



A Study of English Language Teachers' Internship Program in Iran and Turkey: Similarities, Differences, and Challenges

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 13 March 2024 Revised: 12 June 2024 Accepted: 26 October 2024 Online: 07 July 2025</p>	<p>This comparative qualitative study examines English language teachers' internships in Iran and Turkey, identifying key similarities and differences while addressing challenges and proposing viable solutions. The investigation focuses on two countries with cultural affinities, but differing educational outcomes. A triangulated data collection method was employed, combining documentary analysis and survey study. This involved reviewing primary and secondary sources, including curricula, articles, and formal internship regulations from both settings. To enhance data triangulation, an open-ended questionnaire was distributed virtually to ten English teachers and internship instructors from Iran and Turkey. Their responses were analyzed through content analysis to elucidate internship features and challenges. Simultaneously, documentary data were analyzed using a modified version of Bereday's four-step method: description, interpretation, juxtaposition, and comparison. Findings reveal that both countries emphasize practical teaching periods following theoretical training, supervised scaffolded teaching before independent practice, and integration of innovative methods and technology into internships. However, significant differences were noted in the duration of internship programs, content of prerequisite courses, and specific procedures. Key common challenges include the selection of internship schools, mentor expertise, and evaluation processes. The study suggests that Iran needs substantial improvements in mentor selection and training, while Turkey could benefit from a focus on enhancing evaluation and assessment methods. Additionally, the study advocates for closer cooperation between education offices and teacher training universities in both countries, promoting ongoing reforms and support to improve the overall quality of internship programs.</p>
<p>KEYWORDS</p> <p>English Language Professional Development Internship Teacher Training</p>	

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1. Introduction

Educators and scholars in the realm of educational sciences universally acknowledge that the quality and effectiveness of educational systems are significantly influenced by the skill and proficiency of their teachers. These skills encompass a range of competencies, including pedagogical knowledge, classroom management, and the ability to engage students effectively, which directly contribute to the professional competence of teachers (Gholamzadeh et al., 2024; Hammerness & Darling-Hammond, 2007; Zhu et al., 2020). In fact, as an inherent part of any teacher education program, teachers' internship plays a pivotal role in shaping these skills and knowledge, providing them with the essential hands-on experience necessary for success in the classroom (Bazoobandi et al., 2023). Internship programs serve as crucial training grounds where student-teachers can explore and refine their abilities across various disciplines, bridging the theoretical knowledge of academic subjects with practical application in real-world settings. This experiential learning not only enhances their teaching skills, but it also strengthens their overall competence, ensuring they are well-prepared to meet the diverse needs of their students and contribute positively to the educational system (Fomunyan, 2016).

The transformative nature of internship experiences in shaping novice teachers' identities and pedagogical competence is well-documented in the literature. Teaching internships challenge pre-existing expectations and imaginations, promoting the development of professional identity through engagement, resilience, and negotiation of practices (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Guilfoyle, McCormack, & Erduran, 2024). Internships also enhance self-efficacy and learning engagement, which mediate the relationship between internship experiences and professional identity formation (Cai et al., 2022). The transition from imagined to practiced identity is further supported by Communities of Practice, or groups of individuals who share a common interest or profession and engage in collective learning through regular interaction and shared experiences, fostering a supportive environment for professional growth and identity development, finally ending in novice teachers' identity transformation (Pravita & Kuswandono, 2021). These findings underscore the importance of internships in preparing preservice teachers for the realities of their profession and facilitating their identity development.

Furthermore, the design and implementation of vocational education and internship across the globe are of vital significance in preparing future teachers to face the challenges of the teaching profession (Akomaning et al., 2011). In this line, all stakeholders' perspectives must be carefully integrated into internship programs to optimize their effectiveness and align them with the evolving demands of the education sector. The feedback mechanisms and assessment practices

during internship are also essential for evaluating and enhancing the quality of teacher education programs, ensuring that pre-service teachers receive tailored support and opportunities for growth (Ledger, 2018).

Some studies have already delved into a comparison of teacher education and related issues across different countries. The research conducted by Su and Pogoy (2017) examined the classroom practices of teacher interns in Taiwan and the Philippines. Their findings underscore both similarities and differences in key areas such as lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment strategies. The organization of teacher internship programs also varies between the two countries, reflecting different educational philosophies and practices. The study emphasizes that the foundation for developing innovative and high-quality English teachers lies in robust teacher training programs that enhance pedagogical knowledge during pre-service education.

In a comparative study, Hejazi and Bakhtiari (2021) focused on teacher education internship curricula in Iran, Australia, and Singapore, revealing both similarities and notable differences. They indicated that all three countries incorporate full-time internships into their teacher education programs. However, while the number of internship courses in Singapore and Iran is comparable, Australia's approach differs significantly. Unique features of Singapore's teacher education program include a postgraduate program, an international internship initiative, and extensive collaboration between educational institutions and the National Institute of Education. These elements contribute to a distinctive framework for teacher training that sets Singapore apart from both Iran and Australia, highlighting the importance of context in shaping educational practices.

Moreover, Larsen (2016) conducted a comparative case study on the globalization and internationalization of teacher education in Canada and Greater China. The research revealed that the internationalization of teacher education programs manifests differently in these regions, influenced by global trends and local contexts. The study discusses the complexities and challenges associated with internationalizing teacher education, emphasizing that understanding these dynamics requires a nuanced approach that considers both global processes and the specific local factors at play. This comparative perspective enriches the discourse on teacher education by highlighting the diverse paths taken by different countries in response to global educational demands.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching practicums was explored by Tekel et al. (2022), who highlighted how various countries adapted their internship requirements in response to the crisis. Some nations opted to remove or extend the teaching practicum, while others

implemented online teaching practicums utilizing peer learning and virtual reality technology. The study illustrates the flexibility and innovation required in teacher education during unprecedented times, demonstrating how educational systems can respond to challenges while maintaining the integrity of teacher training programs.

Recent research has also shed light on the crucial role of mentorship in teacher education, with Clarke and Mena (2020) investigating the role of practicum mentors across various international contexts. Their findings indicate that mentor teachers often lack adequate preparation for their mentoring roles, which can significantly impact the quality of teacher training. Utilizing the Mentoring Profile Inventory, the study offers a comparative analysis of mentor teachers' perceptions of their work, uncovering context-specific and general aspects of mentoring that have not been extensively reported in previous literature. This research underscores the need for targeted support and training for mentor teachers to enhance the overall quality of teacher preparation programs.

In Iran, the internship structure further illustrates this need for support, as it often lacks integration with theoretical courses, presenting a linear and predetermined format that fails to foster the reflective practices necessary for professional growth. Studies by Hejazi and Bakhtiari (2021) reveal that this disconnection is exacerbated by insufficient support from school teachers, whose academic shortcomings impede effective internship execution (Safarnavadeh et al., 2018). Moreover, the lack of proper supervision hampers the development of pre-service teachers' skills, resulting in an inadequately prepared workforce. Logistical issues, such as the absence of supervisory presence in schools and transportation barriers, further complicate the internship experience, making it difficult for interns to fully engage in the teaching process (Tatari et al., 2015). While some studies highlight the potential of internships to enhance teacher preparation (Nezakat-Alhossaini & Ketabi, 2012), the prevailing focus on theoretical knowledge at the expense of practical training hinders the development of essential teaching competencies among candidates (Boojari et al., 2023). This multifaceted issue underscores the urgent need for structural reform in Iranian teacher education programs.

Similarly, Turkey's teacher internship program faces its own set of challenges, which further exacerbate the issues highlighted in both the mentorship framework and the teacher education system overall. In particular, the preparation of educators in social studies and language education remains problematic. K m r, A, and  epik, (2015) emphasize the importance of reframing internship practice courses to better connect theoretical knowledge with effective teaching methodologies applicable in actual classroom settings. However, the social studies

curriculum often neglects to address global perspectives and critical human rights issues, which are vital for equipping future teachers with the necessary tools to foster democratic citizenship and cultural awareness, as highlighted by Banks (2001) and Merryfield (1998). Additionally, while the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) regulates language teacher preparation, the internship framework—typically spanning 6-12 weeks in the final year of undergraduate studies—suffers from inadequacies in engaging candidates with contemporary educational challenges, leaving them ill-prepared to confront the complexities of real classrooms (YÖK reports, 1998). Pre-service teachers in Turkey also face difficulties related to classroom management, student behavior, and increasing workload, which further undermine their confidence and effectiveness as future educators (Manasikana & Hartono, 2021; Tarman, 2010). These challenges highlight the need for a comprehensive reassessment of internship programs to enhance the preparation of teachers who can successfully navigate diverse classroom environments, thereby improving both mentor training and internship quality across the region.

