

CHAPTER 5

TEACHING PRACTICE EXPERIENCES IN ACCREDITATION PROCESS: OPINIONS OF PRACTICE TEACHERS¹

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INTRODUCTION

Quality and accreditation in higher education institutions have an important place in the world and our country. Interest in accreditation processes has gradually increased due to the issues such as accountability of higher education institutions, their place among international institutions, and the employment potential of diplomas (Alpaydın & Topal, 2022; Özer, Gür & Küçükcan, 2011). In our country, higher education institutions conduct studies to ensure quality standards. Similarly, studies on determining and implementing quality standards continue in Europe (European Standards and Guidelines [ESG], 2015). Accordingly, programs are accredited by completing accreditation processes in line with the determined standards (Staub, 2019). The accreditation concept in higher education is defined as an institution or program's having national/international standards (Özer, 2012). Studies and improvements to ensure quality in higher education

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also affect the success of student mobility, human resources, or economic efficiency (Dey, 2011; Mandavkar, 2019).

Higher education institutions have great importance in training professional staff who are productive, innovative, add value to society, are open to development, and can use cooperation skills effectively in different disciplines such as science, art, and sports. Training graduates from different disciplines with knowledge, skills, and competence in their fields is one of the main purposes of higher education institutions. Therefore, studies conducted based on quality and accreditation in higher education contribute significantly to achieving these purposes. Council of Higher Education (2016) defined the steps of the accreditation process as setting standards, preparation and self-assessment, institution visit and external evaluation process, monitoring, accrediting, decision and approval, and systematic review. Thus, when higher education institutions and programs become accredited, they go through a long and difficult process that starts with setting the standards and continues with the continuation of supervision. It is important for the education system that teacher training programs in higher education institutions continue education according to the determined quality standards. Thus, it is expected that the faculties of education are included in accreditation processes and have these standards. In 1954, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and faculties of education came together and established an accreditation institution at a national level for the first time in the world; thus, accreditation in faculties of education became a current issue (Erkuş & Özdemir, 2010). In our country, the quality of higher education drew attention in the 1990s (Tezsürücü & Aybarç-Bursalıoğlu, 2013). Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) was the only institution responsible for quality institutions (Turkish Higher Education Quality Council, 2016). Faculties of education are evaluated by the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs (EPDAD) (Atatekin & Dulupçu, 2018;

Borat, 2011). One of the teacher training programs in the faculty of education is special education teaching.

The special education teacher training system is carried out as an undergraduate program in faculties of education. Special education preservice teachers take courses in the fields of professional knowledge, general culture, and field knowledge in the program that admits students by verbal scores of the Higher Education Institutions Examination (YKS) conducted by the Center for Assessment, Selection, and Placement. When they graduate, they can work in special education schools where the individuals with special needs receive education, special education classrooms in the inclusion and integration environments, Counseling and Research Centers within the body of the Department of Special Education and Counseling Services affiliated with the Ministry of National Education, and private special education institutions. Preservice teachers receive elective courses in different sub-disciplines (Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Hearing Impairment, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Gifted and Talented Education, Visual Impairment) in the undergraduate program and graduate with the title of special education teacher. There is a pool of elective courses for each of these fields, and preservice teachers are responsible for taking at least one (1) course from each field, and they graduate by completing at least seven (7) elective courses in the field they want to specialize in. Three applied courses in four semesters of the program draw attention. These are Observation in Special Education Institutions in the IV semester of the 2nd year as a Field Training course, School and Institution Experience in Special Education in the VI semester of the 3rd year, and Teaching Practice in the VII and VIII semesters of the last year within the scope of Vocational Knowledge course (Council of Higher Education [CoHE], 2018). In the theoretical and applied courses of the program, it is planned for the preservice teachers

