

# Chapter 1

# Historical Development and Transformation of Teacher Education in Turkey From Past to Present

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Education plays a vital role in societal development, with teachers serving as key figures in transferring knowledge, skills, and social values to students. In Turkey, a country with a rich educational tradition, the processes of teacher training have significantly evolved from the Ottoman period to the present, greatly influencing the quality of education and broader social progress. Understanding the historical development, current state, and future directions of teacher education in Turkey is crucial for analyzing the educational experience of its large student and teacher population. This involves examining the evolution of teacher training from the Ottoman Empire to the Republican era, reviewing current policies and practices, and addressing both challenges and successes. Additionally, the impact of contemporary factors such as technology and globalization on teacher education must be assessed to anticipate future changes. This study aims to contribute to improving Turkey's educational policies, enhancing the teaching profession, and fostering transformation in education.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Teachers play a fundamental role in shaping societies, not only by imparting knowledge and skills but also by transmitting cultural values, fostering social cohesion, and nurturing civic awareness in students. In the case of Turkey, a country with a long-standing educational tradition, the development and transformation of teacher education have been pivotal in determining the quality and direction of the nation's education system. From the late Ottoman Empire to the modern Republic, teacher training processes have been deeply influenced by political, social, and economic changes. These shifts have had far-reaching effects on the professionalism and effectiveness of teachers, directly impacting the broader goals of national development and modernization. Teacher education, therefore, remains a critical area of focus for understanding how educational policies and practices shape both the immediate learning environment and long-term societal progress. However, despite the strides made in Turkey's teacher training system over the past century, the process faces ongoing challenges that complicate its progress. Regional disparities in educational infrastructure, varying levels of professional development, and inconsistencies in policy implementation are among the key issues that hinder the uniform quality of teacher preparation. Additionally, the teaching profession in Turkey is influenced by broader societal issues, such as imbalances in teachers' social rights and conditions, which affect both recruitment and retention. Nonetheless, there are significant opportunities for growth, particularly with the increasing integration of technology and the expansion of international educational collaborations. These factors hold the potential to enrich teacher training programs and enhance pedagogical practices. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the historical development, current challenges, and future opportunities in Turkey's teacher education system. By analyzing these factors, the study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on educational reform and highlight pathways for improving the quality of teacher education in Turkey, ensuring that it remains responsive to the demands of an evolving educational landscape and a changing society.

## **1. TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE OTTOMAN PERIOD**

### **1.1. The Role of Madrasas and the First Educational Institutions**

Madrasahs are known as institutional structures that are usually built next to mosques and offer accommodation and education to students. Although these institutions emerged in different periods of time in various regions of Islamic civilisation, they became institutionalised and gained a systematic structure with the

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