Despite the existence of numerous comparative studies focused on teacher training practices across the globe, to the researchers' best knowledge, no study has solely focused on a comparative study of English teachers' internships in Iran and Turkey. Moreover, by conducting a comparative study of English language teachers' internship programs in Iran and Turkey and identifying the similarities and differences between them, this study aims to delve deeper into the persistent challenges, examining how they influence the internship experiences of pre-service teachers and identifying potential solutions to improve the overall effectiveness and relevance of teacher education in both countries. By addressing these key issues, this research aims to provide insights into the field of teacher education, contribute to evidence-based practices, and support improvements in the teacher training systems of Iran and Turkey. This focus is intended to enhance the preparation and professional development of future educators in these contexts. In line with these objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the similarities and differences between English Language Teachers' internship programs in Iran and Turkey?
2. What are the challenges involved in English Language Teachers' internship programs in Iran and Turkey?

2. Research Method

By employing a qualitative approach, the research aims to gather rich, in-depth insights into the experiences of English teacher trainees and their internship instructors. The research design is applied in purpose and comparative in method, involving two neighboring countries that have implemented reforms in teacher education over the last twenty years. Following the framework established by Bray, Adamson, and Mason (2007), Iran and Turkey were selected due to their similar cultural affinities and their different educational outcomes. The qualitative nature of the study allows for flexibility in data collection and analysis, bringing forth participant perspectives and experiences that quantitative methods may overlook.

Data triangulation was central to the research design, involving the collection of information from multiple sources to enhance the validity of the findings. An open-ended questionnaire was administered to 10 English teacher trainees and their internship instructors from Iran and Turkey, enabling the collection of qualitative data that reflects their lived experiences and perceptions of the internship programs. These questionnaire responses were analyzed through content analysis, identifying common themes and patterns regarding the internship features and challenges. In addition to the survey responses, documentary analysis was conducted by reviewing primary and secondary sources, including curricula, articles, and formal internship regulations from both countries. This documentary data was analyzed using a modified version of Bereday's (1964) four-step method: description, interpretation, juxtaposition, and comparison.

This comprehensive qualitative design, combining participant insights and documentary evidence, provides a robust framework for understanding the complexities of internship programs in both Iran and Turkey. By integrating these diverse qualitative methods, the study aims to present a holistic view of English language teachers' internships, ultimately contributing to informed discussions and recommendations for improving teacher training practices in both contexts.

The participants in this study include five Iranian and five Turkish English teacher trainees, teachers, and internship instructors selected through availability criteria. They responded to the open-ended questionnaire online alternatively through email or WhatsApp. One of the respondents from Turkey responded orally which was later transcribed for later analysis. The demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Information of the Participants

		Country									
		Iran					Turkey				
NO.	Title	Gender	Degree	Age	Experience	Title	Gender	Degree	Age	Experience	
1	Instructor	Male	Ph.D.	45	17	Instructor	Male	Ph.D.	52	21	
2	Teacher	Male	M.A.	42	15	Teacher	Male		37	12	
3	Teacher	Female	B.A.	28	5	Teacher	Female		47	22	
4	Teacher Trainee	Male	Senior Student	24	4	Teacher	Female		29	4	
5	Teacher Trainee	Female	Senior Student	22	4	Teacher Trainee	Female	Senior Student	25	4	

As shown in Table 1, participants were selected through convenience sampling from both the Iranian and Turkish contexts. In the Iranian context, one of the researchers who is currently an internship instructor of English teacher trainees, facilitated easy access to five respondents. Initially, eight participants were approached; however, three declined to participate after receiving the questionnaire.

For the Turkish context, the researchers reached out to several former colleagues and students currently living in Turkey and teaching English at various Turkish universities and institutions. Through these connections, six potential Turkish participants were identified, and five willingly responded to the questionnaire, while one declined the request. Due to limited access to participants, especially in Turkey, no specific criteria were established for their selection. Nonetheless, the final sample across both contexts exhibited a relatively homogeneous demographic background, ensuring that the respondents shared similar characteristics relevant to the study.

To account for triangulation of data collection and to obtain more valid data, two instruments were used in the study: Collecting data through written and online library sources and documents involved searching through articles, books, reports, and other pertinent sources related to the teacher internship processes in both countries. Online databases such as Google Scholar, Academia, and ResearchGate were also consulted. The second instrument was a researcher-made open-ended questionnaire. The items for the questionnaire were constructed after a thorough examination and analysis of the documentary materials pertaining to English teacher internships in both countries. This involved identifying key themes and issues that emerged from the literature, which informed the formulation of relevant questions aimed at exploring the participants' experiences and perceptions.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the researchers consulted two colleagues who are experienced in the field. These colleagues provided constructive feedback, leading to several

modifications and refinements of the questionnaire items. After incorporating their suggestions, the final version of the open-ended questionnaire was administered to the selected participants from Iran and Turkey, allowing for an in-depth exploration of their perspectives on the internship process. In the first phase of data collection, extensive documentary research was conducted to gather relevant theoretical and empirical information about teacher internships. Following this, open-ended questionnaires were distributed to ten identified teachers and instructors currently working in Iran and Turkey to collect data regarding their internship experiences. In line with the research objectives and questions, the collected data underwent a systematic analysis process using Bereday's (1964) method of data analysis, which encompasses four stages: description, interpretation, juxtaposition, and comparison. For this study, the analysis was refined into two main steps: the first step involved the description and interpretation of the data to provide an overview of key findings, while the second step focused on the juxtaposition and comparison of the data, allowing for the identification of similarities, differences, and challenges experienced by participants.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, two colleagues who are experts in the field were consulted to review the data and confirm its accuracy. Their feedback was invaluable in validating the interpretations made from the data, ensuring that the results accurately reflect the participants' experiences regarding the internship processes in both countries.

3. Findings

1.1. Description

This section follows a modified version of Bereday's four-step approach (Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2007) to analyze teacher education and internships in Iran and Turkey. The internship experiences are initially described and interpreted based on the evidence from various sources, including documents and reports (Table 1 & Table 2). In the second part, the obtained data is juxtaposed together to compare and contrast the two countries' internship systems (Table 3). Finally, the challenges of teachers' internships in both settings are described, interpreted, juxtaposed, and compared (Table 4).

1.1.1. Teacher Education System of Iran

The history of teacher education in Iran spans over a century, with the management of teacher training primarily falling under the Ministry of Education and certain universities supervised by the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology for the past fifty years. Following the Islamic

Revolution in 1979, many teacher training centers were gradually closed due to significant changes in perspectives that required a reevaluation of educational institutions. This shift led to the discontinuation of programs that no longer aligned with the new ideological framework emphasizing Islamic values, which rendered previous curricula and teaching methods outdated. Furthermore, the need for a comprehensive overhaul of the educational system, combined with economic challenges and resource shortages made sustaining these centers unjustified. Consequently, some institutions were shut down to pave the way for a new structure of teacher education that could better address the evolving needs of society. The teacher training centers reopened in the 2000s and were incorporated into Farhangian University in 2011, which was established to recruit, train, and develop qualified human resources for the Ministry of Education (Gooya & Gholamzad, 2019; High Council for Cultural Revolution, 2011).

In the same year, the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution (SCCR) approved The Fundamental Transformation of Education Document (FTED) to reform the education system, highlighting important elements such as values, goals, and strategies. This document emphasizes the need for changes in six subsystems. It advocates for the development of a professional training system that fosters ongoing interaction between students and schools, as well as structuring student-teacher internships in line with contemporary educational theories (SCCR, 2011).

