

Examining Modernization on Higher Educational Institution: From Late Ottoman Period to the Modern Republic of Türkiye

Ahmad Siddiq¹

¹ Department of Islamic Sciences, Graduate Education Institute, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Halkalı Merkez, Halkalı, 34303 Küçükçekmece/İstanbul, Türkiye.

Corresponding author

¹ahmad.ahmad@std.izu.edu.tr

Abstract: Türkiye experienced its glory in the field of science during the peak reign of Fatih Sultan Mehmed & Kanuni Sultan Suleyman. Then fell with the defeat of the Ottoman Sultanate in the first world war and the rolling of a secular regime under the command of Atatürk. Looking at its educational history, Türkiye has indeed made efforts to reform and modernize to improve its higher education system. In the modern era, many scientists & intellectuals have emerged from Türkiye who have contributed to the development of modern science, such as Orhan Pamuk who won the Nobel Prize in literature, Aziz Sancar in chemistry, Özlem Türeci and Uğur Sahin who discovered the COVID-19 vaccine, then Selçuk Bayraktar which has now succeeded in making unmanned military drones. This study aims to examine and elaborate in depth on the efforts that have been made by Türkiye in modernizing their higher education system from the late Ottoman period to the reign of the modern Turkish republic. This paper is qualitative research and uses a literature review. The author collects books and policies of the Turkish government as the main references, as well as related articles to obtain data. This study finds that in practice Türkiye has implemented several reform policies to modernize its higher education system. Several institutions had been established during the Tanzimat period to ensure modern teaching in higher education. In the current era, Turkish Universities also apply certain standards in ensuring progress in the development of science and technology in the country through quality assurance and internationalization of higher education.

Keywords: Modernization, Higher Education, Ottoman, Tanzimat Era, Turkish University.

Introduction

Türkiye's higher education history can be traced back to the eleventh century, when Selcuk Turks develop *Medrese*, or mosque, to teach Islamic theology and law. In Iznik in 1331, Orhan Gazi, the Second Ottoman Sultan, established the first Ottoman *Medrese*. Daud Kayseri, one of the most well-known academics of the time, was in charge of this *Medrese* (Khuluq, 2005). Turkish Ottoman *Medreses*, which served as centers of higher learning for a long time and were eventually completely abolished in 1923 after the establishment of a secular republic, were still heavily influenced by religion in many ways (Gediköğlü, 1995).

The *Medrese* was a well-organized institution that played a significant role in both Selcuk and Ottoman societies. (Kazamias, 1966). A *Medrese* certificate or license opened the door to prestigious positions in the palace. The grand vizier, the second-highest official in the Selcuk and Ottoman administrative systems after the Sultan, typically selected each *Medrese's* board of trustees, who were responsible for carrying out the founding benefactor's instructions and establishing the *Medrese's* policies (Umunc, 1986). As independent institutions, *medreses* used funds from their mortmain lands and, in some cases, the imperial budget to pay for the maintenance of themselves, their students, and their teaching staff (*Muderris*).

In the late 1450s, Fatih Sultan Mehmet established the Ottoman palace school (*Enderun*) in order to prepare military and administrative personnel for the palace. Under successive Ottoman Sultans, this school expanded and served as a significant center for higher education for about five centuries before ceasing to function in that capacity in the 19th century (Gediköğlü, 1995). Additionally, he created the *Sahn-i Seman* or *Semaniye Medreses*, each of which was given to a scholar. The elementary and secondary levels of these *Medreses* were located next to his Great Mosque, Fatih Camii (Cook et al., 1993). After Sultan Murad II founded the Dar al-Hadith in Edirne and another *Medrese* in Bursa, the *Semaniye Medrese* rose to become the highest-ranking educational institution in the Empire (İnalçık, 1973). Kanuni Sultan Suleyman made every effort during his rule to raise the standard of education with *Medrese-i Muderrisin*, or university professors and students. There were specialized professional *Medrese* in the Ottoman Empire in addition to the general and conventional types, such as *Dar al-Hadiths* (School of Hadith), *Dar al-Tib* (School of Medicine), *Dar al-Hendese* (School of Engineering), and *Dar al-Mesnevi*. Other schools were later established including *Dar al-Kuzat* (School of Jurists), which was founded in 1854, and *Medresetul Vaizin* (School of Preachers), which was founded in 1913 (Zaim, 1948). But, unfortunately at that time remain its concentration of higher education in the three capitals of the empire like Istanbul, Bursa, and Edirne (İnalçık, 2021).

In addition to the kind of schools mentioned above, the Ottoman traditional Institutions had some special types of schools which beyond their standard from the general school at that time. As stated by Zaim (1948) and Güvenç (1998), these schools can be classified into four types: 1) School of Serai (Dynasty) such as School for Princes (*Şehzadegan*), *Enderun* (School of government officials); 2) Military Schools, such as School of Soldier (*Acemi Oğlan*), School of Military Band (*Mehterhane*), School of Military Sports (*Camhazhane*); 3) Military Industrial Schools, such as School for production of cannon (*Tophane*), School for production swords (*Kılıçhane*), School for production guns (*Tüfekhane*), School for production

bombs (*Kumbarahane*); 4) School of Civil Servants, such as School of *Bab-I Ali* (for administration), School of *Bab-I Defteri* (for public finance), School of *Bab-I Fetva* (for jurist), School of *Bab-I Serasker* (for military court).

