

# **Educational Professionals' Perceptions regarding Impediments and Impediments' Frequencies in Initial Teacher Training**

### Eğitim Profesyonellerinin Öğretmen Eğitiminde Karşılaştıkları Engellere ve Engellerin Sıklıklarına İlişkin Algıları

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ABSTRACT: Educational professionals mostly face impediments in initial teachers training. There are factors contributing to the impediments educational professionals face in initial teacher training. This study aims at identifying perceptions of educational professionals regarding the factors and frequency of these factors impeding educational professionals in initial teacher training in Northern Cyprus. The study adopted an interpretive methodology under qualitative research paradigm. Phenomology was adapted as the research design. Data were collected using field diaries, focus group interviews and in-depth interviews. Data were analyzed through content analysis method. The researcher kept the field diaries. Focus group members were 15 educational experts. Educational professionals were 67 professionals teaching/serving in the education field. Findings revealed themes on opportunities educational professionals were provided, on impediments regarding researching options, on impediments regarding communication and collaboration, on impediments regarding supervising teachers and on impediments regarding mentoring system in public schools as well as the frequency of these impediments according to the perceptions of educational professionals. As a result, initial teacher training should be improved; research opportunities should become better; efficient communication and collaboration should be provided among educational professionals; importance of supervision should be emphasized; mentoring system should be arranged as a system including teacher-academician-supervisor tricycle and academic mentoring system should be adopted.

Keywords: educational professionals, impediments, initial teacher training.

ÖZ: Eğitim profesyonelleri çoğu zaman öğretmen eğitimi söz konusu olduğunda engellerle karşılaşmaktadırlar. Öğretmen eğitiminde eğitim profesyonellerinin karşılaştığı engellere neden olan faktörler bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'nde öğretmen eğitiminde, eğitim profesyonellerinin karşılaştıkları engellere neden olan faktörler ve bu faktörlerin sıklıklarına ilişkin eğitim profesyonellerinin algılarını belirlenmesi hedeflenmektedir. Araştırmada nitel yaklaşım kapsamında yorumlama yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Olgubilim (fenomenoloji) deseni benimsenmiştir. Araştırma verileri nitel olarak, alan günlükleri tutularak, odak grup görüşmeleri ve derinlemesine görüşmeler aracılığıyla toplanmışır. Araştırma verileri içerik analizi yapılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmacı alan günlüklerini tutmuştur. 15 eğitim uzmanı ile odak grup görüşmeleri yapılmıştır. 67 eğitim profesyoneli ile derinlemesine görüşmeler yapmıştır. Çalışma, eğitim profesyonellerine sunulan firsatlar, öğretmen eğitiminde eğitim profesyonellerinin araştırma yapabilmesine ilişkin olanaksızlıklar, öğretmen eğitiminde eğitim profesyonellerinin iletişim ve işbirliğine ilişkin yaşadıkları olumsuzluklar, devlet okullarında öğretmenleri denetlemeye ilişkin olumsuzluklar ve devlet okullarında mentörlük sisteminin oluşturulmamasına ilişkin temalar ile belirlenen bu temalara ilişkin algılara dayalı sıklıklar sunmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, öğretmen eğitiminin geliştirilmesi, öğretmen eğitiminde eğitim profesyonellerinin araştırma olanaklarının daha iyi hale gelmesini, eğitim profesyonelleri arasında etkili iletişimin sağlanması, denetimin önemi, mentörlük sisteminin öğretmen-akademisyen-denetmen üçlemini içine alacak şekilde düzenlenmesi ve akademik mentörlük sisteminin benimsenmesi gerekmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: eğitim profesyonelleri, engeller, öğretmen eğitimi.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

An impediment has been defined as "something that makes it more difficult for someone to do something or more difficult for something to happen" (MacMillan Dictionary, n.d). Educational professionals are those whom the Public Service Commission in Northern Cyprus appoints to a professional degree. A Science teacher who is appointed as a Science teacher to the public schools means s/he has been successful in the exams and appointed to teach in the schools as the professional of Science teaching in Northern Cyprus. Academicians who are appointed as full-time and who has PhD/Ed.D degrees in the education field in Northern Cyprus are also

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considered as educational professionals as they are indispensable part of the teaching and learning process. Improvements in teaching-learning process require educational professionals manage factors contributing to impediments they frequently face in initial teacher training. Unless identified, factors contributing to impediments in initial teacher training for educational professionals may be increased, but may not be finalized. Therefore, defining and managing factors contributing to impediments can facilitate educational professionals to identify and track issues/problems that prevent them from completing their tasks, working efficiently and demotivating them. Also, defining and managing these factors can help taking necessary precautions at once. While identifying the factors impeding initiating planning, Harris (1996, p. 129) found barriers on "the absence of the initial idea, organizational mindset, ignorance and antiplanning personnel". Similarly, Laurila and Gyursanszky (1998, p. 259) stated, "managerial subdivisions and absence of local actors from higher levels of the managerial hierarchy impede development of competence and commitment among new employees". Hussein (2011, p. 333) revealed that there were "structural and conceptual impediments" forcing the emotional and professional well-being. Therefore, mentees' learning could be impeded unless there was "shared understanding, values and directions". Having not a "single model of implementation and having lack of influence on the level of professional development on the start of inquiry-based approaches" might impede teacher development and the quality of teaching.

