

Examine private school policies in Turkey in terms of public policy discipline

Examinar as políticas escolares privadas na Turquia em termos de disciplina de políticas públicas

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine private school policies in Turkey in terms of public policy discipline. In the study, private schools were examined in the context of public policy process analysis in five stages, "agenda setting, policy formulation, enactment, implementation, evaluation". Research data was analyzed through document analysis, which is one of the qualitative research analysis methods. The documents examined for the collection of data in this research consist of the Council of National Education, Government Programs, the law and regulations. According to the results obtained from the research findings; the establishment of private schools in Turkey dates back to the Ottoman Empire and it has been determined that this trend continued after the proclamation of the Republic, especially after the 1980s, when neo-liberal policies began to be implemented. In addition, it has been determined that the decisions of the Ministry of National Education Council and the Government Programs are effective in the formation of private school policies in Turkey. It should not be forgotten that the formulated education policies should not only focus on the increase in quantity, but also should be prepared to increase the quality in education.

Keywords: Education; private school; public policy; education policy in Turkey.

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Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo é examinar as políticas escolares privadas na Turquia em termos de disciplina de políticas públicas. No estudo, as escolas privadas foram examinadas no contexto da análise do processo de políticas públicas em cinco etapas, "estabelecimento de agenda, formulação de políticas, promulgação, implementação, avaliação". Os dados da pesquisa foram analisados através da análise de documentos, que é um dos métodos de análise qualitativa da pesquisa. Os documentos examinados para a coleta de dados nesta pesquisa consistem do Conselho de Educação Nacional, Programas Governamentais, a lei e os regulamentos. De acordo com os resultados obtidos a partir dos resultados da pesquisa; o estabelecimento de escolas privadas na Turquia remonta ao Império Otomano e foi determinado que esta tendência continuou após a proclamação da República, especialmente depois dos anos 80, quando as políticas neoliberais começaram a ser implementadas. Além disso, foi determinado que as decisões do Ministério do Conselho Nacional de Educação e dos Programas Governamentais são eficazes na formação de políticas escolares privadas na Turquia. Não se deve esquecer que as políticas de educação formuladas não devem se concentrar apenas no aumento da quantidade, mas também devem estar preparadas para aumentar a qualidade da educação.

Palavras-chave: Educação; escola privada; política pública; política educacional na Turquia.

Introduction

In a constantly changing and developing world, the way to keep up with innovations, to become modern and to be a developed and happy society passes through education (Keskin & Turna 2010: 411). Therefore, the importance of investment in education is an undeniable fact. Education is an element that contributes to the development of countries and increases both social and economic welfare. Countries for instance New Zealand, Mexico, Brazil, USA, UK, Germany (OECD, 2021) focus on investing in education and training institutions in order to reduce inequalities between people, contribute to individual and social development, increase productivity and efficiency, and improve economic growth (Bozyiğit, 2017: 525).

Education is an individual's process of bringing about the desired change in own behaviour through own life and intentionally. Differentiation of behaviour can only happen through the individual's own life. If an individual's behaviour is changed as planned and voluntarily, it may be called education. Education occurs as a result of change in which all these take place in a period of time (Adem, 1993: 15). According to another definition, education is all of the studies which aim to develop the mental, physical, emotional, social abilities and behaviours of the person in the most appropriate or desired direction, and to provide him new abilities, behaviours and information for a set of purposes (Akyüz, 2016: 2).

Education is a phenomenon that concerns societies and all individuals living in the societies. The basic element that affects the development of states and nations in scientific, technological, economic and humanitarian fields is education (Yeşilyurt, 2020: 10). Educational policies are organized in order to achieve predetermined goals on the basis of the mission attributed to education. For this reason, it is important to analyze and evaluate education policies in order to reveal the purposes for which educational organizations are shaped and operated by the forces that determine the policies, and in order to determine to what extent these goals can be achieved (Özdem, 2015: 632).