While modern higher education in Türkiye began in the early 17th century, but it wasn't until the Tanzimat period of the 19th century that it was shaped by a clear-cut policy. It then crystallized during the constitutional era, particularly after Sultan Abdulhamid, and became unmistakably secular during the first quarter of the Republican period (Zaim, 1948). This general principle allows for the division of the educational and cultural trends of the past two centuries into five distinct periods: 1) the Tanzimat era (1839–1876); imitation of western institutions on the one hand, preservation of traditional values and institutions on the other; 2) the Constitutional Period (1876–1923); the emergence of a new generation (Young Turks) educated in western culture, and deterioration of traditional values and institutions; 3) Atatürk Revolutions, or Revolutionary Movements of the Republican Era (1923–1948); sought to secularize and westernize the traditional eastern social structure 4) Democratic Party Period (1948–1960); attempts to simulate economic, social, and cultural development in a secular, democratic state using national cultural patterns.; 5) Following the revolution of 1960, a pluralistic society with a planning development called cultural diversification in a secular state was created. This development was based on the social, cultural, and political influence of nationalist, traditionalist, secular-Westernist, cosmopolitan, and revolutionary socialist-Marxist movements (Zaim, 1948). In conclusion, to understand how the modernization of higher education began and what are attempts to realize it in Turkey the author believed it should be started to explain the reforms in the *Tanzimat* period.

Materials and Methods

Through library research, this study adopted a qualitative methodology. This method entails locating and identifying sources that offer factual

data or subjective or expert opinions on the research question; these sources are a necessary component of all other research methods at some point (George, 2008). The author chose this type of research because library research has an interpretive character to describe the explicit and implicit information from the acquired data. This study also used historical analysis to explain and elaborate on the history of modernization and reform of higher educational institutions from the *Tanzimat* period to the current era. The source of the data comes from some works that discuss the modernization and transformation of those kinds of institutions, and the strategies & policies that carry out by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) in Turkiye.

Results and Discussion

Higher Education during the *Tanzimat* period

In the *Tanzimat* era, the military institutions underwent the first wave of modernization, which was started with great fervor and enthusiasm to avoid a defeat on the battlefield and reclaim lost military superiority. Undoubtedly, the Ottoman Empire at the time had suffered several military setbacks, and the military and technological developments in Europe forced them to act quickly. Later, this reform movement was broadened to encompass the creation of additional higher education (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004).

1. The Military Engineering Education

As the Ottoman reformers of the 19th century took a more radical and holistic approach, they prioritized military reform but viewed this parallel with the re-organization of education, finance, and all governmental system (Ortaylı, 2021). The creation of new institutions within the Ottoman military organization that was based on comparable ones in Europe allowed for a gradual, but steadily growing change in Ottoman scientific and educational life. These institutions also used a new type of school. The Ottoman Empire's first institution established specifically for modern military technical education was the *Hendesehane* (Mathematical School) (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004). The

students of this school were known as the *corps des mathematiciens* because of the emphasis on mathematics and geometry in the curriculum for military purposes (Umunc, 1986). Following this, all engineering schools founded later were referred to as *Mühendishane* (the Home of Geometricians), as all mathematical subjects were taught under the umbrella term of geometry (Güvenç, 1998).

On April 29, 1775, this institution, known in French as the *Ecoles des Mathematiques*, was founded at the Imperial Shipyard. In addition to the Ottoman teachers, Baron de Tott and another French authority provided instruction. The *Mühendishane-i Berri-i Humayun* (Imperial School of Military Engineering), founded during the reign of Sultan Selim III, was modeled after an Austrian institution, and it opened its doors in 1795. For that reason, students had to learn languages such as German and French, and European teachers needed to be brought in (Ortaylı, 2021). The instructors at this new engineering school were members of the new generation of Ottoman engineers, including Hoca Abdurrahman Efendi and Seyyid Osman Efendi. Additionally, a brand-new type of school has been created to offer courses in geography, cartography, navigation, and shipbuilding. This school is called the Shipyard Engineering School. In May 1793, S. Baltashar Le Brun, who had been imported from France, was selected as the institution's leader. After Le Brun departed for France, educated Ottoman naval officers were appointed to this position. This group was referred to as the *Mühendishane-i Bahr-i Hümayun* (Imperial School of Naval Engineering). Later, this institution was relocated to Heybeli Island where it operated as a school for many years under the name *Bahriye Mektebi* (Naval Academy) (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004).