While identifying the impediments and challenges of innovations in mathematics education in Africa, Yacoubi (2013, p. s75) found, "The role of education has moved towards forging connections between knowledge development and its application to the workplace. So, critical thinking skills, problem-solving and creativity remained the key factors to be a successful worker". Thus, Roby (1985) believed that the problem seems to lie in the nature of curriculum deliberation itself because it is an approach to practice. Thus, a study on finding out the factors which impede professionals in initial teacher training in Zimbabwe, Mswazi, and Shumba (2008, p. 843) found "socio-affective factors that namely the dominant social values and expectations, religious beliefs and doctrines, and an inadequate professional support infrastructure constituted the major impediments to the adoption of professional behaviors commensurate with teaching Religious and Moral Education by prospective teachers". Similarly, having "competition in knowledge production" is one of the institutional impediments in initial teacher education (Ondari-Okemwa, 2011, p. 1447).

Regarding the impediments educational professionals (EPs) face, this study aims at identifying the perceptions of educational professionals regarding factors and frequency of identified factors contributing to impediments in initial teacher training (ITT) in Northern Cyprus (NC). The ultimate goal in identifying the perceptions of EPs regarding factors and frequency of these factors contributing to impediments in ITT in NC is ultimately for improving students and mentees' learning as well as for raising professional qualifications of academicians, teachers, mentees and ITT itself. In order to realize its aim, the study sought answers to the following research questions:

- 1. What do EPs report about factors contributing to impediments in ITT in NC?
- 2. What do EPs report about the frequency of factors contributing to impediments in ITT in NC?

#### 2. METHOD

Research design, samples, instrumentation, procedures, data collection and data analysis of the study were explored in detail in this section.

#### 2.1. Research Design

Given the nature and focus of this investigation and the research questions, interpretive methodology under qualitative research paradigm was adopted as an epistemological position. Phenomenology was used as the research design within interpretivism. The phenomenological research design emphasizes the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by the key stakeholders (Bevir and Kedar, 2008). Bryman (2004, p. 14) generates that getting access to key stakeholders' "common sense of thinking" for interpreting actions and social world through key stakeholders' point of view.

#### 2.2. Research Samples

The researcher kept the field diaries for the last 6 years (since October 2008). 15 focus group members (FGMs) participated to the focus group interviews (FGIs). 67 EPs participated to the in-depth interviews (I-DIs). FGMs were 3 teachers (Ts) from pre-primary to high school; 3 school administrators (SAs) from pre-primary, secondary school and industrial high school; 3 academicians (As) from various universities in NC; 3 executive members of the teachers' trade unions (TTUs), 3 people from the Ministry of National Education (MNE) (a chief inspector, a general manager and an educational expert). EPs were 12 teachers teaching for the public schools, 12 SAs serving for the public schools, 12 As teaching in various universities in NC, 12 TTUs, 19 people from MNE (5 educational experts, 8 chief/inspectors and 6 vice/general principals from the MNE). The participants of the study were chosen on purpose regarding their perceptions and experiences in identifying the factors and frequency of identified factors impeding EPs in ITT in NC.

#### 2.3. Research Instrumentation

Field diaries by the researcher, FGIs with the educational experts and I-DIs with EPs were carried out in order to identify the perceptions of EPs regarding factors and frequency of identified factors contributing to impediments in ITT in NC. Throughout the process, data analysis results of field diaries and interviews were compared and common points were regarded as common impediments. Then, frequency of each impediment was identified.

Through field diaries, some impediments were identified. Semi-structured interview forms for FGMs were produced and implemented to find out perceptions of FGMs regarding factors contributing to common impediments (identified through field diaries and semi-structured interviews) in ITT in NC. After analyzing the data, unstructured interview forms for identifying perceptions of EPs regarding factors and then frequency of identified factors contributing to impediments ITT in NC were implemented.

#### 2.4. Procedures

Keeping field diaries were started from October-2008. FGIs were conducted from January-May 2013. I-DIs were conducted from September-2013-to- March-2014. Data collection process with FGMs lasted between 78 minutes to 89 minutes. Data collection process with EPs for identifying perceptions of factors contributing impediments in ITT lasted between 79 minutes to 91 minutes. Data collection process with EPs for identifying perceptions of EPs regarding the frequency of identified factors impeding EPs in ITT lasted between 56 minutes to 69 minutes.

Starting the process, transcribed field diaries were coded and some factors impeding EPs in ITT in NC were found. Recorded initial data from FGMs were transcribed and then coded. Perceptions of FGMs regarding factors contributing to impediments in ITT identified from the initial data were discussed in the second meeting with FGMs. Then, recorded data were transcribed and then coded. Perceptions of FGMs regarding common factors impeding EPs from the field diaries and the FGIs were discussed at the final meeting with FGMs. Recorded data were transcribed and then coded. Identified common factors impeding EPs in ITT were considered as

the common factors impeding EPs in ITT through field diaries and FGIs. Then, EPs were interviewed. Initial data collection from EPs yielded perceptions of EPs regarding factors contributing to impediments in ITT in NC. Recorded data were transcribed and then coded. Identified factors were discussed with EPs through second I-DIs. Recorded data were transcribed and then coded. Common factors indicated through analyzing the data by the field diaries and focus group interviews as well as by the unstructured interviews were identified. Third I-DIs were applied to take the perceptions of EPs regarding common factors contributing to impediments in ITT in NC. Recorded data were transcribed and then coded to finalize identification of perceptions of EPs regarding common factors contributing to impediments in ITT in NC. Fourth I-DIs were applied for identifying the perceptions of EPs regarding the frequency of these factors contributing to impediments in ITT in NC.

