in classrooms at least for five years.

7. National Education Councils should be utilized in a more productive manner, not only as a solely advisory committee but as a more efficient educational authority; the NECs' politicized nature must be replaced with a more scientific, professional, apolitical and democratic high-quality character.

8. It is vitally needed that a common uppermost ideology of education over (and excluding) all other political ideologies should be constituted. This ideology, possessing the loftiest status for education, should be led by universal education principles (at the top) as umbrella axioms. It should always contain scientific, meritocratic and ethical qualities, seeking multi-lateral collaboration, reconciliation and consensus with democratic approaches everywhere: in the classroom/school, at the universities and in governmental offices – the presidential office, though. In this context, the superordinate goal should be to produce sustainable, long-term educational policies (encompassing 30-40 years) in accordance with this education ideology.

9. As an inclusive implication, proper policymaking under the umbrella of the common uppermost ideology of education should be a permanent education *culture* and all stakeholders should possess the principles of life-long learning while the institutions should be learning organizations for sustainability; this way, the almost 50-year-old *educational policymaking culture* that lack expected and idealized procedural propriety, democratic and ethical quality can be replaced gradually.

5.2.1.2. Implications regarding the policy implementation phase

1. New policies and/or policy changes should be properly disseminated to practitioners, namely teachers, with meticulous care for clarity, so as to ensure their appropriate implementation. To secure this prospect, the most fundamental prerequisite is that teachers must fully comprehend the policy, especially the rationale behind it, by virtue of exact dissemination by the governmental authorities utilizing the best scientific and technological methods including piloting, EBP, and RIA as well as with the benefit of their (teachers') professional background knowledge and experience.

2. It is essential that practitioners ought to develop a positive attitude toward the new policy to enhance the policy practice. In this context, first of all, (probable) teacher resistance to implementing the policy duly must be eliminated or at least alleviated by certain methods like through active teacher participation in the processes (earnestly appreciating their views, applying the suitable ones and, convincing them about why their views are not considered and so on). It is necessary that teachers develop senses of responsibility, ownership, dedication, commitment, and the like, which endorse their feelings of belief in the policy by internalizing it and their feeling of accountability for it. This process can be reinforced by decent governmental applications with a transparent, meritocratic and democratic approach, which provide teachers with self-esteem through appreciation, and initiative and flexibility in implementation in a trustable environment.

3. Teacher quality should be raised in order to reinforce policy implementation. To do this, firstly, the criteria for student selection and admission to education faculties should be reformed so as to single out the best-fitting teacher candidates through duly-elaborated qualification methods/tests assessing the appropriateness of candidates for the teaching profession in terms of not only academic but also psychological, pedagogical and ethical conditions. Then, training offered in education faculties should be improved to high-quality levels; this can be realized by dedicated high-quality professors who educate students to improve their capacities concerning competence and proficiency in teaching profession and ethical virtues. Next, student teachers who graduated from faculties, should be given qualified internship training and be assessed with meticulous care to be selected and appointed as school teachers. In this process, again, transparency and meritocracy must be observed tightly and *miserable* traditional diseases of partisanship, nepotism and favoritism must be avoided cautiously; thus, longed-for *lost* esteem for teachers can be restored.

4. Teacher motivation as an influential component of practitioner performance should be reinforced by both governmental applications and personal efforts by teachers themselves. In this context, MNE can enhance teachers' motivation by appreciating and respecting their personalities, their performance and most importantly their participation in policy processes in meritocratic manners. Teachers should always try to improve their professional and ethical qualities with a sincere approach and they should voluntarily and courageously participate in policymaking processes. In this way, teachers' lack of interest, willingness, dedication and commitment can be lessened while their motivation is heightened to facilitate proper policy practice. On the other hand, since there are teachers working at especially state schools who do not ever deserve anyway to go on with their teaching career due to their laziness and lack of proper effort, competence and willingness, it is better to modify the Civil Servants Personnel Law No: 657, similar to that of contracted staff (provided that all their professional and personal rights are guaranteed), so as to eliminate such teachers by detecting them through proper assessment methods; otherwise, they can stay in the profession till retirement without working properly due to

ineffectual legal and formal sanctions at present. This practice shall enhance teacher quality in time. In line with this implication, it can be suggested that teacher performance and quality should be assessed through the perceptions of their colleagues/peers and their students because these two groups are always the most knowledgeable ones who have the most valuable information about teachers.

5. Special attention should be paid to the theme of capacity building for all stakeholders of education as an integral component of quality, especially for teachers, so as to support educational policy implementation. Efforts for improving personal and professional capacity should be made both individually by the stakeholders themselves and institutionally by governments. Apart from personal dimensions of capacity building, it should be acknowledged that proper interaction, collaboration, and participation among education stakeholders concerning policymaking in a scientific and democratic manner shall contribute to the efforts of capacity building of all sides respectively. Accordingly, with high-capacity actors/partners, qualified policies can be made and implemented in a proper way.

6. As a more comprehensive implication, in order to make and implement qualified education policies that are sustainable and long-lasting, policymaking processes must be participatory, meritocratic, transparent, accountable, trustable, and collaborative, which are conducted with democratic, bias-free, pluralistic and apolitical approaches based on reconciliation and consensus. In line with such a mindset, *balance* emerges as one of the most significant concepts especially in regard to the balance between favoring and opposing ideas, between top-down and bottom-up decision making, between the interests of the government and the needs of the stakeholders, between the politics of the governmental environment and the requirement of scientific and educational environment, and any (seemingly) opposing issues. Thus, (the principles of) balance should be considered and secured in any education policy activity.

7. One *revolutionary* implication that seems to be indirectly related to this study but actually has vital importance is that the fatal tradition of “teaching

to the test” must be removed entirely from the school education because it greatly harms both teaching quality and teacher quality, and accordingly the whole system. Since the university entrance exam (YKS) is the primary reason/impetus prompting such an attitude of instructional *calamity* having been prevailing in our education ecosystem for years, that exam should be definitely abolished in a systematic way inflicting the least harm to its components. The great stress it creates upon the students, teachers, parents and many other related people and institutions is an additional *awesome* strain as well as its gigantic economic burden on the people and the country, almost *for nothing*. If the only aim is to select faculty students by ranking them, the best way is to rank and single them out according to their grades, performances and references obtained during their 12-year education period instead of the results of one-sitting 3-hour exams. The termination of this exam can be either abrupt (with proper preparation) or incremental – gradually decreasing its weight while increasing the weight of the students’ GPA in calculating the final scores, and then terminating it, or modifying its application format only to a very small group who want another chance for higher education. If not, at least it will be fine/acceptable to increase its frequency of application, such as 4 times a year or more, by offering alternative chances, so as to relieve a little the students and the related people *clinched* by it. The high-school entrance/transition exam (LGS) potentially possesses similar problems as well. Therefore, Turkish school education system must get emancipated from the *slavery* of these national exams as soon as possible.

5.2.2. Implications for further research

This part presents the implications of this study for further research concerning educational policy processes. It is expected that these implications shall lead researchers to conduct studies that can contribute to the improvement of educational decision-making and policymaking processes in the Turkish system, and hopefully in other countries having similar contexts. The implications can be listed as follows:

1. In order to explore the impressions of (any) educational policy processes in the school environment, school administrators' and teachers' perceptions should be investigated, compared and contrasted; the findings *shall* contribute to the betterment of educational policies, especially the curricular ones. Furthermore, students' perceptions should also be studied within the same context; in this way, the perceptions of the stakeholders who constitute the group influenced the most by the policies as the final actors of implementation can be obtained and interpreted. Such an accumulation of data/knowledge may be as valuable as those/that obtained from *teachers* in terms of contribution to the betterment of policies concerning them.

2. Like the findings of this study, the related research and literature – mostly in other countries (OECD documents in particular) and *hardly* in Türkiye – intensively explored the theme of participation as the most significant constituent of educational policymaking. Thus, research concentrated solely on the *participation* of stakeholders in policy processes in Türkiye shall obtain and delve into valuable findings that will contribute to policymaking mechanisms in this country.

3. As democratic aspects of decision-making and policymaking processes also became prominent in this study, and again handled popularly in the related world literature but scarcely in Turkish contexts, the themes of *plurality, consensus, reconciliation, dialogue, equality, and justice* in regard to policymaking should be studied within the scope of Turkish cases with a critical approach.

4. (The impacts and dynamics of) ideological involvement in educational policymaking should be researched because, as inferred from this study, issues concerning it and its subthemes inflict substantial damage on educational ecosystems; this must be emphasized frequently by robust studies so as to inform and warn the authorities and the related milieu about the hazards.

5. Cooperation of stakeholders in education policymaking should be studied in *real* fields of education, especially in schools and universities in order to find out the actual impediments to it.

6. Among the participants in this study, “uppermost ideology of education” emerged as a theme which stands for a highly-expected dream, a fundamental/radical remedy and a *magical* tool to restore the *stumbling* education system in Türkiye; thus, getting perceptions/perspectives of other/more purposefully selected and information-rich renown informants in the field may help explore other significant horizons both for grounding theoretical foundations and practical implications. Then, the implications from such studies can bear bigger bodies of knowledge synergically through their interaction with and contribution to each other that can help realize such *fantastic* implications as *the uppermost ideology of education*.

7. Similar studies are to be conducted with participants among other stakeholders of education, such as parents, union members, publishers, and others, in order to examine the perceptions of people whose relation to education is mostly out of the very scope of curriculum and instruction; such studies can provide education policy research and policymaking processes with a variety of multi-lateral perspectives, knowledge and visions from outside the school environment.

8. Mixed method and/or quantitative studies on the same/similar topic(s) as this study’s can be conducted to expand the generalizability quality of this sort of qualitative research studies.

9. It is regarded as significant to investigate more deeply whether ideological approaches of changing governments influence educational policies through further studies on specific cases like a) founding and abolishing Village Institutes (Köy Enstitüleri), b) changes in education policies after the 1980 coup d’état, such as the 8-year uninterrupted education system which were believed to be designed according to Kemalist/Atatürkist ideology, and c) the policies of the present government like the 4+4+4 system, which has been much criticized for having been enforced in line with religious ideologies in order to regenerate İmam Hatip schools and the like.

10. Comparative studies can be conducted to investigate implementers’ attitudes toward education policy changes which are supported by Regulatory Impact Analysis/Assessment (RIA) and/or piloting (prior to implementation) and

the policy changes which are put into practice without RIA and/or piloting. In a similar context and manner, the degrees of policy successes shall be compared in order to explore whether evaluative research prior to policy implementation is effective. Such studies should particularly be conducted in regard to curricular policies.

11. Future education policymaking research should pay particular attention to the approaches of Evidence-based Policymaking (EBP) and Research Impact Analysis/Assessment (RIA).

12. In the context of policy implementation, concerning teacher quality and teacher capacity building, the subject of evaluation of teachers' (performance) by their *students* and by their *colleagues/peers* should be researched in order to contribute to teacher quality improvement and accordingly to policy practice. Its hypothesis or starting assumption might be that, authentically, teacher quality can be assessed best through the perceptions of the teachers' own students and their colleagues in schools, in the real field, not through procedural assessment by Ministry inspectors or other government officers, who see the teachers one time in their life, as (a *useless*) formality.

13. The topic "teaching to the test" should be researched in detail with all of its dimensions since, as appeared in this study, it is a severe impediment against teaching/teacher quality in Turkish schools, which directly affects the overall education system through its direct connections to LGS and YKS/ÖSS exams. It can be assumed that any changes/modifications and/or amendments concerning this widespread instructional attitude shall guide fundamental and radical betterments in the entire schooling system. Furthermore, its economic dimensions related to the publishing sector (testing materials) and special courses (*dershanes*, private tutoring and the like) should be researched. All such research efforts will supervise educational policymaking processes, in particular, concerning curriculum and instruction.

14. Last but not least, a relatively more significant implication is that comprehensive future research should be conducted to examine certain dimensions of university entrance exam, with the assumption or hypothesis that amendments to this exam may lead to the improvement of overall educational

policies, including ameliorations of instructional practice that is mostly ignored; especially perceptions of students and parents in regard to academic, psychological and economic dimensions of this exam can be interpreted in order to explore its impacts or rather probable *damages* on the life of the millions of people concerned.

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APPENDICES

A. INTERVIEW FORM FOR TEACHER PARTICIPANTS AS SAMPLE FOR THE THREE GROUPS (TURKISH VERSION)

Görüşme Formu (Öğretmen katılımcı)

Katılımcının adı :
Katılımcının cinsiyeti :
Tarih :
Yer :

Araştırmanın Başlığı:

Türkiye’de K-12 seviyesinde, eğitim programları ve öğretim politikaları yapımı süreci üzerine bir çalışma: öğretmenler, akademisyenler ve resmi yetkililerin algıları.

Sayın ...

Ben Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü “Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim” Programı doktora öğrencisi Mustafa Baştürk. Doktora tezi çalışmam ana hatlarıyla öğretmenler, akademisyenler ve resmi görevlilerin algıları doğrultusunda Türkiye’deki eğitim politikalarını ele almaktadır. Bu bağlamda, eğitim politikası yapımı basamaklarından “problem tespiti”, “politika oluşturma” ve “politikanın uygulanması” aşamaları temel alınacaktır ve katılımcıların mevcut durum ile ilgili algıları ve iyileştirilmesi konusundaki görüşleri değerlendirilecektir.

Zaman ayırarak bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için çok teşekkür ederim. Bu görüşme, bir **öğretmen** olarak sizin eğitim politikaları yapımı süreçlerine ilişkin görüş ve değerlendirmelerinizi paylaşabilmeniz için iyi bir fırsat da olabilir. Bu sayede, bu çalışma, eğitim programları ve öğretim ile ilgili politikaları oluşturma sürecinin geliştirilebilmesi ve uygulamadaki olası sorunların azaltılabilmesi doğrultularında ilgili alanlara önemli katkılarda bulunabilir.

Size görüşmenin genel özelliği ve gizliliği ile ilgili bilgi vermek istiyorum:

Bu görüşmede konuşulanlar sadece bilimsel araştırma amaçlı kullanılacaktır. Kimliğiniz gizli tutulacak, araştırmacıda saklı kalacaktır ve hiçbir rapor vb. dokümanda kullanılmayacaktır.

İzin verirseniz tüm ayrıntıları toplayabilmek ve önemli bir hususu kaçırmamak için görüşmeyi sadece sesli olarak kaydetmek istiyorum. Kayıtlar da tamamen gizli tutulacaktır.

Görüşmemizin hiçbir bölümünde sizi kasıtlı olarak yanıltacak ya da size zarar verecek bir unsur yoktur. Yine de, görüşmenin herhangi bir aşamasında sizin istemeniz durumunda görüşme hemen sonlandırılacak ve bütün kayıt iptal edilecektir.

Görüşmemiz bir saat civarında sürecektir.

Başlamadan önce sormak istediğiniz herhangi bir konu var mıdır?

Teşekkür ederim, başlıyoruz.

Başlama Zamanı:

I. Tanımlayıcı Bilgiler

1. Kaç yıllık öğretmensiniz? Branşınız nedir?

2. Hangi tür okullarda çalıştınız?

Devlet okulları, özel okullar? İlkokul, ortaokul, lise?

3. Bugüne kadar, eğitim programları ve/veya öğretim ile ilgili olarak Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından yürütülen herhangi bir politika yapımında veya karar verme sürecinde görev aldınız mı?

a. Böyle bir konuda fikrinize başvuruldu mu? Size herhangi bir duyuru vb. yapıldı mı?

b. Sizden görüş istenmemesine rağmen kendiliğinizden herhangi bir görüş veya öneri belirttiniz mi?

4. Milli Eğitim Şuraları ile ilgili bir deneyiminiz oldu mu? Bu kurulun toplantıları hakkındaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?

Sonda: Katılımcıların seçim yöntemi, tartışılan konular, alınan kararlar ve uygulamaları.

GÖRÜŞMEMİZİN BUNDAN SONRAKİ SORULARINI ÜÇ ANA BAŞLIK ALTINDA SORACAĞIM:

1) Problemlerin tespiti, 2) Politika yapımı ve 3) Yeni politikanın uygulanması.

II. Eğitim programları ve öğretim ile ilgili yeni politika yapımı veya politika değişimi gerektiren problemleri belirleme aşaması süreci.

1. Sizce, eğitim programları ile ilgili yeni politika yapımı ya da politika değişikliği gerektiren problemleri belirlemede hangi unsurlar ve/veya kaynaklar etkili olmaktadır? Sorun tespitindeki çıkış noktaları neler olabilir?

Sonda: Konuyla ilgili araştırma sonuçları; uzmanlardan gelen fikir, talep veya teklifler; uygulayıcıların (öğretmenlerin ve/veya okul idari personelinin) fikir ve görüşleri; ulusal sınav sonuçları; hükümet planları ve programları; hükümet yetkililerinin politik direktifleri; hükümet harici siyasi parti temsilcilerinin fikirleri/önerileri; diğer politik ve/veya ideolojik faktörler; velilerin, sivil toplum kuruluşlarının ve sendikaların fikirleri/önerileri; basın ve sosyal medya iletişimi etkileri; diğer ülke sistemlerinin etkileri (yabancı modeller, Avrupa Birliği politikaları, uluslararası sınavlar, vb.).

2. Eğitim programları ile ilgili yeni politika yapımı ya da politika değişikliği gerektiren problemleri sizce kim(ler) ve/veya hangi kurumlar tespit ediyor? Kararlar nasıl alınıyor?

Sonda: Paydaşlardan fikir alma ve birlikte karar verme konusundaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?

Çoklu katılım, çıkar gruplarının etkileri, azınlık grup görüşleri ve çıkarlarının gözetilmesi vb. konular hakkındaki görüşleriniz nelerdir? Muhalif fikirlerin ne derece önemsendiğini ve değerlendirildiğini düşünüyorsunuz?

Karar alma süreci ile ilgili hiyerarşik olarak aşağıdan yukarıya doğru bir iletişim ve etkileşim ağı (sistemi) var mı, yoksa kararlar yukarıda mı alınıyor?

a. Öğretmenlerin problem tespiti sürecine katılımı konusundaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?

Sonda: Bu sürece katılan öğretmenler nasıl seçiliyor? Onlara ne tür görevler veriliyor? Bu görevleri nasıl yürütüyorlar?

Bir öğretmen olarak, öğretmenlerin fikirlerine ne kadar değer verildiğini ve görüşlerinizin politika yapımında ne derece etkili olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz? Varsa, bu konudaki tecrübelerinizi açıklayınız?

Geçmiş dönemleri düşündüğünüzde, eğitimle ilgili problem tespitinde alınan kararlarla ilgili olarak “keşke bana da sorulsaydı!” dedikleriniz oldu mu? Olduysa örnek verebilir misiniz? Nasıl bir katılımda bulunurdunuz?

Yapılandırmacı yaklaşıma geçiş, 4+4+4 sistemine geçiş, Fatih Projesi, ders kitapları içeriği, SBS-OKS-TEOG, vb., MEB tarafından yapılan taslak eğitim programları ile ilgili öğretmen, akademisyen, veli ve diğer paydaşların görüş ve önerilerini isteyen duyurular vb.

b. Akademisyenlerin problem tespiti sürecine katılımı konusundaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?

