

Transnational Education in Turkey

Dr. Deniz Erguvan

Gulf University for Science and Technology, Kuwait
erguvan.d@gust.edu.kw

Doi:10.5901/jesr.2015.v5n1p227

Abstract

The objective of this study is to glance at the status of transnational education in Turkey and analyze the country's level of preparedness for TNE. To this end, some demographic data, financial indicators, Higher Education Council (YÖK) facts and statistics and government discourse on the subject have been studied, transnationalization attempts of foundation and state universities have been analysed and academics and specialists have been consulted. As a result of this study, the findings could be summarized as Turkey is a young country with a growing appetite for university education, with around 2 million people taking the university entrance exam every year. Despite the growing demand, supply is still limited though rising. The Turkish government has a keen interest in internationalising the higher education sector and is actively seeking and promoting partnerships with foreign governments and institutions. The number of foreign students has substantially increased within the last few years and is expected to continue in the medium and long term. Although there has been a spike in interest from transnational education providers, it is still a virgin market with plenty of opportunities for early entrance of western universities.

Keywords: transnational education, internationalization of higher education

1. Introduction

The present society may be regarded as a knowledge society with universities and information technology as its key elements. In knowledge society, education, particularly higher education can play a crucial role in reshaping and restructuring the social, economic and political institutions of a country. International cooperation and collaboration is taking place among countries in educational, social, economic, and services sectors through national and international organizations and agreements.

A transformation is radically affecting both the provision and purposes of higher education. Like the larger scale phenomenon of contemporary globalization that establishes its historical environment, it is functionally characterized by both integrating and fragmenting dynamics, by expanding commodification and privatization, by accelerating flows of goods and services, and by intensified personal and institutional mobility. This transformation has been identified with "internationalization" and the increasing importance of "cross-border" educational activity (Hershock, 2010).

There is a tendency to associate the internationalization of higher education with economically developed Anglophone countries (e.g., the US, UK, Canada, and Australia). Although there are various different rationales behind internationalization (e.g., social, political, and academic), economic rationales are more prominent for these countries. However, several recent developments have made internationalization one of the top issues on the agendas of countries in a wider geographic and economic landscape — including developing and non-Anglophone countries.

Higher education institutions get involved in internationalisation in different ways, from routine student exchange programmes to cross-border collaborative arrangements (Clark, 2012). However, the dynamics of internationalization are changing. Growth has been particularly strong in the number of students studying in their home country with foreign higher education institutions operating outside of their own national space. Many of the students that traditionally would have travelled overseas to study for an international qualification are now pursuing foreign degrees in their home, or neighbouring, countries at local institutions through an array of collaborative arrangements with degree-awarding institutions from major education-exporting countries.

Internationalization of higher education systems may provide opportunities across the borders of a country at a global level through a phenomenon termed 'Transnational Education' (Hussain, 2007). This segment of the international education market, in which students study for foreign qualifications in any manner of ways are referred to as transnational education (TNE) (Clark, 2012). International branch campus is one of the delivery methods, but these foreign outposts are responsible for just a tiny fraction of the degrees being delivered by institutions across borders. More

common are in-country partner arrangements that might include the franchising, twinning or validating of degree programs to teaching institutions and other organizations by awarding institutions.

Transnational education is not a new phenomenon and the international mobility of students may appear as a tradition in the academic world. However the dynamics of transnational education has deeply changed. Twenty years ago, it mostly reflected political, geostrategic, cultural and development aid motivations: the countries encouraged mobility as a way to open up to the world, hoping to create elite international networks. Universities welcomed foreign students but did not make any special effort to recruit them. Nowadays, cross-border education also corresponds to short term economic motivations: it is often perceived as an economic development lever by governments and as a competitive advantage by the institutions (Vincent-Lancrin, p. 64).

Transnational education has experienced a global expansion, and it has diversified beyond the traditional form of student mobility. All signs indicate that this growth will continue in the upcoming decades – unless there is a sudden halt in globalisation due to a major political crisis.

Perhaps not all countries have an explicit policy for the internationalisation of their higher education, but Turkey does.

Turkish governments have started to think how the young generation is educated and trained; Turkish higher education administrators, institutions and academics have seen the need for internationalization of Turkish universities and decided to transform the country's higher education system, particularly since the beginning of the 21st century.

To this end, it seems important to assess the preparedness of Turkish universities for transnational education. In order to assess Turkey's level of readiness for transnational higher education, the study has employed the triangulation method to incorporate the different areas and types of research methodology. Triangulation refers to the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings. Since much social research is founded on the use of a single research method and as such may suffer from limitations associated with that method or from the specific application of it, triangulation offers the prospect of enhanced confidence (Bryman, 2003, p. 1142). The research phase incorporated and integrated the following sources:

- The views of in-country specialists
- Private correspondence with academics
- Research utilising secondary sources

2. The Current Appetite for Transnational Education (TNE) in Turkey

The appetite for Transnational Education provision in the country is big and it is growing every day. The indicators of this appetite could be observed in **(a)** the country demographics and the increasing demand of the young population for higher education, **(b)** the government discourse and policies targeting a quality and internationally recognized and accredited higher education system, **(c)** flourishing joint diploma programs of many private and state universities, **(d)** the growing number of foreign students in the country and **(e)** the interest being shown by transnational education providers.

2.1 The demographics of the country

The population of Turkey is expected to be 84.247.088 by 2023. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (2013), the population will continue increasing slowly until 2050, and it will reach its highest value of 93.475.575 by then. While the population of 60 provinces will increase, the order of the most populous four provinces will not change. The most populous city now, İstanbul will still lead the list with 16.6 million residents in 2023. Table 1 will give us an idea for student population that is projected for the next decade.