2. The Civilian Engineering Education

In general, education reforms during the *Tanzimat* era was designed to train people who could serve as civil servants for the central government (Ortaylı, 2021). The first institution of civilian engineering education in the Ottoman Empire was the *Mülkiye Mühendis Mektebi* (Civilian School of Engineering), which later changed its name to *Turuk-u Maabir Mektebi* (School of Roads and

Passages). This institution was established as a division of the *Darül Fünün Sultanı* (Imperial University), which had its origins in the *Galatasaray Sultanisi* (Galatasaray High School) (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004). At that time, the plan was that the school would provide education at something close to tertiary level (Ortaylı, 2021). Most of its courses were taught in French, but Turkish language was also used occasionally. The law school (*Galatasaray Hukuk Mektebi*), the school of humanities (*Galatasaray Edebi Mektebi*), and the engineering school (*Turuku Maabir Mektebi*) were three professional schools that the government at the time attached to it. Since this school was of such high caliber, its graduates were able to enroll in universities in France (Khuluq, 2005). In a way, the aim of establishing Galatasaray Lycee was to forestall the sending of students to Europe. This had been happening ever since the time of Sultan Mahmud II (Ortaylı, 2021).

Instead of focusing on providing a scientific education, the School of Roads and Passages has adopted a program that is intended to educate the engineers who will perform the services required in public works, particularly in the area of transportation, that have been started on the vast territories of the empire (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004). The Ministry of Public Works hired each and every graduate of this institution into a civil service position. The first group of students to graduate from the School of Roads and Passages in 1880 received a four-year education with semester breaks. This school accepted students of both Muslim and non-Muslim faith. The curriculum adopted the French lycée curriculum and added regional courses like geography, calligraphy, religion, Ottoman history, Islamic history, Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish literature (Khuluq, 2005). The school offered engineering education with a broad focus, which is clear from the curriculum.

3. The Medical Education

In addition to the engineering school, the Medical School and the War School, in the fields of medical and military education, were the new styles of educational institutions established for the military needs at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The Greek Community of Istanbul was chartered in 1805 to establish a medical school (Güvenç, 1998). The first attempt at modern medical education was made in January 1806 with the founding of *Tersane Tibbiyesi* (Shipyards Medical School), a medical institution. To train the doctors and surgeons this institution needs within the framework of the Imperial Shipyards. The Shipyards Medical School aimed to increase the number of Muslim doctors in the Empire and to spread modern medical education (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004). The basic courses were physics, chemistry, pharmacy, hygiene, surgery, internal and external medicine (Umunc, 1986). Levantine doctors, surgeons, and pharmacists who frequently interacted with Europe would teach the classes in Italian and French, and European textbooks would also be used. The school was closed down in 1808 though after Sultan Selim III was overthrown (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004).

During the reign of Sultan Mahmud II, the attempt to modernize traditional medical teaching by establishing a new modern Imperial Medical School, *Tiphane-i Amire* in 1827 (Khuluq, 2005). Mustafa Behcet Efendi, the Court Chief Physician, was in charge of this new institution (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004). It was followed by the Imperial School of Surgery (*Cerrahane-i Amire*), which was founded in 1832 to train surgeons in the already-existing building at the Gülhane garden next to the Topkapi Palace. In the medical school, Turkish was the language of instruction, while French was used in the surgical school (Güvenç, 1998). In the same year, Sat-Deygalliere, a Frenchman invited to serve as a teacher and principal at this school, along with other European doctors, he shifted the Sultan Mahmuds' Imperial Medical School of from *Sehzadebasi* to the Gülhane district of the Imperial School of Surgery (Khuluq, 2005).

The *Mekteb-i Tibbiye* (Medical School) was formed in 1839 by combining the two institutions, and it was relocated to Galatasaray. At this time, C. A. Bernard, a young Austrian physician, was appointed as the school's leader, and *Mekteb-i Tibbiye-i Adliye-i Sahane* (Imperial School of Forensic Medicine), in honor of Sultan Mahmud II, became the new name of the institution. The building's architecture was created by the top

architects of the time, Alexandre Vallaur and Raimondo D'Aronco (Sağlık Bilimleri Üniversitesi, 2015). Under the name *Darül Fünun-i Osmani Tıp Fakültesi* (Ottoman University Faculty of Medicine), the Imperial Medical School, which trained military doctors, and the Civilian Medical School, which trained civilian doctors, were combined in 1909 at the Medical School Building in Haydarpaşa (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004). Famous politicians and scientists were trained in this medical school, where education was provided in German, French and Turkish. *Mektebi Tıbbiye-i Şahane*, which gave education as Haydarpaşa High School between 1933-1983, was allocated to Marmara University in 1983 and continued to serve as an education campus, which also includes the Faculty of Medicine. In 2015, it returned to its re-establishment mission as the University of Health Sciences and is preparing to provide education with other faculties in the field of health, especially the Faculty of Medicine (Sağlık Bilimleri Üniversitesi, 2015).

Darul Fünun: The First Modern University in Islamic World

In 1851, Ali Pasha, Fuad Pasha, and Cevdet Pasha, the 'famous three' of the Tanzimat era, were eager to establish universities. They first tried to found an academy of Science called "*Encümen-i Daniş*" to serve as the foundation for universities (Ortaylı, 2021). This academy is primarily focused on study of philology, literature, history, and research. This council also put forward for the preparation of the textbooks for this higher teaching institution that was not clearly defined (İhsanoğlu, 2019). Unfortunately, the academy was disbanded within a decade, but its work was continued by a new academic organization called the Ottoman Society for Learning (*Cemiyet-i İlmiye-i Osmaniye*), which from 1863 on organized public lectures on modern sciences and served as, in some ways, a center of learning (Umunc, 1986). When the Council was debating whether to create the university, it was stated that the goal was to educate knowledgeable civil servants who would provide the services of the state in a morally upright manner. The modern sciences would be used to create this education (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004).

