



A Comparative Analysis of Policy Frameworks and Admission Procedures in the Teacher Education System of England, Finland, Iran and Japan

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 01 Sep 2020 Revised: 05 Feb 2021 Accepted: 09 March 2022 Online: 09 Feb 2023</p>	<p>The purpose of research was to compare the characteristics of teacher education system with an emphasis on the policy making process and admission procedures in Finland, England, Japan and Iran. The research method was a qualitatively comparative approach using four-stage regional model of Bereday. Scientific documents and reports related to the teacher education system in the four selected countries were used to collect data. The findings showed that, in terms of policy frameworks, the teacher education system in Iran, unlike the other three countries, follows a centralized structure that originates from ideological thought. The structural and administrative concentration and vital role of supranational institutions in the policy-making and decision-making processes have caused the teacher education system in Iran to lack institutional independence and academic freedom. Contrary to England and Finland, in Iran and Japan, obtaining legal obligations from student-teachers is considered an important precondition for continued work in the educational system. Also, the results reveal the similarity of Iran's teacher education system with England, Finland and Japan regarding the necessity of participation of candidates in a national exam, while in terms of educational qualifications and degree of discretion and freedom of action of universities in the admission process, there is a difference between Iran and other countries.</p>
<p>KEYWORDS</p> <p>Comparative Research Policy Framework Teacher Admission Teacher education</p>	

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1. Introduction

Education is the basis of achieving full human capacity and creating an equal and fairly society to realize national growth and development. Educational courses in universities, colleges and teacher education centers are the first and most important purposeful step in the professional training of teachers. Undoubtedly, the success of an educational system depends on the existence of an efficient teacher education system to prepare future teachers to lead and facilitate student learning (Beauchamp, Clarke, Hulme & Murray, 2015). At the same time, the need to coordinate and align educational systems with knowledge-based economic systems in the era of globalization has made reforms in teacher training programs a strategic priority (Azizi, 2016; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). According to Andrysová & Chudý (2019) and McKinsey (2007), the training and preparation of teachers and development of their basic skills for the effective performance of professional responsibilities is one of the reasons for the success of the leading educational systems in the world.

Despite the importance of social and cultural position of teacher and recognition of the senior officials of Iran on the irreplaceable role of teachers in the growth and development of the society, as well as the long history of teacher education and academic centers - which were founded more than a hundred years ago - in Iran, still the teacher education system - in terms of structure, process and content - has not been able to become an effective and efficient system and find its real place in society. In addition, the rule of the ideological and politicized approach on the capabilities of Iran's educational system has caused the political system governing the teacher education system and its outputs (teachers) to be a cultural tool - in line with confirming and consolidating the basis of its political power and dominance. Despite these challenging conditions, there is still hope for change and reform in the teacher training system and its basic mechanisms and processes. Therefore, the current research aims to compare the policy-making processes and admission procedures in the teacher education systems of England, Finland, Iran and Japan in order to provide practical solutions to improve policy frameworks of this system in Iran. While Jensen, Klette & Hammerness (2017) emphasized the importance of linking teacher training with the reality of the school environment, Balodimas-Bartolomei (2016) pointed out the necessity of including a comparative training course in teacher education programs for novice teachers to gain a better understanding of diverse educational systems, subject curricula, and a better understanding of the cultural and racial diversity of the classroom.

Understanding the reforms in teacher education along with the technological and scientific changes in today's world has increased the necessity of comparative studies between countries. Takayama (2020) while comparing the teacher education systems of Japan, Canada, USA and

Australia, proposes a new methodological model namely "negative comparative education". In fact, negative comparative education offers a methodological stance that enables us to conduct comparative research in a way that challenges the European geopolitical centrality of knowledge. Salokangas, Wermke & Harvey (2020) by comparing the teacher education systems in Ireland and Finland found that the concept of teacher autonomy in these two countries is considered as a context-dependent phenomenon, in a way in which teachers in doing classroom exercises and obtaining educational decisions are autonomous. Also, Bariş and Hasan (2019) by comparing teacher education policies in Turkey, China and Japan found that in Turkey these policies are state-oriented and influenced by State continuous changes, which naturally have a negative effect on educational performance, while the policies of teacher training in China is determined by the Department of Education, which can vary from province to province. In terms of the method of selecting and recruiting student-teachers, Japan, like Turkey, attracts candidates through a two-stage entrance exam. The study of Andrysová & Chudý (2019) also revealed that, while in Finland, the idea of independence and professionalism of teachers is emphasized, in French teacher education system, it is important for novice teachers acquire professional skills by combining academic courses with internships in schools.

