

Renovation Efforts in the Ottoman Education System until Tanzimat

¹Sezai Öztaş and ²Ahmet Sait Candan

¹Kırklareli University, Turkey

²Karabuk University, Turkey

Abstract: The beginning of the 18th century is a turning point for the Ottoman Empire. Because, in this century there were major changes in the Empire. Military defeats caused inquiry of the military training of Ottomans, as a result of this, the European-model education renewal efforts before The Tanzimat Period focused on military training. So the first European-model schools were military schools. “Hendesehane”, “Mühendishâne-i Bahri Hümayun” “Mühendishâne-i Berri Hümayun”, “Mektebi Tıbbiye”, “Mektebi Ulûm-u Harbiye”, “M ızıkâ-i Hümayûn Mektebi” were the first European-model schools. These first European-model schools - opened together with the traditional education institutions - with their programs, methods, equipments and teaching staff, were the first schools for the sake of Tanzimat. In this article, the efforts of renewal in the education system of the Ottoman Empire until the Restoration Period will be considered.

Key words: Ottoman empire • Education • Education system • Renewal efforts in education system • Renewal efforts

INTRODUCTION

These are the formal educational institutions in the traditional Ottoman education system until The Tanzimat Period: Sıbyan Mektepleri (Sıbyan Schools), Medreses (Madrasahs), Enderûn Mektebi (Enderûn School), Acemi oğlan Mektebi (Acemi oğlan School), Şehzadegân Mektebi (Şehzadegân School), Meşkhane and Ahi Unions (Öztaş and Sannav, 2008: 179-186).

The traditional educational institutions of Ottoman Empire in the establishment and ascension period survived unchanged. After the 18th century, new educational institutions started to be opened beside these schools [1]. Ottoman Empire didn't need models from Europe in this period. After the ascension period, as some faults were seen, European educational institutions were taken as an example.

The Efforts of Renewal in the Ottoman Education System until the Tanzimat Period: The beginning of the 18th century was a turning point for The Ottoman Empire. Because, in this century there were major changes in the Empire. Military defeats caused inquiry of the military training of Ottomans, as a result of this, the European-model education renewal efforts before The Tanzimat Period focused on military training.

The only reason for the renovations in the Ottoman Empire was not military defeats. We can also show these for the reasons why renewals were started from military education:

- Ottomans, as defeats in wars increased, thought that European officers and soldiers were well-educated and they were behind them and first of all, they considered it necessary that European-model military renewal was urgent.
- The foreign experts, who came to Ottoman Empire in the 18th century, also suggested military renewal.
- As the members of ‘medrese’ couldn't object because of the military defeats, working on these fields were possible [2].

The renewals started with military schools until the Tanzimat period. These renewals started with Mahmut I (1730-1754) and lasted until the era of Mahmut II (1808-1939).

Actually, before Mahmut I in the era of Ahmet III, there were suggestions about military renewal. In 1716, a French officer named Rochefort presented sultan a report suggesting establishing a foreign officer section to army, but failed [3].

In the era of Mahmut I (1730-1754), assistance was taken from Comte de Bonneval, a French officer. Comte de Bonneval, went into the service of Ottoman Empire, became a Muslim and took the name Ahmet. Later that he was called Humbaracı Ahmet Paşa [3,4]. In 1734, with the lead of Humbaracı Ahmet Paşa, a school named "Hendesehane" - the first European-model school - was opened in Üsküdar by Mahmut I. But, as janissaries suspected of this school and prepared for riot the students of the school were dispersed.

In 1760, in the era of Mustafa III (1757-1774), Sadrazam (Grand Vizier) Ragıp Paşa reopened the school with the former student, their sons and grandsons. The school continued insignificantly until Selim III. In 1795, the school was abolished.

During the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768-1774, the Ottoman navy was sat on fire in 1770 in Çeşme so a new navy was needed to rebuild. To meet the officer and technical staff needs of such navy "Mühendishâne-i Bahrî-i Hümayûn (Naval Engineering School)" was opened in 1776 [5]. For the first names of the school such names were used: "Hendesehane", "Humbarahane", "Mühendishane". This school is the first window in the Ottoman Empire opening to West [6].