The construction of this new institution was entrusted to the architect Gaspare Trajano Fossati, the Swiss architect of Italian Origin in 1846 (İhsanoğlu, 2019). The University building was located in the Ayasofya (St. Sophia) complex in Istanbul. The name "*Darul Funun*" was first mentioned in the 1869 statute on General Education (*Maarif Nizamnamesi*) during the period Safvet Pasha was Minister of Education (The Council of Higher Education, 2019). This name "*Darul Funun*" was chosen because the tendention that this institution would be distinct from the *medrese* where traditional sciences ('*ulum*, singular '*ilm*') were taught. Fünun, the plural of *fen*, differed in conotation from the word '*ulum* (namely, science or religious knowledge taught in the *medrese*), and it was used in the term *Darul Funun* to indicate this difference (İhsanoğlu, 2019). *Darul Fünun* was considered as the embryo of the modern Turkish university (Gediköğlu, 1995). It was a civilian higher education institution with roots in Ottoman educational history, but it differed from *medreses* in the traditional ottoman educational system in terms of its structure and (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004). The *Tanzimat* period was the beginning of the initial concept for the University was first put forth to train the new breed of bureaucrats that the state required. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, the first initiatives on this topic were launched.

Ali Pasha, the Grand Vizier, Safvet Pasha, the Minister of Education, and other prominent state figures were present for the university's grand opening ceremony in 1869. The principal was named to be Hoca Tahsin Efendi. It was intended to find a cultural bridge connecting Islamic and Western societies, and to strike a good balance between "Islam and the West" and "the old and the new" by choosing someone for this position who had received their education at a *medrese*, a traditional educational institution, and who had previously taught at the Ottoman School founded in Paris (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004). Darul Fünun was actually one of the few institutions that did not grant scholarships to students and that charged for tuition. The education system that the Ottoman instituted was heavily reliant on scholarships from the beginning to the very end, and there were few

exceptions to this rule (Ortaylı, 2021). Darul Fünun's main purpose was to host a number of free public lectures delivered by prominent Ottoman elites. It lacked clear objectives or a defined organizational structure. The public lectures at Darul Fünun came to an end when a fire in 1865 destroyed its main buildings and facilities (İhsanoğlu, 2019). Its reinstatement wasn't completed until 1870. Despite the failure of his attempt to establish a university, the development of modern higher educational was influenced institutions in the years that followed (Gediköğlu, 1995). However, this new institution experienced ups and downs in its development with several changes and names. In the period 1870-1923 the modern university Darul Funun underwent a change in its name and system. It transformed into *Darul Fünun Sultanisi*, *Darul Fünun Osmani* & *Darul Fünun Şahane*. Even this institution has received a lot of criticism, because the teaching of modern science that aspires to has not yet materialized.

The primary criticism of the Istanbul Darül Fünun, however, focuses on three other issues: the Darül Fünun's attitude toward the reforms implemented by the government under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk; the dearth of significant research; and inappropriate teacher appointments. Darul Fünun had failed to make a significant impact in implementing the reforms required for the quick development of the nation; in fact, some of its professors actively or passively opposed these reforms. The majority of its teachers translated Western works rather than publishing original works, and they did little research (Gediköğlu, 1995). These criticisms prompted the government to take action. The National Assembly advised inviting a higher education expert from Europe to investigate the Darül Fünun and recommend the steps that should be taken to improve it.

In conclusion, The Istanbul Darul Fünun had not performed to the standards set by the Turkish leaders and had not taken the initiative in carrying out the recently introduced reforms. The Darul Fünun had not produced any academic works, which was the most significant issue. It was unable to aid in the growth of the Turkish people. On July 31, 1933, the Istanbul Darul Fünun was abolished and empowering the Ministry of Education to

establish a new Turkish higher institution (Gediköğlu, 1995). The Darul Fünun, however, is where Türkiye's modern universities got their start (The Council of Higher Education, 2019).

Turkish University After Atatürk Revolution

Since 1923, Turkish higher education has been experimenting with different forms of government, when the republican era began, in an effort to find the one that is best suited to the country's internal and external circumstances. After Türkiye became a republic in 1923, the first institution of higher learning to adopt a Western university model was established. Istanbul University, the first institution of higher learning in Türkiye, was founded in 1933 (Gediköğlu, 1995). The Turkish government held the view that higher education could play a significant role in implementing the reforms required for the country's quick development. In the decades that followed, numerous new universities were founded across the nation as a result. It should be noted that the modern Turkish university was founded by deliberately imitating western universities, not as an institution that developed from the *medrese* (Gürüz, 2008).

When Türkiye adopted the concept of a modern university in the nineteenth century, Western universities underwent a significant transformation. French universities were closed down following the French Revolution in 1789. By law, he introduced on May 10, 1806, Napoleon Bonaparte, who took control of France in 1804, created a new institutional framework known as the Université de France. Türkiye used Napoleon's desire to shape the university in accordance with the requirements of the regime and under state control as a model. Türkiye imitated the French educational and governmental system (Guclu, 2020). In addition, in the early nineteenth century, the structure and operation of universities in Germany also underwent significant changes (Gürüz, 2008). An important turning point in the history of universities occurred with the adoption of the Humboldt university model at Berlin University in 1808. Following the acceptance of twenty German academics for positions in Türkiye in 1915, the German model was then adopted in the Istanbul Darül Fünun. These German

academics made a significant impact on the university reforms in Türkiye between 1933 and 1946 (Guclu, 2020).