It is a necessity to seek solutions to educational problems, to make education better, to progress it in unity with training, and to address all aspects of education. In this respect,

education should be evaluated as a whole and individuals should be prepared for the future by taking measures related to education together with all the components that make up the society. In this context, it should be ensured that education policies suitable for the age are produced and these policies become functional. That is because education directly affects the development of a country. Education and education policy in development is to a large extent a strategic instrument of orderly social change. It is seen that the countries to have increased the quality of human resources and to have trained the required workforce in sufficient numbers are developed countries. On the other hand, most of the underdeveloped countries have serious problems in training the workforce that their economies need (Çakmak, 2008: 35-37; Altınışık & Peker, 2008: 113). For this reason, it is of great importance that the implemented education policies are functional.

Public policies are defined as the choices and actions of governments in addressing particular problems. Dye (2012: 5-6) defines public policies as “anything that the political power (government) chooses to do or not to do”. Anderson (2014: 6-7), on the other hand, describes public policy as “a series of purposeful actions or inactions developed by state bodies and public officials, followed by the actor or actors regarding a certain issue or problem”. In addition, public policies emerge after the struggle between the demands and different perspectives of many actors in the formation process (Yıldız & Sobacı, 2013: 14). Thus, it can be stated that the primary duty of those who come to power is to create policies that meet the demands and expectations of the people.

One of the fields of study of the public policy discipline is education policies. Unlike other social services, education is a long-term effort. For that reason, the need for contemporary education policies is pretty much (Tural & Karakütük, 1991: 20). The success of the education system primarily depends on the determination of the goals, objectives, principles and methods on the issue, and therefore on the education policies implemented. Education policy means educational work. It is to make clear what needs to be done in education in the context of principles. (Özen et al., 2007: 120). Education policy is the general plan, which is prepared as a basis for the decisions to be taken by a society, an organization or an educational institution in order to achieve the determined educational goals, and includes the opinions and judgments appropriate to the changing social and economic factors (Yılmaz, 2004). In addition, it can be expressed as the execution of the educational activities carried out in reaching the determined educational goals of a society within the framework of political decisions in a planned and programmed way, taking into account the economic and social changes; or in other words that is, all the principles and decisions put forward by the political power on education.

Educational service may be provided in schools opened by individuals or private organizations as well as the state (Bozyiğit, 2017: 522). Educational institutions whose expenses are not covered by the state are called private schools. These institutions which are apart from public schools can provide education at all levels, from kindergarten to university. Private schools may be individual enterprises or they may belong to some aid organizations or foundations (Bingölbali, 2018: 2). In another definition, private school is conceptualised as; institutions whose costs, income and expenses are covered by real or legal persons, and inspection and supervision is conducted by the Ministry of National Education (Memduhoğlu, 2008: 35; İlgar, 2014: 262).

In Turkey, there are private schools active alongside public schools in the education sector. Although the establishment of private schools in Turkey, which offer many opportunities

especially full-time education and social activity opportunities to the issues such as the inadequacy of public schools and the desire of families for a better education to their children, dates back to the Ottoman Empire, while it expanded with the establishment of the Republic and has gained momentum especially after the 1980s under the effect of neo-liberal policies (Gök, 2004: 100-101). Although the establishment of private schools alongside public schools seems to have created a dual structure in education, it can be stated that it fulfils an important function in eliminating some deficiencies in the Turkish education system.

When the literature is examined, the fact that private schools and private school policies in Turkey have not been examined in terms of public policy has been effective in determining the subject of the study. The main purpose of the study is to examine private school policies in Turkey in terms of public policy discipline.

Development of private schools in Turkey

Private schools are not new in terms of the Turkish education system, they have been practiced during almost a century (Açıklalın, 1989). Primary schools and madrasahs, which are accepted to be the first official education and training institutions of the Ottoman Empire, have the status of foundation (waqf). Although those schools were operated as a kind of private school since these schools were conducted by foundations and philanthropic citizens, it cannot be said that they are fully private (Özkaya, 1992: 7). The history of private educational institutions affiliated to foundations in the Ottoman Empire dates back to before the 19th century. The existence of private schools in today's sense goes back to the Tanzimat Period (1839), and their first appearance in official documents starts with the Reform Edict (1856).