#### 2.5. Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data were collected qualitatively using interpretive approach. Data collection methods included field diaries, semi-structured interviews and I-DIs. Data collected through interpretive approach were analyzed using content analysis method. Content analysis includes identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying and labeling the main occurring themes in the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Throughout the process, each participant of the study was assigned an ID. Through content analysis, data were put into categories and then themes and subthemes were identified using the data by the researcher, FGMs and EPs. Categories, themes and sub-themes were identified manual. The experts in the field of educational sciences reviewed the research instruments and the data each time. Based on the reviewers' comments, the ambiguous and uncertain questions were redesigned and the complex/unclear items were re-worded for enhancing content validity. Also, the ineffective and non-functioning questions were either removed or re-shaped. Also, these experts face validated the questions. Internal validity was managed through the member checks, the participatory/collaborative modes of research and the researcher's bias (Merriam, 1998). The dependability of the results obtained from the data using the open-ended and semi-structured interview forms were provided through the use of the techniques called the investigator's position, triangulation and audit trial (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). For the current study, the-status-of-the-researcher (as a teacher and an educational professional, researcher's social position increased the possibility of reaching the most appropriate participants), the-choice-of-informants (the researcher described the participants clearly; therefore, any independent researcher might desire to replicate the study, could do it very easily) and the-social-situations-and-conditions (the study was conducted in academic environments and situation) were applied for managing the external reliability. Therefore, the social situation and condition was fairly constant and uniform to the participants), the-analyticconstructs-and-premises (main terms, constructs, definitions, units of analysis and premises were delineated and their underlying assumptions were elaborated explicitly) and the-methods-of-datacollection-and-analysis (data were collected using field diaries, semi-structured and I-DIs methods and thematic interpretations were explored clearly) (Zohrabi, 2013). Also, types of elaborating on internal reliability for the present study were using low inference descriptors (it is difficult to observe factors contributing to impediments in ITT. Elaborated descriptions and explanations by FGMs and EPs enhance the internal reliability and any independent researchers/observer any time can observe and replicate these factors rather easily) and having mechanically recorded data (the interviews were recorded and preserved. Any independent researcher can easily implement the reanalysis or replication of the data) (Nunan, 1999).

#### 3. FINDINGS

The findings were presented in three categories followed by the emerging themes. Before category 1 and category 3, the related research question was given. The next section attempted to

respond the following research question: What do EPs report about factors contributing to impediments in ITT in NC?

#### 3.1. Category 1: Common Factors by Field Diaries and Focus Group Interviews (FDaFGIs)

Factors contributing to impediments in ITT were identified through field diaries. Then, common factors were identified using factors identified through field diaries and factors identified through FGIs. Therefore, category on *common factors by FDaFGIs* was identified. Among the category, there was a theme and 4 sub-themes were identified. Category on *common factors by FDaFGIs* yielded a theme on *opportunities*.

#### 3.1.1. Theme 1: Opportunities

Theme on *opportunities* generated 4 sub-themes. Sub-themes on *research opportunities* in *ITT* and at public schools, on communication and collaboration opportunities in *ITT* and public-schools, on supervising opportunities at public-schools, and on academic mentorship system opportunities in *ITT* and at public-schools were generated.

Nearly all of the participants agreed that issues regarding research opportunities generally base from not being volunteer to take part in researches when come from other universities in NC and not clear and open data to see what's going on institutions in NC. Similarly, more than half of the participants revealed that issues concerning supervising opportunities base from time constraints in inspecting teachers/mentees, lack of interest in inspecting teachers due to good relationships with teacher/s and lack of having enough number of inspections from each field in NC. Also, nearly all of the participants believed that issues regarding communication and collaboration opportunities base from strong feel of competition between universities in NC and not giving contract when graduated from other universities in NC. In addition to this, most of the participants revealed that issues concerning the mentoring system mostly base from lack of understanding the role of mentors in NC, lack of clarity regarding the expectations of mentors and academicians, time constrains in having academic mentorship system in public-schools in NC, lack of training options in academic mentorship system in NC, lack of certainty regarding assessment criteria in NC and not believing the fair choose among teachers to train for academic mentorship system in NC.

## 3.2 Category 2: Common Factors by FDaFGIs and In-depth Interviews (FDaFGIs and I-DIs)

Common factors contributing to impediments in ITT were identified through FDaFGIs. Then, common factors were identified using factors identified through FDaFGIs and factors identified through I-DIs. Therefore, category called *common factors by FDaFGIs and I-IDs* was identified. Among the category, there were 4 themes and 13 sub-themes were identified. Category on *common factors by FDaFGIs and I-DIs* generated themes on *having not enough research to support ITT among the universities in NC, lack of communication and collaboration between ITT providers, lack of interest in inspecting teachers and mentees,* and *lack of academic mentorship system in public-schools*.

### 3.2.1. Theme 2: Having not Enough Research to Support ITT among the Universities in NC

Theme on having not enough research to support ITT among the universities in NC generated 2 sub-themes. Sub-themes on not being volunteered to take part in researches when comes from other universities in NC and on not clear and open data to see what's going on other universities in NC were generated. Nearly all of the participants revealed that EPs mostly do not lean to support researching activities regarding initial teacher training in NC. Participants mostly emphasized that academicians need to teach only, but not provided enough researching time. Upon appointed, none of the academicians was asked and supervised for producing research