Table 1: School Age Population Projection in Turkey, 2015-2025 (Million)

	High School Education (15-18 years old)	Higher Education (19-22 years old)	University entrance age (19 years old)
2015	5.171	5.257	1.347
2020	5.124	5.064	1.258
2025	4.956	5.077	1.258

According to the Higher Education Strategy report, prepared by the Higher Education Council (YÖK, 2007) in Turkey, by 2025, the number of undergraduate students is projected to reach 65% of the population that is eligible for higher

education, which will be around 3.380.000. The percentage of students in Open Education is expected to drop from %35 to %11. In addition, post-graduate education is projected to expand and expected to reach 630.000 students.

Foundation universities are predicted to play a bigger role in the next decade and expected to educate %16 of the existing student body. The number of students studying in foundation universities is around 200.000 at the moment and it is expected to reach 575.000 by 2023, by the Foundation Universities Association Chair (Sarıcaoğlu, 2012)

These demographic variables of the country indicate an ever increasing demand for schooling and for university education. However, despite these promising figures for the future of higher education providers, the strategy report also recognizes the following problem areas in the Turkish higher education system that should be tackled for a viable higher education strategy:

1. The supply for higher education cannot meet the demand. The youthful country's demand to have a university degree is substantially above the existing capacity.
2. The quality of higher education should rise up to the international standards and should be assessed by international accreditation agencies.
3. There is a lack of variety in programs, degrees and institutions that will push Turkey to the foreground in the global market.
4. Students need to graduate having mastered at least one foreign language, and this emerges as an urgent problem that needs resolving strategically.

In short, the country has a young population that should be trained at international standards.

2.2 Government discourse and policies

Since the publication of this report in 2006, the political scene in Turkey has shifted and the government and the administration of YÖK have changed. After the parliamentary election in 2007, AKP government has taken over all the administrative and bureaucratic positions. However, despite some positive steps, problems in the higher education have not efficiently been tackled yet. The demand-supply imbalance is still largely observed. However, the growing need for internationalization of Turkish universities is more obvious than ever and the vision of making university education more accessible to millions is stressed by all higher education administrators.

The current president of YÖK, Prof Dr Çetinsaya (2012) pointed to the fact that that university places have increased substantially within the past 4 years, but there is still a long way to go. Turkey is targeting to become one of the 10 biggest economies by 2023, and to this end quantitative growth should be accompanied by qualitative growth. Turkish higher education system should be restructured, and new policies should be adopted in order to make higher education more accessible to the young population.

Dr Çetinsaya has also emphasized one of the higher education visions as internationalization and recognized the need to attract more students and researchers from other regions of the world. Turkey has become one of the actors in the region with its economic and political stability in recent years, however to be more influential in global matters, higher education institutions should develop strategies to attract international students and strive to become hubs of academic excellence.

Another important trend is the substantial growth in public investment in education; the 2011 budget of the Turkish Ministry of National Education was three and half times larger than the 2002 budget. The government will also invest more into the internationalization of the higher education system and international cooperation is going to be encouraged even more (Yalçıntaş, 2012).

Indeed, government discourse about internationalization of education and opening the system to transnational education opportunities has also been visible in bilateral agreements with various countries including the UK. Moreover, Turkey has partnered with 3 countries so far in transnational universities, Kazakhstan (Hoca Ahmet Yesevi International Turkish-Kazak University, in Turkistan, 1992), Kirgizstan (Kirgizstan -Turkey Manas University, in Bishkek, 1997), and with Germany (Turkish-German University, in Istanbul, 2010, no student admission yet). Discussions are held with British bureaucrats to establish a Turkish-British University in Turkey and to further internationalize Turkish higher education (MEB, 2009; YOK, 2012).

A new law proposal to transform the higher education system has been published by the Higher Education Council which may allow foreign universities to open their branch campuses in Turkey. The proposal which is under discussion now is envisioning foreign universities to open faculties, institutes, vocational schools and conservatories; however the proposal will have some restrictions as to recognition of the diploma and the obligation to have a Turkish partner (Kaplan, 2012). In short, the law will that determine the future of the Turkish higher education system is not likely to be in power

very soon due to the political agenda next year which will be quite hectic with local and presidential elections.

2.3 *Flourishing joint diploma programs of many private and state universities*

Although transnational education involves cross border mobility of students, academics, programme of study and/or institutions, in Turkey the current implementation involves the mobility of students or academics who travel abroad to study or teach, and the second kind, which involves educational partnerships with a foreign institution to offer joint courses, elaborate joint curricula or undertake any other joint educational arrangements.

The well-known Erasmus exchange program which started in 1988 in Europe came to Turkey in 2003. Since then thousands of Turkish students have had the chance to study in a European country as a part of their undergraduate degrees.

Another student mobility opportunity is conducted through joint diploma programmes of various private and state Turkish universities. The first joint diploma program started in 2003-2004 academic year with 305 participants and since then 1961 students have participated in this scheme in both undergraduate and graduate programs. According to 2010 YÖK figures, there are 97 joint programs in Turkey with mainly American and European countries such as England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Scotland, Bulgaria and also Russia and New Zealand. This figure is expected to rise in the coming years, due to speed internationalization of the higher education system, and the demand for reputable and internationally recognized diplomas.