Education and training were brought under the supervision and control of the state with the General Education Regulations (Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi) issued in 1869 and The Basic Law (Kanûn-ı Esâsî) of 1876. In the 1869 General Education Regulation, schools were named as "General Schools (Mekatib-i Umumiye)" and "Private Schools (Mekatib-i Hususiye)". The "Private Schools" in this arrangement constitutes the first examples of today's private schools (Kaya & Akgün, 1997: 47). The school, which was opened by Darüşşafaka-i İslamiyye in June 1873 and is still active with the name Private Darüşşafaka Primary School and High School, is the first example of private schools (Akyüz, 2016: 276).

In the 1900s, private schools made significant progress. By 1903, the number of private schools in Istanbul was 28. In the early 1900s, the number of Catholic and Protestant schools throughout the country exceeded 300 (Kulaksızoğlu et al, 1999: 3). In 1915, the Regulation on Private Schools was issued and it was accepted that foreigners and minorities could open schools only in their neighbourhoods or villages, and that Turkish language would be taught by Turkish teachers (Akyüz, 2016: 277).

It can be stated that a different process about private schools started with the Law of Unification of Education, which was enacted on March 3, 1924, after the proclamation of the Republic. All schools, including private schools, were connected to the Ministry of National Education with the "Law of Unification of Education" (Akyüz, 2016: 374-375).

In this period, the quantitative excess of foreign schools and the fact that families sent their children to foreign schools were accepted as the deficiency of Turkish private schools in this field and establishing of private schools was encouraged. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

expressed this demand in his speech at the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1925 and he stated that private initiatives should be carried out in order for private schools to become widespread (Aslan, 2019: 268). The first of these initiatives was the establishment of the “Turkish Education Society” on January 31, 1928. After the foundation of the society, the first private school was opened and started its education life in Ankara in 1931. In 1946, the society changed its name and transformed to the Turkish Education Association (TED). According to the establishment protocol of TED, it was aimed to establish dormitories for intelligent and successful students who could not find the opportunity to receive education materially and spiritually; and thus to contribute to the education of poor children in Anatolia (Çelebi, 2004: 37, <https://www.ted.org.tr>, Access date: 26.09.2021).

The development of private schools became extremely stagnant until the 1961 Constitution came into force (Aslan, 2019: 269). In Article 21 of the 1961 Constitution, it was accepted that education and training were free under the supervision and control of the state, and it was stated that the status of private schools would be arranged by legal regulations. In the 7th National Education Council held in 1962, unlike the previous Councils, the issue of private schools came to the fore for the first time. The need for making the necessary legal arrangements for the dissemination of private schools was brought to the agenda at the council (MNE, Board of Education, <https://ttkb.meb.gov.tr>, Access date: 23.08.2021). Hereby, the necessary structural conditions for the widespread of private schools were provided. In this context, legal arrangements were made for the expansion of private schools (Aslan, 2019: 269). Private Education Institutions Law No. 625 was enacted in 1965 (Bingölbali, 2018: 3). During early 1980s, studies began to increase the number of private schools, but the progress about private schools accelerated after 1985. The reason is that the laws enacted after this date, the regulations prepared based on these laws and the incentives applied made it easier to open private education institutions (Özkaya, 1992: 11).

Although universities could only be established by the state in accordance with the 1982 Constitution; private schools were also openly encouraged by the state with the regulations such as laws, circulars, etc., especially after 1985. The law on private schools was regulated by the Law on Private Education Institutions dated 11 July, 1984, numbered 3035, and various provisions.