activities. Participants strongly suggested that academicians need to produce research activities, supervised by the higher degree academicians regarding their field of study and should be given grades every year. Participants emphasized that each academician should reach to bases points every 5-year determined commonly by all the universities in NC. This kind of system would support the progress of ITT in NC. Otherwise, the academician/s who could not contribute to enough number of researching activities might undergo academician exchange system. Participants believed that academician exchange system might give options academicians teach less and conduct more research activities in other universities in NC (academicians from either governmental, semi-governmental or private universities). Academician exchange system would have benefits for academicians contributing to their ongoing professional development, devoting more time to conduct research activities and being aware of what's going on other universities regarding their field of study. Similarly, teachers at public schools do not lean to take part in research activities as they perceive it time consuming and they also do not lean to open their class doors to research activities. Most of EPs agreed that especially public-school-teachers should devote their time to take part in research activities and led research activities to take part in their classes. Participants agreed that taking part in research activities and allowing research activities to take part in their classes should be seen as part of professional expertise. Participants said that once appointed by the Public Service Commission in NC, public-school-teachers generally teach without contributing their ongoing professional development. They are not inspected and supervised regularly. Their academic performance has never been important. Teachers who take part in research activities felt de-motivated and stop taking part in research activities after some time. Taking part in research activities mostly facilitate teachers contributing their ongoing development; contribute to professional development of their colleagues and allow being aware of recent teaching and learning activities/instructional technologies. Participants of this study suggested that performance grading for public-teachers might be established. Performance grading of the teachers might be supported systematically through identifying criteria on performance grading system. They suggested criteria might be on teachers' taking responsibility of the students and colleagues/teachers, professional expertise, instructional management, leadership and relationships with society, school, teachers and parents as well as on ongoing professional development. Performance grading system for the public teachers might encourage private school managements as well. This might bring communication and collaboration among public and private school teachers as well as contribute positively to communication and collaboration of public-school-teachers and academicians.

#### 3.2.2. Theme 3: Lack of Communication and Collaboration between ITT Providers

Theme on lack of communication and collaboration between ITT providers in NC yielded 2 sub-themes. Sub-themes on strong feel of competition between universities in NC and on not giving contract when graduated from other universities in NC were generated. More than half of the participants revealed that there is a governmental, a semi-governmental and some private universities in NC. They added that mostly, private universities have inclined to appoint graduates of them; not graduates of other universities in NC. Governmental university graduates are directly appointed as public-teachers (as primary and pre-primary teachers). Participants revealed that governmental university graduates need to sit for the exams applied by the Public Service Commission, but there is a reality that all of the governmental university graduates are hired by only public-schools up-to-date. This gives rise to the strong competition among universities in NC especially in terms of appointing graduates due to the fact that there are not enough positions to appoint graduates, which decreases communication and collaboration, but increases strong competition among universities in NC. To get full benefit from the academicians, most of the participants suggested having an academician exchange program among universities in NC per department allowing exchanging of university academic staff/academicians. This would facilitate academic staff to access wide range of institutions of higher education in NC without necessity of negotiating and maintaining individual agreements and allow host institutions to conduct academic staff orientations, offer opportunities to conduct research activities and develop professional expertise to ensure that academicians develops themselves professionally.

#### 3.2.3. Theme 4: Lack of Interest in Supervising Teachers

Theme on lack of interest in supervising teachers generated sub-themes on time constrains in supervising teachers, on lack of interest due to good relationships with teachers and lack of having enough number of inspectors from each field in NC.

Similarly, more than half of the participants said that due to the good relationships with the chief/inspector, a public-school-teacher might not be supervised and inspected, which decreases the development of those teachers. Also, nearly all of the participants revealed that chief/inspectors are hired by the MNE under the Committee by National Education Monitoring, Evaluation and Steering. Participants said that number of chief/inspectors has been decreasing day-to-day in NC, which allows an inspector from the Domestic Science field may supervise and inspect a guidance teacher. Participants revealed that number of inspectors from each field should be increased. They also believed that there should be a performance grading system for the public school teachers and chief/inspectors. Participants revealed that once performance grading system has been established for public-school-teachers, chief/inspectors should also undergo performance grading system. Teachers having improper total grades within 5 years, then they should take intensive in-service teacher training courses on their deficit areas identified by the chief/inspector. Participants believed that chief/inspectors might have good relationships with the teachers, which might affect the inspection and supervision process of the teachers. Participants strongly suggested that public-school-teachers, school administrators, general/vice manager of the Committee by National Education Monitoring, Evaluation and Steering and by the vice/general manager/s of department of primary school (if the inspector was a pre/primary school teacher) or department of vocational and technical education and department of general secondary school education (if the inspector was a secondary/high school teacher) should grade the chief/inspectors. If the chief/inspectors have improper total grades within 5 years, then the chief/inspector should have an option to go back to the teaching activity probably to the final school the inspector was teaching and/or to become retired. Performance grading system for public school teachers and chief/inspectors might be beneficial for the mentees to be raised qualitatively at public-schools, teacher and chief/inspectors to contribute their professional expertise.

#### 3.2.4. Theme 5: Lack of Mentoring System in Public Schools

Theme on lack of mentoring system in public schools gave rise to sub-themes on lack of understanding the role of mentors in NC, on lack of clarity regarding the expectations of mentors and academicians in NC, on time constraints in having mentoring system in public-schools in NC, on lack of training options in academic mentorship system in NC, on lack of certainty regarding assessment criteria in NC and on not believing the fair choose among teachers to train for academic mentorship system in NC.