Sonda: Bu sürece katılan akademisyenler nasıl seçiliyor? Onlara ne tür görevler veriliyor? Bu görevleri nasıl yürütüyorlar?

Akademisyenlerin fikirlerine ne kadar değer verildiğini ve görüşlerinin ne derece etkili olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?

c. Konuyla ilgili olan resmi görevlilerin ve politikacıların problem tespiti sürecine katılımı konusundaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?

Sonda: Bu sürece katılan bürokrat ve politikacılar nasıl seçiliyor? Onlara ne tür görevler veriliyor? Bu görevleri nasıl yürütüyorlar?

Bu bürokrat ve politikacıların fikirlerine ne kadar değer verildiğini ve görüşlerinin ne derece etkili olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?

3. Süreci “demokratik, liyakatli katılım ve uzlaşmacı” süreç yönetimi açısından değerlendirir misiniz?

Sonda: Liyakatli ve ideal bir katılım için, sürece öğretmen, akademisyen ve resmi görevli/politikacı katılımı derecesi ile ilgili yüzdeler vermeniz gerekse nasıl verirdiniz? (Böyle vermeniz) Gerekçelerini açıklar mısınız?

4. Mevcut problem tespiti süreci işleyişinin güçlü yönlerini yorumlar mısınız? Avantajları nelerdir?

Zayıf yönleri/dezavantajları hakkında neler düşünüyorsunuz?

Sonda: Sonuçta doğru problemlerin tespit edilip edilmediği hakkındaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?

a. Ediliyorsa hangi iyi uygulamalar bunu sağlıyor olabilir?

b. Edilmiyorsa nedenleri neler olabilir?

c. Sizce bu sürecin daha iyi işlemesi için neler yapılabilir?

Bunlar niçin yapılmalı ve nasıl yapılabilir?

III. Eğitim (programları) politikası oluşturma aşaması süreci

1. Eğitimle ilgili problemler tespit edildikten sonra, yeni politika oluşturma sürecinde sizce kimler rol alıyor? Bu aktörler nasıl ve kimler tarafından seçiliyor?

Sonda: Komisyonlar? Çalışma grupları? Akademisyenler? Öğretmenler? Ölçütler? vb.

2. Size göre, politika yapımı süreci nasıl işliyor? Karar alıcı kişiler ne tür bir çalışma yöntemleri izliyor?

Sonda: Araştırmalar yap(tır)mak, uzmanlara danışmak, üniversitelerle birlikte çalışmak, uygulayıcıların görüşlerini değerlendirmek, sivil toplum kuruluşlarının, siyasi parti temsilcilerinin fikirlerini almak vb.

3. Eğitim alanı paydaşlarının eğitim programları politikası yapımı sürecine katılımı konusundaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?

a. Öğretmenlerin politika yapımı sürecine katılımı konusundaki görüşleriniz nelerdir? Bu süreçte, öğretmenlerin fikirlerine ne kadar değer verildiğini ve görüşlerinin ne derece etkili olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?

Sonda: Bir öğretmenin böyle bir görev alması sizin için ne anlam ifade eder? (Katkının önemi, bilgiye verilen değer, uygulamanın iyileştirilmesi vb.)

b. Akademisyenlerin politika yapımı sürecine katılımı konusundaki görüşleriniz nelerdir? Bu süreçte, akademisyenlerin fikirlerine ne kadar değer verildiğini ve görüşlerinin ne derece etkili olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?

c. Konuyla ilgili olan resmi görevlilerin ve politikacıların politika yapımı sürecine katılımı konusundaki görüşleriniz nelerdir? Bu süreçte, bürokrat ve politikacıların fikirlerine ne kadar değer verildiğini ve görüşlerinin ne derece etkili olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?

d. Liyakatli ve ideal bir katılım için politika yapımı sürecine öğretmen, akademisyen ve resmi görevli/politikacı katılımı derecesi ile ilgili yüzdeler vermeniz gerekse nasıl verirdiniz?

4. Hali hazırda uygulanan politika yapımı sürecinin güçlü yönleri/avantajları ve zayıf yönleri/dezavantajları hakkında neler düşünüyorsunuz?

Sonda: Politika yapımı sürecinin doğru işleyip işlemediği konusundaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?

a. İşliyorsa hangi iyi uygulamalar bunu sağlıyor olabilir?

b. İşlemiyorsa nedenleri neler olabilir?

c. Sizce daha iyi işlemesi için neler yapılabilir? Bunlar niçin yapılmalı ve nasıl yapılabilir?

IV. Eğitim programları politikası uygulama süreci

1. Sizce, eğitim programları ile ilgili yeni politikalar veya değişiklikler yapıldıktan sonra, onların uygulanması konusunda nasıl bir süreç işliyor?

a. Yeni eğitim politikaları ve uygulamaları hakkında nasıl bilgi sahibi oluyorsunuz? Bilgilendirme nasıl yapılıyor?

b. Yeni eğitim programlarının/politikalarının uygulanmasına yönelik olarak MEB tarafından gönderilen yönetmelik, yönerge ve direktiflerden nasıl yararlanıyorsunuz?

Sonda: Yeteri kadar açıklayıcı ve ayrıntılı mı? Kavrayabilmeniz ve hazırlanabilmeniz için (uygulamadan önce) yeterli zaman veriliyor mu?

2. Uygulamanın başarılı olabilmesi için yapılan ön çalışmalar konusundaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?

Sonda: Hizmet içi eğitim, özel kurslar, çalıştaylar vb.

3. Uygulamalar, merkezî yönetimden gelen yönetmelik, yönerge ve direktiflerle yönlendiriliyor. Bu bağlamda, okul yöneticileri ve öğretmenler yeni eğitim politikalarının uygulanmasına yönelik nasıl bir tutum göstermektedirler?

a. Okul içi bilgilendirme, yönlendirme, koordinasyon, kontrol, değerlendirme vb. süreçler nasıl işliyor?

b. Dirençler oluyorsa sebepleri neler olabilir? Mevcut uygulamalarda dirençler nasıl yönetiliyor?

c. Varsa, bu dirençlerin olmaması için, sizce, politika yapım sürecinin en başından itibaren neler yapılabilir?

4. Uygulamalarda direnç dışında, politikaların verimli olarak uygulanmasına olumsuz etki eden başka hangi zorluklarla baş edilmeye çalışılmaktadır?

5. Sizce, (problemin tespiti ve politika yapımı süreçlerine) (öğretmenlerin, akademisyenlerin ve resmi görevlilerin) katılım dereceleriyle uygulamanın başarılı olması arasında nasıl bir ilişki vardır?

Alternatif: Paydaşların kararlara katılım derecesinin yüksekliği veya düşüklüğü uygulamanın başarısını nasıl etkiler?

Olumlu ya da olumsuz? Niçin ve nasıl?

6. Sizce, uygulamaların daha başarılı olabilmesi için neler yapılabilir?

7. Uygulamanın iyileştirilmesi bağlamında, uygulayıcılar, yani öğretmenler açısından kapasite oluşturma ve kapasite geliştirme konularındaki düşünceleriniz nelerdir?

Sonda: Daha doğru kararlar alınması ve politikaların daha sağlıklı uygulanması açısından öğretmenler, akademisyenler ve politika yapıcı memurların kapasitelerinin geliştirilmesi hangi unsurlara ve şartlara bağlı olabilir?

Sonda: Öğretmenlerin yetiştirilmesi, eğitim fakültelerindeki eğitim.

Sonda: Akademisyenlerin ve resmi görevlilerin mesleki ve etik açılarından yetişme ve gelişimi.

8. Eğitim politikası yapımı ve uygulaması bağlamında, “hesap verebilirlik” prensibi hakkındaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?

Sonda: “Politikayı sahiplenme” terimini nasıl yorumlarsınız?

Sonda: Paydaşların başarı ve/veya başarısızlığı sahiplenmesi hakkındaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?

Şu ana kadar konuştuklarımıza eklemek istediğiniz bir şey var mı?

Katılımcı olarak bu çalışmada yer almanız çok önemliydi. Katılmayı ve görüşme yapmayı kabul ettiğiniz için çok teşekkür ederim.

Bitiş Zamanı :

SÜRE :

**B. INTERVIEW FORM FOR TEACHER PARTICIPANTS AS SAMPLE
FOR THE THREE GROUPS (ENGLISH VERSION)**

Interview Protocol
(Teacher participant)

Name of the participant :
Sex of the participant :
Date :
Venue :

Title of the Research:

A study on curricular and instructional policymaking process at K-12 level in Turkey: Perceptions of teachers, academicians and government officials.

Ms./Mr. ...

I am Mustafa Baştürk, a PhD student in the program of “Curriculum and Instruction” in the Department of Educational Sciences at the Faculty of Education at Middle East Technical University. My dissertation mainly handles educational policies in regard to perceptions of teachers, academicians and government officials. In this context, “identification of issues”, “policy formulation” and “policy implementation” phases of educational policymaking stages will constitute the base of the study and participants’ perceptions of the current situation and their views on improving it will be evaluated.

Thank you very much for sparing time to participate in this study. This interview can also be a good opportunity for you, as a teacher, to share your views and evaluations regarding educational policymaking processes. Accordingly, this study can make remarkable contributions to the related fields in regard to improvement of curricular and instructional policymaking process and minimization of probable problems in policy implementation.

I will inform you about the general characteristic and secrecy of this interview:

Whatever talked in this meeting will be utilized for only scientific research purposes. Your identity will always be kept confidential and your name will never be used in any documents such as reports, articles and the like.

If you do not mind, I would like to record our conversation so as to collect all the details and lest I miss any significant points. The records will definitely be kept confidential as well.

In any part of our interview, there is no element that may intentionally delude you or harm you. Yet, once you request to stop it in any phase of the session, the interview will be terminated immediately and the entire recording will be erased.

The session will last around an hour.

Do you have anything to ask before we start?

Thank you, let us commence.

Starting time:

I. Descriptive Information

1. How many years have you been teaching for?

2. What kind of schools did you work for?

Public schools or private schools? Elementary school, middle school, high school?

3. Have you ever participated in any policy-making or decision-making processes concerning curriculum and/or instruction conducted by the Ministry of National Education?

a. Have you ever been asked for your views regarding such an issue?

b. Have you presented any views or suggestions yourself without being asked for?

4. Have you had any experience concerning National Education Councils? What is your opinion about the meetings of this council?

Prompt: methods of selecting participants, discussion topics, decisions taken, and their practice.

I WILL ASK THE REST OF THE QUESTIONS IN OUR INTERVIEW UNDER THREE HEADINGS: 1. Identification of issues, 2. Policymaking, and 3. Implementation of new policies.

II. The process of identifying the issues that require a new policy or policy change concerning curriculum and instruction.

1. In your opinion, what factors and/or sources are influential in identifying the issues that require a new policy or policy change regarding educational programs? What can be the points of departure in issue identification?

Prompt: Results of research related to the issues; ideas, requests or suggestions presented by the experts; the opinions and views of the implementers (teachers, and/or school administrative staff); results of national exams; governments' plans and programs; political directives of governmental authorities; ideas/suggestions of political party representatives other than the governing party; other political and/or ideological factors; views and/or suggestions of parents, nongovernmental organizations and unions; effects of mass media and social media communications; reflections on foreign country systems, (foreign models, European Union policies, international exams, etc.).

2. Who and/or what institutions, in your opinion, determine(s) the issues that require a new policy or policy change? How are the decisions made?

Probe: What is your opinion about requesting views from stakeholders and collective decision-making?

Probe: What do you think about multi-level participation, the influence of interest groups, considering the views and interests of the minority groups, etc.?

According to you, to what extent are opposing ideas cared about and appreciated?

In regard to decision-making mechanisms, is there a hierarchical communication network (system) from bottom to top or are the decisions taken at the top?

- a. How do you perceive the participation of teachers in issue identification processes?

Probe: How are the teachers who participate in such processes selected? What assignments are given to them? How do they carry out those assignments?

As a teacher, what is your opinion about the extent that teachers' views are valued and how influential their views are in policymaking? Can you mention your experience on this subject if you have had any?

When you ponder the related past periods, concerning the decisions taken in educational issue identification phases, have you ever thought "I wish I had been asked [for my views] too?" If yes, can you give examples? How would you participate in the process?

Prompt: Transition to constructivist approach, passage to 4+4+4 system, Fatih Project, contents of the coursebooks, SBS-OKS-TEOG, etc., announcements requesting views and suggestions from teachers, academicians, parents and other stakeholders in regard to draft curricula developed by the MNE, etc.

- b. How do you perceive the participation of academicians in issue identification processes?

Probe: How are the academicians who participate in such processes selected? What assignments are given to them? How do they carry out those assignments?

What is your opinion about the extent that academicians' views are valued and how influential their views are in policymaking?

- c. How do you perceive the participation of government officials in issue identification processes?

Probe: How are the officials who participate in such processes selected? What assignments are they given? How do they carry out those assignments?

What is your opinion about the extent that officials' views are valued and how influential their views are in policymaking?

3. Can you evaluate the process in terms of “democratic, participative and reconciliatory” process management?

Probe: For meritocratic and ideal participation in the process, how would you rate (if you need to) the proper participation degrees of teachers, academicians and officials/politicians in percentage? Can you interpret on the reasons (for your grading)?

4. Can you comment on the strengths of the current issue identification process operation? What are the strengths/advantages? What do you think about the weaknesses/disadvantages?

Probe: What do you think about whether right issues are identified consequently (or not)?

- a. If yes, what kind of proper exercises satisfy them?
- b. If no, what can be the shortcomings?
- c. In your opinion, what can be done for this process to operate better? Why and how?

III. The process of formulating education (program) policies

1. Once the educational issues are identified, who, do you think, participate in the process of new policy formulation? How and by whom are those actors selected?

Prompt: Commissions? Study groups? Academicians? Teachers? How about the criteria? etc.

2. How do you perceive the operation of policy formulation process? What kind of working methods do the decisionmakers follow?

Prompt: researching, consulting experts, collaborating with universities, of practitioners, evaluating views of practitioners, collecting views from non-governmental organizations and representatives of political parties, etc.

3. How do you perceive the participation of education stakeholders in policy formulation processes?

a. How do you perceive the participation of teachers in policy formulation processes? What is your opinion about the extent that teachers' views are valued and how influential their views are in policymaking?

Probe: What does it mean to you for a teacher to take on such a role?
(Prompt: The importance of such a contribution, value attributed to knowledge and experience, betterment of implementation, etc.)

b. How do you perceive the participation of academicians in policy formulation processes? What is your opinion about the extent that academicians' views are valued and how influential their views are in policymaking?

c. How do you perceive the participation of related officials and politicians in policy formulation processes? What is your opinion about the extent that bureaucrats' and politicians' views are valued and how influential their views are in policymaking?

d. For a meritocratic and ideal participation in the policy formulation process, how would you rate (if you need to) the proper participation degree of teachers, academicians and officials/politicians in percentage? Can you interpret on the reasons (for your grading)?

4. Can you comment on the strengths of the current policy formulation process? What are the strengths/advantages? What do you think about the weaknesses/disadvantages?

Probe: What is your opinion about whether policy formulation process is working properly (or not)?

a. If yes, what kind of proper exercises satisfy them?

b. If no, what can be the shortcomings?

c. In your opinion, what can be done for this process to operate better? Why and how?

IV. The process of educational policy implementation

1. In your opinion, once new policies or policy changes have been made, what kind of a process operates in regard to their implementation?

a. How do you get to know about the new educational policies and their implementations? How are you informed?

b. How do you utilize the regulations, circulars and directives concerning the implementation of new education programs/policies sent by the MNE?

Probe: Are they expressive and detailed enough? Are you allowed sufficient time (before implementation) to grasp them and get prepared?

2. What is your view on the preliminary studies conducted for ensuring successful implementation?

Prompt: in-service trainings, special courses, workshops. etc.

3. Practice [of policies] is guided through regulations, circulars and directives from the central government. In this context, what attitude do school administrators and teachers show towards the implementation of new education policies?

a. How do the processes such as elucidating, guiding, coordinating, supervising, evaluating, and so on, operate in schools?

b. If there are certain forms of resistance, what can be the reason(s) for them? How is resistance managed within the current practices?

c. If there is [resistance to the policy implementation], what, do you think can be done since the beginning of policymaking process in order to prevent it?

4. Apart from the resistance in implementation, what other challenges that hinder proper practice of policies do people try to cope with?

5. In your opinion, what kind of relationship is there between the degree of stakeholder (teachers, academicians and officials) participation (in issue identification and policy formulation phases) and the success of implementation?

Alternative question: How do higher or lower level/degree of stakeholder participation affect the success of implementation?

Prompt and probe: Positive or negative? Why and how?

6. What do you think can be done in order for policy implementation to be more successful?

7. In the context of betterment of practice, what do think about capacity building and capacity improvement issues of implementers, namely teachers?

Probe: In terms of ensuring more sound decision-making and healthier policy implementation, what factors and conditions may capacity building of teachers, academicians and policymaking officials depend on?

8. How do you consider the principle of “accountability” in regard to policymaking and policy practice?

Probe: How do you comment on the term “policy ownership”?

Probe: What is your opinion about the stakeholder’s owning success and/or failure?

Is there anything you would like to add to what we have talked about so far?

It is so significant that you have been involved in this study as a participant.

Thank you so much that you accepted to participate and have an interview.