Methods

Research Method

Qualitative research methods have become increasingly widespread in policy analysis and policy research, and they try to analyze the policy process in a holistic and inclusive way by approaching complex policy problems from a different and broader perspective than quantitative analysis (Altınışık, 2021: 29). For this reason, document analysis method was used in this study, which is one of the qualitative research methods.

The Research Instrument

The research data was collected through document analysis method, which is one of the qualitative research methods. Document analysis method includes the analysis of written materials containing information about the case or cases aimed to be investigated (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016: 189). Document analysis makes it possible to analyze documents produced within a certain period of time about a research problem or documents produced by more than one source and at different intervals on a related subject (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016: 140-143).

Data Analysis

Document analysis method is defined as obtaining, reviewing, questioning and analyzing various documents, which are considered as primary or secondary sources that make up the data set of the research. Document analysis method is a systematic process for examining or evaluating both printed and electronic materials (Özkan, 2021: 2). The document analysis method is defined as the technique used to identify, categorize, research and interpret the boundaries of physical resources. Document analysis method includes an analysis of the content of the document rather than making a summary or explanation of a document related to the research topic and, in most cases, examining the message, intention and motive to be given in the document within a certain historical or contemporary context (Özkan, 2021: 3). In order for documents to be used as a data source; It is expected that the source is both qualified and closely related to the research problem. It is possible to use internationally valid documents as well as the use of official documents of a country, such as the legal basis, development plans and council decisions on education.

The documents examined for the collection of data in this research consist of the Council of National Education, Government Programs, the laws and the regulations (Private Education Institutions Law No. 625, Private Education Institutions Law No. 5580, Regulation on Private Education Institutions of the Ministry of National Education). Therefore, these documents were used as primarily data sources. Each resource in the study was examined and analyzed regarding private schools. The sources obtained were analyzed with descriptive analysis.

The Findings

Arrival of Private Schools on the Agenda

Private schools came to agenda with the formation of private education, which continued its activities in an unspecified manner in the Ottoman period. The number of foreign schools that benefited from the gap due to the lack of a law regulating education and training in the Ottoman Empire increased significantly until 1869. Minorities and foreigners living in Istanbul during the Ottoman period opened schools to receive education in their own language and to implement their own education policies. As a result of the loss of function of the madrasahs and the spread of foreign schools, the Ottoman state established a “Ministry of

General Education (Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti)” and tried to ensure the control of foreign schools (Polatoğlu, 1990: 19).

Private schools first came to the fore in our history, when foreign schools were enacted by a law. Within those regulations, private schools were opened also by the Turkish people until the Republic. The state supported the opening of private schools by Turks, as Turkish families sent their children to schools opened for foreigners to receive education, with the idea of providing a better education for their children and acquiring a good foreign language education (Akyüz, 2016: 375).

With the Republic, the Turkish Education Association was established and a private kindergarten was opened by this association, in order to save Turkish children who went to foreign schools. Private schooling has come to the agenda periodically since the proclamation of The Republic of Turkey, and private education and preparatory teaching institutions have also come to the fore since the first years of the republican period, due to the exams for passing to higher education (Uygun, 2003: 114).

Formulation of Public Policies on Private Schools

Every individual’s right to education is guaranteed by the constitution. Educational policies to increase the quality about that right to education are made by the Ministry of National Education on behalf of the public. It can be stated that the public policies to be implemented in the field of education come to the fore in the Councils of the Ministry of National Education and government programs. Recommendations regarding education are taken by the national education councils. Government programs also reflect the education policies that the political power will implement during the period of the government to be established (İnan & Demir, 2008: 345). Opinions about private schools in the National Education Council can be listed as follows (MNE, Board of Education, <https://tkb.meb.gov.tr>, Access date: 23.08.2021).

a) 6th National Education Council (5-15 February, 1962):