In Iran, comparative studies have been conducted regarding the characteristics, quality of courses, and major issues and challenges of the teacher education system. Bavakhani, Yarmohamedian & Keshtarai (2018) by examining the patterns of revision of teacher education curricula in Australia, Singapore and Turkey found that Singapore and Turkey follow a centralized education system, while Australian politicians tend to reduce power of the government and local authorities. Also, the revision patterns in teachers' curriculum in all three countries are influenced by the local context and environmental realities. Australia's teacher education system seeks to adopt models that standardize curricula, but Singapore emphasizing the impact of future developments on the teacher education system, trying to revise curricula based on the model of "sustainable and deep life, broad and wise life". In addition, the findings show that despite the challenges, the Turkish teacher education system is trying to revise its programs to train skilled teachers who can prepare the young generation for life in the European Union - as an advanced society. Singapore's experience - compared to Australia and Turkey - has been more value-free and seems better to learn from its experiences for Iran's teacher education system. Koshi & Soltani (2017) in a comparative study of teacher training centers in Iran and India found that there is a fundamental difference between curriculum of these two countries in the areas of goals, content, teaching-learning process, evaluation, internship, and information & communication technology.

Azazi, Noorian, Khosravi Babadi & Norouzi (2017) investigated theoretical models and research related to teacher education in Iran and other countries through a conceptual framework and indicated three main axes - comprehensive teacher education program, social models, and economic models. Mahdavi Hezaveh, Maleki, Mehrmohammadi & Abbaspour (2015) by comparing the curriculum of primary teacher training with competency-based approach in Malaysia, India and Iran found that the concept of teacher competencies - according to the background and cultural context, specific issues of each country and policy makers and planners opinions - is subject to change. Also, the most important issues that Malaysia and India are facing is how to measure teachers' integrated professional competencies and teachers' resistance to accepting reforms. This research was conducted with the aim of analyzing and comparing the policy-making process and procedures for accepting teacher candidates in England, Finland, Iran & Japan and tried to answer the following questions:

- What are the similarities and differences between the selected countries in the policy making process of teacher education,
- What are the similarities and differences between the selected countries in the process of accepting candidates for teacher education.

2. Research Method

The research method was comparative with a qualitative approach and sample includes the countries of England, Finland, Iran & Japan. The selection of these countries was based on the strategy of "different social systems, different educational outputs". The method of data collection was documentary through investigation of national and international reports.

3. Findings

Q1: What are the similarities and differences between the selected countries in the policy making process of teacher education?

A) Description

England

The British Ministry of Education believes that nothing affects the progress of students as much as the quality of teaching and training, and accordingly emphasizes the selection of new

standards of teaching, classroom activities and subject knowledge. Teacher standards set a clear foundation of expectations for guidance and professional practice and define the minimum level expected of teachers (Figure 1) (England Department of Education, 2013). In England and Wales, teachers must have a qualified teacher's certificate to teach, which is awarded through initial teacher training programs and lasts approximately one year. After completing the course and complying with the standards, the person as a novice teacher starts her/his one-year work under support programs and on a conditional basis.