Since its inception in 2011, Farhangian University operates through 98 approximately training centers, serving over 70,000 students, and employs two main pathways for recruiting teachers (Nazari et al., 2023). The first pathway allows high school diploma holders to enter Farhangian University through the national entrance exam (konkour) and an interview. According to Articles of Association of Farhangian University published by High Council for Cultural Revolution (HCCR) released in 2011, this four-year program includes continuous education, after which graduates are committed to teach for eight years in designated schools. Male student-teachers are exempt from mandatory military service, and their study duration counts towards their service record (High Council for Cultural Revolution). The teaching candidates are required to pass a total number of 150 general, educational, and professional courses successfully. The law originally predicted a comprehensive exam for this group of teacher trainees, but it was never implemented in practice.

The second pathway targets candidates with bachelor's, master's or Ph.D. degrees seeking to teach at the primary or junior and senior secondary schools. These candidates must pass an entrance exam which typically includes general knowledge questions, specialized subject tests related to the candidates' fields, psychological assessments, and teaching skills evaluations; the in-

person interview mainly targeted at assessing teaching abilities may include simulated classroom scenarios, where they demonstrate their ability to engage students, deliver lessons effectively, and manage classroom dynamics. Candidates may also be evaluated on their use of teaching aids and methods to be eligible for employment by the Ministry of Education. Upon hiring, they complete a one-year training course (including two modules) at Farhangian University followed by a comprehensive exam after which teaching qualification certificate is awarded to the candidates (Mehrpour et al., 2019).

Since the latter half of 2023, a new recruitment method approved by the Council for the Expansion of Higher Education known as the '2+2' or 'dual degree' program has been introduced by the Iranian Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology, in collaboration with top universities. According to this plan, student teachers will spend at least two years at the main university, where they will only take specialized courses. If their general qualifications are approved, they are transferred to Farhangian University at the beginning of their third year to complete their professional teaching courses. This method aims to address both the employment challenges for graduates of other universities and the teacher shortage faced currently by the Ministry of Education (Yoonesi & Jafari, 2024).

The teacher recruitment process in Iran remains centralized, primarily managed by Farhangian University and Shahid Rajayi Teacher Training University, with candidates required to take a national university entrance exam, limiting other universities' involvement in recruitment (Sangari & Akhash, 2017). While historically there was minimal emphasis on professional specialization, recent years have witnessed a shift towards a more practical selection process. Candidates now must demonstrate knowledge of modern teaching issues, relevant social, ideological, and religious matters, as well as digital literacy skills. As of 2022, the Ministry of Education has begun conducting interviews for Konkur exam applicants in provincial capitals, although this responsibility was previously allotted to Farhangian University.

Table 1 summarizes the number and nature of the internship courses English teacher trainees pass at Farhangian University as dictated in the Syllabus of the Iranian Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Technology in 2023.

1.1.2. Teacher Education System of Turkey

The first teacher training institution, *Darulmuallimin*, was founded in Istanbul in the mid-19th century. A key transformation occurred in 1981 when responsibility for teacher preparation shifted from the Ministry of National Education (MONE) to universities (Akyuz, 2010). Following the

establishment of the Republic in 1923, Turkey aimed to align with developed nations, influenced by its aspirations for EU membership, leading to various education reforms (Cakiroglu & Cakiroglu, 1999; Tarman, 2008; 2010).

A pivotal reform was the 1924 enactment of 'The Law on Unification of Education,' which centralized control over education under the Ministry of National Education of Turkey (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı). This centralization allowed the Ministry to handle critical policy decisions, including teacher appointments, textbook selections, and curriculum development, resulting in a national curriculum overseen by Ministry supervisors (Seferoğlu, 2004). The initial teacher training school from the pre-Republican era managed to educate only 20 primary school teachers; however, as the number of these schools increased, Primary Teacher Schools (PTS) successfully met the demand for educators for over fifty years (Öztürk, 1996).

In its early years, the Turkish Republic established primary teacher schools for urban areas and village teacher schools for rural regions (Cakiroglu & Cakiroglu, 1999). The primary goal during the first half of the century was to raise the educational level of the rural population, tailored through initiatives like the 'Village Institutes,' which aimed to provide practical education relevant to village life. Despite differing opinions on their effectiveness, these institutes played a crucial role in Turkish educational history (Gürsimsek et al., 1997); however, they were shut down in 1954 due to political reasons.

The 1973 Basic Law for National Education extended compulsory education from five to eight years, requiring university-level teacher training. Turkey's teacher education system has undergone multiple restructurings influenced by the socio-economic, cultural, and political contexts. Key reform initiatives include the transition to university-based teacher education in 1982, the restructuring of programs in 1997, and further revisions in 2006, all aimed at enhancing educational quality and teacher preparedness.

Many PTSs evolved into two-year Teacher Training Institutes (TTIs) and later transitioned to Higher Teacher Training Schools (HTTS), which prepared teachers for high school and expanded educational duration to five years (Akyüz, 2010; Duman, 2011). However, overlapping student populations and poor management led to the decline of HTTSs, culminating in their closure in 1978 amid ideological tensions (Akyüz, 2010). In response to criticisms of inadequate training and political influence, a shift occurred toward a university-integrated model in 1982, transforming education institutes into two-year Higher Education Schools that eventually expanded to four-year programs (Yüksel, 2010). Despite these advancements, challenges persisted, such as the emphasis

on theoretical knowledge over practical experience and issues with collaboration among training institutions (YÖK, 1998).

A significant change in Turkey's higher education system occurred in 1981, when all academic centers and teacher training institutions were united under universities to enhance educational quality (Güven, 2008). The Higher Education Council (HEC) has since played a critical role in establishing academic standards and faculty promotion requirements, although the absence of a national accreditation system continues to pose a challenge (Grossman et al., 2010). Recognizing the ongoing challenges in teacher training, a restructuring effort in 1997 was launched to align teacher education with educational needs, supported by the Preservice Teacher Education Project in collaboration with the Council of Higher Education (CHE) and the World Bank. This reform established partnerships between faculties and practice schools, significantly increasing practical training hours and focusing on contemporary educational requirements (YÖK, 1998).

To improve teacher education and raise the profession's status, Turkey has organized congresses and provided scholarships for aspiring teachers, aligning efforts with EU standards (Güncer, 1998). The EU stresses the importance of a skilled workforce for economic development, underscoring the need for investment in teacher education to meet an increasingly complex global market's demand (MEB, 2004). According to General Competencies of the Teaching Profession, in Turkey, enhancing teacher effectiveness is essential for executing educational policies and cultivating socially productive individuals, emphasizing the need for improved teacher preparation to tackle the challenges of the 21st century (Güven, 2008; Hejazi, & Bakhtiari, 2021; Tarman, 2010).

3.1.3. Teachers' Internship in Iran

The history of teacher education in Iran spans over a century, with significant developments in the last four decades emphasizing internships as a crucial component of the curriculum (Nezakat-Alhossaini & Ketabi, 2012). The first formal institution for teacher training, the '*Central Teacher Training School*,' was established in 1920, focusing initially on pedagogical principles and educational philosophy. This institution evolved into the 'Teacher Training University' in 1970, distancing itself from the Iran Ministry of Education and aligning with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Faghiri, 2019).

Internship programs are integral to teacher training in Iran, providing essential practical experience for university students. Student teachers engage in classroom settings, bridging theory and practice, although Farhangian University's lack of affiliated schools complicates internship arrangements, often causing delays due to coordination challenges with the national education

system. The curriculum at Farhangian University emphasizes internships not merely as a course but as a critical evaluative component, based on the integrated competence approach, with internships serving as a practical measure of theoretical learning (Ismaili, 2019).

Iranian universities offer four-year teacher education programs for high school graduates who pass a national entrance exam, as previously stated. After admission, pre-service teachers study pedagogy, educational psychology, and specialized subject courses. To enhance teachers' professional skills, the Ministry of Education offers short-term courses and workshops covering both general and specific educational content. Pre-service programs encompass a range of subjects including mathematics, science, and special education (Mullis et al., 2016).

The formal internship program, mainly facilitated by Farhangian University and Shahid Rajaei University, consists of 8-credit courses totaling 512 hours across four stages (Ahmadi et al., 2014). Students of all fields of study including Teaching English who are enrolled in a four-year teacher training program must complete internships before being employed by the Ministry of Education. They participate in eight internship units during their final semesters (Hejazi, 2022). The stages include:

- *Internship One:* Reflective observation focusing on identifying various problems within the school.
- *Internship Two:* Instructional design and scaffolded teaching based on identified issues.
- *Internship Three:* Independent teaching supported by action research addressing specific educational problems.
- *Internship Four:* Collaborative lesson study for instructional design and execution.