Private schools came to the fore for the first time at the 6th National Education Council held on February 5-15, 1962. It was stated in the council that "The necessity of preparing laws and regulations to include encouraging and supportive measures for the development and spread of private education institutions in an order suitable for the same level as the official education institutions". It was decided that the draft law and regulations regarding private schools will be prepared as soon as possible and submitted to the examination of the Board of Education and Discipline by the General Directorate of Private Schools.

b) 12th National Education Council (18-22 June, 1988):

In the 12th National Education Council held on 18-22 July 1988, it was decided regarding private schools that; “taking measures to encourage private and legal persons to open private education institutions including vocational and technical schools, excluding military, religious and law enforcement schools at secondary level, in accordance with the provisions of the legislation; arranging the principles to which these schools depend, in accordance with the level desired to be achieved with public schools; (ii) making legal arrangements that will enable the private sector to open colleges, especially vocational colleges, under the management and supervision of the state, by providing all kinds of incentives to the private sector, even those except foundations; (iii) adding education share to TRT’s advertising revenues and ensuring

that it is allocated to education services. Decisions were taken on the issues of ensuring that a certain amount of share is taken from private courses and preparatory teaching institutions until a favorable solution is reached and regulations are made on the issue.”

c) 14th National Education Council (27-29 September, 1993):

At the 14th National Education Council held on 27-29 September 1993, decisions were taken on (i) encouraging and supporting the private sector to found schools and establish universities; (ii) encouraging and supporting municipalities, state economic enterprises, foundations, religious organizations and other private entrepreneurs to open pre-school education institutions (iii) establishing the "pre-school education fund" for the development, dissemination and institutionalization of pre-school education.

d) 15th National Education Council (13-17 May, 1996):

At the 15th National Education Council convened on 13-17 May 1996, the following decisions regarding private schools were taken; (i) private education institutions providing secondary education should be encouraged, and vocational programs of these institutions should be incentivized; (ii) long-term education loans should be provided by the banks to students in public and private schools or their parents; (iii) private schools and private non-formal vocational and technical courses should also be taken into account in the preparation of city development plans, and low or free land should be allocated to private schools and non-formal vocational technical courses; (iii) tax supports should be provided to private schools and non-formal vocational and technical courses; (iv) public incentive measures should be taken to reduce the operating costs of private schools and non-formal vocational and technical courses; (v) public subsidies should be provided to private schools. However, this subsidy must not exceed 50% of unit student expenditure in public schools.

e) 16 th National Education Council (13-17 November, 1999):

At the 16th National Education Council held on 13-17 November 1999, the following decisions were taken regarding private schools, (i) private sector should be encouraged to open vocational and technical education schools; (ii) establishment of vocational and technical education institutions, vocational training activities in workplaces, by the private sector should be supported through incentives such as Income and Corporate Tax exemption, reduction of VAT rates, tax refund, etc.

f) 17th National Education Council (13-17 November, 2006):

The following decisions were taken regarding private schools at the 17th National Education Council held on 13-17 November 2006; (i) the private sector should be encouraged to open pre-school education institutions; (ii) the private sector should be encouraged to invest in education, and services should be purchased from the private sector; (iii) it should be ensured that private education institutions offer training also in the fields of vocational and technical education and non-formal education.

g) 18th National Education Council (1-5 November, 2010):

The following decisions regarding private schools were taken, at the 18th National Education Council convened on 1-5 November 2010; (i) in order to increase the quality of education, private schools should be encouraged and their number should be increased, and the families who send their children to private schools should be supported as much as half the cost of a student's education in public schools, and in this way, the education expenditures of the state should be reduced; (ii) necessary measures in accordance with 2023 Vision should be taken to increase the enrolment rate in private education to 25%; (iii) taxes and insurance

premiums on employment of private institutions and organizations operating in the field of education should be collected according to priority regions in development, the capacity of private schools should be increased by purchasing services, and the problem regarding land allocation should be resolved.