Ending time:

DURATION:

C. CODEBOOK (CODES, CATEGORIES AND THEMES)

1. Participants' Perceptions of "Identification of Policy Issues" Phase and "Policy Formulation" Phase of Policy Cycle

1. 1. Theme 1. Sources of educational/curricular issues that require a new policy or policy change

Category 1

Government plans and programs (prepared prior to elections) as the main sources

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Premeditated changes (by politicians)	12	9	10
No evaluation of current issues	9	7	8
Imposing ideologies, doctrines and beliefs	10	8	8
Propaganda through education	9	8	7
Hidden agenda	6	4	6
Customary practice in Türkiye	9	7	8

Category 2

Arbitrary individual choices of the governing authority as sources

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Influence of personal wishes (of politicians)	6	5	6
Limited and/or self-centered visions	9	7	8
Impact of private backgrounds	5	4	6
Unscientific choices	9	8	8
Unethical impact	10	7	8
Personal ideological manipulations	6	5	6

Category 3

Impact of international tests on the determination of curricular and instructional education policy issues

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
International tests: PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS	11	7	11
Fair comparison of student scores	8	5	8
Poor test results (as impetus)	12	8	11
Lack of effort for discovering the causes behind failures	9	7	8
Secondary-level source for policy change	7	5	6

Category 4

Foreign educational system models as sources

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Good-quality education systems	12	7	10
Finland, Scandinavian countries, far east samples	11	8	11
Borrowings: no copy but nationalization and localization eclectically	10	8	11
Overcrowding student population as an excuse for poor quality	9	7	9

Category 5

Feedback and suggestions from the practitioners, namely teachers as sources

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Most significant and valuable source (directly from the field)	15	9	13
Least considered source	9	7	8
Consulted but not put into practice	12	6	8
Consulting on trivia	9	2	7
Consulting practitioners after decisions are made	12	6	8
Top-down approach	13	8	9
MNE's properly consulting teachers!	1	1	6
Lack of voluntary feedback or suggestions	12	6	11
Teachers' views are questionable	8	5	8
Teachers' capacities are insufficient	8	4	8
Teachers with post-graduate degrees	5	8	9
Use of technology in view-sharing	12	8	13

Category 6

Feedback and suggestions from academicians

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
As researchers and theorists	13	8	11
Lack of scientific data provision	8	6	9
Personal interests weigh more	6	4	7
Importance of theory	9	9	8
Too theoretical knowledge	11	6	8
The need for harmonizing theory and practice	13	8	11
Irrelevant research data!	4	3	5
Governments' discarding universities	6	5	3

Category 7

Avoidance of giving feedback/view presentation by two key stakeholders; teachers and academicians

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Hardly any voluntary feedback	11	8	8
Reservations (due to lack of trust)	9	6	7
Mistrust towards MNE	13	8	7
Hidden/manipulative silencing (by administrations)	8	4	5
Bias/suspicion about not being appreciated	13	6	7
Fearing criticism and insult	9	3	8
Refraining from expressing opposing views	10	7	8
Uncertainty about self-knowledge and self-capacity	8	5	8
Habit/tradition of unconditional obedience to authorities	9	7	7
Laziness and indifference	10	5	11
Cherishing personal interests	8	4	7

1. 2. Theme 2. Political and ideological approach in educational/curricular decision-making and policy-making

Category 1

Involvement of the current government's political ideology in the process

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Influence of governments' ideologies	12	8	8
Corruption/improper applications	12	8	8
The politicization of education is "not a new story"	10	8	9
It is natural that (political) ideology impacts educational decisions	3	1	8
Expected principle: No involvement of political ideology	10	8	8

Category 2

Instability in the system due to frequent curricular policy changes

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Frequent policy changes (with the changing governments)	10	7	9
Change of political actors	8	5	7
Change demands of voters	6	4	5
Frequent changes in official cadres	9	6	8
Negative impact of changes on schooling processes	9	8	9

Category 3

Poorly-structured policy-making cadres and other official personnel (MNE)

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Deficiencies in staff management	9	7	8
Politicized personnel - pro-government staff	8	6	9
Lack of meritocracy	12	7	8
Nepotism	9	7	8
Partisanship over professionalism	11	8	9
A cultural and traditional phenomenon!	9	6	9

Category 4

Imposing ideology through education policies (sample cases from the past)

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Influences of political ideology	13	8	9
Termination of village institutes	8	5	8
Compulsory uninterrupted 8-year-primary education system; 4+4+4 system	8	6	8
Imposition of ideology through courses/elective courses	6	4	6
Hidden curricula-infiltration of ideology	8	7	7

Category 5

Attitude of governmental decision-makers towards opposing views

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Disregarding opposing/diverse views	12	8	9
Resist, fight, contradict against/to other views	9	7	8
Conjuncture: Political biases lead to decision-making	9	8	9
Opposing is [like] enmity! (governmental outlook)	6	4	6
Lack of empathy and tolerance	11	8	8
Lack of effort for seeking consensus or reconciliation	10	7	8
Conventional approach of ignoring oppositions	9	6	8
Opposition is precious! (It conveys valuable information)	8	7	7
(When there is) no opposition, (there is) no improvement	4	3	3

1. 3. Theme 3. Participation of Stakeholders in Educational/curricular Decision-making and Policy-making

Category 1

Participation of teacher as the most significant stakeholder of education

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Vitality of teacher participation	15	9	12
Contribution by every teacher	12	6	10
A policy interests a teacher the most	12	7	9
Participation in person/practical involvement	10	7	7
In any sort of curricular policy process (not only in curricular issues)	12	8	7
Active engagement in commissions	10	6	8
(From) down-to-top information flow from - (bottom-up approach)	9	6	7
Practitioner's vision for implementation	12	7	9
Information for formative and summative evaluation	9	7	8
Technological assistance (participation of remote teachers)	11	7	10
Perceptions like "Everybody knows education more than the teachers do!" (common ironical criticism among teachers)	9	3	5
Harms of discarding teacher participation	10	8	9
Assignment of teaching-based officials in MNE offices	9	6	7

Category 2

Academics' participation as a significant contribution to the process

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Value of academics' participation	14	9	13
In all educational policy processes (not only in curricular issues)	8	8	10
Theoretical fields of education	13	9	11
Contribution (of theory) to practice	10	8	9
Scientific approach, scientific filtering of educational decisions	10	8	8
Researching foreign systems and improvements in the world	9	7	10
Vital need for close and continuous interaction between theoreticians and practitioners – academics and teachers	11	8	9
Provision of teacher education, in-service training	12	8	10
Requirement of being in the arena (schools) more often	13	8	12
Collaboration with other stakeholders	11	8	9

Category 3

Criticism on academics' participation in the processes

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
No proper contribution by academics	9	6	10
Avoiding participation	9	3	10
Academic cowardice	8	5	8
Far from realities of school education	12	5	10
Low professional and ethical quality	5	3	6
No proper education in education faculties	10	4	9
No proper selection of students for education faculties	9	6	9
Arrogance towards other stakeholders	8	3	9
Doing only sedentary job	10	2	10
Devotion only to their own academic issues and career	8	4	9
Exclusion of academics by the MNE	8	5	9
Disparities between academics and teachers – theoreticians and practitioners	9	7	10

Category 4

Government officials' participation; their improper attitude in an unfavourable environment

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Under heavy influence of the politicians	9	8	8
Nepotistic, political and ideological approaches	8	7	8
Unknown, obscure, opaque decision-making manners	10	7	7
Being aware of the problems but not struggling to solve	7	5	6
Trying to keep their positions and offices	8	6	8
Exerting domination over teachers and academics	10	5	8
Undemocratic approaches to issues	11	4	6
Ignoring opposing views	10	8	9
Intolerant to criticism while in the MNE offices	7	3	7
Too slow performance	11	8	9
There are good officials doing good things as well, but not enough	7	5	9

Category 5

Recommendations about government officials' participation: They should ...

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
conduct cooperation with other stakeholders properly	12	8	10
not participate in decision-making	7	5	6
only conduct bureaucratic procedures; do paper work	11	6	6
just provide cooperative environment and logistics	11	7	7

Category 6

Official environment in the MNE in regard to participation in policy-making

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Not democratic, not meritocratic	10	8	7
Unfair personnel selection and assignment	11	7	7
Very strong top-down hierarchy	13	8	10
Other stakeholders are aware of the wrongdoings	8	6	7
BDE as a tool of the governments	9	7	8

Category 7

Degree/percentage of participation (of teachers, academicians and officials)

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Vitality of democratic/fair participation	12	8	10
Participation of each is indispensable	11	8	9
Percentage is not significant; quality of participation is!	8	5	6
Difficult to determine/to give a percentage	8	6	6
(Whatever the percentage is,) reconciliation is needed	9	7	7
Consensus among the groups	10	8	9
Convincing each other	8	5	6
Weight on teachers' participation	14	8	11
Recommended degrees of participation - 3 flexible groups:	12	8	12
70 % teachers, 20 % academicians and 10 % officials	(6)	(4)	(6)
60 % teachers, 30 % academicians and 10 % officials	(5)	(3)	(2)
50 % teachers, 30 % academicians and 20 % officials	(1)	(1)	(4)

Category 8

Participation of other stakeholders in decision-making: Students, parents, NGOs

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Multiplicity of participation	12	8	9
Pluralistic perspectives	11	8	9
Views of every stakeholder group	12	8	10
Value of opposing views	7	6	6
Opportunity for possible variations and modifications	9	8	7
No imposition of the dominant culture	7	6	5
Students' participation (as valuable as teachers'!)	9	7	8

Category 9

*Issues of participation: lack of proper interaction among participants
(conjunction-today and the past)*

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Vitality of multi-level collaboration	14	9	13
Lack of coordination among teachers, academicians and officials	12	7	9
Lack of dialogue, no view-exchange, no consultancy	8	6	8
Lack of common ideals for education	8	6	6
Poor interaction between education faculties and schools (theory and practice)	13	7	10
Mutual accusations and conflicts among stakeholders	8	4	7
Neglecting teachers' views	13	7	9
Lack of teacher quality	6	8	10
MNE's responsibility for the lack of interaction	9	8	9
Effects of inflexible top-down/central decision-making	12	8	8
MNE's disregarding academic research	8	8	8
Attitude of MNE: It works in seclusion; a "closed box"	11	7	6
MNE does what it should do!	2	0	8

1. 4. Theme 4. National Education Councils' (NECs') not functioning in policy-making as they should.

Category 1

Inappropriate, obscure and politicized structure of NECs

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
NECs are not independent	11	9	9
Not scientific institutions	9	8	8
Ignorance of stakeholders about NECs	10	6	8
Determination of NEC agendas by politicians	9	8	1
			0
Misuse/abuse by governments for political ends	10	8	9
Politicized - a long story like other issues (over 40 years)	11	9	9

Category 2

Inappropriate fashion of participation in NEC meetings

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
No meritocracy	12	8	8
Partisanship in selecting members	9	8	7
Influence of politicians	10	7	8
Invitation of teachers and academicians with political connections	6	6	5
Invitation of only "yes-men"	8	7	7

Category 3

Inefficacy of the NEC as a decision-making partner

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Not so influential on education policy-making	12	8	9
Inefficacy of NEC meetings (compared with past)	9	8	8
A spokesman and a tool of the governments (for legitimizing)	9	8	7
Only an advisory committee	11	9	10

Category 4

Expectations concerning the formation and function of National Education

Councils (NECs)

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
An opportunity for view-exchange among stakeholders	9	8	9
Meritocratic and multi-level participation	12	8	8
Being effective for curricular policymaking	12	7	7
Free from ideological pressure	11	8	7
Not a tool/spokesman of the government	9	7	8
Guiding MNE, not being guided/driven by MNE	10	7	8
No influence of governmental agendas	11	8	7
Sources of its agenda: the suggestions from stakeholders	12	8	9
Being more influential in policy-making, not solely an advisory entity	12	8	10
Leading educational policies	9	7	8
Meeting more often	9	7	8
Scientific, professional and impartial decision-making	9	8	8

1. 5. Theme 5. Expectations for ideal applications of the “identification of policy issues” and “policy formulation” phases

Category 1

Democratic and unbiased approach is needed as a general fundamental attitude

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Democratic approach is fundamental, basic, the sine qua non	11	8	8
Plurality: different views from all stakeholders	13	9	12
Majority is not always right and fair	5	3	6
Variety of participation	9	8	7
Power of opposition to improve the system	8	7	6
Multilevel participation assists in better practice	12	8	9
Eschewing the involvement of political ideology	11	8	7

Category 2

Consensus and/or reconciliation among different views

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Dialogue	14	9	12
Common grounds	12	9	10
Cooperation	15	9	14
Mutual respect, understanding and tolerance	14	8	13
Transparency	14	9	9
Use of constructive and <i>quality</i> opposition	8	8	7
Less resistance	10	7	11

Category 3

Meritocracy in participation of policy actors (all stakeholders as participants)

	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Fair selection, assignment and rotation of teachers and officials	12	7	10
Professional qualifications: talent, skill, competence	10	8	9
Managers and consultants with visions	9	8	8
No nepotism	8	9	9
No partisanship	11	8	8
Not frequent change of the staff	9	7	10

Category 4

The vitality of proper interaction and cooperation among teachers, academicians and officials

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Multiple perspectives	14	9	13
A common platform, cooperation	10	9	8
Teacher is essential in curricular studies	12	8	11
Cooperation among MNE, universities and schools	12	6	10
No involvement of political ideologies	11	8	11
Self-criticism by the three stakeholders	10	8	9

Category 5

Mutual training among the three groups; each group has something to learn from the other one!

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Training by academicians	11	8	10
Frequent school visits by academicians	13	8	10
Briefings by teachers to academicians and officials	9	6	9
In-service training <i>for all by all</i>	10	7	9
Academicians should lead in terms of theory and research	13	9	13
Teachers should lead in terms of practice	12	8	12
Officials should lead in terms of bureaucracy and organization	11	8	9

Category 6

Respective accusation and despisement among the three groups

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Teachers' lack of education theory knowledge	7	8	7
Academicians' lack of information about the practice at schools	12	5	10
Officials' working clumsily	8	6	6
Teachers and academicians' negligence of formal procedures	7	3	9

1. 6. Theme 6. An inevitable need for the constitution of a common uppermost ideology of education over (and excluding) all other political ideologies

Category 1

Fundamental principles of the required education ideology – an umbrella ideology

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Universal education principles as <i>umbrella</i> axioms	11	8	10
Coherence with the Basic Law of National Education	8	7	8
Uppermost status for education	10	8	9
No involvement of political ideologies	11	7	8
Sticking to the uppermost ideology	9	7	8
Scientific, meritocratic and ethical qualities	12	8	11
(Holistic system) multi-lateral cooperation, pluralist approaches	10	8	10
Democratic approaches everywhere	10	8	8

Category 2

Sustainable, long-term educational/curricular policies (encompassing 30-40 years) in accordance with the education ideology

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Common grounds	10	8	9
Scientific, professional and long-lasting	12	8	9
Humanistic, democratic and meritocratic	10	7	11
Defendable, accountable and justifiable	9	8	9
Suitable to the country and the localities	8	8	7
Stability: incremental changes and modifications	9	8	9
Ownership and fidelity by all stakeholders	8	6	9

2. Participants' Perceptions of "Policy Implementation" Phase of Policy Cycle

2.1. Theme 7. Criticality of proper dissemination of new policies to practitioners for the policies' appropriate implementation.

Category 1

Comprehending the "what" of the new policy; problems due to inappropriate dissemination

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Unclear instructions	12	7	8
Inexperienced practitioners	8	6	9
Untimely (or late) announcement	9	6	7
Indifference by the teachers	8	7	10
Lack of background knowledge in the field	9	7	11
Lack of organization and follow-up	8	6	7
Ignoring doing pilot studies	9	7	5

Category 2

Assuring appropriate dissemination of new policies

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Administrations' informing the personnel	9	6	10
MNE's duty to inform teachers	12	7	10
Intelligible publicizing, circulation, broadcast	11	7	9
Educational gazette - announcements bulletin (Tebliğler Dergisi)	10	4	11
Information update	12	8	9
(Effective use of) technological systems	11	8	11
Teachers' task to follow the changes	9	7	12
Requirement of piloting curricular processes	10	9	9

2. 2. Theme 8. Practitioners' attitudes toward new policies/policy changes

Category 1

Resistance by the implementers to policy change/adopting a new policy

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Not understanding the policy	10	7	11
The change as extra work load/burden	9	7	10
Teachers' comfort zone, laziness, fear/anxiety	9	6	10
(Lack of) motivation, (lack of) dedication; indifference	11	7	9
Claiming to know better than the policymakers	7	3	8
Regarding their own system/policy as alternative	5	2	7
Connection between resistance/reaction and participation	13	8	9
Requisiteness of resistance	8	8	7
Fatalness of practitioner resistance	9	6	10

Category 2

What sort of resistance/reaction?

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Refusal, denial, insolence, defiance, stubbornness	9	6	9
Obstruction through finding faults, fussing	8	7	9
Complexes, feeling of revenge, sabotage (due to lack of participation)	7	5	7
Obvious resistance/hidden resistance	5	3	6
Refuse to teach	6	2	4

Category 3

How to reduce resistance?

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Clear and proper dissemination	13	8	12
Reasoning and rationale (behind the change/ new policy)	9	6	10
Continuous informing	11	7	11
In-service training	10	8	11
Explaining to teachers why their suggestions were not applied	9	7	8
Support from (experienced) teachers	7	3	7
Proper selection of teachers	8	6	9
Piloting the new applications	9	8	10
Esteem for teachers by MNE	9	6	8
Appreciation of teachers' views	9	8	9
More initiative (to teachers)	10	7	7
Flexibility (in practice)	9	7	5
Publicizing drafted policy/curricula	9	8	6

Category 4

Proper participation of teachers in policymaking might be the best way to reduce resistance

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Democratic approach in policymaking	14	9	8
Approval by teachers in the formulation phase	9	7	7
Preventive measures/strategies	12	8	8

Category 5

Significance of ownership of the new policy by practitioners

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Ensuring proper implementation	11	8	10
Reducing resistance	10	7	11
Supporting sustainability	9	7	8
Supporting accountability	9	7	8
Comprehending the policy well (supports owning it)	9	6	8
Belief in the policy (reinforces owning it)	10	6	7
Impact of participation (on ownership)	8	6	9

Category 6

Practitioners' sense of accountability for new policy implementation concerns

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Significance of practitioners' feeling accountable	13	8	11
Sources: Responsibility and/or liability	10	8	9
Impact of comprehending the policy	9	8	8
Impact of clarifying the obscure points	10	8	7
Impact of transparency and sincerity	11	8	8
Convincing practitioners about why their suggestions are not applied	12	8	7
Authenticating sensitivity	9	7	8
Lack of feeling of accountability concerning consultancy	11	8	9
Lack of feeling of accountability concerning participation	12	7	8
Internalization of the policy	10	8	9

Category 7

Who should be accountable for policy practice issues?

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Teachers as implementers	8	6	11
MNE's responsibility not the others'	11	8	8
Policy-making actors' responsibility	13	9	8
The policymakers not the implementers	11	8	5
Teachers not participated in the process are not to be accountable	12	8	8
Owning the success/rejecting the failure!	8	7	10

Category 8

Implementers' (teachers') participation in policymaking properly is a must for their ownership of and accountability for the new policy

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Participation of teachers in all phases	14	9	11
Teachers' participation degree	11	7	8
Possessing the policy	12	8	9
Believing in the policy	11	8	9
Internalizing the policy	10	7	8
Feeling accountable for policy process	13	8	8
When/if the teacher is not involved!	14	8	9

2.3. Theme 9. Teacher quality as a powerful factor affecting policy implementation

Category 1

(Recommended) criteria for education faculties' selection and acceptance of teacher candidates

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
The weight of high school scores	9	5	8
Other student scores	8	8	9
References, recommendations, intents, CVs, portfolios	8	7	7
Approval/grading by committees	7	7	6
Special pedagogical and psychological tests	9	8	9

Category 2

High-quality education in education faculties is required but lacking!