The participant universities are mostly foundation universities, such as Kadir Has, Işık, İzmir Ekonomi, Yeditepe, Atılım, Haliç, İstanbul Aydın, Bahçeşehir İstanbul Bilgi. However there is an increasing interest from state universities to make such partnerships as well and İstanbul Teknik, Selçuk, Ege, Akdeniz, Atatürk, İstanbul, Afyon Kocatepe, Fatih, Uludağ, Marmara, Sakarya, Anadolu, Yalova, Dokuz Eylül, Erciyes, Çankırı and Karatekin universities are also offering joint diploma programs at an undergraduate level. Some universities offer joint postgraduate degrees, and ODTÜ, İTÜ, Celal Bayar, Sabancı, Marmara, Gebze High Technology Institute have joint PhD programs with various foreign institutes. YÖK has also approved the opening of 12 new 2 year advanced vocational studies programs.

Graduates of such programs are generally known to have the priority in the Turkish job market with their fluent language skills and academic experience in a foreign country.

2.4 *The growing number of foreign students in the country*

Turkey is a new player in the field of international education and has been accepting foreign students since 1990's. It has been one of the leading countries to send students abroad, with 100,000 Turkish students studying abroad, mostly in the USA, UK and Canada.

Although Turkey is characterized as a sending country in the global scheme of student movement, the comparison of in-bound and out-bound student mobility in Turkey shows that the number of out-bound students has significantly decreased while the number of in-bound students has slightly increased since 2000.

The decrease in the number of out-bound students could be explained with the increase in the number of universities offering a high quality higher education in Turkey. A hard-working Turkish student will generally not consider studying abroad once they are placed in a reasonable university as a result of the LYS (previously ÖSS) placement exam. The great source of demand for studying abroad comes from the significant percentage of students who are not offered a place in their preferred bachelor's programme. The system often forces bright students to enrol in their second or third choice programmes. A student with a desire to study Medicine could end up studying Chemistry or Biology because their placement exam results are not high enough to enrol in a Medicine programme at a highly reputable university. The reputation of a university is the first criteria students look for when choosing a programme. Because of the great divide in the quality of Turkish universities, instead of studying Medicine at a second-rate university, a bright student might prefer to study a related subject at a highly reputable university. Given the chance, many students in this situation would prefer to study abroad (Yalçıntaş, 2012).

Turkish universities are becoming an increasingly popular destination for students from around the globe, signalling the importance of the growing education sector for Turkey. Between the 2005-2006 and the 2011-2012, the number of international students attending Turkish universities more than doubled, from 15,481 to 31,170 (Studyin Turkey, 2012).

Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) affiliated to Prime Minister's Office received 51,000 applications in 2013 for "Turkey Scholarships", given annually to foreign university students in Turkey. 27,000 undergraduate and

associate degree students applied for Turkey Scholarships while 24,000 applied for graduate and doctorate level. The highest number of applications was made by Afghan and Somali students for associate degree-undergraduate scholarships while graduate-doctorate scholarships received the most applications from Pakistani, Palestinian, Somali and Afghan students. President of YTB Kemal Yurtnac (2012) told that they received a record number of applications in 2013, highlighting the huge demand and the highest number within the last 20 years. He also added these numbers mean Turkey serves as a new destination and center of education for those who want to receive higher education abroad. "Our aim is to turn Turkey into a base of education by providing more opportunities. We have to keep pace with the US, Britain, China, India and Malaysia, which are the leading countries in higher education" (Yurtnac, 2012)

The goal is to attract 100.000 students in 2015 and 150.000 in 2020, according to Dr. Mustafa Aydin (2012), the Chairman of the DEIK Education Economics Business Council. Some preparations are underway to reach this goal:

- a. 50 state universities and 36 private foundation universities were established between 2006 and 2011, bringing the total number to 170. The same period witnessed an increase of 40 percent in the number of Turkish students attending university,
- b. The country has strengthened its image as an economically stable country in the region,
- c. University promotion and advertisement campaigns are sponsored through an incentive scheme,
- d. Turkish Universities Promotion Agency (TUPA) has been established to promote Turkish universities abroad. TUPA will publish catalogues and distribute them to Turkish embassies abroad, organize PR activities, participate in international education fairs, conferences and workshops.

Turkey is receiving students from around 50 countries. According to YÖK figures, Turkic, Middle East and Balkan countries seem to be leading the list of countries sending the highest number of students. Azerbaijan tops the list with 4.200 students, which is closely followed by Turkmenistan with 4.110 students. Other countries and the number of students they send are listed as follows (YÖK, 2013);

Northern Cyprus	3.800
Germany	1.417
Greece	1.340
Iran	1.305
Bulgaria	1.231
Mongolia	1.000
Russia	800
Syria	500
Iraq	400
Nigeria	250
the UAE	20 ¹

Foreign students mostly prefer state universities and Anadolu University in Eskişehir is the most popular university with 9 thousand foreign students. İstanbul is the 5th most popular city to attract foreign students with around 3.000 students (Aksam Gazetesi, 2013).

In İstanbul, foreign students study in various state and foundation universities. The figures below show the number of foreign students in some universities and the most popular departments:

¹ Despite close contact with the Middle Eastern countries, the number of students from the Middle East (Mainly Iran and Iraq), including some oil rich Gulf countries (Bahrain and the UAE) has only reached 793, which constitute 11% of foreign students. This figure was 487 a year ago, which indicates that Turkey has not become an academic destination for Arab students (Deutsche Welle, 2012).