Albert Malche, a Geneva University professor renowned for his expertise in academic organization, was invited by the Turkish government to conduct the investigation and create a report regarding the reform of the Darül Fünun in 1931 (İhsanoğlu, 2019). Malche remained for four months in Türkiye and carefully studied the Darül Fünun. His report had a significant impact on later developments in Turkish higher education (Gediköğlu, 1995). Malche wrote a report that was due to the Turkish Ministry of Education on May 31. According to this report, the Darül Fünun was severed from society because there was no unit to inspect them. Accordingly, Istanbul University was established on November 18, 1933 (Guclu, 2020). On August 1, 1933, Istanbul University was founded by the Ministry of Education with approval from the Grand National Assembly. Before 1933, the conservative administrators and professors of the Darül Fünun purposefully avoided using the word "university" to describe institutions of higher learning out of concern that it would signify progressivism and westernization (Gediköğlu, 1995). The Institute of Islamic Studies was established within the Faculty of Letters at Istanbul University, which had originally been founded with four faculties. The Faculty of Theology was abolished (Guclu, 2020). Regular professors, docents, and assistants (junior teachers) made up the faculty at Istanbul University. Until retirement, all teachers were government employees with permanent tenure (Gediköğlu, 1995).

A university built on the Humboldt model was something that people wanted to start with the 1933 reform (Guclu, 2020). Later, the expansion of higher education in Türkiye began with the establishment of institutions outside Istanbul. Turkish leaders understood that to achieve the Turkish Revolution's goal of advancing to the level of modern civilization, new universities needed to be established in other regions of the nation (Gediköğlu, 1995). To this end, two universities were established after Istanbul University: Ankara University in 1946 and Istanbul Technical

University in 1944. The universities in Türkiye later spread to Istanbul and Ankara. The idea of establishing regional universities also gained popularity in 1946 as a result of political, social, and economic changes that had occurred (Korkut, 2003).

The founding of the Karadeniz Technical University (1955), the Ege University (1955), and the Atatürk University (1957) marked the starting point of the Turkish universities' expansion beyond major cities like Istanbul and Ankara (Gürüz, 2008). As a result of the American Association's transfer of Robert College to Türkiye in 1967, the universities of Hacettepe and Boğazıcı were established. The American Congregationalist Missionary founded Boğazıcı University in 1863 under the name Istanbul Robert College. It was run by an American board of trustees and exempt from Turkish university regulations (Umunc, 1986).

Higher Education Law No. 2547 went into effect on November 4, 1981, as the result of the military coup of September 12, 1980, which accelerated the implementation of the previous law's provisions. This law's regulation of higher education was the most radical one ever, surpassing Atatürk's university reform in 1933 and the founding of METU (the Middle East Technical University) in 1956 (Guclu, 2020). Most of the Turkish universities were founded in German, French, or British traditions. Others, like Istanbul Boğazıcı University and Ankara Middle East Technical University, have taken ideas from the higher education system in the United States (Gediköğlu, 1995). Additionally, the majority of institutions of higher education and technical schools are not autonomous but rather connected to universities. Higher education is now more widely available, and as a result, there are an increasing number of institutions. Bilkent University, Türkiye's first foundation university, was established in 1984 as a result of the legislative changes made during this time. In 2020, there will be 129 state universities, up from 53 in 2003. In addition, Türkiye has 5 vocational schools and 76 non-profit foundation universities (The Council of Higher Education, 2019).

Higher Educational Policies & Strategies in Türkiye

1. The Role of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) in Maintaining Quality Assurance

The academic, institutional, and administrative aspects of higher education were restructured as a result of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE)'s establishment in 1981. This made it possible for CoHE to house all of Türkiye's higher education. Universities and educational faculties replaced academies and educational institutions, respectively, and conservatories and vocational schools partnered with universities. As a public institution with autonomy and distinct public identity within the parameters of the mandated powers and responsibilities, CoHE became responsible for all higher education institutions. Additionally, strategic planning, coordination, oversight, and monitoring of higher education in Türkiye are all responsibilities of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE), which is also in charge of developing and maintaining the country's quality assurance systems. (The Council of Higher Education, 2019).

Following Türkiye's participation in the Bologna Process in 2001, the country's attention was primarily directed toward quality assurance in higher education. The Bologna signatories mention the value of quality assurance in nearly every policy document they adopt (Bugday Ince & Gounko, 2014). However, after 2005, Bologna reform-related efforts and activities gained its momentum. The reform initiatives to establish a national system of quality assurance (QA) with a structure and goal akin to those of its transnational counterpart were among them. The establishment of the National Bologna Experts Team in 2004 played a significant part in the spread and application of the process in Türkiye. In collaboration with the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) and the Turkish National Agency (NA), six project phases have already been completed. In order to introduce a workload-based credit system (ECTS) along with courses and program learning outcomes (LOs), and to raise awareness of quality assurance practices with a focus on internal quality assurance, and to establish higher education

qualifications the Bologna team contributed to each project phase through research, seminars, workshops, conferences, and site visits (The Council of Higher Education, 2019).