to take basic field courses such as educational sciences, foreign language, and information technologies and courses based on academic and non-academic characteristics of individuals with special needs; medical, developmental and educational screening and diagnosis in education and psychology; educational services in line with science-based practices; early childhood; effective instructional planning in the scope of legal rights in school age; Individualized Education Program; support and services provided to the individuals and families. The starting point of this study was the idea that the quality of education received in the pre-vocational period is related to the quality and quality standards in higher education and is also a determinant of the transition to the profession and vocational practices of the graduates of the programs in this institution. This study, designed for the special education field, aims to examine the opinions of teachers who give teaching practice courses in special education practice schools about teacher training, quality, accreditation, and practices related to these concepts. Because the closest vocation members of the preservice teachers are internship coordinators at school and teachers in the practice classrooms throughout the practice period in the scope of school-faculty cooperation. When examining the relevant literature, it is found that there are several studies on accreditation process in faculties of education (Al-Ghaith, 2015; Alpaydin & Topal, 2022; Ataman & Adıgüzel, 2019; Doğan, 1999; Erkuş & Özdemir, 2010; Grossman, Sands & Brittingham, 2010; Günel, Türe & Deveci, 2020; Karşlı, Yıldız, Akgün & Cerit, 2001; Kavak, 1999; Lewis, 2016; Murray, 2000; Yanpar-Yelken, Çelikkaleli & Çapri, 2007). These studies were conducted as informative studies about the accreditation processes of faculties of education or based on the opinions of the instructors and students. Besides knowing the importance of practice experience in faculties of education, it is important to investigate the practice experiences of the teachers in special

education practice schools in special education programs within the scope of accreditation and quality. It is considered necessary to include practice teachers, who have an important role in the accreditation of the programs, in the studies on quality and accreditation. This study is thought to be an original study in terms of investigating the opinions of practice teachers about the accreditation process.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

This study, which was conducted to examine the opinions of practice teachers about the special education teacher training process in accreditation quality studies, was designed in phenomenological design among qualitative research methods. Phenomenological design is seen as an effective design to state individuals' viewpoints, perceptions, and experiences (Creswell, 2017). This design was preferred to determine the perception and experiences of the practice teachers about teacher training in the accreditation process and examine them in-depth. The data of the study were collected with the focus group technique.

Sample/Participants

Six teachers working in special education schools in the Southeastern Anatolia Region of Turkey participated in the study voluntarily. The purposive sampling technique was used in determining the participants. The participation criteria are: a) to have a teaching practice certificate b) to have graduated from faculty of education teacher training programs c) to have worked as a practice teacher in the schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education at least once d) to have taken responsibility in the practices of special education preservice teachers in the 2021-2022 academic year e) to volunteer to participate in the study. The

participants were informed about the purpose and importance of the study and were asked whether they wanted to participate in the study voluntarily. All pre-interviewed teachers stated that they wanted to participate in the study voluntarily. Teachers' oral approvals were received before and after the meeting for voluntary participation and recording of the audio and video. Each teacher was given a code name to keep his/her identity confidential. The demographic information of the participants was shown in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, all six teachers are graduates of hearing impaired teaching or intellectual disability teaching in special education, and their professional seniorities vary between 7-11 years. The teachers received their certificates of teaching practice between 2017-2020. Their duration of working as a practice teacher varies between 1-3 years. The classroom sizes of the teachers are between 2-8 students, and the number of teachers who attend teaching practice courses varies between 4-10.

Data Collection Tool and Application

The data were collected with the focus group interview form developed by the researchers. The form consisted of two sections, the first section included demographic information, and the second section included open-ended questions prepared for literature review and related to the purpose of the study. The draft form was submitted to the opinions of three experts who have doctoral degrees, have at least ten (10) years of professional experience, and have been conducting teaching practice for the last five years. The data collection tool was revised after receiving the experts' opinions and took its final form. The data collection tool is the Practice Teacher Opinion Form, consisting of seven demographic and six semi-structured interview questions. The open-ended questions included in this form were asked to the participants in the online environment by taking audio and

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants

No	Code Name	Branch	Professional Seniority	Year of Certificate	Number of Teaching Practice Duties	Classroom Size	Number of Pre-service Teachers (Last 1 year)
1	Elif	Intellectual Disability Teaching	8 years	2019	3	4	10
2	Firat	Intellectual Disability Teaching	7 years	2019	2	4	4
3	Umut	Intellectual Disability Teaching	7 years	2018	2	4	6
4	Sevgi	Hearing Impairment Teaching	7 years	2017	2	5	4
5	Helin	Intellectual Disability Teaching	10 years	2020	1	2	6
6	Nur	Hearing Impairment Teaching	11 years	2018	3	8	5