Opinions about private schools in government programs can be listed as follows:

a) 45th Government Program (13.12.1983-21.12.1987):

When the 45th Government Program is examined, it is seen to be stated that; individuals and private institutions will be able to provide education and training services within the rules to be set by the state, however it is also stated that education and training are among the fundamental missions of the state.

b) 50th Government Program (25.06.1993-05.10.1995):

In the 50th government program, it was stated that; arrangements will be made about public lands in order to meet the land needs of private entrepreneurs in education investments, and private education investments will continue to be encouraged through taxation.

c) 53rd Government Program (06.03.1996-28.06.1996):

In the 53rd government program, “encouraging private sector to open schools and foundations to establish private universities; encouraging and supporting this segment to take a greater role in the development of education, technical methods and technologies, and the production of educational tools and equipment” were the mentioned on the issue.

d) 54th Government Program (28.06.1996-30.06.1997):

In the 54th Government program, the mentioned measures about private education are “encouraging private sector to open schools; promoting this section to take a greater role in the development of education, technical methods and technologies, and in the production of educational tools and equipment”.

e) 58th Government Program (18.11.2002-14.03.2003):

In the 58th Government program, it was stated that “private enterprise will be supported in every field of education and the share of private enterprise in education will be increased”.

f) 61st Government (6.07.2011-29.08.2014):

During the 61st government period, private teaching institutions were transformed into private schools, and various steps were taken to initiate a process that would increase the share of the private sector in education. In this context, various measures were envisaged in order to encourage the establishment of private schools.

When the National Education Councils and Government Programs are evaluated in general, it is seen that the incentives for private schools will be increased in almost every period and the necessity of state support has been emphasized (GNAT, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr>, Access date: 23.08.2021).

Legislation on Private Schools

The first law on private schools was enacted on June 8, 1965, with the name of “Private Education Institutions Law No. 625”. The Law on Private Education Institutions was prepared in great detail. All types of private schools such as Turkish, foreign, minority etc. were covered by this law. The general objectives that these schools have to comply with, the basic

principles, their place in the system, the qualifications of the teachers they will assign, the school buildings and facilities, educational tools and equipment, their duties and responsibilities in the field of education and training were determined in detail (Uygun, 2003: 114).

With the 27th and 42nd Articles of the 1982 Constitution and by the year 1985, foreign real and legal persons in a joint with Turkish citizens were allowed to found private schools in order to encourage foreign capital. Private Education Institutions Regulation was issued for the first time on June 23, 1985. Determination of Private school fees was made free with the Decree Law No. 326 dated June 23, 1988. With the Law No. 4771, dated August 3., 2002 and enacted for harmonization with the European Union acquis, within the scope of private education institutions belonging to foundations, community foundations became able to own and save on real estates in order to meet their religious, social, educational, sanitary and cultural needs with the permission of the Council of Ministers (Küçükçayır & Cemaloğlu, 2017: 2).

Private Education Institutions Law No. 625 was repealed with the Law on Private Education Institutions dated 08.02.2007 and numbered 5580. After 2007, some changes were made in the Law No. 5580 (Law on Private Educational Institutions, <https://ookgm.meb.gov.tr> Access date: 10.10.2021). The Regulation of the Ministry of National Education on Private Education Institutions dated 20.03.2012 and numbered 28239 was prepared being based on the Law No. 5580 and the Articles 13 and 36 of the Decree Law No. 652 on the Organization and Duties of the Ministry of National Education dated 25/8/2011. With this regulation, the procedures and principles regarding the opening and operation of private education institutions of all degrees and types were regulated (MNE, The regulation on Private Education Institutions, 2008).

Private Education Institutions Law No. 5580 consists of 16 articles. The purpose of the law is stated in Article 1 of the Law. Accordingly, anyone who wants to engage in an activity related to private education in Turkey has to act within the framework of this law.