In contrast, since 2009, 31 Turkish universities have received the ECTS Label, the most of any country in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), while 73 Turkish universities have received the Diploma Supplement Label (DS Label). In Türkiye right now, the ECTS credit system is used on almost all campuses. This system enables all Turkish alumni to pursue further education or participate in student exchange programs at universities across Europe.

2. Higher Education Quality Board (HEQB) & Accreditation in Türkiye

Due to the peculiar structure of its higher education system, Türkiye faces one of the most difficult reform areas when it comes to implementing quality assurance (Bugday Ince & Gounko, 2014). The "Regulation on Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions" was first used as the foundation for Türkiye's quality assurance system in 2005. A commission for academic assessment and quality improvement in higher education, known as YÖDEK, was established independently within the bounds of the duties specified by the regulations (The Council of Higher Education, 2019).

Additionally, YÖDEK oversees quality assessment on a national scale and establishes the eligibility requirements for external evaluation. A representative from the National Student Council and ten faculty members make up this group (Bugday Ince & Gounko, 2014). The goal of quality assurance in higher education is to adhere to the requirements set forth by a quality assurance body in order to promote educational improvement and provide accountability. Quality Assurance systems in higher education are essential for both national and global improvement because of the strong correlation between a nation's ability to compete internationally and the standard of higher education offered there (Borahan Nilüfer, Gözdoğan, Ziraati, 2000).

The Higher Education Quality Board (HEQB) was established within the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) and replaced YODEK by a new regulation titled "The Regulation of Quality Assurance in Higher Education" that was published in the Official Gazette on July 23, 2015. The regulation aims to put into effect the requirements for internal-external quality assurance authorization processes, accreditation procedures, independent external evaluation institutions for education, training, and research activities, as well as administrative services of higher education institutions, and the duties, authority, and responsibilities defined in this context. After the law took effect in July 2017 and transformed the Higher Education Quality Board into a public organization with financial and administrative autonomy, it was renamed Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) (The Council of Higher Education, 2019).

Accreditation is a significant part of Türkiye's higher education quality policy. At the moment, CoHE and HEQC support accreditation but it is not required for universities. This policy directs more established institutions and programs to accreditation while developing universities make the necessary improvements to their quality assurance systems (D. V. Yılmaz, 2019). Ten institutions have recently received registration certificates for quality evaluations by the decision of the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), as stated by The Council of Higher Education (2019). These institutions are as follows: 1) MÜDEK¹ (Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Engineering Programs); 2) FEDEK² (For Science, Literature, Faculty of Science and Letters, Faculty of Languages, History and Geography Curriculum Programs); 3) VEDEK³ (For Educational Institutions and Programs of Veterinary Medicine); 4) TEPDAD⁴ (For Medical Education Programs); 5) MİAK⁵ (For Architectural

Accrediting Board); 6) HEPDAK⁶ (For Nursing Education Programs); 7) İLEDAK⁷ (For Communication Programs); 8) SABAK⁸ (For Health Sciences Programs); 9) TURAK⁹ (For Tourism Education); 10) EPDAD¹⁰ (For Faculty of Education).

3. Internationalization of Higher Education Through Join Education & Training Program

In addition to quality assurance for higher education institutions, Türkiye has also made several efforts to improve learning at Turkish universities by attracting international students to study at Türkiye. "Study in Turkey" is a brand website developed by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) to inform international students about the higher education system in Türkiye. Along with general information about the Turkish educational system, it also covers scholarships, the perspectives of international students, living arrangements, culture, and other topics. Currently, the website is accessible in Turkish, English, and Arabic.

One of the core features of strategic plan from the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) is the internationalization. Internationalization is briefly defined as international, intercultural, and global dimensions in the philosophy and delivery of higher education (Aksay Aksezer et al., 2021). Knight (2004) referred to the multisided explanations of internationalization by underlining the following aspects: "international activities, such as academic mobility for students and teachers, international linkages, partnerships, and projects, international academic programs, and research initiatives, as well as the delivery of education to other countries through new types of arrangements like branch campuses or franchises, using a variety of face-to-face and distance techniques: inclusion of an international, intercultural, and/or global dimension into the curriculum and teaching-learning process".