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Neither sufficient nor efficient	9	7	11
Need for high-quality curricula	11	8	8
Gaining proficiency/capacity/competence	12	9	11
Cultivating willingness, dedication and motivation	9	8	9
Academicians shape teacher candidates	10	9	11
Teaching both theory and practice	11	9	9
Continuous interaction with the field, the schools	14	8	13
Issues about teacher educator's experience in the field	10	5	10
Lack of high-quality teaching staff	9	7	11
Prioritizing academic career	9	5	8
Deficiencies of faculty education	9	6	9
In-service and life-long training	9	8	9

Category 3

Ethical dimensions regarding teacher quality are noteworthy for the selection and assignment of student teachers

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Sense of duty/mission	11	8	10
Feeling of responsibility and dedication	10	8	11
Teachers' discrimination/bias about working conditions	7	5	8

Category 4

Meritocratic attributes should be prioritized for the teaching profession

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Deserving/merit/worth	11	7	7
Meritocracy for selection, appointment, assignment (MNE)	14	8	9
(No) favouritism/nepotism/partisanship	13	8	9
(No) frequent change (of MNE personnel)	9	7	10
Records/registry (for achievements, failures and attitudes)	8	8	13
Restoring esteem for the teaching profession	12	8	11
MNE's (re)gaining its lost respect	9	7	9

Category 5

(Recommended) basic formal criteria and principles for official selection and assignment of student teachers regarding teacher quality

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
University degrees	8	7	10
Professional attributes: talent/knowledge/achievement	11	8	12
Special cognitive, pedagogical, psychological and personality tests	8	9	9
Recommendations, intents, CVs, portfolios	8	8	9
Committee approval	9	8	11
Intellectual adequacy	9	8	9
Inefficient MNE inspectors/supervisors	10	7	8

Category 6

Politicization of practitioners (must be avoided)

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Politicization of teachers	9	6	8
Involvement of political ideology, partisanship	10	7	8
Sided governmental/political attitude	8	7	9
(Influence of) politicized unions	8	7	6
Fatality of politicization of teachers	12	8	10

Category 7

Basic teacher quality issues in regard to curricular policy implementation

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Teachers' lack of proper professional knowledge	10	7	11
Incompetent teachers	8	7	10
Inadequate background knowledge	9	8	9
Comparing old and new teachers	8	8	11
Questionability of teachers' views and suggestions	8	7	10
<i>Disease of teaching to the test</i>	13	8	13
Lack of interest in the theory of education	9	8	11
Lack of sufficient self-confidence	10	6	11
<i>A mission for teachers (voluntary participation in policy-making)</i>	9	7	9

Category 8

Self-criticism by teachers themselves in regard to teacher quality

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Pretence	9	3	8
Need for self-improvement	12	7	10
Inadequate professional competence	9	8	10
Almost no reading habits	9	2	8
Lack of dedication to teaching	8	3	12
Lack of professional discipline	8	2	9
Lack of effort to improve knowledge	7	5	9
No regular pursuit of curricular regulations	10	2	12
Lack of interest in the theory of education	9	9	10
Submittance (a cultural issue)	8	4	7
Laziness for view presentation	9	5	8
Lack of self-confidence	8	4	11
“We, teachers, cannot say we are not informed enough”	9	8	13
No shared ideals among teachers	9	3	10
Teachers are politicized	9	6	8
Obedience to the political authority	8	2	7

NOTE: Although some categories in the codebook, such as this one, seem to concern only teachers, most of the participants from the other two groups - academicians and the officials - being from teaching backgrounds, expressed their perceptions in that regard; thus, their frequencies are also presented in the study.

2.4. Theme 10. Teacher motivation as an influential component of practitioners’ performance

Category 1

Teachers’ motivation is low; this causes serious issues in the implementation of policies

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Lack of interest and willingness	10	5	9
Lack of dedication and commitment	11	6	10
Loss of self-reliance	9	3	10
Lack of critical thinking attitude	9	7	7
Teachers’ submissive attitude towards top-down authority	11	6	9
Lack of appreciation from the authorities	12	6	9
Negative influence on student education	8	4	7
Negative influence on student motivation	10	8	11

Category 2

What is lacking on the side of the MNE in regard to motivation is what teachers need!

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Support/incentive/stimulus/impetus	12	5	9
Appreciation/value/honour/respect/deem	12	2	8
Professional, moral and motivational in-service training	11	4	8
Transparent, meritocratic and fair regulations	11	3	7
Promoting teachers' participation in policymaking	12	8	12
Persuading practitioners why their suggestions have not been applied	10	6	9
Avoidance of political ideologies	9	7	8
More initiative, less top-down control	10	8	8
Belief in the sincerity of the MNE	10	8	9
Negative effects of State Personnel Law No: 657	5	2	3
Meritocratic and fair assignments/appointments	9	7	7

Category 3

In order to improve their motivation and quality, teachers should ...

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
have an altruist and sincere approach	11	8	12
value education of virtues	11	6	10
be a model for new teachers and students	14	8	12
conduct democratic attitude	11	7	8
follow justice at school	9	7	7
have competence in both instruction and <i>humanism</i>	10	8	9
be <i>courageous</i>	8	8	8
voluntarily participate in policy-making	11	8	11
avoid accusing others	8	7	9

2.5. Theme 11. Association between teachers' capacity building and teacher quality with regard to policy practice

Category 1

Capacity building; The betterment of teacher's capacity and quality leads to the betterment of curricular policy practice

Codes	f		
	T	A	O
Relation between teacher's capacity and quality	12	8	11
Lacking professional and moral capacity	9	6	10
Decline in teachers' capacity in time	6	4	5
Self-improvement	12	7	12
Broadening visions of teachers	10	7	8
Capacity and performance relationship	11	8	9
Participation in policy-making	12	8	11
Capacity and courage	9	8	9
Use of bottom-up approach	9	7	8
Mental and ethical capacity	10	8	10
Support from universities	11	9	10
Support from the MNE	13	8	8

Category 2

MNE prefers high-capacity teachers to employ and consult; thus, it should help them to improve their capacity

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
Professional and motivational support	14	9	13
In-service training	13	8	9
Rehabilitation and redemption aid	8	7	8
Economic assets	10	8	11
Amelioration in school conditions	11	8	12
Valuing teachers' views	12	8	10
Promoting teachers' participation (in policy process)	13	8	9

2. 6. Theme 12. Expectations and recommendations for the proper implementation of new policies

Category 1

Implementation of the new policy/policy change can be successful when/once the policy-making process has been ... (Qualities concerning the approach)

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
participatory and democratic	13	9	10
transparent and meritocratic	13	8	9
excluded from political ideology	11	7	8
based on trust	10	8	8
based on bias-free approach	9	7	7
based on harmonic collaboration	12	8	13
considerate to opposing ideas	9	8	10

Category 2

Implementation of new policy/policy change can be successful when/once the policy-making process has been ... (Qualities concerning the principles)

<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>		
	T	A	O
consensus-centred	10	9	9
reconciliation-focused	9	9	8
accountable for deficiencies	8	6	7

D. THEMES AND CATEGORIES

I. The Themes of Participants' Perceptions of "Identification of Policy Issues" Phase and "Policy Formulation" Phase

Theme 1. Sources of curricular/educational issues that require a new policy or policy change

Categories	
No	Title
1	Government plans and programs (prepared prior to elections) as the main sources
2	Arbitrary individual choices of the governing authority
3	Impact of international tests on the determination of curricular and instructional education policy issues
4	Foreign educational system models as sources
5	Feedback and suggestions from the practitioners, namely teachers
6	Feedback and suggestions from academicians
7	Avoidance of giving feedback/view presentation by two key stakeholders; teachers and academicians

Theme 2. Political and ideological approach in educational decision-making and policy-making

Categories	
No	Title
1	Involvement of the current government's political ideology in the process
2	Instability in the system due to frequent curricular policy changes
3	Poorly-structured policy-making cadres and other official personnel (MNE)
4	Imposing ideology through education policies (sample cases from the past)
5	Attitude of governmental decision-makers towards opposing views

Theme 3. Participation of Stakeholders in Educational Decision-making and Policy-making

Categories	
No	Title
1	Participation of teacher as the most significant stakeholder of education
2	Academics' participation as a significant contribution to the process
3	Criticism on academics' participation in the processes
4	Government officials' participation; their improper attitude in an unfavourable environment
5	Recommendations about government officials' participation: They should ...
6	Official environment in the MNE in regard to participation in policy-making
7	Degree/percentage of participation (of teachers, academics and officials)
8	Participation of other stakeholders in decision-making: Students, parents, NGOs
9	Issues of participation: lack of proper interaction among participants (conjuncture-today and the past)

Theme 4. National Education Councils' (NECs') not functioning in policy-making as they should.

Categories	
No	Title
1	Inappropriate, obscure and politicized structure of NECs
2	Inappropriate fashion of participation in NEC meetings
3	Inefficacy of the NEC as a decision-making partner
4	Expectations concerning the formation and function of NECs

Theme 5. Expectations for ideal applications of the "identification of policy issues" and "policy formulation" phases

Categories	
No	Title
1	Democratic and unbiased approach is needed as a general fundamental attitude
2	Consensus and/or reconciliation among different views
3	Meritocracy in participation of policy actors (all stakeholders as participants)
4	The vitality of proper interaction and cooperation among teachers, academics and officials
5	Mutual training among the three groups; each group has something to learn from the other one!
6	Respective accusation and desipement among the three groups should be avoided

Theme 6. An inevitable need for the constitution of a common uppermost ideology of education over (and excluding) all other political ideologies

Categories	
No	Title
1	Fundamental principles of the required ideology – an umbrella ideology
2	Sustainable long-term educational/curricular policies (encompassing 30-40 years) in accordance with the education ideology

II. The Themes of Participants’ Perceptions of “Policy Implementation” Phase of Policy Cycle Model

Theme 7. Criticality of proper dissemination of new policies to practitioners for the policies’ appropriate implementation.

Categories	
No	Title
1	Comprehending the “what” of the new policy; problems due to inappropriate dissemination
2	Assuring appropriate dissemination of new policies

Theme 8. Practitioners’ attitudes toward new policies/policy changes

Categories	
No	Title
1	Resistance by the implementers to policy change/adopting a new policy
2	What sort of resistance/reaction?
3	How to reduce resistance?
4	Proper participation of teachers in policymaking might be the best way to reduce resistance
5	Significance of ownership of the new policy by practitioners
6	Practitioners’ sense of accountability for new policy implementation concerns
7	Who should be accountable for policy practice issues?
8	Implementers’ (teachers’) participation in policymaking properly is a must for their ownership of and accountability for the new policy

Theme 9. Teacher quality as a powerful factor affecting policy implementation

Categories	
No	Title
1	(Recommended) criteria for education faculties' selection and acceptance of teacher candidates
2	High-quality education in education faculties is required but lacking!
3	Ethical dimensions regarding teacher quality are noteworthy for the selection and assignment of student teachers
4	Meritocratic attributes should be prioritized for teaching profession
5	(Recommended) basic criteria and principles for official selection assignment of student teachers regarding teacher quality
6	Politicization of practitioners (must be avoided)
7	Basic teacher quality issues in regard to curricular policy implementation
8	Self-criticism by teachers themselves in regard to teacher quality

Theme 10. Teacher motivation as an influential component of practitioners' performance

Categories	
No	Title
1	Teachers' motivation is low; this causes serious issues in the implementation of policies
2	What is lacking on the side of the MNE in regard to motivation is what teachers need!
3	In order to improve their motivation and quality, teachers should ...

Theme 11. Association between teachers' capacity building and teacher quality with regard to policy practice

Categories	
No	Title
1	Capacity building; The betterment of teacher's capacity and quality leads to the betterment of curricular policy practice
2	MNE prefers high-capacity teachers to consult; thus, it should help them to improve their capacity

Theme 12. Expectations and recommendations for the proper implementation of new policies

Categories	
No	Title
1	Implementation of the new policy/policy change can be successful when/once the policy-making process has been ... (Qualities concerning the approach)
2	Implementation of the new policy/policy change can be successful when/once the policy-making process has been ... (Qualities concerning the approach)

E. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARASTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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08 MART 2017

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç. Dr. Hanife AKAR;

Danışmanlığımı yaptığımız doktora öğrencisi Mustafa BAŞTÜRK'ün "*Türkiye'de ilk ve ortaöğretim eğitim programları politikası yapımı süreci ile ilgili bir durum çalışması: öğretmenler, akademisyenler ve resmi görevlilerinin algıları*" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 2017-EGT-025 protokol numarası ile 08.03.2017 – 31.10.2017 tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Canan SÜMER

İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başkanı

Prof. Dr. Mehmet UTKU

İAEK Üyesi

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR

İAEK Üyesi

Yrd. Doç. Dr. İnar KAYGAN

İAEK Üyesi

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

İAEK Üyesi

Doç. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI (4.)

İAEK Üyesi

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

İAEK Üyesi

**BU BÖLÜM, İLGİLİ BÖLÜMLERİ TEMSİL EDEN İNSAN ARAŞTIRMALARI
ETİK ALT KURULU TARAFINDAN DOLDURULACAKTIR.**

Protokol No: Metin girmek için tıklayın **2017-2018-02**

İAEK DEĞERLENDİRME SONUCU

Sayın Hakem,

Aşağıda yer alan üç seçenektan birini işaretleyerek değerlendirmenizi tamamlayınız. Lütfen **“Revizyon Gereklidir”** ve **“Ret”** değerlendirmeleri için gerekli açıklamaları yapınız.

Değerlendirme Tarihi: **28.02.2017** Metin girmek için tıklayın

Ad Soyad: Metin girmek için tıklayın

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Herhangi bir değişikliğe gerek yoktur. Veri toplama/uygulama başlatılabilir.
<input type="checkbox"/> Revizyon gereklidir <input type="checkbox"/> Gönüllü Katılım Formu yoktur. <input type="checkbox"/> Gönüllü Katılım Formu eksiktir. Gerekçenizi ayrıntılı olarak açıklayınız: Metin girmek için tıklayın <input type="checkbox"/> Katılım Sonrası Bilgilendirme Formu yoktur. <input type="checkbox"/> Katılım Sonrası Bilgilendirme Formu eksiktir. Gerekçenizi ayrıntılı olarak açıklayınız: Metin girmek için tıklayın <input type="checkbox"/> Rahatsızlık kaynağı olabilecek sorular/maddeler ya da prosedürler içerilmektedir. Gerekçenizi ayrıntılı olarak açıklayınız: Metin girmek için tıklayın <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer. Gerekçenizi ayrıntılı olarak açıklayınız: Metin girmek için tıklayın.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ret Ret gerekçenizi ayrıntılı olarak açıklayınız: Metin girmek için tıklayın

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15 ARALIK 2017

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç.Dr. Hanife AKAR ;

Danışmanlığımı yaptığımız doktora öğrencisi Mustafa BAŞTÜRK'ün “Türkiye’de ilk ve ortaöğretim eğitim programları politikası yapımı süreci ile ilgili bir durum çalışması: öğretmenler, akademisyenler ve resmi görevlilerinin algıları” başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 2017-EGT-025 protokol numarası ile 15.12.2017-30.12.2018 tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.


Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN

Başkan V



Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

Üye



Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR

Üye



Doç. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI

Üye



Doç. Dr. Zana ÇITAK

Üye



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN

Üye



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

Üye

**F. OFFICIAL PERMISSION FROM THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL
EDUCATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS WITH ITS
PERSONNEL**



T.C.
MİLLÎ EĞİTİM BAKANLIĞI
Yenilik ve Eğitim Teknolojileri Genel Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 81576613/605.01/10699881
Konu: Araştırma İzni

13.07.2017

Sayın Mustafa BAŞTÜRK
(Aşağı Dikmen Mah. 575. Sokak Nu.6 Çankaya/ANKARA)

- İlgi: a) 30/06/2017 tarihli dilekçeniz
b) Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığının 07/07/2017 tarihli ve
79031618-605.01-E.10468799 sayılı yazısı
c) 07/03/2012 tarihli ve B.08.0.YET.00.20.00.0/3616 sayılı genelge

İlgi (a) dilekçe ile Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümünde doktora eğitimine devam eden Mustafa BAŞTÜRK'ün "Türkiye'de İlk ve Ortaöğretim Eğitim Programları Politikası Yapımı Süreci İle İlgili Bir Durum Çalışması: Öğretmenler, Akademisyenler ve Resmi Görevlilerin Algıları" konulu doktora tezi kapsamında hazırlanmış olduğu veri toplama aracının Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığında görev yapmakta olan personele uygulanmasına yönelik izin talebi Genel Müdürlüğümüzce incelenmiş olup konuya ilişkin olarak Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığından görüş talep edilmiştir.

Denetimi kurum idaresinde olmak üzere onaylı bir örneği Bakanlığımızda muhafaza edilen, uygulama sırasında da mühürlü ve imzalı örnekten çoğaltılmış veri toplama aracının kurum faaliyetlerini aksatmadan gönüllülük esas olmak üzere uygulanmasına ilgi (b) yazı çerçevesinde ve ilgi (c) genelge doğrultusunda izin verilmiştir.

Gereği bilgilerinize sunulur.

Güvenli Elektronik İmzalı
Aslı İle Aynıdır

13 Temmuz 2017

Bilal TIRNAKÇI
Bakan a.
Genel Müdür

Ek: Veri Toplama Araçları (4 Sayfa)

Sevda BERKİTEN

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G. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name : Baştürk, Mustafa
Nationality : Turkish (TC)
Date and place of birth: ...
Marital status : Married (with two children)
Occupation(s) : Teacher of English, School Administrator
(Principal/Vice Principal), School Coordinator and
Representative, IB Coordinator, Book Publisher, Editor,
Educational Sciences Specialist.
Phone : ...
E-mail : ...
...

WORK EXPERIENCE

March 2016 – Present

Title : Member of Board of Directors, Member of Publication
Committee.
Affiliation : Akademi Artı Publishing Co., (Elma Publishing House),
MELA Software Publishing Co. (Ankara).

February 2013 – February 2016

Title : General Manager, Publishing Coordinator, Editor,
Translator.
Affiliation : Akademi Artı Publishing Co., Elma Publishing House
(Ankara).

August 2008 – January 2013

Title : English Teacher, IB Coordinator, Principal, Vice
Principal, School Promotion Representative,
Translator-interpreter.
Affiliation : Private Yüce Kindergarten/Primary/Middle/High School
(Ankara).

September 2005 – July 2008

Title : General Manager, Publishing Coordinator, Editor,
Translator.
Affiliation : Akademi Artı Publishing Co., Elma Publishing House
(Ankara).

July 2004 – August 2005

Title : English Teacher, Middle and High-level
Administrator/Manager, Translator-interpreter.
Affiliation : Turkish Land Forces Language School (İstanbul).

August 1993 – June 2004

Title : English Teacher, Middle and high-Level Administrator/Manager, Translator-interpreter, United Nations and NATO Liaison Officer, Accounting and finance manager.
Affiliation : Turkish Military Academy (Ankara).

June 1987 – July 1993

Title : English Teacher, Administrator/Manager, Translator-interpreter.
Affiliation : Kuleli Military High School (İstanbul).

EDUCATION**September 2012 – September 2022****Post-graduate; Scientific Preparation Education and Doctorate**

Department : Curriculum and Instruction (Educational Sciences)
Affiliation : Middle East Technical University (Ankara)
GPA : 3,94/4,00

July 2004 – August 2005**Post-graduate; Master (MS)**

Department : Educational Administration and Supervision
Affiliation : Yeditepe University (İstanbul)
GPA : 3,95/4,00

September 1994 – June 1997**Post-graduate; Master (MA)**

Department : British Cultural Studies
Affiliation : Hacettepe University (Ankara)
GPA : 4,00/4,00

September 1982 – June 1987**Undergraduate; (Bachelor of Arts) and Pedagogical Formation**

Department : English Language and Literature; Faculty of Education
Affiliation : Hacettepe University (Ankara)
GPA : 3,82/4,00

August 1978 – July 1982**Secondary Education**

Department : Science High School
Affiliation : Kuleli Askeri Lisesi (İstanbul)
GPA : 8,52/10

SEMINARS AND COURSES**July 2009**

Department/Subject : International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB- DP) Coordination and Management.
Affiliation : International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) (England).