According to Article 3 of the Law on Private Education Institutions; Private education institutions can be opened by real persons who are Turkish citizens, private legal entities or legal entities subject to private law provisions. The Ministry of National Education is authorized to establish and activate the institution. The necessary qualifications and appointments regarding the administrators, teachers, master trainers and personnel who will work in these private education institutions are stated in the 2nd and 3rd articles of the Law on Private Education Institutions and in the Regulation on Special Education Institutions. School principals and (if any) general director, founder or founding representative are appointed with the approval of the Ministry of National Education according to the relevant documents.

Teachers who will work in private education institutions are required to meet the requirements and qualifications in official education institutions, according to which they can be appointed as teachers to all kinds of institutions and organizations. In addition, work permit approvals are obtained from the governorship before they start to work. (MNE, Regulation on Private Education Institutions, 2008, article 32.) In 2014, the legal process regarding the closure of preparatory schools or their conversion to private schools was initiated with the Law No. 6528 on the Amendment of the National Education Basic Law and Some Laws and Decrees (Aslan, 2019: 271).

Implementation of Public Policies Regarding Private Schools

In Turkish education system, private schools are also state-affiliated institutions, and the public policies and decisions taken in general are also directly related to private schools. In addition, there are also public policies implemented especially for private schools. In this context; with the transition to 8-year compulsory education, the secondary school sections of private schools were closed, and only the high school sections continued to operate. With the transition to the 4+4+4 education system, private secondary schools were reopened. Due to the fact that high school education has become compulsory, interest in private high schools has increased. The state support for students of private schools, which has been put into practice since the 2014-2015 education and training period, has increased the interest in private schools. There has been an increase in the number of private kindergartens as the age for starting education was decreased to 60 months. With the closing of private preparatory institutions in 2014 and their transformation into private schools, those who met the specified conditions turned into private schools. Thus, interest in private high schools has increased in preparation for university exams. There has been a significant increase in the number of private schools.

Evaluation of Public Policies Related to Private Schools

Although there have been periodic decreases in the number of private pre-schools, when evaluated in general, the number of private pre-schools has increased over time. For example, while there were 1,244 (private kindergartens and private nursery classes) in Turkey in 2006, the number of the schools increased to 5,320, while the number of teachers working in these schools increased to 19,340, in 2021 (MNE, Official Statistics, <http://sgb.meb.gov.tr>, Access date: 09.09.2021). It can be easily stated that determination of the age of starting school as 60 months and the state incentive support provided to private schools in 2014 contributed to this increase.

With the determination of compulsory education period as 12 years, an increase is observed in the schooling rate in Turkey. With this increase, the proportion of private schools has also increased. With the transition to the 4+4+4 education system, the number of private schools at primary school level, which was 677 in 2004, increased to 2.049; and the number of students increased from 172.346 to 269.312, in 2021. Again, the number of teachers working in private primary schools became 33,285 in 2021 (MNE, Official Statistics, <http://sgb.meb.gov.tr>, Access date: 09.09.2021). In this context, it is seen that the number of private primary schools and the number of students and teachers in these schools have increased in the last ten years.

With the abolition of the 8-year education system in 2012, secondary schools were reopened. The number of private secondary schools increased from 904 in 2012 to 2,343 in 2021 and the number of students reached the number of 311,811 (MNE, Official Statistics, <http://sgb.meb.gov.tr>, Access date: 09.09.2021). Policies such as making high schools compulsory and applying exams for high school education have led to an increase in the number of private secondary schools.

Private high schools have always shown their presence in the Turkish education system. Significant increases are observed in the number of private high schools, as a result of

the policies such as the 4+4+4 system implemented since 2012-2013 and the closure of private preparation institutions. The number of private high schools, which was 582 in 2004, reached 3,789 in 2021 (MNE, Official Statistics, <http://sgb.meb.gov.tr>, Access date: 09.09.2021). It is seen that the number of students and teachers has also increased.