¹ MÜDEK (Mühendislik Eğitim Programları Değerlendirme ve Akreditasyon Derneği)

² FEDEK (Fen, Edebiyat, Fen-Edebiyat, Dil ve Tarih Coğrafya Fakülteleri Akreditasyon Derneği)

³ VEDEK (Veteriner Hekimliği Eğitim Kurumları ve Programları Değerlendirme ve Akreditasyon Derneği)

⁴ TEPDAD (Tıp Eğitimi Programlarını Değerlendirme ve Akreditasyon Derneği)

⁵ MİAK (Mimarlık Akreditasyon Kurulu)

⁶ HEPDAK (Hemşirelik Eğitim Programları ve Akreditasyon Derneği)

⁷ İLEDAK (İletişim Eğitimi Değerlendirme Akreditasyon Kurulu)

⁸ SABAK (Sağlık Bilimleri Eğitim Programları Değerlendirme ve Akreditasyon Derneği)

⁹ TURAK (Turizm Eğitimi Değerlendirme ve Akreditasyon Kurulu)

¹⁰ EPDAD (Eğitim Fakülteleri Eğitim Programlarını Değerlendirme ve Akreditasyon Derneği)

According to Türkiye, internationalization in higher education is an investment in the future and necessitates a long-term commitment to the participants-academic staff, institutional partners, and students (The Council of Higher Education, 2019). Therefore, the goal of this program is to create and improve cooperative education and training initiatives among institutions of higher learning all over the world. A protocol must be signed between the Parties to establish joint education and training programs at all levels (associate, undergraduate, and graduate). Türkiye strongly encourages their universities to embrace and learn from cultural diversity as well as to integrate cross-institutional internationalization. The discussion in this section will be limited to two joint exchange programs in which many Türkiye students have participated: the Erasmus program and the Mevlâna Exchange program.

1. Erasmus+ Program

The European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus) program, which was first introduced in 1987, is one of the European Union's most well-known initiatives that directly affect the lives of its citizens. It is also typically regarded as one of the best elements of EU policy (Oner, 2015). This program aims to strengthen European higher education, raise students' cultural awareness, and foster intercultural competence so they can create global networks. The achievement of the stated goals required international collaboration and student mobility (Kayaoğlu, 2016). Türkiye became 31st participating country in the Erasmus program since 2004 (Oner, 2015). In order to participate in the program, more than 129 Turkish higher education institutions hold the Erasmus University Charter. Students from abroad may apply for the Erasmus program. They are eligible for Erasmus funds. Europe is a viable option for their academic pursuits. Students who volunteer to participate in the program spend three months to an entire academic year studying at another European university with which an agreement has been made. When students return to their home universities, they can be sure that the courses they took while abroad will be accepted there (Kayaoğlu, 2016).

Between 2004 and 2017, Turkish Higher Education Institutions have sent approximately 149,233 students abroad and received 55,667 students (The Council of Higher Education, 2019). The Erasmus grants in fields like education, youth, and sports will be maintained from 2021 to 2027, according to a statement from the European Commission, and the number of scholarships awarded under the new program, as well as the number of participants, will be tripled. The Erasmus program has developed into a crucial tool for internationalization in Turkish higher education today (Gurel & Aslan, 2022).

2. Mevlâna Exchange Program

Türkiye's Mevlâna exchange program is an ambitious project in higher education denotes an instance of policy transfer: taking the European Union model (i.e., Erasmus) and slightly adjusting it to the national circumstances (G. Yılmaz, 2019). The Mevlâna Exchange Program offers international and Turkish university students the chance to study abroad. Through the program, higher education institutions in Turkey and other countries will be able to exchange students and academic staff (The Council of Higher Education, 2019). The Programme is accessible to all higher education institutions worldwide without regard to geography. The purpose of this program is to facilitate student and faculty member exchanges between domestic and international educational institutions. This program's uniqueness lies in the fact that it covers every top university in the world (Tasar, 2019).

The Mevlâna Exchange Program's main goal is to facilitate student and faculty exchanges between Turkish higher education institutions and institutions of higher learning in other nations. Furthermore, the Mevlana Exchange Program seeks to: (1) Establish Türkiye as the center of attraction for higher education; (2) Boost Turkish higher education institutions' academic capabilities; (3) Contribute to the globalization of higher education; (4) Share Türkiye's historical and cultural heritage on a global scale; and (5) Strengthen the culture of respect and tolerance for differences and intercultural communication (Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı, 2015).

The Turkish Higher Education Council's strategy of "globalizing higher education" has received only a limited amount of support from the current international and regional exchange programs run by some nations and regional organizations. To this end, students who apply to the Mevlâna Exchange Program are an important tool for advancing the vision of global higher education and will have the chance to pursue their academic interests at any university in the world. On the condition that the higher education institutions have signed a bilateral Mevlâna Exchange Protocol, all academic staff members who work in domestic or foreign higher education institutions may also gain access to the Mevlâna Exchange Program. Since 2013, a total of 2000 protocols have been signed. One (minimum) or two semesters (maximum) are allowed for students to study abroad, and two weeks to three months are allowed for academic staff to deliver lectures (The Council of Higher Education, 2019). Accordingly, this program, which is being hosted by Turkish higher education institutions for the purpose of studying or lecturing, may benefit students and academic staff from any nation. Activities related to education will be carried out at the host institution as part of this mobility (Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı, 2015).

Conclusions

Türkiye has undergone a long process of modernizing education since the beginning of *Tanzimat's* reign until today. Several forms and models of education have been tried to be applied to the formation of the modern university that currently exists. It is important to note that the modernization of education has been a major demand of the Türkiye people for nearly 200 years. However, modernization also has a significant impact on changes in the culture of society. The influence of the Western university model is evident in Türkiye. Changes in political power and higher education policy makers also affect the many steps that Türkiye must go through in the educational reform process. In conclusion, Türkiye has found its best model in the form of its best universities. The university in Türkiye also aligns

itself with many of the top universities in Europe in terms of vision, collaboration, and internationalization.