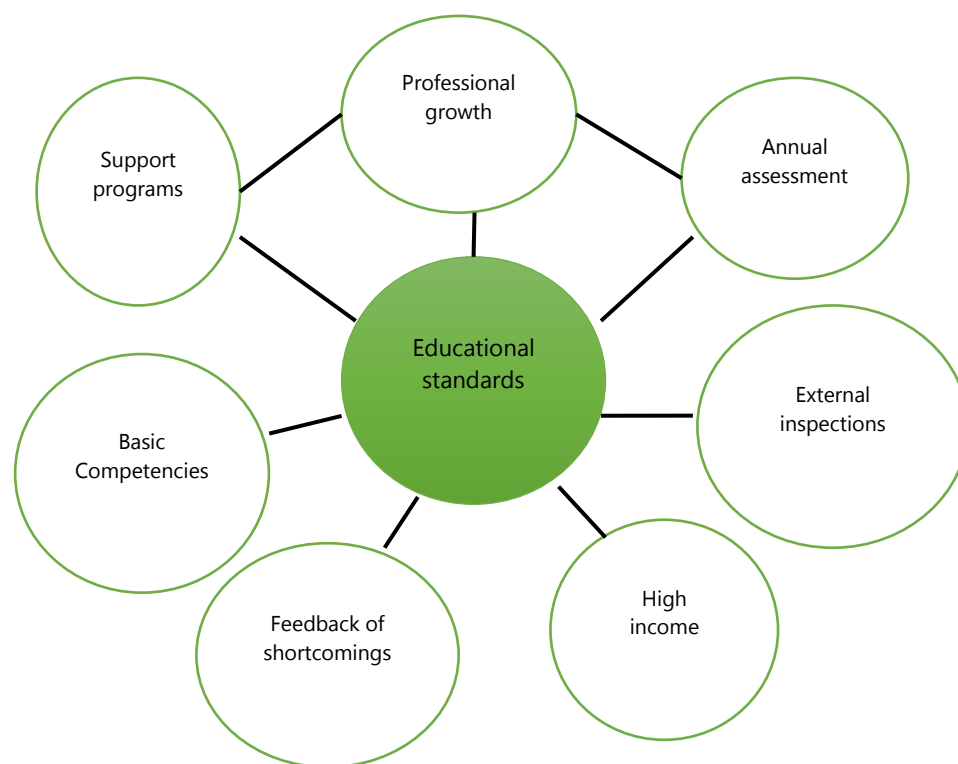


Figure 1: A set of expectations for guidance and professional practice

Finland

The teaching profession is very popular in Finland (Lonka, 2018; Viinikka, & Ubani, 2019). In this country, teacher education is an attractive field of study and higher education institutions can choose the most motivated and suitable people by adopting strategic policies and appropriate and effective criteria. Due to the decentralized policy approach in the Finnish education system, higher education institutions independently decide on the implementation and educational mechanisms

and processes of teacher training courses. Since the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland has put a revision in the program (K-12) with an emphasis on lifelong learning and adopting the slogan "Development of a human being and a citizen" in its agenda (Figure 2) (Burg, 2018), the realization of this goal requires effective policies in the teacher education system and efforts to train skilled teachers. For this reason, the main focus of policy in the Finnish teacher education system is to prepare teachers who feel responsible for the environmental issues and future orientations, pay attention to the diversify educational activities, respect culture of participation and democracy, care about local issues and challenges and respect cultural and linguistic diversity.

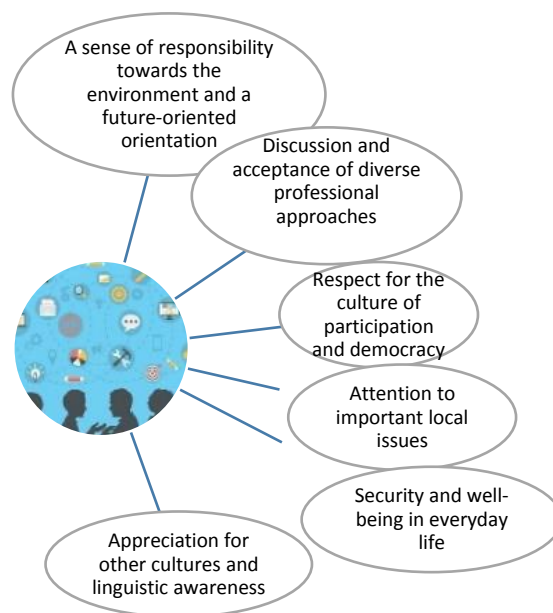


Figure 2: Finland's vision for education

Iran

In Iran, determining the general and macro policies, courses and fields of study, financial and administrative matters are the responsibility of the Board of Trustees of Farhangian University (the only university that is directly responsible for selecting candidates for teaching jobs and training them formally). The board of trustees of this university is mostly a political-administrative combination and the election of the university president is done with the proposal of the Minister of