The above-mentioned four stages apply to all courses of training at Farhangian university including Teaching English as a Foreign Language although there are criticisms levelled against this one-size-fits-all approach to teachers' internship in Iran (Almasi et al. 2016; Asghari, 2016; Ghamsari, 2021; Ismaili, 2019; Safarnavadeh et al., 2018; Zare Sefat, 2016).

Table 2

Teachers' Internship Program for Teacher Trainees of all Courses in Iran

Internship	Number of Hours	Main Mission	Program Activities	Program Indexes
1	128	Acceptance of professional responsibility through reflective observation and problem-solving.	Reflective observation, experience recording, and problem explanation.	Knowledge of educational environment and learning issues
2	128	Professional orientation through activity design and reflection on teaching styles.	Designing activities, problem-solving, and learning in small groups.	Activity design, group learning
3	128	Development of professional identity through individual action research and reflection.	Instructional design, daily lesson planning, individual teaching, and evaluation.	Program design at the academic level, individual action research
4	128	Formation of social identity and professional growth through collective action research and reflection.	Designing, producing, executing, and reflecting on professional development.	Instructional unit design, action research, lesson study

As illustrated in Table 2 and as acknowledged in the formal internship syllabus of Farhangian University, Iranian teaching candidates must complete a total of 128 hours of internship, divided equally into four internships, with each term comprising 32 hours. Throughout these internships, student teachers are mandated to prepare a written report following the university's specified format. Additionally, they must present their reports at a final seminar attended by peers and faculty (Faghiri 2019; Hejazi, 2022).

Typically, teachers' internship in Iran involves four semesters of training (Soleimani Aghchai et al., 2024). Since Farhangian university has the same internship syllabus for students of all courses, English teacher trainees typically need to successfully pass four stages of internship. In 'Internship 1', labeled as '*Reflective Observation*,' teacher trainees analyze four features of their internship schools: physical characteristics, educational-emotional relationships, organizational structure, and teaching processes. They employ coding techniques to identify key categories of problems within these aspects and aim to uncover both educational and non-educational issues faced by the school. This analysis includes 'Internship 2', where the teacher trainees undertake a 10-step instructional design based on the identified problems. They adhere to their designed steps to evaluate their effectiveness in achieving predetermined objectives, assessed through criteria they establish.

During 'Internship 3', trainees perform *action research* targeting specific educational challenges identified earlier. This phase emphasizes independent teaching, where they select educational content and create lesson plans, while evaluation remains a crucial final step.

In 'Internship 4', typically occurring in the final semester, trainees form *lesson study* teams consisting of at least three members, potentially including a mentor and the school administrator. This team collaboratively designs the first teaching cycle, with one member delivering the lesson while others document it. Following the teaching session, the team convenes to analyze the teaching for strengths and weaknesses, subsequently creating a second instructional plan for the next phase. This collaborative process includes another member teaching, while the team continues to assess and analyze the session for improvement.

3.1.4. Teachers' Internship in Turkey

In the latter half of the 20th century, Turkey witnessed two major changes in teacher education policies. The first was the enactment of the 'Basic Law of National Education' in 1973, which mandated that teachers be trained in higher education institutions. The second change, occurring in 1981, involved transferring teacher education responsibilities from the Ministry of National Education to autonomous universities through the Higher Education Council (Cakiroglu & Cakiroglu, 1999).

Historically, the period of education for teacher training schools evolved from 4 years before the Republic's proclamation to 5 years in 1924 and 6 years in 1932, aligning primary school teacher education with the vocational high school level (Dursunoğlu, 2003). These schools primarily functioned in urban areas, leading to a dual 'village and city' model for training classroom teachers from 1924 to 1954. In 1926, Village Teacher Schools were established to address rural teacher training needs (Uyar, 2000).

The enactment of the 1973 Basic Law on National Education uplifted classroom teacher training to higher education. Consequently, admission to Primary Teacher Schools ceased, and many were closed or reorganized as teacher high schools (Çetin & Gülseren, 2003). Starting in 1975, Educational Institutes took on the task of training classroom teachers for two years post-high school, eventually renamed Schools of Education in 1982, connected to universities. By the 1989-1990 academic year, their education duration extended to four years, and by 1992, they were integrated into faculties of education as Departments of Classroom Teaching. The number of education faculties training classroom teachers increased from 24 in 1990 to 76 by 2019 (YÖK, 1998).

In 1999, teacher training included a mandatory one day per week in schools as part of a four-year program, with students teaching four lessons (Demirel, 1991). Authorities recognized the inadequacy of this experience, leading to the introduction of a one-year internship for new teachers, supported by a mentor for guidance and professional development (Stevens & Demirzen, 2002). This mentoring arrangement allowed new teachers to learn from experienced educators during their first year.

Following updates to the internship program, student teachers must attend classes at least one day per week under the supervision of a guidance teacher (Köklü Yaylaci & Özyildirim Gümüş, 2022; Stevens & Demirzen, 2002). If students do not align well with their guidance teacher, they may be prohibited from practical teaching. Today, while pre-service teacher training in Turkey differs from previous models, it still necessitates at least one semester of school experience and one semester of teaching practice, where interns observe and participate in teaching-learning activities. Table 3 summarizes recent developments in teacher education of Turkey since 1982.

Table 3
The developments in Teacher Education of Turkey since 1982

Teacher Preparation Dimension	1982 Traditional Prog., University Ed. Faculty	1982 Traditional Prog., BA, academic area + Cert.	1999 Turkish teacher education program	2006
Length of program	4 years	Teaching Certificate 4 Months	4 years Undergraduate (UG) or Masters	4 years Undergraduate (UG)
Time in Schools	8 years	None	10-24 weeks, 1 day- week + 2 intensives 1 month	Two semesters in schools in the 4 th year of the program: total 28 weeks in schools
Lesson taught in schools	4, if trusted by mentor	None	4-8 expected, observed with written feedback	Depends on the instructor's availability
University supervisor role	Usually not visit schools	Usually not visit schools	Visits expected at least 2 a semester	Visits expected at least 2 a semester
Mentor teacher role	Not paid	Not paid	Paid, involved directly, may have training	Paid, involved directly, may have training
Teacher formation classes	39 credits over 4 years	12-15 credits for certificate	39 over 4 years if UG 56 over 2 years if MA	Programs will have a ratio of 50-60% branch theory and technique, 25-30% professional teaching theory and technique, and 15-20% general cultural information.

Adopted from Tarman 2010, p. 78

As evident in Table 2, Turkey has undergone three significant renovations in its educational system, particularly since 1982, driven largely by the aspiration to align with European Union standards. Teacher training and internship programs have experienced substantial transformations over time, influenced by policy changes and evolving educational practices (Kildan et al., 2013). A pivotal transition occurred in 1973 when teacher training moved to higher education, prompting a restructuring of teacher education institutions (Köklü Yaylaci & Özyildirim Gümüş, 2022). Although historical developments have shaped the current landscape of teacher training in Turkey, ongoing reforms continue to affect the quality and effectiveness of these programs.

3.1.5. Juxtaposition and Comparison

A review of the literature described in the previous section revealed some basic internship features as presented in Table 4. It presents a comprehensive overview of various features related to teacher internship programs in both Iran and Turkey. This expanded view includes essential elements of the teacher education systems, such as internship structure, assessment methods, mentorship quality, financial constraints, and curriculum coherence.