Degree : Certified.
2005-2008
Department/Subject : Presentation techniques, Body language,
Discourse Analysis, Management and Leadership,
Team work, Finance-Marketing.
Affiliation : İzgören Akademi Eğitim ve Danışmanlık Ş.
(Ankara).
April-July 1991
Department/Subject : Advanced Teacher Training.
Affiliation : Defence Language Institute (ABD).
Degree : (3,92/4,00). Awarded with Distinguished
Diploma.

LANGUAGES

1. Language : Turkish
Level : Native
2. Language : English
Level : Advanced (English language exam -YDS, grade: 97/100. Dec.
2016)
3. Language : German
Level : Elementary

COMPUTER PROGRAMME SKILLS

Programme : Microsoft Word - Microsoft Excel
Level : Post-intermediate

H. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

TÜRKİYE’DE EĞİTİM PROGRAMLARI VE ÖĞRETİM POLİTİKASI YAPIMI SÜRECİ: ÖĞRETMENLER, AKADEMİSYENLER VE DEVLET MEMURLARININ ALGILARI

Giriş

Günümüzde, küçük bir köy kahvehanesinde olsun, bir üniversitedeki resmi bir etkinlikte ya da Millet Meclisindeki bir görüşmede olsun, toplum yaşamımızın neredeyse bütün faaliyetlerinde eğitim konusu bir şekilde gündeme gelir. Çoğunlukla da eğitimin önemi vurgulanır ve toplumun geleceği açısından okul eğitiminin kalitesinin altı çizilir (Heck, 2004). Okuldaki eğitim ve öğretimin kalitesi ise ilgili eğitim politikalarının kalitesi ile doğru orantılıdır ve bu durum her kuruluş için geçerlidir (CMHC, 2018; PowerDMS, 2020). Etkili ve sürekliliği olan kaliteli politikalar üretmek için ise, politika yapımı süreçlerinin iyi düzenlenmesi ve yönetilmesi gerekir. Bu doğrultuda, artık hükümetler “politika yapımı” konularını ajandalarındaki listelerin en tepesine yerleştirmektedirler (Hallsworth et al., 2011; Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004).

Politika yapımı süreçlerinin düzgün ve etkili yürütülmesi, son yirmi yıldan uzun bir süredir Ekonomik Kalkınma ve İş birliği Örgütü’nün (OECD) en çok önem verdiği konulardan biri olmuştur; özellikle, politika yapımı süreçlerine vatandaş katılımı bu kuruluşun yayınladığı dokümanlarda ısrarla üzerinde durduğu bir unsurdur (2001, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2020). Politika süreçleri bağlamında *katılım* teması ilgili literatürde genellikle politika yapımına katılım ve politika araştırmalarına katılım olarak iki türde ele alınır. Her ikisinde de mümkün olduğunca geniş katılım önerilse de uygulamanın hızlı ve etkili olması açısından katılımı, politikadan en fazla etkilenecek olan paydaş gurubunun katılımı olarak sınırlamak daha uygundur. Paydaş katılımı hem genel bağlamda (Heck, 2004) hem de Türkiye özel bağlamında (Yıldırım-Taştı, 2019) sorunların çözümü ve karar verme süreçlerinin etkinliği açısından önemlidir. Ayrıca,

katılım açısından paydaşlar arasındaki dengeye ve adaletli yaklaşıma özen gösterilmesi vurgulanması gereken önemli bir noktadır (Creswell, 2007).

Eğitim programları ve öğretim ile ilgili politika yapımına katılım konusu Türkiye kontekstinde ele alındığında, üç ana paydaş grubunun katılımının gerekliliği öne çıkmaktadır: Öğretmenler, eğitim fakültelerindeki akademisyenler ve Millî Eğitim Bakanlığının ilgili birimlerinde çalışan memurlar. Bu üç grup, ülkedeki eğitim politikaları yapımı süreçleri bağlamında *ana sütunlar* veya *sacayağı* olarak adlandırılabilir; her biri ayrı ayrı önem arz etmekle birlikte, üçünün aynı anda uyumlu konumu ve ilişkisi yapılan faaliyetlerin etkinliği ve kalitesini sağlamak açısından önemlidir. Diğer taraftan, herhangi biriyle ilgili süreçlerin aksaması ya da uyumsuzluğu bütün sistemin arızaya uğramasına sebep olur. Temel fonksiyonları göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, genellikle öğretmen, uygulayıcı; akademisyen ise teorisyen olarak kabul edilirken, ilgili devlet memurları da prosedür ve süreç yöneticisi olarak bilinir. Bu üç grup içinde, eğitim ile ilgili karar verme süreçlerine öğretmen katılımının önemine literatürde ağırlık verilmiştir (Cohen vd., 2007; Eisner, 2000; Keser-Aschenberger, 2012). Eğitim dünyasına bilimsel bilgi desteği sağlayan ve fakültelerde öğretmen yetiştiren akademisyenlerin bu süreçlere katılımının önemi de öğretmenler kadar olmasa da literatürde önemsenmiştir ve daha aktif olmaları önerilmiştir (Leonardo, 2010). İlgili devlet memurları grubunun katılımı ise, özellikle Türkiye kontekstinde bürokratik ve formalite işlemleri seviyesinde kalmakla birlikte, etkili politika aktörleri içerisinde bulunmalarından dolayı, görüş ve algılarının değerlendirilmesi gerektiği literatürde vurgulanmıştır (Sabatier, 1999). Kısacası, ilgili literatürde hem eğitim politikaları yapımı hem de eğitim politikaları araştırmalarında, politika aktörlerinden üç önemli grubu teşkil eden öğretmenler, akademisyenler ve devlet memurlarının süreçlere katılımının önemi özellikle belirtilmiştir.

Diğer taraftan, metodoloji açısından, politika yapımı süreçleri – özellikle eğitim politikaları – ile ilgili çalışmalarda, durumun derinlemesine incelenmesi ve yorumlanabilmesi için fenomenolojik nitel çalışmalar önerilmektedir (Creswell, 2007; Keser-Aschenberger, 2012; Lambert, 2020). Ayrıca, süreçleri araştıran çalışmalar yanında, algıları inceleyen çalışmalar ve bir durumdan

memnuniyetsizlik ile ilgili arařtırmaların nitel arařtırma geleneđi metotları ile yapılması önerilmektedir (Cohen vd., 2007; Patton, 2002). Bu anlamda, son yirmi yıldır bilhassa PISA, TIMSS ve PIRLS gibi uluslararası testlerde, Türkiye'deki öğrencilerin başarılarının tatmin edici düzeyde olmaması ile ortaya çıkan memnuniyetsizlik, aslında 40-50 yıl geçmiře, belki de daha eskiye kadar uzanmaktadır (Akyüz, 2009).

Bu tür memnuniyetsizliklerin giderilmesi için yapılacak en temel çalışmaların başında, sistemi yönlendiren eğitim politikalarının yapım süreçlerindeki sorunların ortadan kaldırılması ya da en aza indirilmesi için atılacak adımlar gelmektedir. Bu doğrultuda izlenecek yol ise mevcut sorunların tespiti ile başlamalıdır ve o sorunların çözümüne katkı sağlayacak önerilere ulařılacak çalışmaların yapılmasıdır. En anlamlı bilimsel bilgi deđerlendirmesi ile sorunların tespiti ise ulařılabilecek en uygun kaynaklardan elde edilecek verilere bađlıdır. Bu çalışmanın özelinde, bu tür verilerin, eğitim programları ve öğretim alanının en önemli paydařlarından detaylı olarak elde edilebileceđi deđerlendirilmiřtir.

Bu bilgiler ışığında, bu çalışmanın amacı, öğretmenler, eğitim fakóltesi akademisyenleri ve ilgili (Milli Eğitim Bakanlıđı) devlet memurlarının, eğitim programları ve öğretim politikaları yapımı süreçlerine iliřkin algılarını derinlemesine arařtırmak ve sonucunda, yüksek nitelikli ve sürdürülebilir politikalar üretilmesine ve bu politikaların daha etkin bir şekilde uygulanmasına katkı sağlayacak öneriler üretmektir.

Çalışmanın tez önerisi ařamasında, 2016 yılında yapılan detaylı taramalarda, eğitim politikaları alanında Türkiye'de yapılan çalışmalar incelenmiř ve bu çalışmanın konusu ve alanına yakın herhangi bir çalışmaya rastlanmamıřtır. Bazı benzerlikleri olan çođu çalışma, Atatürk'ün eğitime yaklařımı ve bakıř açısı üzerine yoğunlařmıřken, yine oldukça fazla sayıda çalışmanın Türkiye'deki eğitim sisteminin (veya belirli unsurlarının) diđer ülkelerinkilerle kıyaslanması ve mesleki eğitim konuları üzerine yapılmıřtır. Öğretmen algılarını arařtıran birçok çalışma yapılmıř ancak eğitim politikaları ile ilgili olanına rastlanmamıřtır. Öğretmen eğitimi ve mesleki edinim politikaları, ekonomik sorunlar ve küreselleřme ile eğitim politikaları iliřkileri,

eđitim politikalarının tarihi geliřimi ve trendleri, eđitim programlarında yapılan deęiřiklikler ile okul turleri ile ilgili politikalar yuzeysel duzeyde incelenmiř ama politika yapımı surleri ve paydař algılarını arařtıran alıřmaların yapılmamıř olduđu kanaatine varılmıřtır. Bu gzlem ve incelemeler sonucunda, alanda nemli bir bořluk olduđu saptamasıyla bu alıřmanın yapılmasına karar verilmiřtir. Diđer taraftan, alıřmanın bulguları tespit edildikten sonra 2021 yılında benzer bir tarama alıřması daha yapılmıř ve yine benzer konularda alıřmalar olduđu grlmüřtür; bylece, alandaki, bu alıřmanın dolduracađı bořluđun byk oranda devam ettiđi saptanmıřtır. Bu aıdan, alıřmanın alana nemli katkı sađlayacađı dřnlmekte ve mit edilmektedir.

Politika terimi genel anlamda, hedeflenen sonulara ulařmak iin oluřturulan eylemlere yn verecek bilgi, prosedr, yntem ve talimat gibi unsurları dzenleyen bir sistem, plan, program, mekanizma ve/veya dzenleme olarak tanımlanır. Bu tanıma ek olarak, bu alıřmada arařtırmacının yaklařımı eđitim politikası yapımının, Elliot Eisner'ın belirttiđi gibi, sanatsal zellikler de iermesi gerekecek kadar hassasiyet ve zen gsterilmesi gereken bir surleri olduđu ynndedir. Eđitim politikası terimi de sistem iinde, amalanan sonuları elde etmek iin, eđitim ile ilgili meselelere iliřkin yapılması gereken eylemler ile prensiplerin belirlenmesi olarak tanımlanabilir (Trowler, 2003). Politika yapımı ifadesi ise, ajandada bulunan sz konusu meselenin etkili, dođru ve uygulanabilir bir řekilde halledilmesi iin, karar vericiler tarafından kabul edilen uygun yol(lar) oluřturma surleri olarak ifade edilebilir (Hayes, 2014). Politika aktrleri olarak tanımlanan kiřiler, politika yapımı surlerinin bir veya daha fazla ařamasında, byk veya kk rolleri olan katılımcılardır. Politikanın uygulanması surleri ise, oluřturulmuř bir politikanın teoriden pratiđe geiři, yani, icra edilmesi ařamasıdır.

Byk lkeler ve kuruluřlarda olduđu kadar ok kk organizasyonlarda da politikalar yapılır ve uygulanır. Kısa veya uzun surleri olabilen politikalar anayasa ve yasalara aykırı olamaz ve yapan hkmetlerin niyet ve iradelerini ieren politik hususlardır. Genelde politikalar gelecekte yapılması planlanan faaliyetler iin yapılır; ancak bazı politikalar hkmetlerin belirli konularda bir řey yapmaması ile ilgili de olabilir (Dye, 1975). Ayrıca, belirtmek gerekir ki,

politikalar yapıldıkları zamandan uygulanmalarına kadar geçen sürede birçok farklı algılama ve yorumlara maruz kaldığından, politika yapımcıların baştaki niyetleriyle tamamen aynı şekilde uygulanması büyük oranda ihtimal dışıdır (Garratt & Forrester, 2012).

Politika yapımı ile ilgili literatürde oldukça fazla miktarda teori ve yaklaşım bulunmaktadır ve bunların hiçbirisi için en iyisi ya da diğerinin alternatifidir şeklinde bir iddiada bulunulamaz (Cohen, 2013). Yine de literatürde daha çok bahsi geçenler, Keser-Aschenberger (2012) tarafından da teyit edildiği gibi kurumsalcılık, sistem teorisi (yaklaşımı), rasyonel seçim kuramı, aşamacılık (artırımcılık), çoğulculuk (grup teorisi), seçkin(cilik) kuramı ve politika döngüsü/süreci modelidir. Bu çalışmada, gerektiğinde diğer kuram ve yaklaşımlara değinilmekle beraber, politika döngüsü modeli esas alınmıştır. İlk defa Harold Lasswell (1971) tarafından yedi aşamalı olarak tasarlanmış olan bu model, birbiriyle ilişkili ve birbirini takip eden fazlardan (safha, aşama, kademe, evre, basamak, etap) oluşur. Lasswell (1971) her faz için “güvenilirlik, kapsayıcılık, seçicilik, yaratıcılık, açıklık/şeffaf olma, makullük/akılcılık, bütünlendiricilik, beklenti tutarlılığı, zamanlılık, tahrik edici olmama, gerçekçilik, eş biçimlilik, dengelilik, iyileştirilebilir olma, bağımlı olmama ve devamlılık” gibi ölçütlerden belirlenmiş olanlarını içermesini koşul olarak tanımlarken, bütün aşamalar için sahip olunması gereken ölçütleri de şunlar olarak tanımlamıştır: “Parasal/ekonomik olarak uygunluk, teknik yeterlilik/etkililik, doğruluk, dürüstlük itibarı, görevli personelin beceri ve sadakati, tamamlayıcılık, tesir etkililiği, farklı yapılar olarak faaliyet, değişen koşullara uyumda esneklik ve gerçeklik, karar verme ve uygulamada hassasiyet ve sorumluluk alma” (Lasswell, 1971).

Fazla kuralcı ve yönlendirici olması (Jann & Wegrich, 2007), aşamalarının doğrusal olarak tanımlanmış olması – oysa tasarımın doğası gereği gidiş ve gelişlere izin verecek şekilde dairesel ve döngüsel olması gerektiği – (Howlett vd., 2013) gibi eleştiriler alan bu model, Lasswell’den sonra bazı araştırmacılar tarafından üç ila on kademe arasında değişen sayılarda fazlar içeren biçimlerde de tasarlanmıştır (Keser-Aschenberger, 2012). Theodoulou ve Kofinis (2004), belirli kısımlarını tekrar yorumlamak suretiyle, bazı değişiklikler

yaparak bu modeli yedi basamaklı olarak tekrar tasarlamışlardır: “Sorunların tespiti, ajanda oluşturma, politikanın oluşturulması, politikanın uyarlanması, politikanın uygulanması, politikanın değerlendirilmesi ve politikanın sonlandırılması veya değiştirilmesi”. Bu çalışmada ise onların modelinin üç fazı “sorunların tespiti, politikanın oluşturulması ve politikanın uygulanması” araştırmanın ana çerçevesi olarak yararlanılmıştır.

Politika aktörleri genel anlamda, Cumhurbaşkanı/Başbakan dahil olmak üzere hükümetlerin içindeki politika yapıcılar ile onların dışındaki grup ve kişiler olmak üzere ikiye ayrılır. Bu iki grubun içinde de politika yapımı sürecini kendi ilgi ve istekleri doğrultusunda yönlendirmeye çalışan belirli kategoriler bulunur. Bu kişi ve gruplar bazen çok uzun süreli tartışma ve pazarlık süreçleri geçirir; bu dönemlerde, lobi çalışmaları ve medyadan yararlanma etkili stratejiler olarak bilinir (Theodoulou & Kofinis, 2004).

Politika yapımı ile ilgili literatürde – özellikle OECD belgelerinde – *sivil katılım* en fazla ağırlık verilen tema olarak öne çıkmaktadır ve kamu güveni ve desteği ile şeffaf olarak oluşturulan politikaların daha kaliteli, etkili ve uzun süreli olduğu vurgulanmaktadır (OECD, 2005). Türkiye bağlamında, internet teknolojilerinden yararlanma ve özellikle e-devlet uygulamalarıyla sivil katılım oldukça gelişim göstermiştir (Yerlikaya, 2015). Bu olumlu durum, 2016 yılındaki müfredat yenileme çalışmalarında MEB’in taslak programları internet vasıtasıyla kamuoyu tartışma ve önerilerine açma uygulamalarında da kendini göstermiştir. Politika yapımına sivil katılım, ilgili literatürde, katılımın etki ve derecesine göre safhalara ayrılarak incelenmiştir; özellikle Arnstein’in (1969) oluşturduğu *vatandaş katılımı merdiveni* tanımı ve çerçevesinde, kendisinin “katılımcılık ve katılımsızlık türleri” olarak ifade ettiği kavramlar ile ilgili literatürde ele alınmış ve katılım derecelerinin seçimlerde oy alma derecelerine etkileri de tartışılmıştır (Moffitt, 2014; OECD, 2001; Smith, 2005; Wilcox, 1998; Yerlikaya, 2015). Politika yapımına katılım ile ilgili olarak, Türkiye özelinde hem sivil hem de hükümet kanadından katılım olarak değerlendirilebilecek olan Milli Eğitim Şûraları, Cumhuriyetin kuruluşundan bu yana yaptığı/yap(a)madığı periyodik toplantıları, ajandası, alınan kararların

uygulanmadığı, etkililiği/*etkisizliği* gibi konularla aralıklar da olsa hep gündemde olmuştur.

Oldukça karmaşık, dinamik, etkileşimli ve sürekli gelişen bir sistem (Geurts, 2011) olarak tanımlanan politika yapımı süreci, bir soruna yönelik fikirlerin oluşturulmasıyla başlar, çözülmesi için ilgili aktörler tarafından yapılan çalışmalarla kavramlaştırılır ve hükümet tarafından seçeneklerin oluşturulması, en uygununun seçilmesi, uygulanması, değerlendirilmesi ve (gerektiğinde) değişikliklerle tekrar düzenlenmesi olarak özetlenebilir (Sabatier, 1999). Bu süreç ülkelerin yönetim rejimlerine göre farklılıklar gösterebilir; örneğin, İngiltere gibi iki kamaralı sistemlerde, ABD gibi hem temsilciler meclisi hem de senato bulunan kongre sistemli ülkelerde, federal veya üniter yapılı yönetimlerde, Türkiye gibi parlamenter sistemden Cumhurbaşkanlığı yönetim sistemine geçmiş olan ülkelerde farklı prosedürler izlenebilir. Ancak, bütün modern yönetimlerde, süreç yönetici ve son karar verici hükümetlerdir.