Education, the approval of the Minister of Science, Research & Technology and Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution and the decree of the Minister of Education. The president of Farhangian University has more of an executive role and implements professional, administrative and financial approvals for the board of trustees. In part of the statutes of this university, the duties of the board of directors are to participate and cooperate in setting up the strategic plans of the university under the upstream documents - such as the 2025 Vision Document, the country's development plan, and the plans and policies of the Ministry of Science, Research & Technology. This shows that the responsibility of the president and the members of the board of directors are to provide the necessary platforms for the implementation of the set of decisions that are proposed in the above documents. Another part of the policy-making functions is the responsibility of the university council, which is in charge of the current policies and programs according to the macro policies and the approvals of the board of trustees. In the preface of the strategic program of Farhangian University (2015), while emphasizing the importance of strategic management, having this program is a serious necessity for cultivating high-quality human resources, creating transformation and excellence in the education and comprehensive, targeted and intelligent approach for development. In this document, while pointing out the lack of academic and specialized discourse in teacher education, it emphasizes the necessity of linking theory and practice and highlights the position of Farhangian University (Farhangian University, 2015).

Japan

Japanese teachers represent a large part of country's successful historical identity. Although teachers have a high social status and economic rewards in Japan, at the same time, the society demands a lot of responsibilities and expectations from them. From the cultural point of view, this society considers the school as a moral community and a fundamental institution for the education of a good citizen. Therefore, teachers have a great responsibility for moral education and character development, instilling basic Japanese values, attitudes and habits in students of all educational levels. In fact, in Japan, school culture is considered an integral part of the moral character of education. School culture plays an important role in cultivating and habituating as well as developing students' personality or identity (Junaedi, & Syukur, 2017). While analyzing the occupational culture of Japanese teachers, Kimura (2007) mentions high social status, professional virtue and conscientiousness as three characteristics of Japanese teachers. In his opinion, the high reputation of teachers has improved their social status. Possessing the professional virtue of teachers requires them to possess vision and virtuous character along with possessing high knowledge and skills as a basic qualification for the teaching profession. Nevertheless, in Japan,

moral virtue is considered as the basic pillar of the teaching profession and it is emphasized more than knowledge and skills. From the aspect of conscientiousness, selfless attitudes are highly praised. In this country; there is a National Council of Curriculum Standards, which determines curriculum requirements every ten years. The members of this council determine the legal framework of the responsibilities and duties of maintaining the level of education for primary, middle and high schools. The curriculum includes general requirements, objectives, content of each subject, key teaching points, time and structure of the course. According to the Central Education Council, teachers should only teach concepts that are emphasized in the curriculum standards. In these standards, ways to improve students' ability to do things and how they can learn are emphasized. Although in many countries, teachers are trained before starting their service in higher education institutions (Darling-Hammond, 2017), but in Japan, a new method is used for this purpose. According to Fujimuraa & Mistilina (2020), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan has ordered the implementation of the *Kyoshi-juku* program to the local boards of education. *Kyoshi-juku* is a new program in Japan that provides teacher preparation, classroom observation experiences, and specific information for working in local schools.

B) Interpretation

England

In the strategic policies of the British teacher education system, the training of qualified and deserving teachers has received a lot of attention. This is why teachers in this country enjoy high job security and excellent job benefits - such as competitive salaries, generous stipends, and decent pensions (Beauchamp et al., 2015). As a result of the implementation of this policy, it has been possible to attract and retain capable people for the teaching profession, and their professional development has a progressive and a forward trend (Swain, 2022). Nevertheless, by adopting a result-oriented approach in the learning process and trying to standardize the professional development process of teachers, England aims to combine university courses with school internships.