<u>University & Department</u>	<u>Number of Foreign Students Enrolled</u>
Bahçeşehir University	367
Faculty of Economics & Business Administration	129
Faculty of Architecture & Design	100
Beykent University	380
Faculty of Economics & Business Administration	135
Faculty of Engineering & Architecture	110
Bogaziçi University	220
Faculty of Economics & Business Administration	160
Faculty of Engineering	46
Fatih	723
Faculty of Economics & Business Administration	231
Faculty of Science & Arts	205
Faculty of Engineering	165
Aydın Üni	138
Vocational Technical School	37
Faculty of Economics & Business Administration	34
Faculty of Engineering & Architecture	34
Bilgi	238
Faculty of Economics & Business Administration	106
Faculty of Arts & Sciences	43
İTÜ	851
Faculty of Electrical & Electronic Eng	169
Faculty of Mining Eng	104
Faculty of Civil Eng	96
Sabancı	29
Faculty of Engineering	12
Yeditepe	137
Faculty of Medicine	41
Faculty of Economics & Business Administration	17
Faculty of Engineering & Architecture	17

The target countries TUPA has specified for promotion activities of Turkish universities are Albania, Algeria, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Germany, Georgia, Ghana, Iran, Iraq Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia Mongolia, Morocco, Nigeria, Palestine, Pakistan, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Korea, Syria, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, and Uzbekistan (StudyinTurkey, 2012). The target countries cover most of the Turkic and Balkan as well as MENA (Middle East-North Africa) countries.

Interviews conducted with prominent academics from various universities reveal that they are quite hopeful about the foreign student capacity of Turkish universities (İdeal Eğitim, 2013). A great majority of Turkish universities make a serious attempt to attract and get their share of millions of foreign students. They attend international education fairs and promote their universities. Academics also stressed that the universities with English instruction and international reputation have the competitive edge.

Moreover, foreign students, factor geography, academic staff, social facilities, advanced labs, student accommodation into their university choices. However, students are mostly attracted to international accreditation and high academic standards.

Academics firmly believe that Turkey has the potential to be a higher education hub in the region. They also say that the interest from Middle East, Turkic and even African countries is quite natural and understandable as it could be traced back to the Ottoman Empire period. They know more about Turkish culture than any other countries and trust our quality. This advantage should be used efficiently to satisfy the students from these countries so they could be our references.

The motivation to pursue higher education in Turkey varies greatly among students and nationalities. Interviews conducted with foreign students and some studies (Özoğlu, Gür & Coşkun, 2012) reveal the following motives for choosing Turkey to study in a HEI:

- Having relatives in Turkey (for Turkic nationalities),
- Growing trade, diplomatic, educational and cultural ties between Turkey and students' home countries (for African and Arab nationalities),
- Inexpensive and high quality programs in English,
- Recommendation from friends who have studied or visited,
- Being a Muslim country,
- Interest in Turkish language and culture,
- Scholarship opportunities.

Interviews conducted with foreign students in the country show that the educational opportunities of Turkey are not

presented adequately in foreign countries, and this constitutes the biggest shortcoming of the international student policy of the country (Özoğlu, Gür & Coşkun, 2012).

To sum up, Turkey's government has actively supported higher education institutions in their efforts to establish joint universities and develop joint programs with partners from countries in surrounding regions. Also, the government has played an active role in establishing international universities, determining the scale of student exchange, and facilitating the development of joint programs. The extent of the involvement indicates that Turkey is using higher education as a foreign policy tool.

2.5 *The interest of international higher education providers*

With its young population, approximately 2 million students trying to get university education every year and 100.000 students studying abroad, Turkey has long been noticed by international higher education providers.

The discussions for the new YÖK legislation are still continuing and if approved, this may open the door for foreign universities to invest in the country directly. Following the proposal, international higher education providers have speeded up their promotion activities in Turkey. For example International Education Fairs of Turkey (IEFT) has hosted 170 universities from 30 countries in various big cities of Turkey. The participant countries this year ranged from the USA, the UK to Malaysia, Romania and Poland (IETS, 2013). The general coordinator of IETS, Deniz Akar said that many foreign universities have started their investigations in Turkey for investment purposes and these are mostly private universities that have branch campuses all over Europe. European University, London School of Business, the American and New York universities are potential investors in Turkey.

Another recent development that could set a model for transnational education providers considering investing in Turkey has been the acquisition of Bilgi University by an American network of universities, Laureate International (Armstrong, 2008). This takeover is normally a violation of the Constitution because Turkish universities cannot be run by foreign organizations; however Bilgi University announced in 2009 that it would join the Laureate International Universities network. Since then the American network has gradually taken over the administration and they have been acting as strategic partners in education since February 2009. The founder of the university Oğuz Özerden believes this partnership will also help the university attract students from the Middle East, Russia and China. He also adds that according to their agreement, Laureate International will support international promotion activities of Bilgi and its search for foreign students. Bilgi will share its experience and expertise in disciplines such as communication, law and international relations with other universities in the network and will receive know-how in vocational training, middle level manager training, adult education and online education.

A similar development in January 2012 took place and The Carlyle Group acquired a 48% stake in Bahcesehir Koleji, a private education provider in Turkey (Carlyle Group, 2012). Bahcesehir Koleji is part of Bahcesehir Education Group which also owns Bahcesehir University, a private university with approx. 13,000 students, and Ugur, a chain of test preparation centers. Carlyle is an experienced investor in private education and recent investments in the sector include: Apollo Group, an education provider for more than 30 years in USA, operating the University of Phoenix, the Institute for Professional Development, the College for Financial Planning, Wall Street Institute, Inc., a global operator and franchisor of English language instruction services. Carlyle's MENA team targets investments in Turkey, the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates), North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia), and the Levant (Lebanon and Jordan). In the press release that was published also on the group website, Walid Musallam, Carlyle Managing Director and Head of Carlyle MENA, says (2012), "Demand for private education in Turkey is increasing, driven by a number of factors including a growing student population and higher incomes. Bahcesehir Koleji has developed a strong position in this sector and we are very excited to be investing in the business"

As the two acquisition examples indicate, this is likely to start a new trend in Turkey. In short, what academics and professionals in education agree that Turkey is soon to be a popular destination for international higher education providers and a country where top 100 universities of the world may want to invest in.