**All teachers work in Special Education Practice Schools.

video recording. The participants' demographic information was collected via Google Forms application, where they can answer the questions only with their personal e-mails and save each question only once. After collecting electronic information, a focus group interview which lasted for 1 hour 40 minutes was conducted on May 10, 2022, determined to be a suitable day and time for all participants and researchers. Six practice teachers who attended the focus group interview stated their opinions about quality and accreditation processes in higher education and about being accredited in terms of education programs. Teachers also stated opinions about the effect of accreditation studies on the teacher training process. Both researchers took part in the interview; the first researcher took written notes during the interview, and the second researcher became the moderator of the interview. The focus group interview was conducted in the online environment with the participation of both researchers and six practice teachers, who were determined using purposive sampling. The second researcher is an academic member of the special education field and has been conducting teaching practice for 13 years. She also lectures and works on projects about qualitative research at undergraduate and graduate levels. She provides consultancy for the thesis studies designed in the qualitative research method. The first researcher got a master's degree in the special education field, continues her graduate study at the doctoral level, and has been conducting teacher practice for 4 years. Both researchers are experienced in quality and accreditation studies in special education. The second researcher voluntarily contributes to accreditation studies of teacher training programs at national levels and evaluator education in quality studies.

Data Analysis

The first researcher transferred the data from the focus group interview with semi-structured questions in the online environment into writing in the computer environment.

Demographic information obtained with Google Forms was converted into a table (Table 1). As a result of the transcription process, a data document consisting of 9 pages, 514 lines, and 1771 words in 12 point-size in Word was obtained by listening to the interview records. The data obtained were evaluated with content analysis. Then, the written document analysis method was used, and codes were reached from the related statements. Related codes were colored in groups, and sub-themes and main themes were reached from these codes. Three main themes and ten sub-themes were reached as a result of content analysis conducted by researchers who reached an agreement (90%) from validity and reliability studies. Finally, the researchers conducted validity and reliability studies of the codes and themes reached from the codes based on agreement.

Findings

The findings of this study which was conducted to investigate the opinions of practice teachers about the teacher training process in special education within the scope of accreditation and quality studies, consist of three main themes and ten sub-themes. Figure 1 shows the themes which constitute the findings.

As seen in Figure 1, three main themes, which are Quality of Teaching Practices, Contribution of Teaching Practices, and Aspects to be Developed, and sub-themes constitute the findings of this study. The following titles give explanations of the themes.

Quality of Teaching Practices

All participant teachers stated opinions about the quality of practices. These opinions were stated in the context of the effect of feedback, technology use, past practice experiences, and characteristics of preservice teachers. Teachers (Elif, Firat, Helin, Sevgi) stated that the preservice teachers underwent a qualified teaching practice process. They described it as a chance

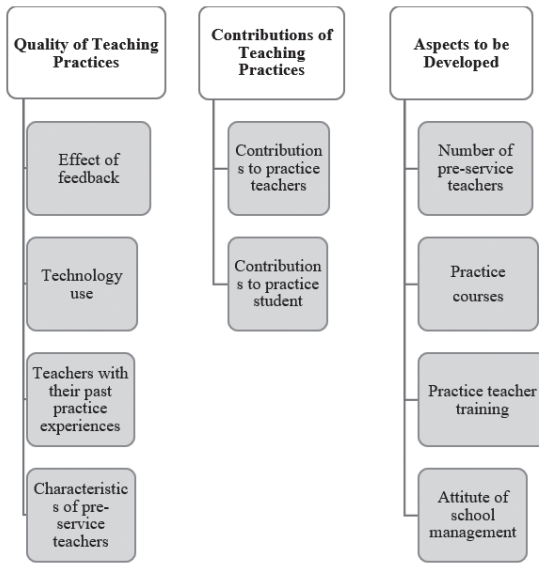


Figure 1. Themes and Sub-themes

for the preservice teachers to have the opportunity to practice together with teachers who graduated from the special education field. Accordingly, Teacher Elif stated her opinion by saying, “Today, intern teachers are so lucky. We are all special education teachers, branch teachers such as the music teacher are special education teachers, too. I think we contribute to putting theory into practice.” She also stated that the preservice teachers had a good supervision process in practice courses. Teachers (Sevgi, Helin), expressing the importance of giving feedback during teaching practice, emphasized that the preservice teachers had an opportunity to receive feedback from both the instructors at the university and themselves regularly. Teacher Helin stated that the instructors are satisfied with the feedback process by saying, “Practice teachers (university’s instructors) were very good. The process was observed closely, and feedback was provided.