References

Journal:

- Aksay Aksezer, Esin, Kutlay Yağmur, and Fons van de Vijver. 2021. "A Qualitative Study of Erasmus Program Challenges and Paradoxes Based on the Experiences of Students from Turkey." *Yükseköğretim Dergisi* 11(1):63–73. doi: 10.2399/yod.20.730970.
- Gurel, Ezgi, and Berna Aslan. 2022. "Internationalizing Teacher Education: What Is the Erasmus Exchange Program's Contribution in Turkey?" *Higher Education Studies* 12(1):131. doi: 10.5539/hes.v12n1p131.
- Borahan Nilüfer, Gözaçan. Ziraati, R. (2000). "Developing a System of Quality Assurance for Higher Education Sector in Turkey". *Doğus University Journal*, 1(1), 18–27.
- Bugday Ince, S., & Gounko, T. (2014). Quality assurance in Turkish higher education. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 4(2), 184–196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2014.890523>
- Gediköğlü, T. (1995). Changing Models of University Government in Turkey. *Minerva*, 33(2), 149–169. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41820968>
- Guclu, M. (2020). How Turkish universities have evolved through constitutional changes. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 15(3), 86–94. <https://doi.org/10.5897/err2019.3867>
- Gurel, E., & Aslan, B. (2022). Internationalizing Teacher Education: What is the Erasmus Exchange Program's Contribution in Turkey? *Higher Education Studies*, 12(1), 131. <https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v12n1p131>
- Güvenç, B. (1998). History of Turkish Education. In Y. Ergüven (Ed.), *Eğitim ve Bilim TED Bilim Kurulu* (Vol. 22, Issue 108). Türk Eğitim Derneği.
- Ihsanoglu, E., Al-hassani, S., & Bashir, F. (2004). Ottoman Educational Institutions during the Reform Period. *Foundation for Science Technology and Civilisation*.
- Kayaoğlu, M. N. (2016). Reality of Erasmus through the eyes of students. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 2016(DecemberSpecialIssue), 315–320.
- Khuluq, L. (2005). Modernization of Education in the Late Ottoman Empire. *Al-Jami'ah*, 43(1), 23–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000944557100700109>
- Knight, J. (2004). Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 8(1), 5–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315303260832>
- Korkut, H. (2003). University Reform in the Republic period in Turkey. *Journal of National Education*, 160, 23–39.
- Oner, S. (2015). The 'Erasmus Generation' and Turkey: The Effect of the Erasmus Programme on Perceptions about Turkey and its EU Membership Bid. *Epiphany*, 8(3), 107.

- <https://doi.org/10.21533/epiphany.v8i3.183>
- Tasar, H. H. (2019). The assessment of mevlana exchange program: The case of Morocco. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, 14(2), 232–240. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v14i2.3606>
- Umunc, H. (1986). In search of improvement: The reorganisation of Higher Education in Turkey. *Minerva*, 24(4), 433–455. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01096706>
- Yılmaz, D. V. (2019). Quality Assurance in Turkish Higher Education in the Framework of Process Model. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 1(46), 37–60. <https://doi.org/10.35237/sufesobil.533996>
- Yılmaz, G. (2019). Emulating Erasmus? Turkey's Mevlana Exchange Program in Higher Education. *Asia Europe Journal*, 17, 145–159. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-017-0497-y>
- Zaim, S. (1948). *The development of educational system in Turkey (The impact of westernization on the education)*. 490–518.
- Book:**
- Cook, W. F., Babinger, F., Hickman, W. C., & Manheim, R. (1993). Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time. In *Sixteenth Century Journal* (Second Edi, Vol. 24, Issue 3). Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2542132>
- George, M. W. (2008). *The Elements of Library Research; What Every Students Needs to Know*. Princeton University Press.
- Gürüz, K. 2008. *The Turkish National Education System at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century*. Istanbul: İsbank Culture Publications.
- İhsanoğlu, E. (2019). *The House of Sciences: The First Modern University in the Muslim World*. Oxford University Press. <https://www.ptonline.com/articles/how-to-get-better-mfi-results>
- İnalçık, Halil. 2021. *The Ottoman Empire and Europe; The Ottoman Empire and Its Place in European History*. Seven Edit. edited by A. Koçal. Istanbul: Kronik Books.
- İnalçık, H. (1973). *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age (1300-1600)* (I. and C. Norman Imber (ed.)). Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Kazamias, A. M. (1966). *Education and the Quest for Modernity in Turkey*. University of Chicago Press.
- Ortaylı, İlber. 2021. *The Empire's Longest Century*. First Edit. edited by A. Koçal. Istanbul: Kronik Books.
- Report:**
- Sağlık Bilimleri Üniversitesi. (2015). *2015 Yılı İdare Faaliyet Raporu*. https://sbu.edu.tr/FileFolder/Dosyalar/39d9e03a/2017_7/2015YiliIdareFaaliyetRaporu.pdf
- The Council of Higher Education. (2019). *Higher Education System in Turkey* (Vol. 1, Issue 1).
- Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı. (2015). *Mevlana Değişim Programı*.