3. Demand for State and Private (Foundation) Universities, Programs and Courses

3.1 *Foundation and State Universities*

According to 2012 YOK figures, Turkey has currently 173 universities, 107 of them are state, 66 of them are foundation /

private but non-for-profit and 7 advanced vocational school. Universities are mostly located in 3 big cities, İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir, but there are some established universities in other cities of Turkey as well.

Best students still prefer state universities, however some foundation universities have also established themselves as respectable higher education institutions. The best Turkish universities (excluding the ones with medical faculties) according to their academic performance are as follows (URAP, 2012);

Table 2. University Rankings in Turkey in 2012

1	Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi (State - Ankara)
2	İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi (State - İstanbul)
3	Boğaziçi Üniversitesi (State - İstanbul)
4	Gebze Yüksek Teknoloji Enstitüsü (State - Kocaeli)
5	İzmir Yüksek Teknoloji Enstitüsü (State - İzmir)
6	İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent Üniversitesi (Foundation - Ankara)
7	Sabancı Üniversitesi (Foundation - İstanbul)
8	Koç Üniversitesi (Foundation - İstanbul)
9	Tobb Ekonomi ve Teknoloji Üniversitesi (Foundation - Ankara)
10	Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi (State - İstanbul)

Table 2 shows there are 4 foundation universities among the best universities in Turkey. The foundation universities in the list are all backed up by strong foundations sponsored by wealthy business people.

Table 3 shows the ranking of top ten foundation universities in Turkey, according to 2012 figures;

Table 3. Foundation University Rankings in Turkey in 2012

1	İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent Üniversitesi
2	Sabancı Üniversitesi
3	Koç Üniversitesi
4	Başkent Üniversitesi
5	TOBB Ekonomi ve Teknoloji Üniversitesi
6	Fatih Üniversitesi
7	Yeditepe Üniversitesi
8	Doğuş Üniversitesi
9	Atilim Üniversitesi
10	Çankaya Üniversitesi

The most popular foundation universities are Yeditepe, İstanbul Aydın, İstanbul Bilgi, Bahçeşehir, Bilkent, Başkent, Koç, Beykent, Fatih, and Kadir Has. The list below shows the number of some popular foundation universities which are located in İstanbul and Ankara.

Table 4. Foundation University Rankings according to Total Number of Students

University	Number of Students	Number of Foreign Students
Yeditepe Üniversitesi	15,054	137
İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi	11,531	138
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent Üniversitesi	10,980	154
Beykent Üniversitesi	10,734	380
Fatih Üniversitesi	8,876	723
İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi	8,338	238
Başkent Üniversitesi	8,306	37
Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi	8,286	367
İstanbul Kültür Üniversitesi	6,241	116
İstanbul Arel Üniversitesi	6,145	33

3.2 Demand for Undergraduate Programs

In 2011, 835.915 new students enrolled in a university program in Turkey:

- 431.576 students (51,63%) signed up for a BA or BSc,
- 339.198 students (40,50%) signed up for an Associate Degree (2 year programs)
- 51.223 students (6,13%) signed up for an MA, MSc, MBA
- 9.623 students (1,15%) signed up for a PhD

The most popular BA and BSc programs according to a student survey (Eğitim BirSen, 2011) are:

- Teaching (20, 2%),
- Engineering and architecture (15.5%),
- Administrative sciences (14.2%).
- Law (9%)
- Arts and Sciences (8.2%).

The joint degree programs that many state and foundation universities offer mostly focus on computer, mechanical, software and industrial engineering in BSc; business administration and economics, English language and literature, and English teaching in BA programs. These programs also reflect the program choices of Turkish high school graduates.

According to a study by Pekkaya and Çolak (2013), the factors determining Turkish students' career choices are job security, remuneration and career opportunities. These three factors explain almost 65% of students' career choices.

3.3 Demand for Post-graduate Degrees

When it comes to Masters degrees, foundation universities particularly target professionals who would like to build on their BA and BSc degrees for a career change, promotion and a pay rise.

According to a survey, in some universities the percentage of working students in post graduate programs are as high as 90%, with an age average of 25-35 (Erdoğan, 2011). Most universities adjust their timetables according to the working hours of their students, starting classes after 18.00 during week days and scheduling classes at weekend mornings.

MBA has an undisputable dominance in post graduate programs. MBA and Executive MBA programs are very popular among professionals who want a career move. Universities that attract the most professionals with their MBA, Executive MBA or e-MBA programs are Koc, Sabanci, Bilkent, Bahcesehir, Bilgi, Ozyegin and Kultur universities in foundation universities and Bogazici, Istanbul Teknik and Ortadogu Teknik universities in the state sector.

MSc in Finance is second in popularity. This program is the primary choice for professionals working in finance markets. The third most popular program is MSc in MIS (Management Information Technologies) or other computer and information technologies with similar titles (Erdoğan, 2011).

In prominent state universities (Bogazici, ITU and ODTU) engineering MSc programs are still popular with Engineering graduates and software/ computer, electric and electronic, mechanical and industrial engineering programs are still preferred by successful graduates of engineering programs.