Feedback was given one by one. He/she took notes for each student separately and talked about them for minutes...” (Teacher Helin). She also added that the preservice teachers were satisfied with her feedback. Another subject emphasized by the teachers (Umut, Nur) was that technological opportunities used during teaching practice were efficient in education. Teacher Umut stated the effect of technology use comparatively: “There is a serious difference between our era and current technology. They are so lucky now. We are moving with the files uploaded to Classroom weekly. Feedback is given weekly. We used to submit files at the end of the term and receive marks. They are so lucky about this.” (Teacher Umut).

Teachers evaluated the teaching practice opportunities based on their own past practice experiences. Teacher Elif, who had negative experiences in the practice period, said “There was no information and supervision process in our era. Not in the bad sense. We were extensively free. The practice teachers were not special education teachers. We did not work with special education teachers. Intern students now are so lucky.” (Teacher Elif). Similarly, Teacher Firat sees his teaching practice process as an unlucky period. Despite the negative experiences of Teacher Elif and Teacher Firat, Teacher Nur describes herself as lucky in terms of her experiences in those years: “They used to send us to all disability groups. I see myself lucky about feedback. We used to receive feedback for each file. We used to see each student group. I feel lucky about this subject” (Teacher Nur). The participants stated preservice teachers’ characteristics as another factor determining the quality of teaching practices. Teachers (Sevgi, Helin, and Elif) stated that the positive characteristics of preservice teachers contributed to the practice period. Accordingly, Teacher Sevgi said, “...They used to do it fondly, they used to come here willing to learn... Not for receiving marks” (Teacher Sevgi). Teacher Helin said “I had intern students in both semesters, I had a very

qualified time. My students used to question information. I think we cannot talk about practice without knowledge. I was very satisfied” (Teacher Helin). Teacher Elif said “...For example, the interns supported us on autism day. they were there voluntarily. There was a beautiful climate, cooperation. Level of cooperation is very high among interns.” (Teacher Elif).

In conclusion, teachers mentioned various factors that affect quality by sharing their opinions and experiences at different levels in the main theme, the quality of teaching practices. It is understood that different subjects, such as reflections of past experiences, characteristics of preservice teachers, technology use, and feedback, are among the determinants of quality.

Contributions of Teaching Practices

Contributions of teaching practices were discussed under two sub-themes; a) contributions to practice teachers and b) contributions to practice students. Four teachers (Helin, Elif, Firat, and Umut) expressed their opinions on this main theme. Teacher Helin stated that the teaching practices are an advantage for preservice teachers. She explained why she sees it as an advantage with these words: “...They can see all disability groups. They can evaluate students in all social aspects. They see branch teachers. They see the problems experienced by teachers.” (Teacher Helin). The participants also mentioned the contribution of teaching practices to practice teachers besides their contribution to preservice teachers. Teachers (Helin, Elif, Firat, Umut) stated that they contribute to their knowledge during practice courses of preservice teachers. For a preservice teacher, Teacher Helin said “he/she was so well-equipped and curious. Luckily I had interns this year. I refreshed my memory...”. Teacher Elif stated that they stayed active and energetic. Teacher Firat emphasized the contributions of preservice teachers to him by saying “You improve yourself to answer the questions asked

by interns, in order not to feel embarrassed. When the students ask the questions in the right place, it improves us, we make research to answer questions and not to fall short”. With a similar expression, Teacher Umut expressed his opinion by saying “New studies are being conducted in special education. We renew ourselves with the questions asked us. I learned that there are new discussions about concept teaching. We learn new information. I think that the field can be developed constantly since it is open to development. Probably, we wouldn’t have learned this unless we had had a practice student and wondered about it. They have such a contribution, every new student renews the teacher.”