Finland

In Finland, academic institutions independently decide on the educational content of teacher training courses. Also, in this country, the link between education and research has been emphasized and teacher training is research-oriented. The goal of teacher training courses is to train teachers who are able to solve problems independently and have the capacity to use the latest findings in educational and subject areas. The Finnish teacher education system is based on trust in

the teacher, in which there is no national evaluation. The quality of the teacher's performance determined through examining and analyzing (1) the basic knowledge of teacher (input approach), (2) process or interaction between teacher and student in the classroom (process) and (3) results of the teaching and learning process - such as the learning performance of the students in national exams or the graduation rate (output) (Lavonen, 2017).

Iran

Despite the severe lack of teaching staff for different levels of education, Iran's educational system in the field of teacher education clearly does not have a single and comprehensive policy. In this regard, despite the historical role of the Ministry of Science, Research & Technology - and its affiliated universities - in training and preparing the teachers needed by the country in the past, in the current situation, this ministry practically has no role and place in the policy-making process of the teacher education system. This is despite the fact that using the wide capacity of educational science colleges could effectively help the training of teachers needed in the country. In any case, in the current situation, Farhangian University and Shahid Rajaei Teacher Training University are the only two higher education institutions that under the Ministry of Education are in charge of implementing the policies of the Supreme Council of Education regarding the training and preparation of future teachers. Farhangian University was established in 2011 by consolidating teacher training centers across the country and currently it has 98 academic units (64 university campuses and 34 faculties). Based on its statutes, this university follows a mission-oriented and strategic policy (Farhangian University, 2011). The foundation and evolution of Shahid Rajaei Teacher Training University was founded in 1980 with the merger of Tehran Institutes of Technology and was founded under the title "Center for Higher Technical Education of the Islamic Revolution". In addition to the technical associate courses, this university also received permission to hold non-continuous undergraduate courses. In 1993, with the permission of the Higher Education Extension Office of the Ministry of Science, Research & Technology, this complex was transformed into the College of Technical & Professional Education. Then, according to the available facilities, in 1997, with the merger of "Higher Education Center" and "College of Technical & Vocational Education" - and with the approval of the Ministry of Science, Research & Technology and Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution - under the name "Shahid Rajaei Teacher Training University" was promoted to the rank of university. Currently, this university is the only university in the country that has the mission of training technical teachers, and due to its unique expertise and mission, it is considered as a "strategic university" for the country (Saafi, 2019).

Japan

Japan is currently carrying out new reforms in schools in line with the 21st century. These comprehensive reforms include a wide range of changes - such as the revision of national curriculum standards, the new school evaluation system, introduction of the national academic performance test, revision of university admission policies & entrance exams, and improvement harmony between school and society (Yamanaka & Suzuki, 2020). In this regard, the government has considered further changes in social and employment structures, emphasizing the unforeseen technological changes (such as artificial intelligence and UNESCO's 2030 education agenda).

C) Juxtaposition

Table 1- Juxtaposition of teacher training policy process in selected countries

Country	Component
Finland	Attention to necessities of life in knowledge-based societies, independence of university action in selecting goals & determining the content of teacher training courses, emphasizing professional freedoms , trusting the teacher, professionalism in teacher training, emphasizing equality and decentralization, emphasis on acquiring basic knowledge, competencies and skills based on continuous learning and networking skills by teachers, creating equal educational opportunities.
England	Emphasis on the implementation of school-based teacher training courses, emphasis on cooperation of teacher training centers and academic centers with schools to determine and compile the basic standards of the teaching profession, attention to performance-oriented policies, decentralization and in some sectors, centralization
Japan	Public universities as a faculty of education, separation of teacher training institutions (higher education) from employment institutions (local board of education), emphasis on holding employment evaluation of each city with separate and independent responsibility, emphasis on the role of National Curriculum Standardization Council, emphasis on continuation of the system for re-hiring teachers, obtaining legal commitments from teachers, and attention and emphasizing the role of university grades in the process of hiring candidates for teaching jobs.
Iran	Provision of space for nurturing and empowering teaching manpower, determining the general and macro policies, courses and fields of study, financial and administrative matters by the Board of Trustees of Farhangian University, obtaining teacher commitment from teachers/students, emphasizing on role of Farhangian University as a only institution of higher education under the supervision of Ministry of Education for teacher training, and emphasizing the strong centralization in the process of recruiting , accepting and hiring teachers