Table 4

Features of English Teachers' Internship in Iran and Turkey

Features/Factors	Iran	Turkey
Program Duration	4 semesters, total of 512 hours (Ahmadi et al., 2014)	4-year program, at least 28 weeks in schools (Köklü Yaylaci & Özyildirim Gümüş, 2022)
Stages of Internship	4 stages: Reflective observation, Instructional design, independent teaching, Collaborative lesson study (Faghiri, 2019; Hejazi, 2022)	Mandatory practical teaching involving observing and participating, one day per week (Köklü Yaylaci & Özyildirim Gümüş, 2022; Stevens & Demirzen, 2002)
Internship Evaluation	Written report and final seminar presentation (Faghiri, 2019)	Varies by instructor; observations with feedback required (Köklü Yaylaci & Özyildirim Gümüş, 2022)
Mentoring and Support	Collaborative lesson study teams with mentor involvement (Hejazi, 2022)	Varies by instructor; observations with feedback required (Köklü Yaylaci & Özyildirim Gümüş, 2022)
Course Content	Courses include pedagogy, educational psychology, and TEFL (Mullis et al., 2016)	50-60% theory, 25-30% professional teaching theory, 15-20% cultural information (Tarman, 2010)
Focus of Internship	Problem identification and solution development through action research (Faghiri, 2019)	Teaching practice with emphasis on observation and participation (Stevens & Demirzen, 2002)
Challenges	Lack of affiliated schools leading to coordination challenges (Ismaili, 2019)	Issues with alignment and adequacy of preparation experience (Stevens & Demirzen, 2002)
Practical Experience	Interns are placed in educational environments for 128 hours (Faghiri,	Interns required to teach and receive feedback in schools for a semester (Köklü

	2019)	Yaylaci & Özyildirim Gümüş, 2022)
Professional Development	Short-term workshops offered by Ministry of Education (Mullis et al., 2016)	Mentorship enhances professional development (Köklü Yaylaci & Özyildirim Gümüş, 2022; Stevens & Demirzen, 2002)
Educational Philosophy	Integrated competence approach emphasizing theory-practice link (Ismaili, 2019)	Transition in focus over decades aiming to align with EU standards (Kıldan et al., 2013)

Table 4 presents a comparative overview of the features of English teachers' internship programs in Iran and Turkey. Both countries have established comprehensive internship programs, albeit with different durations and expectations. In Iran, the program spans four semesters, totaling 512 hours, with a focus on stages such as reflective observation and collaborative lesson study (Ahmadi et al., 2014; Faghiri, 2019). In contrast, Turkey's internship is part of a four-year program that mandates at least 28 weeks of practical school experience (Köklü Yaylaci & Özyildirim Gümüş, 2022). Evaluation methods also vary; interns in Iran complete a written report and presentation, while Turkey's evaluation relies on instructor discretion and requires direct observations with feedback (Köklü Yaylaci & Özyildirim Gümüş, 2022). Mentoring plays a crucial role in both countries, with Iran emphasizing collaborative lesson study teams, and Turkey offering guidance from trained mentor teachers (Hejazi, 2022; Stevens & Demirzen, 2002). Additionally, the content of courses and the focus of the internship differ, with Iran integrating pedagogy and educational psychology into its curriculum (Mullis et al., 2016), and Turkey emphasizing observational and participatory teaching practice (Tarman, 2010).

While both countries face challenges such as a lack of affiliated schools in Iran (Ismaili, 2019) and alignment issues in Turkey (Stevens & Demirzen, 2002), the opportunities for professional development vary, with Iran providing short-term workshops and Turkey benefiting from structured mentorship to enhance professional growth (Mullis et al., 2016; Köklü Yaylaci & Özyildirim Gümüş, 2022).

3.2. Findings Based on the Survey Study

As already mentioned, to obtain more valid data, 10 internship instructors, English teachers, and trainees from both Iran and Turkey were asked to complete an open-ended questionnaire on the features of internship and the inherent challenges. The responses received virtually from Iranian and Turkish contexts were carefully coded and categorized to obtain the features of internship in each country. The features were, then, reported in adjacency tables. Table 5 shows the adjacency table for features of English teachers' internship in Iran and Turkey based on the survey study through open ended questionnaire:

Table 5
Features of Teachers' Internship in Iran and Turkey according to Questionnaire Results

Features	Selection Process	Age Range	Employment	Internship Duration/Structure	Course Requirement	Evaluation Criteria/Methodology	Mentorship Quality	Reporting Requirements	Instructor & Mentor Qualifications	Post-Graduation Support	Importance of Practical Training
Selection Process	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Age Range	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Employment Timeline	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Internship Duration/Structure	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Course Requirements	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Evaluation Criteria/Methodology	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Mentorship Quality	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Reporting Requirements	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Instructor & Mentor Qualifications	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Post-Graduation Support	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Importance of Practical Training	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

- **Yes**, indicates that there is a meaningful relationship or similarity in that aspect of the internship features between Iran and Turkey.
- **No** indicates that there is no relevant connection or similarity in that specific aspect.

Table 5 outlines the adjacency matrix for various features of teachers' internship programs in Iran and Turkey, based on responses from the questionnaire. The table highlights significant differences and similarities in aspects such as the selection process, age range, employment timeline, internship duration, course requirements, evaluation criteria, mentorship quality, reporting requirements, instructor and mentor qualifications, post-graduation support, and the importance of practical training.

One notable finding is the emphasis on the importance of practical training, which is recognized by respondents from both countries. An Iranian respondent stated, "*Practical training is essential for developing the skills needed in real classroom settings,*" reflecting a shared understanding of its significance across both contexts. However, the responses reveal that while the internship duration and structure are viewed similarly in terms of importance, the actual implementation differs. For example, the Turkish respondents emphasized the structured nature of their internship, saying, "*Our internship program is well-organized, with clear expectations and timelines,*" which contrasts with the more flexible approach indicated by the Iranian respondents.

Additionally, the matrix indicates that there is no meaningful relationship in aspects such as the selection process and age range between the two countries, suggesting that these features are approached differently in each context. An Iranian respondent highlighted this by noting, "*The selection process is often based on academic performance rather than practical teaching experience,*"

while a Turkish respondent remarked, "*Age is not a criterion for selection; we focus on the qualifications and readiness of the candidates.*"

3.3. Comparison and Interpretation

The analysis of the two adjacency matrices for English language teacher internship programs in Iran and Turkey reveals both similarities and notable differences regarding their features. One matrix is based on established literature and documented resources (Table 3), while the other derives from the insights of teachers and internship instructors through questionnaires (Table 4, providing a triangulated view of the internship programs and their components in both countries.

3.3.1. Similarities

Both Iran and Turkey have experienced significant upheavals in their teacher education systems, impacting their internship programs and leading to the introduction of new educational transformation plans to enhance teacher training (Table 3). In Iran, these transformation plans have historic roots, with the latest implementation occurring in 2007 (Nazari et al., 2023; Nezakat-Alhossaini & Ketabi, 2012). Similarly, Turkey has introduced transformation plans during reformative phases (Güven, 2008; Köklü Yaylıcı & Özyıldırım Gümüş, 2022; Yüksel, 2010). Both countries aim to elevate the quality of teacher education, particularly through enhancements in practical training.

The ideological orientation of the government and society has notably shaped teacher education and internship frameworks. In Iran, the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 led to significant reforms, including the introduction of the Fundamental Changes Document, which impacted teacher education practices (SCCR, 2011). Turkey experienced its own fundamental educational reforms following Atatürk's ideological shifts, moving toward a more nationalistic approach (Grossman et al., 2010; Tarman, 2010).

Despite differences in the structure and duration of internship programs, both countries have established distinct systems for teacher internships. Iran's internship comprises a four-term plan from the fourth to the eighth semester of teacher education (JafariShafaq et al., 2020; Mehrpour et al., 2019; Sangari & Akhash, 2017), while Turkey's is organized as a one-day plan in the fourth year (Table 3, Tarman, 2010). Both systems emphasize the importance of practical components in teacher training, with a shift away from purely theoretical approaches (MoNE, 2010). Both matrices highlight a significant focus on the structure of the internship, with the library

sources emphasizing clearly defined frameworks and the questionnaire results affirming the foundational role of duration in teacher training.

Additionally, in both countries there is an Internship Day, where teacher trainees visit their assigned schools to observe or engage in teaching activities (Soleimani Agchai et al., 2024; Faghiri, 2019). Although there are differences in the timing and specific activities of the Internship Day, it is important to note that in both countries, the learners do not take any other classes at the university. The importance of practical training is further underscored in the responses to questionnaire items in which the respondents have emphasized the significance of practical training (internship) after a period of theoretical instruction. This is also highlighted in the written internship literature in both settings pointing to the critical role that hands-on teaching experience plays in the professional development of English teachers. Moreover, although challenges noted in both countries differ, there is a consensus on the existence of weaknesses impacting internship and its effectiveness.