According to the data of the Ministry of National Education, the number of private schools and the number of students increased from year to year at every education level as a result of the public policies implemented; in the 2020-2021 academic year, 13,501 private schools serve to 1,310,605 students with 162,215 teachers (MNE, Official Statistics, <http://sgb.meb.gov.tr>, Access date: 09.09.2021). This increase in the number of private schools has relatively eased the burden of the education system on the state on and created a different alternative to the school preferences of the parents for their children at compulsory education age.

Discussion

The existence of private schools in today's sense was in the Tanzimat Reform Era (1839) and the first time for them to be included in official documents was in the Reform Edict (1856). With the Tanzimat Reform, educating the people began to be seen as one of the main duties of the state and the Regulation of General Education dated 1869 was enacted. During this period, the number of minority schools, which can be seen as the basis of private schools, have increased in the Turkish education system.

With the Law of Unification of Education enacted on March 3, 1924, after the Republic was proclaimed, all educational institutions in Turkey were connected to the Ministry of National Education. The state, which restricted foreign and minority schools, decided on January 31, 1928 that private entrepreneurs could open private schools under its own control, and the Turkish Education Association (TED) was established in this regard.

Private schools, which developed in a limited way under the state administration until the 1960s, experienced a revival after this date. Especially since the 1980s, the number of private schools increased with the effect of neo-liberal policies. Private Education Institutions Law No. 3035, which entered into force in 1985, removed all obstacles to private schools up to that time and the state encouraged their establishment. With that law enacted, the attempts of private and legal persons to open private schools were significantly supported and thus the concept of private school began to spread rapidly. In the 2000s, private schooling has become an important issue in the field of education. Especially in 2014, with the closure of private teaching institutions and the conversion of some of them to private schools, there has been a serious increase in the number of private schools.

Conclusion

In this section the research findings and suggestions were presented below:

Private schooling started in the Ottoman period. Until the 1961 Constitution, private schools in Turkey followed a rather stagnant course. Especially with the effect of neo-liberal policies, there became a serious increase in the number of private schools after the 1980s. It has been determined that various legal regulations and instructions have been prepared and put into

effect in parallel with those strategy documents among which the decisions of the Ministry of National Education Council and Government Programs are effective in the formation of private school policies in Turkey.

It can be stated that the legal regulations regarding private schools in Turkey are at the level of law and regulation. With the transformation of 8-year compulsory education into 4+4+4 12-year compulsory education in 2012, the need for private schools has increased. In addition, it is seen that the incentive policy provided by the state for private school students also supports the opening of private schools. Reducing the starting age of education to 60 months, closing the preparatory teaching institutions and turning them into private schools also had a positive impact on the development of the private school sector.

Although there have been periodic decreases in the number of private preschools; when evaluated in general, it has been determined that the number of private preschools has increased over time. Parallel to this, the number of students having education in private schools has also increased. In addition, it can be stated that the need for private schools has increased with the transformation of 8-year compulsory education into 4+4+4 12-year compulsory education in 2012 (OECD, 2020: 8).

However, it should not be forgotten that while the number of private schools increases with the implemented public policies, the quality of education does not increase at the same rate. Today, there are private schools in almost every city besides public schools. As a matter of fact, this increase in quantity brings the issues of quality and efficiency in education into a controversial situation.

When evaluated in general, the steps to be taken regarding private schools can be summarized as follows:

- The formulated education policies should not only focus on the increase in quantity, but also should be prepared to increase the quality in education.
- In order to increase the quality in education, it is important to evaluate the course curricula as a whole, taking into account teacher competencies.
- Particular attention should be paid to the meticulous evaluation of the conditions for opening private schools and the well-designed evaluation of whom these schools will serve.
- Finally, in order to ensure equality of opportunity and access in education, various public policies should be put into effect. In this context, it is very important to consider measures that will increase the quality of the public policies to be implemented for private schools in the coming years, and to be more careful while allowing an increase in quantity.

Endnotes

This study has been based on the master's thesis titled "Private Schools in Turkey in terms of Public Policy" at Necmettin Erbakan University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Political Science and Public Administration.

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