The ranking of popular postgraduate programs according to academics (private correspondence) from Boğaziçi, Koç, Bahçeşehir, Sabancı, Bilkent and Okan is as follows:

- MBA
- Business Administration and Management Degrees
 - Strategic management and brand management
 - Global business administration and marketing
 - Technology management
 - Health management
 - Engineering management
 - Supply chain and logistics management
- Finance and Economics
- Management Information Systems
- Engineering (Computer, electric and electronic, industrial and molecular biology)

In personal interviews, an academic from Bahçeşehir University pointed to the growing popularity of MA programs and said post graduate programs in marketing communication and public relations, advertisement, EU relations and law always reach their enrolment capacity.

Another personal interview with an academic from Sabancı University pointed out that MBA programs have been around for almost century in the USA, but are in their infancy in Turkey. He expects the demand to rise in the coming years due to the need for more highly qualified personnel of companies. He also mentions that family companies are increasingly becoming more professional and employing secondary level managers with MBA degrees or paying their tuition fees to encourage them to complete their MBA's.

Academics from Bilkent and Koç universities link the popularity of their programs to the quality of their academic staff, their flexible timetables and internationally accredited programs.

3.4 Tuition fees

Tuition fees in postgraduate programs are mainly determined by the language of instruction, the choice of university and course and program contents. Weekend and evening courses are more costly than courses offered in regular hours. Postgraduate tuition fees range from 5.000 TL (\$ 2.500) to 56.000 TL (\$ 22.000). In some universities students are charged per credit for about \$ 250-400.

Foundation universities have announced their tuition fees for 2013- 2014. Fees vary greatly according to the undergraduate program to be studied, and they range between 18 and 50 thousand Turkish lira (1 USD= 2.2 TL approximate currency rates as of 19th November, 2014)

Below is a list of some popular universities and their tuition fees for 2013-2014 academic year:

- Koç: Undergraduate: 36.500 TL, Medical faculty 50.000 TL (full or partial scholarships available)
- Sabancı: Undergraduate: 36.000 TL (full or partial scholarships available)
- Bilkent: Undergraduate: 22.000 TL
- Bahçeşehir: Undergraduate: 26.000 – 42.000 TL
- Okan: Undergraduate: 18.000 - 24.000 TL
- Fatih: Undergraduate: 17.000 TL

The tuition fees that foreign students pay vary based on the program and the type of the universities. For example Fatih University, a popular destination for foreign students charges students as follows:

- Medical Faculty **19.500** US dollars
- Law Faculty **11.000** US dollars
- Economics & Business Administration and Engineering **9000** US dollars
- Science and Arts **6.500** US dollars
- Foundation/Prep year **5.900** US dollars

Sabancı University, well-known for its top quality academic staff and popular post graduate programs charges foreign students almost the same as home students with the following scheme:

- Undergraduate departments **16.000** US dollars
- MBA **20.000** US dollars
- Masters in Finance **12.500** US dollars
- Masters in other disciplines **7.500** US dollars
- PhD in Management **10.000** US dollars

Bahçeşehir University which hosts the highest number of foreign students among foundation universities charges foreign students 7900\$ for undergraduate and post graduate programs.

The listed tuition fees show that the fees the Turkish foundation universities are charging their students are quite affordable compared to their western counterparts.

4. Some Problem Areas in Turkish Higher Education

4.1 Foundation Universities²

Foundation universities have been a topic of discussion since they were established. There have been supporters as well as opponents among researchers, academics and politicians. Supporters generally highlight the fact that these universities absorb the demand for higher education, ease the financial burden of the state, and keep the students, who may otherwise have chosen to study abroad, in the country (Yetkin and Atabek, 2006). Foundation universities intensify the competition in higher education and find creative ways for student intake. This competition is contributing to the scientific progress in the country, and reversing brain drain of the educated population (Sarıcaoğlu, 2012).

An increasing number of students prefer foundation universities due to their positive characteristics such as student-focused service, quality teaching staff, hands-on training, cooperation with business community, and quick adaptation to new technologies, and instruction in foreign language (Sarıcaoğlu, 2012). In addition, almost 40% of the students studying in the foundation universities in Turkey are enrolled in programs related to economics, management, and administrative studies, which train the minds that will contribute to the global economy. This percentage is considerably lower in the state institutes which cannot adapt to market needs quickly or do not function according to market principles and have different priorities. Graduates of foundation universities are most likely to become professionals who will generally aim to work for multinational companies and banks that can afford to pay high salaries. In this sense, the relationship with economic globalization is direct (Yalçınan & Thornley, 2006).

According to some scholars and researchers who are critical of these institutions, foundation universities were established as non-profit organizations, however they have become for-profit institutions. The tuition fees of these universities (for the 2012-2013 academic years, between 10.000 and 30.000 USD) are not affordable for many Turkish households and a very small number of students (according to ÖSYM data for 2010-2011 academic year approximately 194.000 students) take advantage of the opportunities offered by foundation universities. The students who can afford to pay the tuition fees generally come from higher socio-economic families, which does not alleviate the inequality in educational opportunities (Tansel and Güngör, 2002).

Another problem area closely linked to high tuition fees is the inability of foundation universities to achieve their enrolment targets. In 2011, state universities have filled %92 of their places, whereas this figure was around %70 in foundation universities. As an example, Kultur University enrolment figures in 2012 were as follows: departments with 25% scholarship had %74, with %50 scholarship had %84 enrolment rates while departments with 75 and 100% scholarship reached their full capacity.

Despite the economic growth in the recent years, the demand for private education in Turkey is still below expectations. The big boom in the number of foundation universities has increased the supply of private education which clearly indicates a fierce competition among foundation universities. Almost all universities have engineering and administrative sciences faculties; therefore they should emphasize the strengths of their departments and offer innovative programs to expand their market shares. If low enrolment rates continue, some foundation universities will have to close less popular departments or the university administration will be taken over by stronger foundations (as happened with Doğuş University, which has been acquired by Doğa Education Group recently.)