3.3.2. Differences

As Table 3 and Table 5 show, and it is documented in the literature, while teachers' internships in Iran and Turkey share some similarities, significant differences exist that are worth further scrutiny. One major distinction is the presence of independent teacher training universities in Iran dedicated solely to educator preparation. The establishment of teacher training colleges in Iran over a century ago led to the creation of Farhangian University in 2010, which focuses exclusively on this purpose (Ahmadi et al., 2016; Hejazi & Bakhtiari, 2021). Conversely, Turkey lacks universities solely dedicated to teacher training, integrating it within broader educational faculties (MoNE, 2010).

The structure of the teacher internship program also varies markedly. In Iran, internship is systematically organized into stages designed to address practical school needs, starting with narrative research and culminating in collaborative lesson study supported by experienced educators (Soleimani Aghchai et al., 2024). In contrast, Turkey's approach is less structured, featuring a brief practical teaching period during the latter part of the fourth year (Tarman, 2010). Additionally, the duration of internships differs significantly: Iranian trainees are required to complete 512 hours over four semesters, while Turkish interns typically commit to a longer one-year program that includes 28 weeks of practical training.

The recruitment systems further diverge, with Iran employing multiple recruitment methods, such as nationwide examination (Konkur) and the 2+2 model for rapid graduation and employment in public schools (Farhangian University by-law, 2023; Nazari et al., 2023). Turkey

typically follows a conventional approach, requiring candidates to serve a provisional year before permanent employment (Tarman, 2010). Furthermore, educational prerequisites for internships differ; Iranian trainees must complete four terms of coursework aligned with internship requirements before starting, while Turkey lacks this structured approach, where theoretical courses do not adequately meet the practical needs of internships.

In Iran, internship instructors receive specialized training through workshops before internships begin, enhancing their effectiveness (Nazari et al., 2023). Turkey does not have a similar preparation process for internship personnel, resulting in a lack of systematic training. The internship experience for Iranian teacher trainees includes phases of reflective observation and collaborative lesson study, emphasizing reflective teaching practices (Soleimani Aghchai et al., 2024). In contrast, Turkey's internships often feature poorly defined phases, primarily focusing on unstructured observation followed by practical teaching (Tarman, 2010).

As of summer 2023, Iran has also implemented '*Internship Schools*' recognized for their superior facilities and experienced staff, requiring mentors to complete targeted workshops to improve support for interns. Turkish interns, however, are typically placed in regular public schools without specialized support structures (Tarman, 2010). Furthermore, assessment methods during internship terms illustrate further discrepancies; Iran employs qualitative techniques, including reflective journals, and incorporates feedback from various stakeholders to ensure comprehensive evaluations. Conversely, Turkey lacks a defined assessment metric, limiting its evaluative framework.

The roles assigned to internship personnel also differ significantly. In Iran, specific tasks are assigned throughout the internship process, with instructors facilitating seminars for further guidance (Soleimani Aghchai et al., 2024). This clarity of roles is absent in Turkey, where internship roles are less specifically defined. Finally, the integration of special education components varies; Iran systematically incorporates special education into the internship framework, preparing trainee teachers to support diverse learners (Nazari et al., 2023). In contrast, Turkey has struggled to effectively integrate special education training, leaving many candidates inadequately equipped for inclusive classrooms (Tarman, 2010). This lack of structured integration may hinder future educators' ability to address diverse classroom challenges.

In conclusion, the comparative analysis reveals fundamental areas of agreement regarding the structure and importance of practical training in English teacher internships in Iran and Turkey. However, significant differences arise concerning specific processes, evaluation methods, and content focus.

3.4. Juxtaposition and Comparison of Teachers' Internship Challenges in Iran and Turkey

3.4.1. Internship Challenges in Iran and Turkey according to Library-based Documentary Sources

After reviewing the written documents concerning teacher internships in Iran and Turkey, several key challenges were identified. Table 5 presents a comparative analysis of these challenges. As mentioned in the previous sections, the internship program of both Iran and Turkey faces some inherent challenges already documented in the literature. Table 5 describes each challenge, identifies whether it applies to Iran, Turkey, or both, and includes the sources documented in the literature regarding the identified challenges.

Table 6

Challenges of Teachers' Internship in Iran and Turkey based on library sources

NO.	Challenge/Component	Iran	Turkey	Similar/Different	Citation
1	Quality of teacher training programs during internships	✓	✓	S	Hejazi & Bakhtiari (2021); Çepik & Çepik (2015)
2	Insufficient practical application of theoretical knowledge	✓	✓	S	Ahmadi et al. (2014); Musset (2010)
3	Lack of coherence with course materials	✓	-	D	Hejazi & Bakhtiari (2021)
4	Inadequate reflective practices	✓	-	D	Ahmadi et al. (2014)
5	Insufficient time allocated for internships	✓	✓	S	Maleki et al. (2021); Koshi & Soltani (2018)
6	Ineffective evaluations of intern performance	✓	✓	S	Ahmadi et al. (2014); Karamati & Ahmadabadi (2016)
7	Monitoring and evaluation challenges	✓	-	D	Hejazi (2022); Zare Sefat (2016)
8	Financial constraints affecting internship execution	✓	-	D	Hejazi (2022)
9	Lack of ongoing oversight and academic support	✓	-	D	Zare Sefat (2016)
10	Insufficient awareness among educators about internship benefits	✓	-	D	Karamati & Ahmadabadi (2016)
11	Absence of supervisors in schools	✓	-	D	Tatari et al. (2015)
12	Evaluation uncertainties	✓	-	D	Tatari et al. (2015)
13	Limited transportation complicating internship experience	✓	-	D	Tatari et al. (2015)
14	Poor collaboration between schools and universities	✓	-	D	Parishani et al. (2016)
15	Limited interactions among stakeholders	✓	-	D	Parishani et al. (2016)
16	Weaknesses in internship curriculum from students' perspectives	✓	-	D	Asghari (2016)
17	Lack of alignment between internship programs and academic/job requirements	✓	-	D	Ghahramanlu (2014);

17	Need for better balance of theory and practice	✓	✓	S	Ghahramanlu (2014); Musset (2010)
19	Focus on theoretical over practical training	✓	✓	S	Nezakat-Alhossaini & Ketabi (2012); Musset (2010)
20	Challenges in fostering global and multicultural perspectives	-	✓	D	Merryfield (1998)
21	Need to educate democratic learners	-	✓	D	Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu (2003)
22	Gaps in curriculum engagement with contemporary global issues	-	✓	D	Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu (2003)
23	Lack of computer skills training	-	✓	D	Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu (2003)

Table 6 provides a comparative analysis of the challenges faced by teachers' internship programs in Iran and Turkey in the light of library-based sources. Among the similarities identified, both countries grapple with poor quality in teacher training programs, insufficient practical application of theoretical knowledge, and inadequate evaluations of intern performance. These challenges are critical, as they hinder the development of competent educators who are well-equipped for their roles. The need for a better balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills is emphasized, with findings supported by recent studies (Ghahramanlu, 2014; Musset, 2010). Additionally, both countries face time constraints, with inadequate internship durations limiting the opportunity for interns to develop their skills effectively.

However, the table also reveals significant differences in the challenges faced by the two nations. For instance, Iran experiences issues such as a lack of coherence with course materials, inadequate reflective practices, and financial constraints that affect the execution of internships (Hejazi & Bakhtiari, 2021). Specific to Turkey, challenges include difficulties in fostering global and multicultural perspectives in education, which points to a need for more integrated approaches in teacher preparation (Merryfield, 1998).

3.4.2. Internship Challenges in Iran and Turkey According to Survey Study

In order to have a solid basis for judging the internship challenges of Iran and Turkey, the data from the open-ended questionnaire completed by the participants was carefully coded and categorized. The obtained challenges of both countries were later displayed in an adjacency matrix shown in Table 7.