Politikaların uygulanması süreci bütün politika yapımı sürecinin tamamı kadar önemli olarak değerlendirilir; zira, doğru biçimde uygulan(a)mayan politikalar etkisizdir, anlamsızdır ve kağıt üzerinde kalmaya mahkumdur. Bu bağlamda, politika ile onun pratiği (uygulanması) arasındaki çelişki ve uyuşmazlıkların kaldırılması veya en aza indirilmesi önemlidir (Trowler, 2003). Genelde iki türlü politika uygulama yaklaşımı kullanılır; birincisi, sadece yönetenin otoritesinin yönlendirdiği idarî/tepeden aşağıya (top-down) uygulama yaklaşımı, ikincisi ise asıl zahmetli işi yapan (Trowler'ın ifadesiyle “donkey work”) alt kademelerin değerlerinin, tavırlarının ve algılarının önemsenmediğinin kabul edildiği ancak mutlaka en üst derecede değerlendirilmesi gerektiğini savunan alttan üste (bottom-up) politika uygulaması yaklaşımıdır (Trowler, 2003). Özellikle ve mutlaka eğitim ve öğretimle ilgili politikaların uygulanmasında ikinci yaklaşıma özen gösterilmesi gerektiğinin altı çizilmektedir. Aslında, her iki yaklaşımın bir sentezinin yapılarak kullanılması – “yönlendirilmiş meslektaş dayanışması” (“directed collegiality”) – en doğru yaklaşım olarak değerlendirilmektedir (Trowler, 2003).

Eğitim politikaları yapımı ve uygulamaları sosyal, politik, ekonomik, teknik, dinî ve kültürel alanlardan birçok faktörün etkisine maruz kalmaktadır

(Garratt & Forrester, 2012) ve ilgili süreçler öğrencilerin sınıfından parlamento binasına kadar büyük bir kesimi ilgilendirmektedir (Firestone, 1989 aktaran Heck, 2004). Eğitim programları ve öğretim alanı ile ilgili politikalar da yukarıda bahsedilen bütün özellikleri taşımakla birlikte, başlangıç noktası olarak müfredat teorisinin alınmasının uygun olduğu değerlendirilmektedir (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). Müfredat teorileri, disiplinler arası özelliğe sahiptir, beşerî bilimler, doğa bilimleri ve sosyal bilimlerle etkileşimli olarak oluşur ve yol gösterir (Beauchamp, 1975). Genelde müfredat teorisi olarak tanımlanan eğitim programları ve öğretim alanı teorilerine, ilgili değişik alanlardan, Bobbitt, Tyler, Taba, Dewey, Beauchamp, Vygotsky, Bloom, Maslow, Piaget, Gagne, Gardner, Greene, Freire ve Apple gibi birçok bilim insanı katkı sağlamıştır. Müfredat oluşturma ve düzenlemeleri ile ilgili yaklaşımlar söz konusu olduğunda, ilgili literatürde genellikle üç türden bahsedilir: konu-temelli, öğrenci-temelli ve toplum-temelli yaklaşımlar. Bu yaklaşımlar da eğitim programları ve öğretim ile ilgili teori ve politikaları etkiler ve yönlendirir (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004).

Yukarıda bahsedilen, özellikle teorik açıdan politika yapımını etkileyen faktörlerin yanında, “tecrübe, uzmanlık, değerler, yargılar, ideolojiler, ekonomik, politik vb. kaynaklar/koşullar, lobiler, baskı grupları, danışman(lık)lar (düşünce kuruluşları), program ve prosedürler, ani/acil/beklenmedik durumlar gibi birçok faktör eğitim politikaları yapımı ve uygulamalarında etkili olur. Bütün bu faktörlerin yanında, pratik anlamda, bilimsel araştırmalardan elde edilen “bilgi” (duruma göre “veri”) kullanımı önemli bir faktör olarak değerlendirilir (Davies, 2004). Literatürde, araştırma bilgilerinin kullanım amacı ve metotlarıyla ilgili birtakım sınıflandırmalar da vardır (Weiss, 1979). Bu bağlamda, eğitim politikalarını ilgilendiren en önemli tema, araştırma bilgilerinin politika yapımında, siyasiler tarafından kendi politik/ideolojik amaçları doğrultusunda suistimal edilmesi ve bunun bütün eğitim ekosistemine verdiği büyük zarar olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bazen bu o kadar garip boyutlara ulaşmaktadır ki, araştırma (bilgisi) mevcut bariz problemleri ‘problem değil’ kategorisine yönlendirerek politika ajandasının tekrar tanımlanmasına sebep olur ve bu tür bilginin elde edildiği bilim “kötü bilim (bad science)” olarak adlandırılabilir (Weiss, 1979, s. 430).

Bilimsel arařtırmaların bulgu ve önerilerinin politika yapımında kullanılması konusu ile ilgili olarak Kanıtta Dayalı Politika Yapımı (KDP) ve Düzenleyici Etki Analizi/Değerlendirmesi (DEA) kavramları da literatürde sıklıkla bahsi geçen konulardır. KDP genel anlamda, politika yapıcıların, ihtiyaçları olan sistematik bilgileri/kanıtları ilgili alandan temin edip kullanarak daha akılcı, bilimsel ve sağlam kararlar alarak politika oluřturmaları yaklaşımına dayanır; fikirlerden ziyade kanıtları temel alır (Davies, 2004; Parkhurst, 2016; Sutcliffe & Court, 2005). DEA ise taslak halinde olan bir politikanın, ileriki uygulama ařamalarında, uygulayacak/üzerinde uygulanacak kiři ve grupları bu politikanın ne derece ve nasıl etkileyeceğini gerekli boyutlarıyla önceden görme, tahmin ve tahlil etme olarak tanımlanabilir. Pilot uygulamalarla benzerlik gösteren bu bilimsel arařtırma çalıřması, politika yapımında, bütün seçenekler için uygulanıp en iyi kořullara sahip olanının seçilmesine katkı sađlayarak zaman, enerji ve maddi vb. tasarruflara destek olur (Güngör ve Evren, 2009; OECD, 2008; OECD, 2009). Eđitim politikaları yapımında da büyük katkılar sađlayan KDP ve DEA arařtırma bilgileri “Önlem tedaviden daha iyidir” “Prevention is better than cure” (OECD, 2001) ifadesinde olduđu gibi iř iřten geçmeden önlem alınması ve dođru kararlar verilmesi ađısından oldukça önemlidir. Bütçe, mevzuat, sosyal ve ekonomik hayat, çevre ve ilgili kesimler üzerinde yapması muhtemel etkileri tahmin/tespit etmeye ıřık tutacak bir ön değerlendirme olarak kabul gören DEA Türkiye’de de çođu politika taslak çalıřmalarında mecburi tutulmuř bir uygulamadır (Bakanlar Kurulu Kararı, 2005). KDP ve DEA çalıřmaları eđitim politikaları ile ilgili politika yapımı ve diđer karar verme iřlemlerinde çok önemlidir; ancak üniversitelerden bu dođrultuda sađlanan bilgi desteđi çođunlukla yetersiz kalmaktadır (Heck, 2004; Kaya-Kařıkçı, 2016). Ayrıca, sadece KDP ve DEA ile ilgili deđil, eđitim politikaları yapımı ve uygulamalarına yönelik olarak yapılan akademik çalıřmalarda yetersizlik söz konusudur. Bu durum, daha önce de belirtildiđi gibi arařtırmacının yaptıđı detaylı taramalarda tespit edilmiřtir. Diđer taraftan, mevcut arařtırmaların büyük çođunluđu nicel olduđundan, sorunların fenomenolojik olarak derinlemesine incelenmesine olanak sađlayan nitel çalıřmalar alanında önemli bořluklar olduđu kanaatine varılmıřtır. İřte bu

tespitler ve yaklaşımlar doğrultusunda yapılan bu çalışma, Türkiye’de eğitim ve öğretim politikaları yapımı süreçlerini önemli üç grup paydaşın algılarını derinlemesine inceleyen nitel bir durum çalışması olarak yürütülmüş, bulguları yorumlanmış ve ortaya çıkardığı öneriler sunulmuştur.

Yöntem

Bu nitel durum çalışması, “Politika Döngüsü” modelinin üç aşaması (problem tespiti, politika yapımı ve politika uygulaması) kapsamında yapılmıştır ve çalışmanın araştırma soruları şu şekilde geliştirilmiştir:

1. Öğretmenler, (eğitim fakültelerindeki) akademisyenler ve ilgili devlet memurları Türkiye’deki eğitim programları ve öğretim ile ilgili politika yapımı süreçlerini nasıl algılıyorlar? Onların bu algılarını şekillendiren etmenler nelerdir?

a) Yeni politika yapmayı veya politika değişikliği gerektiren meselelerin belirlenmesiyle ilgili algıları nelerdir?

b) Politika yapımı konusundaki algıları nelerdir?

c) Politikaların uygulanması ilgili algıları nelerdir?

2. Bu üç paydaş grubun (öğretmenler, akademisyenler ve memurlar) algıları arasındaki ortak noktalar ve farklılıklar nelerdir? Bunlar eğitim uygulamalarını nasıl etkilemektedir?

Bu sorulara cevap bulabilmek üzere oluşturulan çalışmada “iç içe geçmiş tek durum deseni” kullanılmıştır. Çalışmadaki durum “Türkiye’de eğitim politikası yapımı süreci”, analiz birimleri ise adı geçen üç grubun algılarıdır.

Araştırmanın Katılımcıları

Katılımcılar, Türkiye’de eğitim sisteminin üç ana sütunu olarak tanımlanabilecek olan üç paydaş grubundan Ankara’daki ilk ve orta dereceli okullarda çalışan 15 öğretmen (devlet okullarından 10 ve özel okullardan 5 öğretmen), eğitim fakültelerinde görevli 9 akademisyen (devlet üniversitelerinden 7 ve özel üniversitelerden 2 akademisyen) ve Millî Eğitim

Bakanlığının ilgili birimlerinde görevli 14 devlet memuru (8'i emekli 6'sı aktif çalışan) olarak belirlenmiştir. Araştırma konusu ve alanı açısından zengin bilgiye sahip, bilgisini paylaşmaya niyetli katılımcılar, amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi ile bu yöntemin tekniklerinden ölçüt(lü) örnekleme, kartopu/zincir örnekleme ve maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme teknikleri kullanılarak tespit edilmiştir (Patton, 1990).

Veri Toplama Araçları ve Süreci

Veri toplama aracı olarak, üç katılımcı grubu için esas içerik itibariyle aynı olan ancak görev tanımı ve meslek özellikleri itibariyle küçük farklılıklar içeren sorulardan oluşan, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formlar kullanılmıştır. Bu formların hazırlanılmasının her safhasında, meslektaş değerlendirmesi, uzman görüşü, pilot uygulama gibi geçerlik ve güvenilirlik ile ilgili her koşul yerine getirilmiştir. Resmi izinler ve etik kurul onayları alınmış, mülakatlar esnasında uygun görüşme iklimi oluşturulmuş, güven ortamı sağlanmış, katılımcıların rızaları alınarak dinleme kayıtları yapılmıştır. Görüşmeler yüz yüze derinlemesine mülakat şeklinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşme seansları süresince, veri zenginleşmesine ve çeşitlenmesine katkı sağlayacak notlar tutulmuş, alternatif sorular ve sondaj soruları ile derinlemesine veri toplanmaya çalışılmış, tam anlaşılabilen veya detayı alınamayan noktalar tekrar sorulmuş, netleştirilmiş ve detaylandırılmıştır. Görüşme sonrasında araştırmacı tarafından yapılan kontrol ve değerlendirmelerde atlanan, eksik kalan ya da tatminkâr olmayan noktalar katılımcı ile tekrar iletişim kurularak aydınlatılmıştır. Bütün veri toplama süreci boyunca, araştırmacı tarafsızlığını korumaya büyük özen göstermiş, varsayımları, önyargıları, duyguları, dünya görüşü, kendi tecrübeleri ve fikirlerini ortamdan uzak tutmaya çalışmıştır (Austin & Sutton, 2014).

Veri Analiz Süreci

Veriler tematik kodlama yöntemiyle içerik analizi yapılarak çözümlenmiştir. Analizler şu temel plan doğrultusunda yapılmıştır: Veriyi

düzenleme, kodlama ve kategorileri (alt tema olarak da adlandırılabilir) düzenleme, temaları oluşturma, bulguları düzenleme ve yoruma hazırlama. Görüşme seanslarında, sesli kayıt altına alınan ham veri araştırmacı ve profesyonel firma tarafından yazıya dökülmüş, düzenlenmiş ve elle kodlama sistemi ile analiz edilmiştir. Literatür taraması, görüşme oturumları ve verinin ilk okumalarına dayanılarak elde edilen kod ve kavramlar, yine aynı şekilde oluşturulan kavramsal çerçeveler içine yerleştirilerek analizler yapılmıştır. Analiz sürecinde, tümevarım şeklinde verinin kendisinden ortaya çıkan ekstra kod, kavramlar ve kategoriler de mevcut bulunanlara eklenmiştir. Defalarca ham veriye geri dönülmüş, ikili olarak, bazen karşılıklı bazen de ayrı ayrı kontroller yapılmış, pilot kodlama ve analizler, alandan başka kodlayıcılar (puanlayıcılar) arası güvenilirlik testleri, uzman görüşleri, meslektaş değerlendirmesi gereklilikleri yerine getirilmiştir. Analizler, ilgili literatüre sürekli başvurularak, döngüsel bir şekilde hem tümevarım hem de tümdengelim yaklaşım ve metotları kullanılarak, çoğunlukla eleştirel düşünce yaklaşımları ile, “ne” sorularına kısa ve net, “neden ve nasıl” sorularına daha detaylı ve derinlemesine cevap verilmesine imkân tanıyan araştırmacı zihniyeti doğrultusunda yapılmaya gayret edilmiştir. Bütün aşamalarda çalışmanın ana çerçevesi olan politika döngüsünün üç aşaması (sorun tespiti, politika yapımı ve politika uygulaması) ile araştırma soruları sürekli olarak göz önünde bulundurulmuş ve odaklardan uzaklaşmamak için sınırlara özen gösterilmiştir. Analiz sürecinde, bu üç aşamanın ilk iki aşamasıyla ilgili kodların çok büyük oranda birleştiği tespit edilmiş; bu durumda, gereksiz ve sıkıcı tekrarlardan kaçınmak ve bütünlüğü kaybetmemek için bu iki grup raporları ortak olarak sunulmuş ve yorumlanmıştır.

Analizlerde, her kod veya kavram için hangi katılımcıların algılarının hangi kodlar altında birleştiği listeler oluşturularak daha anlaşılır hale getirilmiştir. Sonrasında, bu katılımcı sayıları üç grup için ayrı ayrı tablolarda toplanarak daha da netleştirilmiştir. Kodlar sınıflandırılarak kategoriler altında toplanmış ve kategorilerden de temalar elde edilmiştir. Kodlarda olduğu gibi bazı kategori ve temalar önceden oluşturulmuş, bazıları sonradan ortaya çıkmıştır; ancak hepsi hem kendi içlerinde hem de bütün içinde anlam bütünlüğü ve uyumluluk açısından defalarca revize edilmiştir. Elde edilen son kod, kategori

ve temalar liste ve tablolar halinde düzenlenerek sunulmuştur. Listelerin büyük çoğunlukla kod kümeleşmesi, desen oluşması ve olgu tekrarı gibi tekniklerle oluşturulmasına rağmen önemli görüldüğünde daha az sayıda katılımcının kullandığı anlamlı kodlara da kategoriler ve dolayısıyla temalar içinde yer verilerek bulgular arasında sunulmuştur. Dahası, bir mevzu, sadece bir katılımcı tarafından bile belirtildiyse, araştırmacı tarafından anlamlı ve/veya önemli bir husus olarak değerlendirildiğinde, yorumlanmış ve rapor edilmiştir. Ayrıca, önemli görülen iki konu ile ilgili nicel bulgulara yer verilmiş ve yorumlanmıştır; ilgili alanyazında, nitel çalışmada nicel veri veya bulgu değerlendirilmesine yönelik, anlamlı/önemli görüldüğünde ve gerektiğinde kullanılabileceği doğrultusunda cevaz verilmiştir (Miles ve Huberman, 1994).

Güvenilirlik/güvenirlik ve Geçerlik

Nitel çalışmalarda güvenilirlik ve geçerlik kavramlarının nicel çalışmalara göre oldukça farklı uygulandığı ve yorumlandığı göz önünde bulundurularak her aşamada ilgili literatüre başvurulmuş, metoda ilişkin her faaliyetin arkasındaki gerekçe alanyazından güçlü referanslar verilerek izah edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Diğer taraftan, bu kavramların nitel çalışmalardaki terminolojisi de farklı kelime ve kavramlarla ifade edilmektedir. Bu çalışmada hem kullanılan terimler hem de yararlanılan teknik ve stratejiler itibarıyla, özellikle Creswell (2007), Miles ve Huberman (1994) ile Yıldırım ve Şimşek'in (2013) verdiği bilgiler ve öneriler değerlendirilmiştir. Genel olarak kullanılan "İç geçerlilik" terimi için aynı zamanda ve inanılabilirlik veya doğruluk ifadeleri de eklenmiş ve bu özellikleri sağlamak ve güçlendirmek için şu stratejilerden yararlanılmıştır: *Veri çeşitlemesi (katılımcı ve doküman), uzun süreli etkileşim ile araştırma ve araştırmacı etkisini azaltma, ayrıntılı ve derinlemesine veri toplanması, meslektaş incelemesi ve katılımcı teyidi*. "İç güvenilirlik" – tutarlılık veya denetlenebilirlik – özelliği kalitesini desteklemek için *alandan başka uzman meslektaşlar tarafından kodlama tutarlılığı ve uzman görüşü alma* teknikleri kullanılmıştır. "Dış güvenilirlik" – tarafsızlık veya teyit edilebilirlik – özelliklerine katkı sağlamak için *araştırmacı önyargılarını ve (katılımcı/ortam*

üzerindeki etkilerini azaltma, (araştırmacı üzerinde olası) katılımcı etkilerini azaltma, dışarıdan uzman incelemesi/sorgulaması, daha sonraki dış değerlendirmeler için bütün veri ve dokümanları muhafaza etme önlemlerinden faydalanılmıştır. “Dış geçerlilik” – (başka durumlara) aktarılabilirlik veya uygunluk – özelliklerini güçlendirmek için *ayrıntılı betimleme, amaçlı örnekleme (kartopu/ölçüt/maksimum çeşitleme stratejileriyle) metodu kullanma* yöntemleri uygulanmıştır. Bütün özelliklere belirli oranlarda katkı sağlayacak şekilde *aykırı durumların incelenmesi, şaşırtıcı ve aksi durum bulguları (karşıt açıklamalar)* gibi ek verilerden yararlanılmıştır. Ayrıca, çalışmanın tamamını kapsayacak şekilde, “bu çalışma bittikten ve raporlandıktan sonra gerçekten bir işe yarayacak mı?” sorusu hep akılda tutularak bütün unsurların, “Edimsel geçerlik” – “Pragmatic validity” (Miles and Huberman, 1994) – kavramına uygunluğu sağlanmaya *özel* özen gösterilmiştir.