Aspects to Be Developed

Five participant teachers (Umut, Nur, Firat, Helin, Elif) noted that teaching practice had some aspects to be developed in the accreditation process. The subjects emphasized by the teachers were discussed under the number of preservice teachers, practice courses, practice teacher training, and attitude of school management sub-themes. According to teachers (Firat, Helin), the excessive number of preservice teachers in the classroom constitutes a limitation in teaching practices. Teacher Firat stated that the excessive number of preservice teachers in the classroom constituted a limitation by saying “...They are too many in number. We took four people here, they lose their concentrations, they form groups. Our classroom sizes are low”. The teachers (Elif, Firat, Umut) drew attention to some aspects to be developed in teaching practices. For example, Teacher Elif stated that a digital platform for providing cooperation in practice courses should be created: MoNE (Ministry of National Education) may create a mutual pool, a digital pool. We used to present internship files, but it has changed. I think teacher (practice teacher)-student (preservice teacher)-academician-MoNE can be a mutual source of information”. Another suggestion is related to increasing the

teaching practice course hours. Teacher Firat said “...number of practice courses can be increased. They can come here for 8 hours in two days”. Besides suggestions about the course hours, Teacher Umut suggested putting practice courses in earlier years in the curriculum and mentioned making practice experiences widespread in institutions such as special education and rehabilitation centers, practice schools, counseling and research centers. Teacher Umut expressed these opinions and suggestions by saying, “...institution-based experiences should be made more widespread, they should be in institutions such as rehabilitation centers, CRC (Counselling and Research Centers), so that they can see where they would work. They should see them in earlier years. I mean, I think they should be put in earlier years so that the people who won't be able to carry out this profession can realize it earlier”.

Another subject emphasized by the teachers (Nur, Firat, Helin, Nur) in the Aspects to be Developed theme was the training of practice teachers who carry out practice courses with preservice teachers. According to teachers, there are skills and knowledge that teachers who carry out teaching practice should have. Teacher Nur's opinion that the practice teachers should provide quality standards in the professional aspect, especially in the accredited programs, draws attention. “There should be much difference between the accredited and not accredited in terms of practice. Academic standards are set. The teacher meets them or not... Not only you (academicians) in academic terms but also we should know the accreditation standards. What can or should we provide practice students with? Maybe I am not sufficient. This directs me to research... It can be necessary for me to learn new techniques. Maybe I should update myself. Not only practice students but also practice teachers have some responsibilities. Sometimes we may think that we are already sufficient. We shouldn't say I graduated from this field, my diploma is sufficient; we should say that we

could be better.” (Teacher Nur). On the other hand, Teacher Firat drew attention to the education processes of practice teachers and stated: “Only the certificate is not enough for the teacher. It depends on information technologies a little bit. He/she should receive education on how to train a teacher. He/she can explain to us how to train an intern and how to be a model for them. It is not enough to tell us on what days and for how many hours we will conduct courses. MoNE does not give a clear program. They sometimes coincide with holidays, what will we do when this happens?...” (Firat teacher). In addition to these opinions, Teacher Firat shared the opinion that the knowledge and skills of the teachers who graduated from unintegrated programs (such as intellectual disability teaching undergraduate program) and were appointed to institutions that provide services in different areas of need, such as visual and hearing impairment were insufficient. His suggestion for this is to provide the teacher with the opportunity of developing themselves in these fields with in-service education. Similarly, Teacher Helin stated her opinion about the quality of practice teachers; “I think the quality of the teachers who will conduct practice together with the preservice teacher in this process should be evaluated. Not every teacher should be a practice teacher, they should have competence. Special education is a developing field but I think the student should be able to work with teachers who provide opportunities and direct correctly and see enough number of students.” (Teacher Helin). Teacher Nur supported these opinions and argued that the teachers who are the stakeholders of teaching practice courses should go through an accreditation process and standards should be developed for these teachers. The last subject in this theme is related to the attitude of school management in the schools where practice courses are carried out. Teacher Firat stated that he paid attention to the attitude of the manager and said: “One of the most important things is the attitude of school management.

Some school managers see the intern as their guests but these people will be our colleagues, a regulation should be made regarding this. They will work together after a year. An attitude should be developed taking this into account. They should feel comfortable using the shared areas of the teachers' room. The school management should familiarize students with the school.”