Table 7
Challenges of English Teachers' Internship in Iran and Turkey Based on the Survey Study through the Open-ended Questionnaire

NO.	Challenges	Turkey	Iran
1	Quality of Supervision and Mentorship	Some mentors do not help trainee teachers.	Irregularity in mentoring; not all mentors are up-to-date with modern practices Lack of constructive feedback, hindering development
2	Theoretical vs. Practical Application	Disconnection between theoretical knowledge and real-world situations	Theoretical issues in university classes diverge from public school realities Rigid curriculum limits adaptability
3	Resource Constraints	Limited resources; schools lack materials and support. Large class sizes hinder effective teaching practices.	Shortage of teaching materials, technology, and infrastructure Crowded classrooms affect classroom management
4	Assessment and Feedback	Lack of valuable feedback on intern performance	Subjective assessment; evaluations depend on mentor perception
5	Adaptability Issues	Difficulty in adapting to real-world situations	Learners face unrealistic teaching scenarios
6	Pressure and Stress	High social and emotional pressures; interns feel stress during training	High-pressure situations negatively affecting learning and confidence
7	Duration of Internship	Insufficient duration to develop teaching skills	Brief internship periods limit immersion in teaching environments
8	Lack of Integration with Professional Development	Poor follow-up support after internship	Insufficient tools for professional support post-internship

Regarding quality of supervision and mentorship, respondents from both contexts identified significant challenges related to mentorship quality. In Turkey, it was noted that “*some mentors do not help trainee teachers,*” reinforcing the necessity for better guidance during internships”. Iranians echoed a similar concern: Respondent 2 stated, “*Not all guides may be up to date with modern instructing honestly speaking*” and highlighted the issue of “*restricted support,*” where learners report lacking feedback from mentors, which hinders their development.

Moreover, the lack of relationship between theory and practice emerged as a critical issue. Turkish Respondent 3 mentioned the “*disconnection between their theoretical knowledge from university and the challenges in real-world situations.*” In Iran, Respondent 1 underscored that “*the*

theoretical issues covered in university classes are miles away from the realities of the public schools." Furthermore, Respondent 2 pointed out that rigid educational practices make it challenging for students to apply their academic knowledge, noting that "there may be a disengage between what is instructed in educator preparing programs and what is practiced in schools."

Moreover, both countries are grappling with inadequate resources during internships. Turkish Respondent 4 referred to "*large class sizes and limited resources,*" while Iranian Respondent 2 noted a "*shortage of assets*" including teaching materials and infrastructure, exacerbated by "*high student-to-teacher proportions,*" which severely limit effective teaching practices.

The assessment and feedback mechanisms during the internship period were also critiqued. A Turkish participant remarked on the "*lack of valuable feedback on intern performance,*" revealing issues with assessment that rely heavily on the mentor's perception. This concern resonates in Iran, where Respondent 2 mentioned that the subjectivity of assessments can undermine the development of trainee teachers, stating that evaluations "*depend on individual mentorship perceptions rather than standardized criteria.*"

The adaptation to real-world teaching environments was a notable concern. Respondent 3 from Turkey observed, "*interns spend more time observing rather than actively teaching*" indicating a limited practical exposure. Iranian Respondents 4 and 5 highlighted that students "*have few chances to teach*" and often "*review a topic that has been already taught,*" reflecting scenarios that do not mirror authentic teaching challenges.

Table 7 also reveals that the emotional burden placed on interns during their training periods was highlighted by both Turkish and Iranian respondents. In Turkey, pressures were hinted at through Respondent 4's mention of "*challenges may include...stressful conditions,*" and in Iran, Respondent 2 described students' experiences, saying they "*regularly confront high-pressure situations, which can lead to push and uneasiness, unfavorably influencing their learning and certainty.*"

With regard to the duration of internship, both groups acknowledged the insufficient time allocated for effective internships. A Turkish respondent expressed the sentiment of "*insufficient duration to develop teaching skills,*" echoing Iranian Respondent 2's remark that "*brief internship periods limit immersion in teaching environments,*" indicating that both systems fail to provide adequate time for skill development.

Finally, issues related to post-internship support were prevalent in both contexts. Respondent 4 from Turkey stated there is "*poor follow-up support after internship,*" while Iranian

participants pointed out the “*insufficient tools for professional support post-internship*,” highlighting the need for better integration of professional development opportunities post-training.

3.5. Comparison and Interpretation of the Challenges

The comparison of the results in Table 5 and 6 indicates challenges faced by one or both of the countries under study concerning teachers' internship according to both library-based and survey-based study:

Quality of Supervision and Mentorship

Both Turkey and Iran identified challenges related to the quality of mentorship, including a lack of constructive feedback and irregularity in mentoring. In Iran's teacher education system, the quality of teacher training programs during internships is crucial for linking theoretical knowledge to practical application (Hejazi & Bakhtiari, 2021). Similarly, Çepik and Çepik (2015) emphasize that these programs are essential for preparing future teachers who will impact the nation's future. This sentiment is echoed in library sources, which note similar challenges regarding the quality of teacher training programs during internships. Both sources emphasize the need for better supervision and mentorship, indicating this as a common challenge across both contexts.

Theoretical versus Practical Application

Survey responses highlighted a disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application, mentioning rigid curricula. Hejazi and Bakhtiari (2021) found that internships in Iran's four-year teacher education framework are minimally emphasized, characterized by a linear and predetermined structure that lacks coherence with course materials. Furthermore, Ahmadi et al. (2014) identified shortcomings, such as inadequate reflective practices and insufficient time. Library sources corroborate this by indicating insufficient practical application of theoretical knowledge and calling for a better balance between theory and practice (Musset, 2010). As such, both datasets underline this challenge, further reinforcing the discrepancy between theory and practice in teacher training.

Resource Constraints

Limited resources and large class sizes were significant issues highlighted in survey responses from both countries. Financial constraints further impede the execution of internships in Iran (Hejazi, 2022), which relates closely to resource challenges. Maleki et al. (2021) also mentions these financial constraints in connection with effective teaching, linking them to broader systemic issues.

While the survey explicitly addresses the availability of materials and class sizes, the library sources more broadly focus on the financial aspects as contributing constraints to effective teaching.

Assessment and Feedback

In survey responses, participants reported a lack of valuable feedback and subjective assessments in evaluating intern performance. Karamati and Ahmadabadi (2016) highlight ineffective evaluations of intern performance, emphasizing the poor evaluation methods in both datasets and showcasing a shared concern over the feedback mechanisms for interns. Moreover, Safarnavadeh et al. (2018) note that the academic and professional shortcomings of school teachers hinder effective internship implementation.

Adaptability Issues

Survey responses pointed to issues with adapting teaching practices to real-world scenarios. In contrast, library sources focus on systemic issues surrounding monitoring and evaluation, particularly the lack of coherence with course materials, which complicates adaptability (Zare Sefat, 2016). Both sources address adaptability; however, the survey data emphasize practical teaching adaptability directly, while the library sources approach it from a broader systemic perspective. Additionally, Koshi and Soltani (2018) demonstrated that Iran allocates significantly less time to internships compared to other subjects, complicating overall adaptability.

Pressure and Stress

Survey participants identified high emotional pressures and stress during the internship experience—an aspect not explicitly highlighted in the library data. This indicates that survey data provide a more personal perspective on intern experiences, whereas library resources may concentrate on broader structural issues, lacking direct mentions of emotional stress (Tatari et al., 2015).

Duration of Internship

Both Turkey and Iran reported insufficient time allocated for internships in survey responses, a sentiment mirrored in the library sources, which also highlights the need for more substantial engagement during internships (Asghari, 2016; Ghahramanlu (2014) emphasized the necessity of better alignment between internship programs and academic/job requirements, reinforcing the shared challenge of internship duration in both contexts.

Lack of Integration with Professional Development

Survey responses highlighted poor follow-up support after internships, while library sources similarly indicate a lack of ongoing oversight and support (Ghahramanlu, 2014). The lack of coherence with course materials presents a significant gap in alignment within internship programs, as recognized in comparative research (Parishani et al., 2016).

Additional Challenges from Library Sources

Several challenges highlighted in the library sources are not captured in the survey data. For instance, inadequate reflective practices emphasize the importance of self-reflection in teacher development—an aspect not identified in survey responses (Nezakat-Alhossaini & Ketabi, 2012). Moreover, logistical concerns such as transportation issues and collaboration deficiencies (Merryfield, 1998) are mentioned only in the library dataset, pointing to external factors affecting internship experiences that were not captured by the survey data.