Baron de Tott, French citizen of Hungarian stock, helped to establish and train the military engineering and artillery sections in Ottoman Empire. Besides Baron de Tott, Scotchman Campbell, who became Muslim and nicknamed English Mustafa, also took part in training the military engineering and artillery sections [3]. As can be seen, in the 18th century, the foreigner experts who had gone into the service of The Ottoman Empire had huge assistance in the modernization of Ottoman military education.

The students of the school were provided from the former students and naval officers who are on duty. As Baron de Tott cited in his memoirs, there were white-bearded captains and 60-year-old students among the students [3].

Selim III, already in his prince times, thought about governmental problems and their remedies. When accessed to the throne, he implemented his plans. Selim III, in 1795, in order to train land forces and to train land, artillery and engineering officers and engineers, established "Mühendishane-i Berri-i Hümayûn (Land Force Engineering School)". Moreover, the education system of this school was joined with Mühendishâne-i Bahrî-i Hümayûn [4,6]. According to Unat [7], in terms of teaching another language and students' sitting in rows for the first time, this school has a private place in our education history.

In the era of Selim III, a student named İshak was sent to Paris to advance in French and upgrade his intelligence [4]. This young man is the first student to go to Europe in the name of Ottoman Empire.

As we come to the era of Mahmut II (1808-1839) it is seen that free culture changes end and obligatory culture changes start [8]. In the year 1822, "Mühendishâne-i Bahrî-i Hümayûn" removed into shipyard and separated from "Mühendishane-i Berri-i Hümayûn" [9].

In 1824, Mahmut II published an edict about the obligation of primary school. In summary, this edict orders that children must join obligatory primary school until puberty, they mustn't be given to technical schools before they took religious education in "Sıbyan Schools" and only the teacher and judge can decide that the child can leave the school [9]. Moreover, with this edict, for the first time in Ottoman history a Maarif Nazırı (Minister of Education) was appointed [10].

After 1830, the reformation period opened by Mahmut II, compared to the periods before it, can be said to be more conscious, more comprehensive and more courageous. The first deep conflicts in the Ottoman society, conservative-reformist conflicts and disagreement in institutions occurred in this period and these brought Ottoman Empire to the announcement of Tanzimat [11].

In 1830, Mahmut II ordered that 150 students from Tıbbiye (Medical School) and Enderun sent to Europe. But this order couldn't be fully executed because of the resistance of the conservative groups. Later, students selected from "Harbiye" and "Hendesehane-i Amire" were sent to Europe. Again, in the era of Mahmut II, between the years of 1834-1836, students were sent to Paris, Wien and London in order to train teachers for "Harbiye School" and other military schools [4]. These students, after returning to country, took significant parts in the government and lead the renewal movements.

Mahmut II quickened the renewals when he abolished "Yeniçeri Ocağı" (Janissary Corps) which he saw as an obstacle to renovations. Instead of "Yeniçeri Ocağı" he established 'Asâkir-i Mansûre-i Muhammediye" (1827). Then for this school officers and doctors were needed. After that Mahmut II had to focus on education. In 1827, in order to meet the doctor need of this school, "Tıbhâne-i Amire" and, in 1931, "Cerrahâne-i Mamure" were opened with the help of head doctor Mustafa Behçet Efendi [12]. The actual westernization of these medical schools started with the employment of Professor Bernard from The University of Wien. Professor Bernard joined these two schools and taught anatomy lessons with cadaver [4]. When two schools were joined they took the name "Mekteb-i Tıbbiye".

In his speech in the opening of the new medical school building in 1838, Mahmut II openly stated that he gave importance to language education. In this speech, Mahmut II cited the obstacle of language which is the main problem of education and renovation efforts. The number of Muslim Turks who knew a European language perfectly was very low. The teachers, consultants and technical officers were all European in the army. Their advices and orders had to be translated and filtered. Moreover, Muslims who knew languages were needed to translate course books into Turkish and to create technical and scientific language [3].