In conclusion, it is seen that teaching practice experiences in the accreditation process are presented with different viewpoints by practice teachers. The data obtained show that various factors determine the quality of teaching practices. The teachers mentioned their satisfaction with the way preservice teachers and academicians manage the process. Besides, it is a prominent finding that practice courses contribute to both preservice teachers and practice teachers. It draws attention that the teachers see this process as an opportunity to improve themselves and renew their knowledge. Based on the opinions of the teachers, it was determined that there are some aspects to be developed regarding the practice courses. Findings obtained with semi-structured questions and focus group technique are discussed in line with the literature under the next title.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions

This study was conducted to examine the opinions of practice teachers about the accreditation process. For this purpose, the focus group interview was conducted with six practice teachers in the online environment. The data were collected through semi-structured interview questions and demographic information form and analyzed with content analysis. As a result of the analyses, three main themes and ten sub-themes were reached. Finally, the findings obtained were discussed in line with the literature.

In this study, in which it is prominent that various factors determine the quality of teaching practices, the participants

expressed the importance of feedback provided to preservice teachers. Accordingly, the feedback provided to the preservice teachers by both instructors and practice teachers during the practice period has an important place in teacher training. A study examining the functionality of teaching practices in terms of the stakeholders determined that the instructors and preservice teachers exchanged information regularly. The importance of exchanging information or providing feedback shows similarity with the findings of this study (Görgeç, Çokçalışkan & Korkut, 2012). Another factor in teachers' opinions was related to the idea that technology use is effective in teaching practices. The fact that the preservice teachers use technology for practice courses and conduct the studies between the higher education institution and practice school is seen as an advantage. The development of digital platforms to continue systematic interaction between the other institutions and stakeholders in higher education was also suggested in the literature (Piştav Akmeşe & Kayhan, 2021). From the results of another study in which videos that provide professional knowledge and skills for teachers were used, it is understood that teachers made a positive contribution to their improvement through these videos (Gaudin & Schalies, 2015). Hence, the integration of developing technological opportunities is seen as important in the quality of teaching practices. Another subject frequently mentioned by the teachers is related to their own practice experiences. Teachers stated that especially not having special education teachers in their own practice period created a limitation. In this sense, they expressed that the preservice teachers who received an education with them were lucky. This can result from the idea that a qualified education in knowledge, skills, and competence in the special education field can be obtained only at the end of a 4-year undergraduate education. Thus, the literature includes explanations that corroborate this opinion. For example, in a study that was conducted in a qualitative method

and examined special education teaching practice courses and teachers' experiences in the Covid-19 pandemic, Piştav Akmeşe & Kayhan (2021), emphasized the importance of applied education and drew attention to the need for qualified staff in education. It is suggested that the field experts should give the theoretical and applied courses, especially while conducting teacher training. In a study conducted with 130 preservice teachers, Wiens et al. (2020) stated that preservice teachers followed the example of practice teachers' teaching and interaction behaviors. On the other hand, it is considered a problem to appoint teachers from other fields who received a short education period instead of the staff who trained in the field of special education in Turkey (Özyürek, 2008). It is understood that the teachers who graduate from the field exhibit a difference in terms of planning, preparation, classroom environment, and organizing teaching (Nougaret et al., 2005). Besides, in action research focused on training practice instructors in the teacher practice process, it was emphasized that practice instructors should be experienced and competent in their fields (Vuran, Ergenekon & Ünlü, 2014).

The participants stated that the characteristics of preservice teachers are determinant and they were satisfied with the participation of the students in the practice period. In addition, they mentioned that the preservice teachers make positive contributions to their professional knowledge and skills in the field by keeping their knowledge and skills up-to-date. Another prominent finding of the study is related to the problems resulting from the excessive number of preservice teachers in practice courses. The participants find the number of preservice teachers in the classrooms excessive, suggesting that it should be decreased. It is seen that this finding was supported in other studies. It was stated that the excessive number of preservice teachers is limiting as the duration of learning by observation and one-on-one working opportunities is shorter (Piştav Akmeşe & Kayhan, 2021). The importance of practice experiences in

special education teacher training is known. However, the low number of institutions appropriate to conduct teaching practice courses formally can be given as the reason for this situation. Teachers made suggestions about the duration of the courses besides the number of preservice teachers. The duration of the teaching practice course is found to be insufficient, and it is stated that this course should be included in the curriculum in earlier periods. In a study, Grgen, okalıřkan & Korkut (2012) stated that preservice teachers suggested increasing the duration of practice as a solution. Because preservice teachers do not have enough opportunity to achieve the expected goals, the suggestion regarding the increase in the duration of practice courses coincides with the findings of other studies (Bařtrk, 2007; Boz & Boz, 2006).