D) Comparison

- Similarities

The main goal of teacher training in these countries is to develop and improve the ability of teaching manpower (K-12). Training and internship courses in teacher education institutes are usually three or four years.

- Differences

In Finland, the approaches of decentralization and institutional independence for choosing goals and determining educational content, trust in the teacher, equality and efforts to build learning and knowledge-centered communities are emphasized. In England, the application of the integrated approaches of the leading university and school-oriented is the focus of policy makers. Also, the basis of policy making in teacher education is the governance of collaborative discourses of schools and universities and neoliberal approaches based on performance with the dominance of the marketing approach. In Japan, *Kyoshi-juku* new approach, prominent role of the National Curriculum Council and decentralization have value. In Iran, policy-making in the teacher education system is centralized, and values are mostly derived from ideological beliefs expressed in an abstract form but there is no coordination between the goals and trends in the implementation and evaluation.

Table 2- Similarities and differences in the policy process of teacher training in selected countries

Components	Finland	England	Japan	Iran
Structural centralization in teacher training policies	–	–	–	*
Institutional independence of universities and teacher training centers	*	*	*	–
Academic freedom and professionalism	*	*	*	–
Cooperation of teacher training centers with universities	*	*	*	–
Obtaining legal obligations from applicants for teaching jobs	–	–	*	*
Focusing on providing and training teaching staff for (K-12)	*	*	*	*
Alignment between goals and processes during implementation and evaluation	*	*	*	–

Q2: How is the procedure for accepting teacher training courses in Iran compared to selected countries?

A) Description

England

To become a qualified teacher in England, trainee teachers must complete an initial training programme. Also, non-university trainees can obtain Qualified Teacher Status during a three or four year undergraduate course (England Ministry of Education, 2013; Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2006). The duration of the master's course is one year and full-time, and the successful graduates are awarded a teacher's qualification certificate.

Finland

In this country, educational qualifications and work experience have been determined as necessary conditions for obtaining various educational positions. The Finnish National Board of Education is the decision-making body regarding teacher qualifications. Most of the teachers (88%) have the desired characteristics and about 63,500 teachers are working in different academic courses. The ratio of female teachers to male in primary school reaches more than 70%. In addition, research training is a part of teacher education courses (Viinikka, Ubani, Lipiäinen & Kallioniemi, 2019). In Finland - except for kindergarten where teachers must have at least a bachelor's degree -, in other educational levels, teachers must have a master's degree. Also, the entrance exam is used to evaluate specialized skills and professional talent. In the admission process, the assessment criterion includes competence and expertise in a specific educational field, which is shown through work experience and academic merit.

Iran

Student admission is done with the permission of the Ministry of Science, Research & Technology and based on the capacity of each field announced by the Ministry of Education. Student-teachers are selected from among those accepted in the national exam, after confirming the general and specialized qualifications by the Ministry of Education. Also, before registration, student-teachers are required to commit to serve twice the duration of their studies.

Japan

The current system of higher education in Japan, which was introduced in 1949, has institutionalized the establishment of a faculty of educational sciences in every public university.

Japan currently has 184 public and private higher education institutions that offer accredited teacher education programs. Also, in Japan, the role of teacher training institutions is clearly separated from employment institutions (local board of education). Candidates must participate in a local employment test to assess skill abilities. These evaluations include written and practical tests (physical exercises, arts and crafts, music, and functional language skills), interviews (individual and group), essay writing, micro-scale teaching, class activities, preparation of lesson plans, situational behaviors with developmental roles in school environment and aptitude tests. Evaluation criteria for candidates are different in each city (Yamanaka & Suzuki, 2020).