Nearly all of the participants revealed that mentees at public schools are suggested to be under control of the academicians from the university, teachers/mentors from the school and the chief/inspector from the MNE. However, the cycle does not work in that order. Participants said that when mentees are sent to public schools, they mostly suffer from having under the control of experienced teachers. They may not get mentor help from any teacher. They do not even see any chief/inspector. This brings mentees not to be raised fully. However, this kind of application may bring public-school teachers to be supervised and inspected at a regular basis, mentees to be raised fully and supervised by the chief/inspectors. Nearly all of the participants commented that the objective of mentoring system and role of mentors at public-schools should for developing the

teaching skills of mentees regarding especially classroom management, lesson planning, school/class rules and adaptation to school life, teaching methods and techniques and recent educational technologies. However, there is neither mentoring system established, nor training options of mentorship in teaching and learning process of NC. Most of the participants agreed understanding the role of the mentors in public schools, understanding the expectations of mentors, academicians and assessment criteria to raise mentees at higher qualities, offering training options for teachers regarding mentorship and believing that there should be fair choose for academic mentorship should be established through a system. These factors may bring especially public-teachers not being volunteered to accept the mentees to their classes, not sharing teaching experiences with them, even not checking the lesson plan/s and/or teaching materials of the mentees before the lesson and refusing to give effective and detailed feedback to them after the teaching session. Most of the participants emphasized how managerial and political support become advantageous for some EPs, but disadvantageous for EPs who do not in NC, where equality among EPs is not even mentioned. Therefore, participants of the current study suggested establishing academic mentorship system. This system requires a tricycle model by academicians, public-school-teachers and chief/inspectors. This model may contribute to raise more qualified mentees, contribute to professional development of public-school-teachers and academicians.

The following part deals with the next research question: What do EPs report about the frequency of factors contributing to impediments in ITT in NC?

#### 3.3. Category 3: Frequency of Factors Impeding EPs in ITT

#### 3.3.1. Theme 6: Frequency of Factors

The findings obtained from the data collected from EPs for identifying perceptions of EPs regarding frequency of factors contributing to impediments in ITT in NC were presented in this section. A category called *frequency of factors* was identified. Among the category, 4 themes were identified.

#### 3.3.1.i. Theme 6a: Frequency of Factors on Researching in ITT

Perceptions of EPs regarding frequency of factors on researching in ITT can be seen in Table 1.1.

Name of Sub-themes	Frequency of Sub-themes	As	Ts	SAs	TTU	MNE	Total
Not being volunteer to	Always	17	15	13	13	16	74
	Often	0	2	2	4	3	11
take part in researches	Usually	0	0	0	0	0	0
when come from other	Sometimes	0	0	0	0	0	0
universities in NC	Never	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	17	17	14	17	19	85
Not clear and open data to see what's going on institutions in NC	Always	13	15	11	16	12	74
	Often	0	2	3	2	0	7
	Usually	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sometimes	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Never	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	13	17	14	18	12	81

Table 1.1: Theme 6a: Frequency of Factors on Researching in ITT

Impediments on not being volunteered to take part in researches when come from other universities in NC and not clear and open data to see what's going on institutions in NC always happen (each coded 74 times).

## 3.3.1.ii. Theme 6b: Frequency of Factors on Supervising Teachers and Mentees at Public-Schools

Perceptions of EPs regarding frequency of factors on supervising teachers and mentees at public-schools can be seen in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Theme 6b: Frequency of Factors on Supervising Teachers and Mentees at Public-Schools

Name of Sub-themes	Frequency of Sub-themes	As	Ts	SAs	TTU	MNE	Total
Time constrains in inspecting teachers/mentees	Always	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Often	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Usually	2	0	0	0	0	2
	Sometimes	6	3	4	2	4	19
	Never	13	13	14	15	15	71
	Total	21	16	18	17	19	92
Lack of interest in inspecting teachers due to good relationships with teacher/s	Always	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Often	4	1	5	15	2	27
	Usually	14	19	10	7	15	66
	Sometimes	2	0	0	1	0	3
	Never	2	0	0	0	0	2
	Total	22	20	15	23	17	98
Lack of having enough number of inspectors from each field in NC	Always	4	12	14	15	14	59
	Often	15	3	5	4	4	31
	Usually	2	0	0	0	0	3
	Sometimes	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Never	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	21	15	19	19	18	93

Impediment on time constraints in inspecting teachers/mentees never happens (coded 71 times), whereas impediment on lack of interest in inspecting teachers due to good relationships with teacher/s often happens (coded 66 times). On the other hand, impediment on lack of having enough number of inspectors from each field in NC always happens (coded 59 times).

## 3.3.1.iii. Theme 6c: Frequency of Factors on Communication and Collaboration in ITT

Perceptions of EPs regarding frequency of factors on communication and collaboration in ITT can be seen Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Theme 6c: Frequency of Factors on Communication and Collaboration in ITT

Name of Sub-themes	Frequency of Sub-themes	As	Ts	SAs	TTU	MNE	Total
Strong feel of competition between universities in NC	Always	13	15	12	14	14	69
	Often	0	0	0	1	3	4
	Usually	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sometimes	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Never	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	13	15	12	15	17	73
Not giving contract when graduated from other universities in NC	Always	5	2	3	0	1	11
	Often	14	12	13	15	14	69
	Usually	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sometimes	0	3	0	0	0	3
	Never	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	19	17	16	15	15	83

Impediment on strong feel of competition between universities in NC always happens (coded 69 times) whereas impediment on not giving contract when graduated from other universities in NC often happens (coded 69 times).