As we mentioned above, “Asakir-i Mansûre-i Muhammediye” was established (1827) instead of “Yeniçeri Ocağı” which was abolished in 1826. A new and modern school was needed in order to meet the officer need of this army. For that purpose, “Mekteb-i Ulûm-u Harbiye” was opened in Maçka in 1834 [7]. This school was adjusted to French samples as much as possible [3]. Mahmut II dealt with these academies himself. He came to “Mekteb-i Ulûm-u Harbiye” himself and checked it and in 14 July 1835, he got prepared and issued a charter in the characteristic of an internal regulation [4]. “Mekteb-i Ulûm-u Harbiye” gradually became an institution which is advanced compared to its contemporaries, it was commonly seen that the graduate officers of this school gave positive science lessons in civil schools. Thus, this school served Ottoman Empire not just by educating military officers but also by raising teachers for long years [6]. Moreover, this school has a private place because it raised Mustafa Kemal Atatürk- the founder of The Turkish Republic [4].

When “Yeniçeri Ocağı” was abolished in 1826, ‘Mehterhane’ and its band “Mehter Takımı” (Military band of Ottoman Empire) were also abolished. So, a new band was needed for “Asâkir-i Mansûre-i Muhammediye”. In order to constitute a band “Mızıkai Humâyûn Mektebi” was opened in 1834 [6,9].

Besides, advisory councils named “Dâr-ı Şûra-yı Askeri” (1836) “Dâr-ı Şûra-yı Bâb-ı Ali” (1838) and “Meclis-i Ahkâm-ı Adliye” are opened to deal with governmental issues.

In the year 1838, “Meclis-i Umûr-ı Nafia” was established to govern agricultural and industrial issues of the country. This council principally dealt with education issues for the first time. Actually, in 1826, “Evkaf-ı Hümâyûn Nezareti” was founded to organize and govern “Sıbyan Schools”. But it is known to be useless [4]. The foundation of “Meclis-i Umûr-ı Nafia” is important, because it showed that a new education system had to be

established other than “Medrese” and the organization of these issues had to be given to another committee not to “ulema (wise people)” class. Therefore, education was tried to be taken from the hands of “Medrese” and to be taken under the supervision of the government [11].

In 1939, “Meclis-i Umûr-ı Nafia” issued the “lâyiha” (writing which expresses opinions and views about a subject) which it had prepared about the education reforms. In this “lâyiha” the importance of science was emphasized and suggestions such as producing inspection mechanisms for schools, arrangement of curriculum, giving lessons in the class formation, obligatory subscription of the children about the ages of 4-5, helping the poor students by the government, avoidance of rote-learning based education system were made [4,7,11]. Moreover, the need to create a link between primary, secondary and high education was emphasized for the first time [9].

These education reforms prepared by “Meclis-i Umûr-ı Nafia” was presented to Mahmut II by the advisory councils “Dâr-ı Şûra-yı Bâb-ı Ali” and ‘Meclis-i Ahkâm-ı Adliye’ and they were approved. The sultan ordered to give the name ‘Rüştiye’ to this school which had been planned to be founded in the “lâyiha” [7].

Although the education precautions of Mahmut II was generally related to the army, it is seen that he held the problem of primary and secondary civil education in 1838 and he planned the foundation of “Rüştiye” [3]. As a matter of fact, military schools gave education which is over than average level. But there were not secondary schools other than “Sıbyan” schools. For this reason, the idea of establishing civil secondary schools was born. In 1839, a school between the “Sıbyan” and military schools was decided to be established in order to provide student for the military schools. For this purpose, “Rüştiye” schools were founded.

“Mekâtib-i Rüştiye Nezareti” ministry was founded to deal with educational issues (1839). İmanzade Esat Efendi was appointed there as chief [4,7].