B) Interpretation

England

The Teaching Regulation Agency in England is responsible for granting a certificate of competence to teachers at the end of the training course (Foster, 2019). The Ministry of Education of England determines the number of graduates needed in each educational field using the teacher estimation model. In 2018 to 2019, 29,255 students studied university courses. This model also estimates the UK's need for 14,237 postgraduate trainees for secondary school and 12,552 for primary school (Department for Education, 2018). In this country, every year more than 30 thousand people enter the primary teacher training courses in different ways. These courses must have the necessary standards and the candidates are required to present the General Certificate of Secondary Education in English, Mathematics and Science for enrollment in levels 3 and 4 or higher.

Finland

Education in Finland has attracted international attention due to its high quality and the country's success in obtaining excellent learning results. Although pupils start school later and spend less time in the classroom - compared to other European countries - the presence of well-trained teachers with a high level of professional freedom has made the educational performance of this country brilliant. The goal of Finnish teacher education is the balanced development of teachers' personal and professional competencies: student-teachers seek to develop their own pedagogical theories in their specialized contexts.

Iran

In Iran, student-teachers are selected to participate in a four-year course based on the needs of the Ministry of Education and after obtaining a high school diploma. When the need for a teacher exceeds the capacity of Farhangian University, undergraduate students of other universities - in related fields - are also selected and during a one-year skill course are awarded a teacher's professional competency certificate. For the master's degree, a two-year course is held with the collaboration of universities and accredited higher education institutions (Farhangian University, 2015).

Japan

In Japan, the basic condition for entering the teaching profession is to participate and pass the exams of the National Student-Teacher Admission Center. At the same time, it is possible to enter the teaching profession through an open admission system. Anyway, the implementation of *Kyoshijuku's* policy approach - which was established in 2015 - is the training of teachers in an academic environment with a research approach that provides appropriate practical preparations for the candidates to attend schools.

C) Juxtaposition

Table 3- Juxtaposition of admission procedure for teacher training courses in selected countries

Country	admission procedure
Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting a high score in the college entrance exam • Completing a master's course • Freedom of action of the university in accepting student-teachers
England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the national exam • Special admission test for some universities
Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in the National Admission Center exam (a type of standard exam in public and private universities) • Entering the teaching profession through an open and free admission system
Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the national exam and confirmation of specialized and general competence • Delivering the obligation to serve • Participation in educational recruitment tests • Having a minimum average score of 14 in high school

D) Comparison

Analyzing and comparing the structure, mechanisms, goals and development strategies of teacher training in the studied countries in terms of teacher acceptance procedures indicates that

these countries have similarities and differences. The main similarities and differences between them are briefly mentioned below:

- Similarities

Most countries hold a national exam to accept teachers. Also, the average grades of candidates before university are important. University courses in teacher training are similar and most of these courses last three or four years.

- Differences

In Finland, Japan and England, university institutions have their own autonomy and tests in the process of accepting student-teachers. The selection of student-teachers in Iran is mostly with emphasis on commitment to Islamic values and religious behavior, while in the countries under study, emphasis is placed on academic competence and social behavior of teachers. Also, in the process of accepting teachers, in Finland, professional competence is emphasized, in England, standards are emphasized to determine the competencies of each individual, and in Japan, standard criteria are emphasized in the teacher exam .

Table 4- Similarities and differences in the teacher training acceptance procedure in selected countries

Components	Finland	England	Japan	Iran
Compulsory participation in the national exam	–	*	*	*
Having at least a master's degree	*	–	–	–
Universities' freedom of action in the student-teacher admission process	*	*	*	–
Get a high score in the test	*	*	*	–

4. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to compare the policy frameworks and admission procedures in the teacher education system of Finland, England, Japan and Iran. The findings showed that despite the similarities, there are important differences - especially in the policy-making process and admission procedures - between Iran's teacher education system and other countries. Based on this, the current authors found the Finnish teacher education system to be a very inspiring model, which is based on the idea of teachers having freedom, professional and aspiration to learn continuously. In this country, the goal of teacher training is to nurture and develop the educational thought of teachers who can combine the results of educational research with the challenges of teaching.