#### 3.3.1.iv. Theme 6d: Frequency of Factors on Academic Mentorship System

Perceptions of EPs regarding frequency of factors on mentoring system can be seen in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Theme 6d: Frequency of Factors on Academic Mentorship System

Name of Sub-themes	Frequency of Sub-themes	UTs	Ts	SAs	TTU	MNE	Total
Lack of understanding	Always	16	15	14	16	16	78
	Often	0	4	5	2	3	14
the role of mentors in	Usually	0	0	0	0	0	0
NC	Sometimes	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Never	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	16	19	19	18	19	92
Lack of clarity regarding the expectations of mentors and academicians in NC	Always	15	11	11	14	12	63
	Often	10	10	9	8	9	47
	Usually	0	4	4	0	0	8
	Sometimes	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Never	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	25	25	24	22	21	118

**Table 1.4 (continued)** 

Time constrains in having academic	Always	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Often	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Usually	0	0	0	0	0	0
mentorship system in	Sometimes	0	4	8	2	9	23
public schools in NC	Never	16	15	11	16	10	69
	Total	16	19	19	18	19	92
	Always	17	15	12	15	11	70
I1	Often	2	4	5	2	1	14
Lack of training options in academic mentorship in NC	Usually	0	0	2	3	4	9
	Sometimes	0	0	0	0	0	0
III INC	Never	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Total	19	19	19	20	16	94
	Always	16	13	11	14	12	66
I1	Often	3	6	5	4	3	22
Lack of certainty	Usually	0	0	1	0	0	1
regarding assessment criteria in NC	Sometimes	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHICHA III INC	Never	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	19	19	17	18	15	89
NI (1 1' ' (1 C.'	Always	12	0	2	1	0	16
Not believing the fair choose among teachers to train for academic mentorship system in NC	Often	2	4	1	2	0	9
	Usually	0	10	13	11	0	34
	Sometimes	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Never	0	0	0	0	15	15
	Total	14	14	16	14	15	74

Impediments on lack of understanding the role of mentors in NC (coded 78 times); lack of clarity regarding the expectations of mentors and academician in NC (coded 63 times); lack of training options in academic mentorship system in NC (coded 70 times) and lack of certainty regarding assessment criteria in NC (coded 66 times) always happen. Impediment on not believing the fair choose among teachers to train for academic mentorship system usually happens (coded 34 times) whereas impediment on time constrains in having academic mentorship system in public schools in NC never happens (coded 69 times).

#### 4. DISCUSSION and RESULTS

Due to the active role of the educational professionals play in teaching-learning process, perceptions of EPs regarding factors contributing to impediments in ITT and frequency of these

factors are identified in order to plan how to deal with them. Unidentified impeding factors continue to impede educational professionals like a spider-network. Therefore, an unidentified impeding factor builds on other unidentified impeding factors and impediments become like a spiral.

Conducting researches in initial teacher training and classroom settings mostly contribute to the professional development and professional expertise of teachers and mean to know very well what is going on in the classroom settings by the academicians. Looy and Goegebeur (2007, p. 107) suggested that such kind of approach builds "stronger ties between theory and practice in initial training itself, and to a reinforcement of the knowledge basis in the teacher training curriculum and the teaching profession". Similarly, communication and collaboration are indispensable part of each other. Bevins and Price (2014, p. 270) stated that whatever the goal for the teachers, either part of a research or for professional development purposes, collaboration at all means to reduce the gap between "theory and practice" but collaboration seems complex and the level of the relationship should be fed by range of requirements.

This is similar for public-teachers in NC. They do not take any steps to collaborate with the academicians because they consider the quality of the work/training, certificate/s provided, time of the project/training and financial benefits they can get. Similarly, academicians should be volunteered in taking part in researches, which also comes from academicians of other universities in NC. Moran (2010, p. 177) found, "It is important to consider the impact of research approach on the ability of trainees to become future producers of evidence as well as effective and ethical practitioners". Moran concluded that there should be approaches enabling integration of theory and practice together including integration of research practice. Similarly, mentees mostly like researching areas connected to their practice, experience and interests (Stinckens, Elliott, and Leijssen, 2009; Moran, 2010). Academicians are strongly suggested undergoing a system, called academicians exchange system to contribute their academic skills, professional development and improve ITT. Similarly, public school teachers have strongly been suggested undergoing a system, called performance grading system to improve their performances and supply ongoing professional development.

Koski, Martikaineh, Burakoff, and Launonen (2010, p. 279), after interviews with key staff members regarding identifying the insights gained during participation in the Finnish communication training program, found that staff members should be given more opportunities to gain more practices on communication and opinions regarding the actions performed during communication training should be explored. Similarly, academicians undergoing academicians exchange system would facilitate improving communication and collaboration among them.

Also, supervisions and inspections of public-school-teachers in NC are not at regular bases. In NC, teachers who have completed their internship period after 2 years still need to be observed and supervised by an inspector. However, inspectors do not observe the teachers at regular bases and an inspector on English language teaching, for instance, generally inspects teachers of other languages due to lack of inspectors in the specified field. The inspector may not even know the language used in the class at the time of inspection. This shows that inspectors do their inspections at overall bases and mostly use their judgments. Purpose of inspection is to "help schools contribute more effectively to... achievement" (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 2007, p. 3). It was found, "principals' and teachers' perceptions of school quality were highly stable.... The results showed that school inspections had a comparatively low impact on the aspects of school quality measured..." (Gaertner, Wurster, and Pant, 2013, p. 1). Performance grading system for the public-school-teachers and performance grading system for chief/inspectors are suggested as a necessity to contribute professional development and professional expertise of teachers and of chief/inspectors.