Sınırlılıklar

Öncelikle bu çalışmadaki bulgular ve yorumlar, öğretmenler, akademisyenler ve memurlar olmak üzere üç grup paydaş katılımcının algı, tecrübe ve görüşleriyle sınırlıdır; öğrenciler, veliler, ilgili sendikalar ve kuruluşlar gibi diğer paydaşlar çalışmada yer almamıştır. Diğer taraftan, 15 Temmuz 2016 darbe girişimi çalışmanın yapıldığı dönemde vuku bulduğundan, sebep olduğu gecikmelerin yanında, katılımcıların görüşlerinde bu olaydan öncesine göre bazı farklılıklar oluşturmuş olabilir. Ayrıca, Suriye iç savaşı nedeniyle Türkiye’ye gelen göçmenlerin durumları ve ülkenin yaşamına etkileri katılımcı görüş ve algılarında bazı ekstra yönlendirmeler yapmış olabilir. Global bir konjonktür olarak, yüz yüze katılımcı görüşmelerinin bitmiş olmasına rağmen, 2019 yılında ortaya çıkan COVID-19 salgını da çalışmanın sürdürülmesinde birtakım engellere sebep olmuştur ve bunlar çalışmaya belirli şekillerde dolaylı sınırlılıklar getirmiş olabilir. Son olarak, katılımcılardan, görüşmeler esnasında halen görev başında olan MEB devlet memurlarının tavır ve davranışlarında bazı endişeli durumlar gözlemlenmiştir; bu durumlar onların algılarını ve dolayısıyla ifadelerini etkilemiş olabilir. Çalışmanın ilgili

bölümlerinde bu durum açıkça belirtilmiş ve ilgili kısımlarda üzerinde yorumlar da yapılmıştır.

Bulgular

Politika döngüsü modelinin üç fazı çerçevesinde yapılan ve katılımcıların algılarının analizlerinin yapıldığı bu çalışmada toplamda 58 kategoriden 12 tema elde edilmiştir. Ortaya çıkan kod, kategori ve temalar açısından, modelin iki fazının (*problem tespiti ve politika yapımı*) çok benzerlik göstermesi üzerine, bu iki safha birleştirilerek çalışmaya devam edilmiş ve bulgular da bu şekilde sunulmuştur. Dolayısıyla, bulgular 1) Yeni politika gerektiren meselelerinin tespiti ve politika yapımı safhaları ile ilgili katılımcı algıları ile 2) Politikaların uygulaması safhasına yönelik katılımcı algıları olarak iki ana bölüm halinde arz edilmiştir.

Birinci bölüm kapsamında elde edilen 6 tema ve kategorileri şunlardır:

Tema 1. Yeni bir politika veya mevcut politika değişikliği gerektiren eğitim meselelerinin kaynakları

Kategoriler

- a) Esas kaynak (seçim öncesinde hazırlanmış olan) hükümet planları ve programları
- b) Yöneten otoritenin keyfi kişisel seçimleri
- c) Eğitim programları ve öğretimle ilgili kararlar üzerinde uluslararası sınavların etkileri
- d) Başka ülkelerin eğitim sistemi modelleri
- e) Uygulayıcılardan (öğretmenlerden) alınan dönütler ve öneriler.
- f) Akademisyenlerden alınan geri bildirim ve öneriler
- g) İki kilit paydaş grubun, öğretmenler ve akademisyenlerin, görüş ve dönüt sunmaktan çekinmesi

Tema 2. Eğitim ve öğretime yönelik karar verme ve politika yapımında siyasi ve ideolojik yaklaşımlar

Kategoriler

- a) Hükümet(ler)in (iktidardaki otoritelerin) siyasi ideolojilerinin müdahil edilmesi
- b) Sistemdeki sık eğitim politikası değişikliklerine bağlı istikrarsızlık
- c) Yetersiz yapılandırılmış politika-yapıcı kadro ve diğer resmî personel
- d) Eğitim politikaları vasıtasıyla ideoloji empoze etme (geçmişten örnekler)
- e) Karşı fikirlere karar verici yönetimin tavrı

Tema 3. Eğitim programları ve öğretim ile ilgili karar verme ve politika yapımı süreçlerine paydaş katılımı

Kategoriler

- a) Eğitimin en önemli paydaşı olan öğretmenlerin katılımı
- b) Süreçlere önemli bir katkı olarak akademisyenlerin katılımı
- c) Süreçlere akademisyen katılımına yönelik eleştiriler
- d) Devlet memurlarının katılımı; elverişsiz bir ortam ve onların ters tutumları
- e) Devlet memurlarının katılımına yönelik tavsiyeler: Şunları yapmalılar:
...
- f) (Öğretmenler, akademisyenler ve devlet memurlarının) katılım dereceleri/yüzdeleri
- g) Karar verme süreçlerine diğer paydaşların katılımı: Öğrenciler, veliler, STK'lar
- h) Katılım ile ilgili sorunlar: Katılımcılar arasında uygun iletişim olmaması (geçmişteki ve bugünkü konjonktür)

Tema 4. Milli Eğitim Şûralarının politika yapımında olması gerektiği gibi faaliyet göstermemesi

Kategoriler

- a) Şûraların uygunsuz, belirsiz ve siyasi yapısı
- b) Şûra toplantılarına katılım için uygunsuz kural ve üslûplar
- c) Karar verici paydaşı olarak şûraların yetersizliği

d) Şûraların oluşumu ve fonksiyonlarına yönelik beklentiler

Tema 5. “Politika sorunlarının belirlenmesi ve politika yapımı aşamalarının ideal olarak uygulanmasına yönelik beklentiler

Kategoriler

a) Genel temel tavır olarak demokratik ve önyargısız yaklaşım

b) Farklı görüşler arasında konsensüs ve/veya uzlaşma

c) (Bütün) politika aktörlerinin katılımında liyakat

d) Öğretmenler, akademisyenler ve (ilgili) devlet memurları arasındaki iletişim ve iş birliğinin hayatiyeti

e) Üç grup arasında karşılıklı eğitim; her grubun diğerinden öğreneceği bir şey vardır!

f) Üç grup arasında karşılıklı suçlama ve aşağılama

Tema 6. Bütün diğer siyasi ideolojilerin üzerinde (ve dışında) ortak, en üst düzeyde bir eğitim ideolojisi oluşturmanın mutlak gerekliliği

Kategoriler

a) İhtiyaç duyulan eğitim ideolojisinin temel prensipleri – bir şemsiye ideoloji

b) Eğitim ideolojisi doğrultusunda sürdürülebilir, uzun vadeli (30-40 yıllık) eğitim ve öğretim politikaları

İkinci ana bölüm (eğitim politikalarının uygulanması) ile ilgili verilerden elde edilen 6 tema da kategorileri ile aşağıdaki gibidir:

Tema 7. Yeni politikaların düzgün uygulanabilmesi için, uygulayıcıların politikalar hakkında doğru ve uygun şekilde bilgilendirilmesinin büyük önemi

Kategoriler

a) Yeni politikanın “ne” olduğunu anlama; hatalı bilgilendirmeye bağlı sorunlar

b) Yeni politika hakkında doğru bilgilendirmenin sağlama alınması

Tema 8. Yeni politika/politika deęişikliğine karşı uygulayıcıların tavırları

Kategoriler

- a) Yeni politika ya da politika deęişikliğini benimseme konusunda uygulayıcı direnci
- b) Ne tür bir direnç/tepki?
- c) Dirençler nasıl azaltılır?
- d) Öğretmenlerin politika yapımına doğru katılımı dirençleri azaltmanın en iyi yolu olabilir.
- e) Yeni politikanın uygulayıcılar tarafından sahiplenilmesinin önemi
- f) Uygulayıcıların yeni politika uygulama sorunlarına yönelik hesap verebilirlik hissiyatı
- g) Politika uygulama sorunlarına karşı kim sorumlu olmalı?
- h) Uygulayıcıların (öğretmenlerin) yeni politikaları sahiplenmesi ve hesap vermesi için onların politika yapımına gerçek katılımı tam bir zorunluluktur!

Tema 9. Politika uygulamalarını etkileyen güçlü bir faktör olarak öğretmen kalitesi

Kategoriler

- a) Eğitim fakültelerinin öğretmen adaylarının seçimi ve kabulü için (önerilen) ölçütler
- b) Eğitim fakültelerinde yüksek kalitede eğitim verilmesi gerekli; ancak aksıyor!
- c) Öğretmen kalitesiyle ilgili etik boyutlar, stajyer öğretmen seçimi ve atanması bağlamında dikkate değerdir.
- d) Öğretmenlik mesleği için liyakate yönelik özelliklere öncelik verilmelidir.
- e) Stajyer öğretmenlerin resmî seçimi ve atanmasına yönelik (önerilen) temel formal ölçüt ve prensipler
- f) Uygulayıcıların politize olması (sakınılmalıdır)
- g) Eğitim programları ve öğretim açısından temel öğretmen kalitesi meseleleri

h) Öğretmen kalitesi ile ilgili olarak öğretmenlerin özeleştirileri

Tema 10. Uygulayıcı performansının etkili bir bileşeni olarak öğretmen motivasyonu

Kategoriler

a) Öğretmen motivasyonu düşük; bu durum, politikaların uygulanmasında ciddi sorunlara sebep oluyor.

b) Motivasyon ile ilgili öğretmenlerin ihtiyaçları MEB tarafından ya hiç sağlanamıyor ya da eksik bırakılıyor!

c) Motivasyonlarını ve kalitelerini yükseltmek için öğretmenlerin yapmaları gerekenler ...

Tema 11. Politika uygulaması bağlamında, öğretmenin kapasite geliştirme konusuyla öğretmen kalitesi arasındaki ilişki

Kategoriler

a) Kapasite geliştirme; Öğretmenin kapasitesi ve kalitesinin iyileş(tiril)mesi eğitim ve öğretimin iyileşmesine öncülük eder.

b) MEB yüksek kapasiteli öğretmenleri görevlendirmeyi ve onlara danışmayı tercih ediyor; o halde, onlara kapasitelerini geliştirebilmesi için destek olmalı.

Tema 12. Yeni politikaların düzgün uygulanabilmesine yönelik beklentiler ve tavsiyeler

Kategoriler

a) Yeni politika veya politika değişikliğinin uygulamasında süreç şu şekilde olursa başarılı olur: ... (yaklaşım ile ilgili özellikler)

b) Yeni politika veya politika değişikliğinin uygulamasında süreç şu şekilde olursa başarılı olur: ... (prensiplerle ilgili özellikler)

Politika yapımı süreçlerine katılım ile ilgili olarak iki önemli sayısal bulgu elde edilmiştir: Birinci bulgu bizzat katılım ile ilgilidir. MEB tarafından yürütülen politika yapımı süreçlerinden en azından bir tanesine katılmış olan öğretmen sayısı 1 (15 katılımcı içinden), akademisyen sayısı 1 (9 katılımcı arasından) ve devlet memuru sayısı 13 (14 katılımcı içinden). Diğer taraftan, katılımcılardan Milli Eğitim Şûralarına en azından bir defa katılmış olan öğretmen bulunmamakta iken, 1 akademisyen ve 11 memurun katılmış olduğu

ortaya çıkmıştır. İkinci nicel bulgu ise MEB tarafından yürütülen herhangi bir politika yapımı sürecine görüş/öneri bildirmeye ilişkindir. *Kendisinden istenmesi sonucunda* görüş/teklif sunan öğretmen sayısı 2, akademisyen sayısı 1 ve memur sayısı 13'tür. Yine bu bağlamda, *kendisinden istenmeden, gönüllü olarak* görüş/teklif sunan öğretmen sayısı 1, akademisyen bulunmamakta ve memur sayısı 2'dir.

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Araştırma bulguları dört ana başlık altında tartışılmıştır: 1) Yeni politika yapımı gerektiren sorunların tespiti ve politika yapımı süreci, 2) Eğitim politikası yapımında araştırmalardan faydalanma; değerlendirme, KDP ve DEA. 3) Politika uygulama süreci ve 4) Üç gruptaki katılımcıların algıları arasındaki benzerliklerin ve farklılıkların tartışılması.

1) Yeni politika yapımı gerektiren sorunların tespiti ve politika yapımı süreci.

İlgili literatürde en çok üzerinde durulan ve tartışılan konu olan *katılım* bu çalışma da benzer şekilde ön plana çıkmıştır. Yeni politika yapımını gerektiren meselelerin tespitinde hükümetlerin katılımı çoğunlukla manipülasyon şeklinde etki yapmak olarak kendini göstermektedir; zira, kendi ajandalarında önceden belirlenmiş meseleler için eğitim politikaları oluşturmaya zemin hazırlamaktadırlar. Uluslararası testlerde alınan düşük notlar ve sıralamalarda Türkiye'den katılan öğrencilerin son sıralarda yer almaları da yeni politika yapımına sebep olan sorun kaynağı olarak görülmektedir. Öğretmenlerden gelen dönüt, görüş ve öneriler en önemli kaynak olarak değerlendirilmesi gerekirken çoğunlukla yok sayılmaktadır. Akademisyenlerinkiler de benzer şekilde göz ardı edilmektedir. Bu yüzden hem öğretmenler hem de akademisyenler görüş ve öneri sunmaktan kaçınmaktadırlar. Hatta bu durum "Nasıl olsa görüşlerim önemsenmeyecek; neden boşu boşuna bildireyim!" biçiminde, bir katılımcının ifadesiyle "öğrenilmiş çaresizlik" rahatsızlığı boyutuna ulaşmaktadır. Ayrıca, öğretmenler görüş ve öneri sunmayı kendileri için bir ek yük ve çoğunlukla formalitenin yerine getirilmesi olarak görmektedirler. Milli Eğitim Şûraları da bu

bağlamda etkili bir katılım sağlayamamakta; çoğu kararları sadece tavsiye niteliğinde kalmaktadır. Kısacası, hükümet kaynakları dışında herhangi bir öneri veya görüş onlarınkilerle örtüşmediği sürece nazarıtibara alınmamaktadır. Benzer durum ve hükümet tavrı, politika formülasyonu sürecinde de geçerlidir. Bu iki fazdaki faaliyetlerde paydaş katılımı ile ilgili derece/yüzde verilmesiyle ilgili katılımcı ifadelerinde, “karar verme ve politika yapımı süreçlerine % 70 oranında öğretmen, % 20 oranında akademisyen ve % 10 oranında devlet memuru katılımı” oranları en fazla sayıda katılımcı tarafından önerilmiştir. Bu sonuç araştırmadaki katılımcı algılarına göre öğretmenlerin bu süreçlerde rol almasının ne kadar önemli olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu konuda birkaç husus daha belirtmeye değerdir: Zamanlama paydaş katılımında çok önemlidir; süreçlerin en başından itibaren bütün katılımlar değerlendirilmelidir (Bu konu OECD tarafından neredeyse bütün ilgili dokümanlarda vurgulanmaktadır).

Hükümetlerin siyasi ve ideolojik yaklaşımları eğitim politikası yapımını olumsuz etkileyen önemli faktörlerden biri olarak algılanmıştır. Bu bağlamda alt sorunlar, müfredat ve diğer unsurlar vasıtasıyla ideolojik empozeler, sık politika ve kadro değişiklikleri, partizanlık, adam kayırmacılık ve liyakatsizlik ile zıt fikirlere ve eleştirilere karşı olumsuz tavırlardır. Bu sorunların sadece son dönemlere mahsus olmadığı, neredeyse 40-50 yıllık gelenekselleşmiş ve hatta ilgili kültürün bir parçası haline gelmiş olduğunun vurgulanması önemlidir. Bu süreçlerin düzgün yürüyebilmesi için yapılan önerilerden öne çıkanlar, demokratik tavır, şeffaflık ve hesap verebilirlik, konsensüs veya en azından uzlaşma, hakkaniyet ve liyakat gibi değer ve prensiplere uyulması gerekliliği ile paydaşlar arasında (karşılıklı suçlamalardan uzak) uyumlu ve verimli iletişim ve iş birliği tesis edilmesidir.

2) Eğitim politikası yapımında (bilimsel) araştırmalardan faydalanma; değerlendirmeler, KDP ve DEA.

Katılımcılar, eğitim programları ve öğretim ile ilgili politikaların araştırmaya dayalı olarak yapılması gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir. Bu bağlamda, üniversitelerden ve bilimsel bilgi edinilebilecek kaynaklardan yararlanılması uygundur. Veriye/kanıta dayalı politika yapımı ve düzenleyici etki analizi çalışmaları yönlendirmeleriyle, süreçlerde zaman, enerji ve maddi kaynak

kaybının en aza indirileceđi, olası sorunların erken tespit edilerek önlem alınabileceđi, yapılacak politikaların sürdürülebilir, kalıcı ve uzun ömürlü olacađı ve bu durumun da özellikle hükümetlere büyük fayda sağlayacađı, dolayısıyla ülkenin eğitim sistemine büyük destek olacađı değerlendirilmiştir.

3) Politika uygulama süreci.

Bu aşamaya yönelik elde edilen bulgulardan öne çıkanlardan ilki yeni politika ile ilgili olarak öğretmenlerin yeterli derecede bilgilendirilmedikleri, bu konuda MEB'in eksikliklerinin yanında, öğretmenlerin de hatalı tutumlarının olduğuna dikkat çekilmiştir. Öğretmenlerin uygulama sürecinde yeni politikalara yaklaşımları konusunda, onların zaman zaman uygulamaya karşı direnç gösterdikleri, çoğunlukla yeni politikayı sahiplenmedikleri, uygulamadaki aksaklıklar konusunda hesap verme hissiyatına sahip olmadıkları gibi meselelerin altının çizildiđi görülmüştür. Bu tür olumsuz öğretmen tutumlarının iki önemli sebebinin politika yapımı süreçlerinde onlara yeteri kadar rol verilmediđi, görüş ve önerilerinin alınmadıđı, alındıđında ise hakkıyla değerlendirilmediđi iddiaları ile öğretmenlerin, yeni politikalara yönelik yeterince bilgilendirilmedikleri gerekçeleri sunulmuştur. Ayrıca, öğretmen katılımcılar da dahil olmak üzere (bir tür öz eleştiri ya da itiraf olarak), öğretmenlerin kendilerinin de yeni politikalar konusunda yeterli profesyonel bilgiye ve diđer taraftan öğrenme isteđine sahip olmadıkları algıları da beyan edilmiştir.