The comparison of the findings reveals strong overlap in major challenges faced by teacher interns in Iran and Turkey. Common challenges include:

- Quality of Supervision and Mentorship
- Theoretical vs. Practical Application
- Resource Constraints
- Assessment and Feedback
- Duration of Internship
- Lack of Integration with Professional Development

Furthermore, survey responses provide insights into the emotional context of internships, focusing on stress and adaptability, while library sources explore additional logistical and structural challenges, including financial and collaborative issues.

4. Conclusion

The comparative analysis of teacher internship programs in Iran and Turkey reveals a multifaceted landscape deeply influenced by various causal, contextual, and intervening factors, significantly impacting the efficacy of these initiatives. While both countries share a commitment to fostering effective teaching practices through supervised internships, notable disparities emerge in aspects such as internship duration, prerequisite theoretical courses, evaluation methodologies, mentoring structures, and curricular approaches. These variations challenge the standardized processes

advocated by Johnson and Lee (2018) for uniform teacher training across different educational systems.

The presence of significant challenges, including educational and organizational obstacles, further complicates the implementation of internship programs. This aligns with the findings of Ahmadi et al. (2014), Gashmardi (2021), and Hejazi (2022), who emphasized the adverse effects of such barriers on teacher training effectiveness. For instance, the identification of insufficient time allocated for internships and the lack of coherent integration between theory and practice reflect the need for reform and consistency in internship experiences (Maleki et al., 2021; Ghahramanlu, 2014). Furthermore, the quality of supervisor mentorship and support remains a critical concern, with evidence indicating that many interns face challenges in receiving adequate guidance throughout their practical training (Hejazi & Bakhtiari, 2021; Karamati & Ahmadabadi, 2016).

Moreover, the financial and material resource deficiencies impact the overall quality of internship programs, as indicated by previous research (Almasi et al., 2016; Hejazi, 2021; Karamati & Ahmadabadi, 2016; Safarnavadeh et al., 2018; Tatari et al., 2015; Zare Sefat, 2016). The limited collaboration between educational institutions and schools further exacerbates the disconnection between theoretical preparation and practical application, resulting in discrepancies between expected and actual internship experiences (Parishani et al., 2016).

The ongoing challenges outlined in this analysis underline the necessity for sustained support, continuous training, and mentorship that extend beyond the internship period, aligning with Yunus's (2020) findings on the influence of cultural factors on teacher training. Additionally, the integration of technological resources and solutions to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers is vital for enhancing the internship experience, as highlighted by Soleimani Aghchai et al. (2024).

In light of these findings, both Iran and Turkey must prioritize comprehensive reforms that address the evolving educational challenges and institutional constraints facing their teacher training programs. The emphasis on experiential learning, reflection, and collaboration among stakeholders is crucial for the professional growth of teacher trainees. Continuing to align program structures with contemporary educational needs and fostering environments conducive to reflective practice can lead to more successful outcomes for future educators (Köklü Yaylaci & Özyıldırım Gümüş, 2022).

In conclusion, both Iran and Turkey must confront the multifaceted challenges present in their teacher internship programs to better prepare educators for the demands of modern classrooms. By fostering a more cohesive relationship between theoretical instruction and practical experience, educational authorities can enhance the overall quality of teacher training, ultimately

aiming to produce competent and responsive educators. Recognizing and actively working to mitigate these obstacles will not only improve educational outcomes for students but also contribute to the long-term development of a pedagogically sound workforce capable of addressing the dynamic needs of society. Comprehensive reforms that prioritize the integration of theory with practice, alongside addressing systemic issues in teacher education, are imperative for the advancement of effective teaching and learning in both countries.

To enhance the professional skills of new teachers, educational and organizational reforms, along with dedicated efforts to improve the resources and structures supporting internship programs, are essential. This includes developing clearer guidelines for program implementation, establishing robust mentorship systems, and ensuring that internships are not merely a formality but are integrated into a comprehensive teacher education framework. The involvement of stakeholders—such as educational institutions, policymakers, and the teaching community—should be prioritized to create a more cohesive and supportive environment for teacher trainees. Based on what has been discussed, the following suggestions may improve the present state of English teachers' internship in Iran and Turkey:

a. Clear Guidelines and Standards for Internship Programs

Establishing a national set of standards for internship programs in both Iran and Turkey is critical. These standards should outline specific expectations regarding the duration, structure, and assessment of internships. For instance, Iran could adopt a scaffolded approach where interns first observe experienced teachers before gradually taking on teaching responsibilities, as suggested by Ghahramanlu (2014). In Turkey, aligning internship durations with international best practices—such as a minimum of 10-15 hours of weekly teaching alongside observational experiences—will ensure that interns have adequate time for practical teaching (Karamati & Ahmadabadi, 2016).

b. Robust Mentorship Systems

To improve the quality of guidance available to interns, targeted training programs for mentors and supervisors are essential. In Iran, structured training programs should be developed focusing on delivering constructive feedback, supporting reflective practices, and effectively utilizing technology in the classroom (Hejazi, 2021). For Turkey, implementing a mentorship certification program that covers pedagogical strategies, mentoring techniques, and technology integration into educational practices will professionalize the mentor role and provide high-quality guidance to interns (Bunyamin et al., 2021).

c. Integration of Technology

Integrating technology into internships can enrich the training experience. In Iran, educational institutions could forge partnerships with technology firms to provide access to digital teaching tools and resources. Workshops for interns and mentors on effectively incorporating these tools into lesson planning and teaching should be mandatory (Soleimani Aghchai et al., 2024). In Turkey, creating a digital platform where interns can share lesson plans, teaching materials, and reflections on their experiences encourages peer learning and allows easy access to relevant resources, thus enhancing teaching practices.

d. Revised Evaluation Methodologies

Revising evaluation methodologies is vital for fostering a culture of continuous improvement. In Iran, transitioning from traditional assessment methods to formative evaluations that emphasize ongoing feedback can be implemented. Regular check-ins where mentors observe interns and provide immediate constructive feedback promote an iterative learning process (Hejazi & Bakhtiari, 2021). In Turkey, diversifying evaluation criteria to include peer feedback and self-assessment components will further foster reflective practice among interns while presenting a more holistic view of their teaching effectiveness (Hejazi, 2021).

e. Strengthening Partnerships with Schools

Cultivating partnerships between teacher training institutions and schools can significantly enhance the effectiveness and relevance of internships. In Iran, these collaborations should focus on co-developing internship programs that meet the specific needs of both parties, ensuring that mentors are aligned with the goals of teacher education programs (Zare Sefat, 2016). In Turkey, establishing a network of pre-approved internship placements guarantees that interns are placed in environments that support their professional growth, with regular meetings between schools and teacher education programs helping to align expectations and goals (Maleki et al., 2021).

f. Addressing Workload and Time Management

To ensure interns have a balanced experience, implementing stronger support systems is crucial. In Iran, offering workshops on time management and strategies for balancing responsibilities can help interns prioritize tasks effectively (Tatari et al., 2015). In Turkey, setting clear guidelines regarding the maximum teaching workload for interns is vital, ensuring it remains manageable while allowing sufficient time for lesson planning, reflection, and mentorship (Almasi et al., 2016).

g. Cultural Competence Training

Providing training focused on cultural competence and sensitivity will help interns navigate the cultural and linguistic barriers they may encounter, particularly in diverse classroom settings. This

training could involve workshops led by educators with experience working in multicultural environments, emphasizing inclusive teaching practices that equip interns to effectively manage the complexities of diverse classrooms (Karamati & Ahmadabadi, 2016).

h. Continuous Feedback Mechanisms

Implementing continuous feedback mechanisms enhances the internship experience. In Iran, establishing a structured feedback system that involves regular surveys and informal check-ins with interns and mentors can facilitate timely adjustments to the internship program based on participant experiences and suggestions (Hejazi, 2021). Similarly, in Turkey, creating an anonymous digital feedback system allows interns to provide candid feedback on their experiences, which should inform program improvements and mentor training initiatives (Bunyamin et al., 2021).

To conclude, by addressing these identified gaps and challenges with specific, actionable strategies, it is hoped that both Iran and Turkey can work towards a more effective internship model that better prepares future educators for the complexities of the teaching profession. Implementing these recommendations will not only enhance the quality of teacher training but also contribute to the overall improvement of educational outcomes in both countries.

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