Another remarkable finding of the study is related to training practice teachers who conduct teaching practice courses. Participants' opinions about this subject gather around in-service education, knowledge and skills, development, and accreditation studies. It was argued that the teachers who conduct practice courses should have definite quality standards and be equipped with knowledge and skills. This opinion is supported by other studies in the literature (Kiraz, 2001; Sarioban, 2008, Topkaya & Yalın, 2005). Hence, it is seen that Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development affiliated with MoNE has taken steps to carry out education to provide quality of teachers who will take part in practice courses (Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development, 2017). The finding that in-service education should be organized for the instructors and practice teachers for the quality of preservice teachers supports the finding of this study (Azar, 2003). zyrek (2008) stated that a qualified teacher can be trained by providing the standards and benefiting from the accreditation process. Thus, with accreditation, it can be guaranteed that the teacher training programs meet the standards. However, in a study, Adıgzel &

Sağlam (2009) stated that teacher training programs can meet the standards at a moderate level. Kossar (2003), emphasizing that practicing in the preservice process has critical importance for preservice teachers, stated that professional examples should be provided to the preservice teachers during the practice. Wiens et al. (2020) stated that preservice teachers took support from practice teachers and their willingness to teach as an example. Participant teachers experience the disadvantages of combining areas of special needs under a single title and making them a single program. For example, a teacher who graduated from an intellectual disability teaching program stated that he/she felt insufficient when he/she had to teach in the hearing impairment field. Thus, they think that is important for preservice teachers to work with all groups and gain experience in different institutions before starting to teach. This finding shows similarity with the suggestions of another study. Piştav Akmeşe & Kayhan (2016) stated that the ability of teachers who will teach in the hearing impairment area to provide education with sign language is significant. One of the participant teachers suggested that in-service education should be organized regarding the professional needs of the teachers as a solution.

Finally, the participants stated that the attitude of school management is a determinant of the quality of practices. For example, they emphasized that the attitudes of the school principal and vice-principal, stakeholders of school teaching practices, should be improved. Similarly, in a study, Görden, Çokçalışkan & Korkut (2012) stated that there were problems in informing the preservice teachers about the management by school managers who participate in teaching practices. Besides, a subject mentioned in the findings of this study was mentioned by the preservice teachers in the study by Görden et al. (2012). Thus, preservice teachers stated that they were not adopted as teachers. However, the teachers in our study emphasized that the school management should adopt preservice teachers as teachers.

Besides, other study findings support this finding (Boz & Boz, 2006; Sağ, 2008; Tok & Yılmaz; 2011).

Suggestions

Based on the study's findings, this section includes suggestions regarding practice and research. Following suggestions can be made regarding teaching practices;

- Quality standards that state the quality of teaching practices, teachers, and instructors can be determined, and the accreditation process of the programs can be encouraged.
- When thinking about the importance of providing feedback in teaching practices, a systematic program for providing feedback to preservice teachers by both instructors and practice teachers can be developed and applied.
- Digital platforms that enable the cooperation of MoNE and CoHE can be developed to continue the teaching practice process.
- Legal regulations that improve the duration and frequency of practice courses can be developed to increase the quality of teaching practices.
- Studies that improve the knowledge, skills, and competency of practice teachers through in-service education and that enable them to receive practice courses can be carried out.
- To decrease the number of preservice teachers in the same classroom, increasing the number of practice teachers can be encouraged.
- Preservice and post-service education can be carried out to improve positive attitudes and behaviors of the managers in practice schools.

Following suggestions can be made for further research;

- More studies on the quality and accreditation process in teaching practices can be carried out.

- Teaching practice processes can be examined with qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research designs.

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