Bu konulara bađlı olarak öğretmen kalitesi ile ilgili hususlar belirtilmiş ve çoğunlukla, kalite yetersizliğine ilişkin eleştirel meselelere değinilmiştir. Bu anlamda, iki nokta üzerinden yorum yapmak uygundur: Birincisi MEB'in eksik veya hataları (eđitim fakültelerine öğrenci kabulündeki genel sorunlar; öğretmen yetiştiren fakültelele 12 yıllık çok yönlü değerlendirme yapılarak alım yapmak yerine sadece 3-4 saatlik bir sınav (YKS) sonucuna göre öğrenci alımı; eğitim fakültelerindeki eğitimin yetersizliği; teorik eğitim yanında okullarda (K-12) bizzat pratik öğretime yeterli zaman ayırılmaması; öğretmen seçimi ve atanmalarıyla ilgili sorunlar ve diđerleri); İkincisi ise öğretmenlerin şahsi meseleleri (bilgi, beceri ve kendine güven eksiklikleri; motivasyon, mesleđe bađlılık ve kendini adama, kapasite geliştirme, kendini gerçekleştirme çabası

gibi üstün özelliklerle ilgili yetersizlikler). Bu bağlamda bir diğer önemli konu ise, bütün bu bahsedilen sorunların öğretmen motivasyonunu düşürdüğü ve dolayısıyla öğrenci motivasyonunun da azalmasına sebep olduğu ve böyle olunca hem öğretme hem de öğrenme ortamlarının olumsuz etkilenmesi yönündeki kuvvetli ihtimalin vurgulanmasıdır.

4) Üç gruptaki katılımcıların algıları arasındaki benzerliklerin ve farklılıkların tartışılması.

Bu bölümdeki hususlar tartışılırken, paydaş görüşlerinin aktarımında “adil davranma” (Lincoln ve Guba, 1989) ilkesine; doğruların kişi, ortam, zaman gibi unsurlara göre değişiklik gösterebileceği yaklaşımıyla “çoklu gerçeklikler” (Stake, 1995) felsefesine ve yapılan bilimsel bir çalışmanın *işe yarar* ve *harekete geçirici* sonuçlar oluşturmasının önemine atıfta bulunan “edimsel geçerlilik” (Miles ve Huberman, 1994) prensibine mümkün olduğunca uyulmasına özen gösterilmiştir.

Çalışmada üç gruptaki paydaş katılımcı algılarının yorumunda, diğerlerinden daha fazla öne çıkan ortak noktalar özetle şunlardır: Eğitim programları ve öğretim ile ilgili politika yapımında, adil ve etkili paydaş katılımı önemlidir. Oluşturulacak ideal eğitim ideolojisi haricinde hiçbir siyasi ideolojinin politika yapımı süreçlerini etkilememesi gerekir. Bu şemsiye ideolojinin, çoğulculuk, şeffaflık, konsensüs, uzlaşma ve hesap verilebilirlik ilkelerini temel alan demokratik, liyakatli, insancıl ve etik prensipler doğrultusunda oluşturulması zorunludur. Eğitim paydaşları arasında yakın ve sürekliliğe sahip iş birliği olmalıdır. Uzun vadeli ve sürdürülebilir eğitim politikaları yapılmalıdır. Öğretmenlerin eğitim politikaları yapımı süreçlerinde özel ve emsalsiz bir yeri olmalıdır. Öğretmenlerin eğitim politikalarını sahiplenme, onlarla ilgili hesap verebilme hissiyatını kazanabilecek ve bu bağlamda, motivasyonlarının yüksek tutulabileceği ortamların oluşturulması, öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen yetiştiren fakültelerin eğitim kalitesinin artırılması hem öğretmenlerin kendileri hem de bakanlık tarafından öğretmen kapasitesi geliştirme çabalarına ağırlık verilmesi bütün eğitim ekosisteminin yararına olacaktır.

Üç gurubun algılarındaki farklılıklar karşılıklı eleştiri ve hatta çoğunlukla birbirlerini suçlama olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Aralarındaki çelişkilere gerekçe gösterilen temel konular şunlardır: Öğretmenler, akademisyenleri okullara (K-12) pek gelmemekle, dolayısıyla okul eğitiminin yapıldığı gerçek eğitim dünyası hakkında yeterince bilgi sahibi olmadan fakültelerinde, oturdukları yerden *ahkam* kesmekle ve kendi kariyerlerinde yükselmek için, eğitime katkı yapmak için harcadıklarından daha fazla çaba göstermekle suçlarken, akademisyenler de öğretmenlere karşı eğitim ve öğretim teorileri hakkında yeterli bilgi sahibi olmadan öğretmenlik yaptıkları, öğrenmeye ve kendilerini geliştirmeye de pek niyetli olmadıkları, bu yüzden eksik ve yetersiz öğretim yaptıkları konularında eleştiri ve suçlamalarda bulunmaktadır. Genel anlamda bakıldığında, bu sorunlar eğitim-öğretim bağlamında teori ile pratik, yönetsel bağlamda politika yapımı ile politika uygulamaları arasındaki çelişki ve sorunlar olarak tanımlanabilir. Çözümleri ise iki grubun aralarındaki iletişim ve iş birliğini artırarak anlaşma ve ortak çalışma zeminlerini birlikte oluşturmalarıyla sağlanabilir. Benzer şekilde, öğretmenler, MEB memurlarını, kendilerine sürekli ekstra yük getiren, sıkıcı formalite ve bürokrasi işleri ile onların değerli zamanını alan, eğitim ve öğretim ile ilgili karar verme ve politika yapımı süreçlerinde öğretmenlerin görüş ve önerilerini önemsemeyen – aslında göstermelik olarak fikir ve dönüt alıyormuş gibi yapıp değerlendirmeden – siyasilere yönlendirmeleriyle hareket eden, ofislerinde oturup okullarda neler olup bittiğini, öğretmenlerin ne zorluklar yaşadığını bilmeden verimsiz işler yapan bürokratlar olarak değerlendirmektedir. Memurlar da öğretmenleri resmi bilgi, belge, yönetmelik ve talimatları doğru dürüst takip etmeden kendi bildikleri gibi davranan, yapılan eğitim politikalarını sahiplenmeyen, uygulamadaki aksaklıklar konusunda sorumluluk hissetmeyen, hesap vermekten imtina eden okullarda başlarına buyruk olarak çalışan kişiler olarak görmektedir. Diğer taraftan, akademisyenler de memurları öğretmenlerinkilere benzer konularda eleştirirken (gereksiz formalite ile yorma, karar alma ve politika yapımında onların ve öğretmenlerin görüşlerini değerlendirmeme vb.), memurlar da akademisyenleri öğretmenlerinkilere benzer konularda (okullardan uzak durma, sadece teoriye ve kendi kariyer işlerine ağırlık vermekle vb.) eleştirmektedir. Önemli ve umut

verici olan nokta şudur ki, her üç grup da kendileri hakkında benzer konularda öz eleştiri yapmaktadırlar. Bu durumda, bir anlamda, problemler tespit edilip kabullenildiğine göre, çözümü de kolay olacaktır; yeter ki, bu üç önemli paydaş bir araya gelip iş birliği ile çalışsınlar. Diğer taraftan, devlet memuru katılımcılar arasında emekli olanların ifadeleri – özellikle hükümeti ve diğer grupları eleştiren konularda – doğrudan ve daha güçlü iken aktif çalışan memurların benzer bağlamlardaki ifadeleri daha dolaylı ve oldukça zayıf ölçektektir. Mülakatlar esnasında da hem beden dili ve ses tonlarında, hem de kelime seçimi ve ifadelerde çalışan memurların çekingen tavırları gözlemlenmiş ve bu hususlara çalışmanın gerekli yerlerinde ek açıklamalarla değinilmiştir.

Öneriler

Bulguların yorumlanması ve tartışılması sonucunda iki başlık altında öneriler sunulmuştur:

Eğitim Uygulamaları ile İlgili Öneriler

1. Öğretmenler ve akademisyenlerden gelen dönüt, görüş ve öneriler eğitim programları ve öğretim ile ilgili yeni politika yapımını gerektiren esas kaynaklar olmalıdır; diğer bütün kaynaklar ikinci planda değerlendirilmelidir.

2. Eğitim politikası yapımında, hükümetler tarafından önyargılı, esnek olmayan, tamamen siyasi ideoloji ile tek taraflı olarak yönlendirilen tavır ve uygulamalar durdurulmalıdır; bu süreçler partizanlık ve kayırmacılıktan arınmış, şeffaf, liyakatli, çoğulcu ve demokratik yaklaşımlarla konsensüs veya uzlaşma arayan tavır ve uygulamalarla yönetilmelidir.

3. Öğretmenlerin katılım derecesi daha yüksek olmak üzere, bütün eğitim politikası yapım süreçlerinde uygun ve adil paydaş katılımı sağlanmalıdır. Paydaşların iletişim ve iş birliği verimli ve sürekli olmalıdır.

4. Önlem almanın tedaviden daha kolay ve iyi olduğu varsayımı ile, zaman, enerji ve maddi kayıpları da en aza indirmek için, süreçlerin her

aşamasında bilimsel araştırmalardan (KDP ve DEA gibi) elde edilecek bilgi ve yönlendirmeler esas alınmalıdır.

5. Süreçlerde aşağıdan yukarıya doğru karar verme mekanizmaları da yoğunlukla kullanılmalı; tepeden aşağıya karar mekanizmaları ile bir denge sağlanmalıdır.

6. Milli Eğitim Bakanı dahil MEB'deki bütün personel öğretmenlik mesleği kökeninden gelmeli ve (K-12) okul eğitiminde tecrübeli olmalıdır.

7. Milli Eğitim Şûraları hükümetlerin etkisi altında sadece tavsiye niteliği kararlar alan pasif bir kurum olmaktan çıkarılıp daha etkili ve verimli çalışan, politika yapımını yönlendirici bilimsel kurum haline getirilmelidir.

8. Bütün siyasi ideolojilerin üzerinde ve dışında olan ortak bir en üst düzey şemsiye eğitim ideolojisi oluşturulmalıdır; bu ideoloji evrensel eğitim prensipleri ile bilimsel, liyakatli ve etik özelliklere sahip, çok taraflı iş birliği ve uzlaşmaya açık demokratik yaklaşımlarla uzun vadeli eğitim politikaları üretebilecek niteliklerle bezenmelidir.

9. Paydaşlarının hayat boyu öğrenmeye alışkın, kurumlarının öğrenen organizasyonlar, düzenleme ve uygulamalarının mesleki ve ahlaki prensiplere bağlı kalıcı bir eğitim kültürü oluşturulmalıdır. Bu da zaman içinde kaliteli eğitim politikaları yapıp uygulanarak sağlanabilecektir. 40-50 yılda oluşup neredeyse kemikleşmiş mevcuttaki sorunlu kültürün dönüşümü oldukça zor ve uzun sürecektir; o yüzden acilen başlatılmalıdır.

10. Eğitim politikalarının düzgün uygulanabilmesi için uygulayıcılar (öğretmenler) bu politikalar hakkında çok iyi bilgilendirilmelidir; politikanın arkasındaki mantığı ve uygulama yöntemlerini iyi kavramış bir öğretmen pratiği başarılı kılacaktır.

11. Öğretmenlerin uygulayacağı yeni politika hakkında olumlu bir tutum geliştirmesi – içselleştirmesi, sahiplenmesi, kendini adanması, sorumluluk hissetmesi, hesap verebilir olması, direnç göstermemesi – sağlanmalıdır; Bunu gerçekleştirmek için MEB öğretmen motivasyonunu artıracak, onlara değer verdiğini gösterecek ve politika yapımının her aşamasında onların katılımını sağlayacak ortamlar oluşturmalıdır.

12. Eğitim politikalarının uygulama kalitesini yükseltmek için öğretmen kalitesinin yükseltilmesi gerekir. Bu doğrultuda, eğitim fakültelerine öğrenci alımında YKS sınav puanı, not ortalaması vb. ölçütler yanında, öğretmenlik mesleğine uygunluk testleri, komisyon mülakat ve incelemeleri, geçmiş öğrenim hayatındaki öğretmen, müdür ve rehberlik uzmanı görüş ve referansları gibi başka ölçütlerin de değerlendirilmesi, eğitim fakültelerindeki eğitim kalitesinin artırılması ve öğretmen adayı öğrencilere daha fazla pratik okul stajyer eğitimi verilmesi ile öğretmen atamalarında şeffaflık, liyakate uygunluk gibi prensiplere hassasiyet gösterilmesi uygun olacaktır.

13. Öğretmen motivasyonu artırılmalıdır. Bu meselenin MEB boyutunda öğretmene verilen değerin artırılması ve onlara hissettirilmesi, onların politika yapımı faaliyetlerine hakkaniyetli ve demokratik şekilde katılımının sağlanması ile doğru orantılıdır. Öğretmenin kendi açısından ise mesleğine karşı ilgi, istek, bilgi ve becerilerini artırmaya ve kapasitesini geliştirme gayret etmesiyle sağlanabilir. Diğer taraftan, öğretmenlerin de tabi olduğu 657 Sayılı Devlet Memurları Kanunu'nda değişiklikler yapılarak bir defa mesleğe alındıktan sonra yüz kızartıcı vb. suçlar haricinde neredeyse hiçbir olumsuz koşulda (işini savsaklama, mesleğinin bilimsel ve etik gerekliliklerini aksatma, zamana, müfredata ve okul kurallarına riayet etmeme, öğrenci, veli ve meslektaş ilişkilerinde yetersizlik, öğretmenlik mesleğini hakkıyla yerine getirecek bilgi ve becerilerden yoksunluk vb.) meslekten uzaklaştırılma/atılma gibi yaptırımlar uygulanamamaktadır. Bu tür – bir nevi lakayt – uygulamaları öğretmenlik mesleğinin kaldırması mümkün değildir ve böyle devam etmek toplumun geleceğini riske sokmak demektir. Ayrıca, yaygın bir durum olan, devlet okulunda görevli bir öğretmenin özel okuldakilere kıyasla – nasıl olsa beni kimse atamaz düşüncesiyle – daha disiplinsiz ve verimsiz çalışmasına bu yasa olanak vermektedir. Yasada değişikliklerin yanında, öğretmenin sicil durumuna etki edecek performans ve tutum değerlendirmelerine öğrenciler ve meslektaş/akran değerlendirmeleri de eklenirse, bahsi geçen olumsuz öğretmen tavırlarının düzelmesine katkı sağlanabilir. Zira, bir öğretmenin tutum ve performansını, eskiden olduğu gibi birkaç senede bir defa dersine girecek müfettişten ya da müdürden ziyade, ya da başak yöntem veya unsurlara kıyasla,

onun sürekli birlikte olduğu öğrencileri ve öğretmen arkadaşları çok daha sağlıklı olarak değerlendirebilir.

14. Çalışmayla ilgili çok genel ve kapsayıcı bir öneri olarak eğitim politikalarının kaliteli, uzun ömürlü ve sürdürülebilir olması için, yapım süreçlerinin katılımcı, liyakatli, şeffaf, hesap verilebilir, güvenilir, uzlaşmacı ve iş birliğine dayalı olması, demokratik, önyargısız, çoğulcu, dengeli ve apolitik bir yaklaşımla yönetilmesi gerekir.

15. Oldukça yenilikçi bir yaklaşımla yapılan son öneri ise Türkiye’de okul eğitim ve öğretimini ciddi anlamda baltalayan, öğretmenleri *ölümcül* bir şekilde tamamen sınava yönelik öğretme faaliyetlerine yönlendiren, hemen her koşulda, ortama, zamana ve bireye bağlı olarak birden fazla doğrunun olabileceği değerlendirilen günümüzün ideal yaklaşımlarına aykırı olan ve aynı zamanda yaratıcılığı külliye öldüren *tek* doğruyu seçmeye zorlayan çoktan seçmeli sınavların (kademeli olarak) kaldırılmasıdır. Çalışmaya katılan her üç gruptaki katılımcıların algılarından çıkarım yapıldığında, bütün K-12 eğitim sistemini, özellikle öğretmenlerin uygulamalarını (örneğin, Beden Eğitimi, Resim/Müzik Eğitimi, Yabancı Dil gibi derslerin haftalık ders saatlerinin Matematik ve diğer fen derslerine paylaştırılması; yaratıcılık, probleme çözme, öğrenilenleri yeni durumlara uyarılma gibi becerilerden ziyade hızlı işlem yapma ve bilgi ezberlemeye yönelik öğretim yapmaya yönelme vb.) sadece öğrencileri sıralama amaçlı sınavlara hazırlamaya zorlayan durumların bütün eğitim ekosistmine zarar verdiği dair ciddi uyarılar tespit edilmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, çalışma bulgularının yorumundan hareketle yapılan bu öneri, öğrenciler ve veliler üzerinde üst düzey stres yaratması ile de neredeyse onarılamaz yaralar açan LGS ve YKS sistemlerinin ikisi için de geçerlidir. 8 ya da 12 yıl boyunca, birçok sınava girmiş, yüzlerce not almış, çok sayıda öğretmen, rehberlik uzmanı, okul müdürü/müdür yardımcısının eğitimine ve gözlemine tabi olmuş öğrencilerin böyle zengin bir geçmiş (sicil) bilgisi ve referans bilgisi elimizde iken sadece yılda bir defa yapılan – alternatifsizlikten dolayı bu durum da ayrı bir stres meselesidir – birkaç saatlik oturumla uygulanan sınavlarla öğrencileri bir üst kuruma yerleştirmek gibi garip bir sistem içinde olmamamız gerekir. Zira, 8-12 yılda sıralayamadığımız, hangisinin hangi

fakültede okumasına karar veremediğimiz öğrencileri 3-4 saatlik sınav sonuçlarına göre sıralayıp fakültelere yerleştirmek ne kadar doğru ve sağlıklıdır? Diğer taraftan, bu sınavların hem ailelere hem de ülkeye çok büyük bir maddi külfet getirdiği ve bu masrafların son derece gereksiz yere yapıldığı da aşikârdır.

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Benzer konularda gelecekte yapılacak çalışmalarla ilgili öneriler de şöyledir:

1. Bu çalışma haricindeki diğer eğitim programları ve öğretim alanı paydaşlarının da eğitim politikası yapımı ile ilgili algılarının araştırılması ve karşılaştırılması.

2. Sadece eğitim politikası süreçlerine *katılım* üzerine odaklanmış çalışmalar yapılması.

3. Politika yapımı bağlamında, *çoğulculuk, konsensüs veya uzlaşma, diyalog, eşitlik ve adalet* kavramları ile ilgili Türkiye kontekstinde eleştirel yaklaşımla çalışmalar yapılması ve bulguların demokratik eğitimde ileride olmakla tanınan diğer ülkelerle kıyaslanması.

4. Eğitime siyasi ideolojilerin karışmasının dinamikleri ve etkilerinin araştırılması ve olası zararlarının vurgulanması.

5. Okullar ve fakültelerde eğitim politikası yapımında paydaş iş birliği üzerine çalışmalar yapılması.

6. “Üst düzey eğitim ideolojisi” kavramının oluşumuna katkı sağlamak için daha fazla bilimsel araştırma yapılması.

7. Bu ve benzer çalışmaların genellenebilirlik özelliğine katkı sağlamak için aynı konuda karma metot ve nicel çalışmalar yapılması.

8. Öğretmen performansı ve tutumlarının öğrencileri ve meslektaşları tarafından (da) değerlendirilmesi üzerine çalışmalar yapılması.

9. Öğretmelerin “sınava yönelik öğretim” uygulamaları ve öğrenci seçme/sıralama sınavlarının (LGS ve YKS) olumlu ve olumsuz yönleri ile ilgili çalışmalar yapılması.

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