Another finding of the research revealed that while the English teacher education system - by adopting a result-oriented approach in learning and standardizing the professional development process of teachers - tries to combine university courses with practical school training, the Japanese emphasize the importance of teaching practice (Internship). Also, the Japanese teacher education system considers the role of factors such as the ability to teach and learn; guidance skills, classroom management, academic counseling, social interaction, and cooperation skills in determining the competency standards of teachers. In addition, in Japan, universities organize teacher training programs and the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, Culture & Technology supervises the content of courses. In Iran, the teacher education system is centralized and managed with a top-down approach, while at the same time, training-oriented approaches with the predominance of religious discourses are prevalent. The three countries of Finland, England and Japan are seeking to establish common pedagogical foundations to create a common culture among their teachers. From this point of view, teachers should be able to relate the latest pedagogical research to the learning process. Also, they should be able to update themselves by relying on current knowledge, not only in their especial field, but also in the field of pedagogy. With this definition, the requirements for being a teacher in the four selected countries are influenced by legal requirements, although there are similarities between them in terms of form and structure, the way student-teachers are accepted, and current academic trends.

In Iran's educational policy documents (document of fundamental reform of education system and Farhangian University statutes), there is no specific reference to teacher training and its role and importance. In this system, the centralized political-administrative hierarchy has full control. Also, in the above documents, the way to realize the visions and goals of the teacher education system is not clear, and its evaluation tools have not been considered. Farhangian University lacks a strong academic identity and is dominated by academic management traditions. In addition, in this university, a kind of organizational charting has assumed a central role - instead of central competence - and therefore, there is a big difference between what is decided and what is implemented. As a result of the dominance of such an approach in Iran's teacher education system, extreme emphasis on theoretical topics instead of internships, one-sided teaching processes mainly in the lecture method, the focus of evaluations on the level of known and understanding, the absence of research centers, emphasis on educational approach as the dominant discourse, and continuation of ideological discourses have become prominent features. A review of in-service training courses shows that attention to pedagogical needs and specialized training is lacking.

Attending these courses has more financial motivation and getting a certificate than having educational value for educators.

The findings of the research also revealed that in terms of policy frameworks, the teacher education system in Iran - unlike the other three countries - is affected by a centralized structure and emanating from an ideological thought . the structural and administrative concentration and the pivotal role of supranational institutions - in the processes of policy-making and decision-making has caused institutional independence and academic freedom to be taken away from the senior officials of teacher education system. Another finding is that there is a similarity between the teacher education system of Iran and Japan in terms of the obligation to continue attending the educational system after the completion of the teacher training course. In addition, despite the fact that there is a similarity between Iran's teacher education system and England and Japan regarding the need for candidates to participate and pass a national exam, but in terms of the condition of academic degrees, discretion and freedom of action of universities in accepting candidates, and need to obtain excellent grades in the national exam, the difference is obvious. According to the findings of the research, it is suggested to pay more attention to the professional competence system with the continuous professional development approach in the teacher education system of Iran. Based on findings, the following suggestions can be considered by educational planners in Iran's teacher education system:

- Focus on standardizing the teaching profession and appointing an external body to measure and evaluate these criteria for accepting candidates,
- Increasing the dignity and livelihood of teachers,
- Determining educational approaches and theoretical discourses and increasing the link between the university and the school,
- Application of in-service training for teachers,
- Application of research-based learning in pedagogical strategies,
- Giving priority to research and increasing the scientific perspective in the professional development of teachers,
- Applying academic theoretical discourses and school practical trends, competency-based decision-making,
- Creating scientific systems in the policy cycle, planning, implementation, evaluation and revision of teacher training programs,

- Moving towards independence of action and giving more freedom and authority to teachers and mentors for policy making, planning and choosing educational contents,
- Pragmatism in expressing the perspectives and goals of teacher training and avoiding infinite, rhetorical and artificial goals.

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