Teachers need to be tolerant/authoritative in the classroom to make students feel better (Petegem, Creemers, Aelterman, and Rosseel, 2008, p. 451). Looking at the relationship between mentees and public-school-teachers, it is necessary to be tolerant/authoritative in the classroom because mentees desire to feel better while observing/teaching in the class. Cain (2009) suggested that a teacher who acted as a mentor at the same time could develop themselves in terms of constructing an extensive range of thinking, managing their comprehension of their own practice and managing research literature. Findings of a study aiming at identifying and examining key factors of the failure of school-based mentoring to realize its full potential, implied that in order to clarify the meaning and purpose of mentoring, appropriate training of mentors of beginning teachers should be made (Hobson and Malderez, 2013). Alhlja and Fresko (2014, p. 162) found, "mentor selection, gender, and school leave" were the key factors in estimating the function of mentors and in perceiving mentoring system. Hudson (2013, p. 771) discovered that mentoring plays a key role in "professional development and led towards enhancing communication skills, developing leadership roles (problem-solving and building capacity) and advancing pedagogical knowledge". Similarly, Ilğan (2012, p. 65) suggested mentorship and its practical application as one of the elements of professional development. Absence of mentoring has been found one of the impediments in reforming the identities of African immigrant teachers in South African schools (Vandeyar, Vandeyar, and Elufisan, 2014). Absence of mentoring for public-schoolteachers is an existing strategy in NC. Academic mentorship has been suggested for publicschool-teachers in NC. Mlis (2001, p. 23) defined academic mentorship system as one of the strategies of professional development of educational professionals "to take advantage of the skills and expertise of the senior members for professional growth". Academic mentorship system is one of the deficient strategies faced by academicians, public-school-teachers and mentees. During mentees' teaching and learning experience at public-schools, their expertise should be facilitated by the school-based-mentors. However, teachers of public-schools are not trained as mentors and they are not getting paid for the extra work they do. When they are asked to facilitate the mentees, they cannot do it properly due to their lack of skills on active mentorship strategy. Chief/inspectors should also inspect/supervise mentees at schools besides teacher inspection/supervision. However, such kind of system has not been established. This yields mentees not to be trained properly at public-schools in NC. Therefore, tricycle contribution by academicians, public-school-teachers and chief/inspectors has been a necessity for having a qualified mentee raising system.

- 1. Identifying factors contributing to impediments and frequency of identified factors revealed significant conclusions. Increasing the level of relationship between academicians and public-school-teachers in terms of communication and collaboration on joint projects and academic trainings by taking into consideration what teachers consider for their part facilitates communication and collaboration among them.
- 2. Training public-school-teachers as active mentors and highly qualified mentees-training at public-schools should be seen as advantageous. Academic mentorship includes training of mentees enrolled during their internship period at public-schools and training of public-school-teachers as mentors. It also includes inspection/supervision of teachers and mentees by chief/inspectors at regular bases. This kind of mutual combination may generate the interaction of the active mentorship strategy and a tricycle model to train mentees, public-school-teachers and academicians accordingly.
- 3. Establishing performance-grading-system both for teachers and chief/inspectors can improve their professional development and expertise a lot.

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#### Uzun Özet

Eğitim profesyonelleri denilince, okul yöneticileri, öğretmenler, öğretmen sendikalarına seçilmiş yönetim kurulu üyeleri, akademisyenler ve Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı eğitim uzmanları ve baş/müfettişler akla gelmektedir. Eğitim profesyonelleri öğretmen eğitiminde çoğu zaman engellerle karşılaşmaktadırlar. Bu çalışmada, KKTC eğitim sisteminde eğitim profesyonellerinin öğretmen eğitiminde karşılaştıkları engellere neden olan faktörlerin ve bu faktörlerin sıklıklarına ilişkin eğitim profesyonellerinin algılarının incelenmesini hedeflenmektedir. Araştırmada, nitel yaklaşımın yorumlama yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca, bu çalışmada, olgubilim (fenomenoloji / phenomology) deseni kullanılmıştır. Olgubilim deseni, farkında olduğumuz ancak derinlemesine ve ayrıntılı bir anlayışa sahip olmadığımız olgulara odaklanarak bize tümüyle yabancı olmayan, fakat tam anlamını kavrayamadığımız olguları araştırmayı amaçlayan çalışmalar için uygun bir araştırma ortamı oluşturmaktadır. Olgubilim çalışmalarında, genel olarak bir olguya ilişkin bireysel algıların ortaya çıkarılması ve yorumlanması amaçlanmaktadır. Elde edilecek veriler ışığında, ilgili profesyoneller KKTC'de yer alan devlet okullarında ortak araştırma stratejileri, verimli iletişim ve işbirliği yollarını oluşturabilecekler, öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen adaylarının denetlenmesini ve mentörlük sisteminde etkin rol üstlenmelerini sağlayabileceklerdir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, eğitim profesyonlerinin, öğretmen eğitiminde karşılaştıkları engellere neden olan faktörleri ve bu faktörlerin sıklıklarına ilişkin algılarını belirlemektir. Bu amaçla, araştırmacının Ekim 2008 yılından itibaren tuttuğu alan günlükleri, bu çalışma için özellikle oluşturulan yarı yapılandırılmış ve yapılandırılmamış görüşme formları aracılığıyla veri toplanması yoluna gidilmiştir. Araştırmacının tuttuğu günlükler analiz edilerek belirlenen faktörler, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılarak odak grup görüşmesi için oluşturulan eğitim uzmanlarından oluşan gruba sorulmuştur. Belirlenen faktörlerin ortak olanları alınmış ve odak grup görüşmeleri aracılığıyla eğitim uzmanlarıyla tekrar gürüşülmüştür. Alan günlükleri ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu (AGveYYGF) aracılığıyla belirlenen faktörler, ortak engeller olarak anılmıştır. AGvYYGF ile belirlenen ortak engeller, yapılandırılmamış görüşme formu aracılığıyla, derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılarak eğitim profesyonellerinin görüşüne sunulmuştur. Ortak engeller üzerine yapılan derinlemesine görüşmeler sonucunda, kültürel bakış açısıyla eğitim profesyonellerinin, öğretmen eğitiminde karşılaştıkları engellere neden olan faktörlere ilişkin algıları belirlenmiştir. Ortak engeller üzerine en son yapılan derinlemesine görüşmeler de ise, eğitim profesyonellerinin öğretmen eğitiminde karşılaştıkları engellere neden olan faktörlerin sıklığına ilişkin algıları belirlenmiştir.