In addition, the position of Rectors and their relationship with the Boards of Trustees in these institutions is controversial. The Rector is the chief executive officer in state universities, whereas in foundation universities, they are only members of the Board of Trustees. This situation can create issues, for example, in autonomy, institutionalization and academic leadership. Official representative of the legal entity and the final decision maker in academic appointments is the board of trustees, which has led to two power groups within the administration (Ergüder, 2010, p. 70-71).

4.2 Quality

Currently there are 182 HEI's in Turkey, some very well-established, others that have only recently opened their doors to

²In Turkey, the term "private universities" and "foundation universities" are used interchangeably because they are founded by the foundation of a private enterprise. Students, who would like to study at these universities, have to take the national university entrance examination, as well. In most cases, the score required to be placed in a private university is not as high as what state universities require and students have to pay really high tuition fees. Foundation universities offer scholarships to successful students which cover their school fees and sometimes a monthly allowance.

students. Although some universities outside Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir are excellent or have some excellent departments, the vast majority of prestigious universities are located in these three big cities. Even in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir there is great disparity in the quality of education and research at different universities. Most of the foundation universities have big budgets and luxurious campuses, though this does not necessarily mean that they offer high-quality education. Some of the foundation universities thrive on the reputation of a few well-known retired professors and offer expensive education to students from wealthy families. It is vital to understand the variety in quality of state and foundation universities.

4.3 Bureaucracy

A common pitfall in agreements on institutional cooperation is that the process is lengthy on the Turkish side. Turkish institutions often need time to overcome bureaucratic issues within their own institution and with both YÖK and other government bodies.

According to Vice Rector of Istanbul University, Prof Dr Kayacan (2012), approval for joint programs takes excessively long due to various reasons. The roadmap for opening joint programs by YÖK is not current and up to date and sometimes institutes are required to prepare documents that are not specified in the regulations which generally causes delays.

Another point to consider is the recognition of the foreign partner by YÖK. The Turkish Higher Education Council only allows partnerships between the Turkish institute and an accredited foreign institute. Opening the program first and then applying for approval may cause disappointment among students who may have recognition problems (as was the case of a partnership attempt between two universities in Turkey and Kosova which had to be cancelled later on due to YOK disapproval.)

4.4 Istanbul and some local issues

Istanbul is the most populous city in Turkey with around 14,000,000 residents. Istanbul is Europe's second and the world's eighth biggest city and it is a rapidly growing metropolis.

According to the United States State Department Bureau of Security, despite its dense population and the mass of visitors, the city is listed as one of the safest in the world. Crime rates have been considerably lower in recent years as a result of successful policing and law enforcement operations and by the use of MOBESE (Integrated Mobile Electronic System (CCTV). MOBESE is a "City Information and Security System" enacted under the city's Security Department with the support of the Governorship. With approximately 600 modern cameras installed throughout the city, public services and administrative functions continue to improve, further decreasing crime rates.

The overall crime rate remains lower than that of other cities of comparable size. One out of 66 people in Istanbul is a victim of a crime. The most common crimes involve theft, pick-pocketing, bag-snatching, and purse slashing. Muggings are rare but are becoming more common. Violent crime against tourists and the expatriate community is also very rare.

Protests and demonstrations are a common occurrence in Istanbul. Taksim (Square) and Istiklal Caddesi (Street), two areas frequented by tourists, are often the venue for demonstrations. While demonstrations are usually peaceful, their potential to escalate into political violence should not be underestimated.

Recent protests which began on May 31, 2013 as a small sit-in by environmentalists intensified after a police crackdown. The demonstrators were initially protesting against government plans to build over Gezi Park in Taksim Square. The protests have continued for about a month with protesters occupying Taksim Square in Istanbul and parts of the capital, Ankara. Three people, including a police officer have died in violent conflicts between the police forces and anti-government protestors.

The past twenty five years have seen a drastic reduction in political activity culminating in mass protest. This is especially so in the last ten years. Turkey has entered a new era of ostensibly democratic responses to issues and it is in this vein that the current protests should be viewed. In addition, serious crime is on the decline generally and was never an issue against foreigners. However, as in most cities of the world, the correct individual precautions should be taken.

The most important issues faced by the city are the lack of quality housing, poor connection between housing and working districts, inadequate population growth control, lack of natural disaster-proof building stock, high housing rental and sales prices, and lack of urban social facilities.

5. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to provide evidence that the international dimension and the interest of transnational higher education in Turkey has been steadily growing in importance, scope and complexity. The internationalization of higher education originated and gained speed as a result of globalization.

Turkey has started to take part in international educational agreements such as the Bologna and Erasmus later than other European countries, but it has made great progress, and the internationalization and mobility have become very important components of higher education in Turkey. Under the influence of the Bologna Process, structural changes have been introduced and implemented in higher education. It could be also stated that the developments in higher education were both policy and demand driven. The enrolment rates in tertiary education have increased but, even though many Turkish tertiary students have moved abroad for educational purposes, Turkey has not been a popular destination for international students yet. Also, despite many positive significant changes, there are still some important obstacles such as financial and administrative problems that need to be addressed.

To expand their internationalization efforts, institutions of higher education in Turkey could pursue working closely with government leaders, YÖK, and other decision makers to internationalize their curriculum and they could engage in curriculum reform that enables their universities to be more responsive to globalization trends. They could further seek additional sources in the private sector, which would encourage entrepreneurialism in education. Finally, universities in Turkey could address the current and potential reasons for a reluctance to embrace the innovation, seek educational partnerships in countries beyond Europe, and continue to identify the remaining characteristics, communication, and consequences of internationalization from the study that would unleash their potential to compete in the global arena of education.