The first “Rüştiye” schools were “Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye” (11 February 1839) and “Mekteb-i Ulûm-i Edebiye” (March 1839) [6,9]. Although curriculums were substantially traditional, teaching of French and modern subjects were foreseen. The aims of these schools were to educate government officials and translators [3]. “Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye” educated civil servants, whereas “Mekteb-i Ulûm-i Ebediye” educated foreign service officers. These schools kept their primal forms in the era of Mahmut II. But, in the Tanzimat Period, ‘Rüştiye’ schools developed and increased [13].

As can be seen, the renovations that had been made in the era of Mahmut II served as an example to the oncoming renovations. The extension of the renovations in education took place in the Tanzimat Period and afterwards.

CONCLUSION

The first renovation efforts in the Ottoman education system began in the field of military training. "Hendesehane" (1734), "Mühendishâne-i Bahrî-i Hümâyûn" (1776), "Mühendishane-i Berr-i-i Hümâyûn" (1796) are the first European-model education institutions in the 18th century. In the 19th century, "Mekteb-i Tıbbiye" (1827), 'Mekteb-i Ulûm-u Harbiye' (1834) and 'Mîzika-i Hümâyûn Mektebi' were later added to these institutions.

In the renewals of education, France was taken as an example in terms of economic and political developments in the beginning. The teaching of French as a second language in our schools, the sending of students to mostly to France, that the foreign books in the libraries were mostly French and translating Western languages from French are proofs to this situation [14].

In the 18th century, the foreigner experts who had gone into the service of the Ottoman Empire had huge assistance in the modernization of Ottoman military education. The renewal efforts in military training and the foundation of new schools pioneered the foundation of civil schools and also modernized the curriculums of these schools.

In this era, except from the opening of new schools, there are renewal efforts in the field of education. These efforts are; the obligation of primary schools, the entering of foreign language education into the curriculum for the first time, sending students abroad for the first time and the renovations in the education.

REFERENCES

1. Öztas, S., S.C. Samnav, 2008. "Study Of The Classical Education System Of The Ottoman Empire Until Tanzimat (Administrative Reforms) Period (1839-1876)". IV International Scientific Conference "Contemporary Intentions in Education" Ss. Cyril and Methodius University Faculty of Pedagogy, 13-15.06.2008, Ohrid, Macedonia, 1, 179-186.
2. Akyüz, Y., 2002. 17. yüzyıldan günümüze Türk eğitiminde başlıca düzenleme ve geliştirme çabaları (Genel özellikler ve doğrultular). XIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi, III. Cilt, II. Kısım, Ankara, 4-8 Ekim 1999.
3. Lewis, B., 1998. Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu. M. Kırıatlı (Çev.). Ankara: T.T.K.
4. Koçer, H.A., 1991. Türkiye'de Modern Eğitimin Doğuşu ve Gelişimi (1773-1923). İstanbul: MEB Yayınları.
5. Beydilli, K., 1995. Türk Bilim ve Matbaacılık Tarihinde Mühendishâne, Mühendishâne Matbaası ve Kütüphanesi (1776-1826). İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık ve Kitapçılık.
6. Akyüz, Y., 2008. Türk Eğitim Tarihi M.Ö. 1000- M.S. 2008. Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayınevi.
7. Unat, F.R., 1964. Türkiye Eğitim Sisteminin Gelişimine Tarihi Bir Bakış. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi.
8. Turhan, M. (1969). Kültür Değişimleri Sosyal Psikolojik Bakımdan Bir Tetkik. İstanbul: MEB.
9. Kafadar, O., 1997. Türk Eğitim Düşüncesinde Batılılaşma. Ankara: Vadi Yayınları.
10. Kaya, Y.K., 1984. İnsan Yetiştirme Düzenimiz. Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal ve İdari Bilimler Döner Sermaye İşletmesi.
11. Kodaman, B., 1999. Abdülhamit Devri Eğitim Sistemi. Ankara: T.T.K.
12. Ergin, O., 1977. Türk Maarif Tarihi I. İstanbul: Eser Matbaası.
13. Berkes, N., 1978. Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma. İstanbul: Doğu-Batı Yayınları.
14. Ergün, M., 1990. Türk eğitiminin batılılaşmasını belirleyen dinamikler. Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi, VI 17: 435-457.