Araştırmaya, odak grup görüşmeleri için 15 eğitim uzmanı ve derinlemesine görüşmeler için 67 eğitim profesyoneli katılmıştır. Eğitim uzmanları; 3 devlet okulu öğretmeni, 3 devlet okulu yöneticisi, KKTC üniversitelerinde görev yapan eğitim bilimleri alanında doktora sahibi olan 3 akademisyen, 3 sendika yönetimi üyesi, 1 bakanlık müdürü, 1 baş/müfettiş ve 1 eğitim uzmanı olmak üzere 3 Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı üyesinden oluşmaktadır. Eğitim profesyonelleri ise, 12 devlet okulu öğretmeni, 12 devlet okulu müdürü, KKTC üniversitelerinde görevli eğitim bilimleri alanında doktora sahibi olan 12 akademisyen, öğretmen sendikalarına bağlı yönetim kurulu üyelerinden 12 kişi, 5 eğitim uzmanı, 8 baş/müfettiş ve 6 bakanlık müdür/yardımcısından oluşmaktadır. Eğitim uzmanları ve eğitim profesyonelleri, amaçlı örneklem yöntemiyle seçilmiştir. Nitel veriler içerik analizi yöntemiyle katagorize edilerek temalara ayrılmıştır. Alan günlükleri, odak grup görüşmeleri ve derinlemesine görüşmelerden elde edilen veriler nitel analiz yönteminde uzman eğitim bilimleri alanında doktora sahibi öğretim üyeleri tarafından farklı zamanlarda

birçok kez okunup, her defasında elde kodlama türü temel alınarak kategori ve temalar oluşturulmuştur. Öğretmen eğitiminde eğitim profesyonellerini engelleyen engellere neden olan faktörler ve bu faktörlerin sıklıklarına ilişkin görüşler, temalara ayrılıp araştırmacı tarafından karşılıklı sağlama tekniği kullanılarak teyid edilmiştir.

Alan günlükleri ve odak grup görüşmeleri (AGvOGG) sonucu belirlenen ortak faktörler, kategori 1'i oluşturmaktadır. Kategori 1, firsatlar teması ve 4 alt tema şeklinde belirlenmiştir. Alt temalar şunlardır: 1.) Öğretmen eğitiminde ve devlet okullarında araştırma firsatları, 2.) Öğretmen eğitiminde ve devlet okullarında iletişim ve işbirliği firsatları, 3.) Devlet okullarında denetleme firsatları ve öğretmen eğitiminde ve 4) Devlet okullarında akademik mentörlük firsatlarıdır.

AGvOGG ile eğitim profesyonelleri ile yapılan derinlemesine görüşmeler sonucu belirlenen engellere neden olan faktörler ise kategori 2'yi oluşturmaktadır. Kategori 2'nin alt temaları şunlardır: 1.) Kuzey Kıbrısta öğretmen eğitimini destekleyen araştırmalara yeterince destek verilmemesi, 2.) Öğretmen eğitimini sağlayanlar arasında yeterince iletişim ve işbirliği sağlanamaması, 3.) Öğretmenlerin denetimine yeterince önem verilmemesi ve 4.) Devlet okullarında mentörlük sisteminin olmaması şeklindedir. Söz konusu temalar ise 13 alt temaya ayrılmıştır.

Eğitim profesyonellerinin öğretmen eğitiminde karşılaştıkları engellerin sıklığına ilişkin eğitim profesyonellerinin algıları kategori 3'ü oluşturmaktadır. Kategori 3'ün alt temaları şunlardır: 1.) Araştırmaya ilişkin faktörlerin sıklığı, 2.) Öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen adaylarının devlet okullarında denetimine ilişkin faktörlerin sıklığı, 3.) İletişim ve işbirliğine ilişkin faktörlerin sıklığı ve 4.) Mentörlük sistemine ilişkin faktörlerin sıklığıdır.

Sonuç olarak, bu araştırma eğitim profesyonellerine sunulan fırsatlar, araştıma olanakları, iletişim ve işbirliği, öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen adaylarının denetimi ve mentörlük sistemi ile belirlenen bu faktörlerin sıklıklarına ilişkin detaylı veriler sunmaktadır. Bu araştırma, öğretmen eğitiminde eğitim profesyonellerinin karşılaştıkları engellere neden olan faktörlerin ve bu faktörlerin sıklıklarına ilişkin algıların belirlenmesi açısından önemli bir yaklaşım ortaya koymuştur. Bu yaklaşım, eğitim profesyonellerinin araştırma olanaklarının geliştirilmesi, eğitim profesyonelleri arasında etkili iletişim ve işbirliği olanaklarının artırılması, öğretmen eğitiminin ve denetim sisteminin geliştirilmesi, devlet okullarında mentörlük sisteminin oluşturulmasında ve mentörlük sisteminin öğretmen-akademisyen-denetmen üçlemini içine alacak şekilde düzenlenmesi ve akademik mentörlük sisteminin benimsenmesine daha geniş bir açıdan bakma fırsatı yarattığını ortaya koymuştur.

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