Amongst the 20 largest economies in the world, Turkey is expected to become one of the most powerful economies in Europe within a decade as it utilises favourable demographics and private sector development. Coupled with its location and large domestic market are helping Turkey to become a centre of operations for multinational companies.

To sum up, there is a range of compelling reasons as to why Turkey is an attractive market, a good fit and an opportunity for transnational universities to build partnerships with Turkish universities. Turkey could be recommended as a region for transnational investors to focus resources to establish new ventures to attract domestic and international students, most likely to be located in Istanbul.

References

- Aydın, M. (2012). Uluslararası öğrenci temini çalışmayı sonuç raporu. DEİK / Eğitim Ekonomisi İş Konseyi (EEİK). DEİK Yayınları: 783-2012/6-c2.
- Armstrong, L. (2008). Interesting activity at the for-profit/non-profit interface: Laureate. Changing Higher Education. Retrieved from <http://www.changinghighereducation.com/2008/01/interesting-a-1.html#more>.
- Bryman, A. (2003). Triangulation. Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods. Sage Publications.
- Carlyle Group (2012). Press Release: The Carlyle Group acquires a 48% stake in Bahcesehir Koleji, a private education provider in Turkey. Retrieved from <http://carlyle.com/news-room/news-release-archive/carlyle-group-acquires-48-stake-bahcesehir-koleji-private-education-p>
- Clark, N. (2012). Understanding transnational education, its growth and implications. World Education News and Reviews. Retrieved from <http://wenr.wes.org/2012/08/wenr-august-2012-understanding-transnational-education-its-growth-and-implications/>
- Deutsche Welle (2012). Yabancı öğrencilerin yeni adresi. Retrieved from <http://www.dw.de/yabanc%C4%B1-%C3%B6%C4%9Frencilerin-yeni-adresi/a-15778032>
- EğitimBirSen (2011). Öğrencilerin Meslek Seçimini Etkileyen Faktörler. Retrieved from http://www.egitimbirsen.org.tr/Kamusal_Alan_Yalanina_Son_Verilmelidir-1022-manset-haber.html
- Erdoğan, Y. (2011). Popüler yüksek lisanslar. <http://www.capital.com.tr/populer-yukse- lisanslar-haberler/23002.aspx?2>.Page
- Erguder, U. (2010). Leadership and Governance. *Higher Education Management and Development: Compendium for Managers* (Ed. Jeroen Huisman), Waxmann Publishing Co., New York.
- Hershock, P. (2010). Mobility, markets and equity in higher education: Match or mismatch? 2010 Education 2020 Leadership Institute. September 13-24, 2010, Bangkok, Thailand. Retrieved from <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/education/international-forum-for-education-2020/education-leadership-institute/current-institute>.
- Higher Education Council (2007). Türkiye'nin Yükseköğretim Stratejisi. Retrieved from <http://www.yok.gov.tr/content/view/557/238/>
- Hussain, I. (2007). Transnational education: concept and methods. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education (TOJDE)*. 8(1). 163-173.
- Kaplan, P. (2012). Yabancı üniversite açmaya izin var ama denklik yok. Retrieved from <http://www.haberturk.com/yazarlar/pervin->

- kaplan/793305-yabanci-universite-acmaya-izin-var-ama-denklik-yok
Kayacan, Z.C. (2012). Uluslararasılaşmada sorunlar: Eğitim. Üniversitelerde Uluslararasılaşma Sorunları Çalıştayı, İstanbul University, 10th December, 2012, İstanbul, Turkey.
- OSAC (2013). Turkey 2013 Crime and Safety Report: İstanbul. Retrieved from <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=13800>
- Pekkaya, M & Çolak, N. (2013). Determining the factors in choosing professions. The Journal of Academic Social Science Studies. Volume 6 Issue 2, p. 797-818, February 2013
- Sarcaoğlu, R. (2012). Vakıf üniversitelerinin hedefi: 2023'e kadar 575 bin öğrenci. <http://www.hurriyeteğitim.com/haberler/12.04.2012/vakif-universitelerinin-hedefi-2023e-kadar-575-bin-.aspx>
- Student Placement Center (2013). Studies, Publications and Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.osym.gov.tr/belge/1-128/sureli-yayinlar.html>
- Study in Turkey (2012). Services for Turkish Universities. Retrieved from http://studyinturkey.com/content/sub/services_for_turkish_universities.aspx
- Turkish Statistical Institute (2013). Population and Demographics. Retrieved from <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=kategorist>
- Vincent-Lancrin, S. (2009). Cross-border Higher Education: Trends and Perspectives. Higher Education to 2030, Globalisation. Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, OECD.
- Yabancı öğrenci sayısı 100 bine nasıl çıkar? (2013). İdeal Eğitim, Ekim 2013, Sayı 6. <http://www.ideal-dergisi.com/?p=267>.
- Yalçıntaş, F.D. (2012). An Insight into Higher Education in Turkey, The Netherlands-Turkey Higher Education and Vocational Education Foundation (NIHA) publications.
- Yalcintas, M.C & Thornley, A. (2006). Globalisation, higher education, and urban growth coalitions: Turkey's foundation universities and the case of Koc University in İstanbul. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*. 2007, (25), 822-843.
- Yurtnac, K. (2012). Turkey's new horizon: Turks abroad and related communities. SAM Papers, Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs Center for Strategic Research, Ankara.