



## An Overview to Private (Foundation) Universities in Turkey from the Terms of Society and Education

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How to cite this paper: Kurt, İ. (2021). An Overview to Private (Foundation) Universities in Turkey from the Terms of Society and Education. *Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Language*, 1(1), 30-41.  
<https://doi.org/10.71514/jssal/2021.9>

### Article Info

Received: 2021-01-14

Accepted: 2021-02-23

### Abstract

In the process of obtaining information, education has a significant role. The information is transferred to the individuals through the education system within the composition societies made up. The opportunities societies have and informing individuals are provided through public service in the process of educating, teaching. Education within public service is maintained by being divided into different stages and supporting individuals' social, academic, and cultural achievements more in each stage, and preparing for the upper stage. Universities correspond to the last stage of the process of teaching and educating during which public service is offered. Universities serve to teach and educating for the public through state and foundation universities which are formed according to the needs of societies. The state and foundation universities are at the same level as higher education in order to serve to improve the quality of education of the societies, share information and support its reproduction by using more effectively, support self-improvement of the individuals, help them get a profession. Opened by the permission of the state, the private universities need to serve the needs of their regions for the same purposes. Particularly in terms of higher education, it offered the possibilities, opportunities, and innovations for individuals, contribute to society and the standard of living will be higher. In this paper, the foundation universities are researched for their goals which are necessary for the contribution in higher education in Turkey. The state and foundation universities are aimed to be evaluated in terms of society and education.

**Keywords:** Society, education, higher education, private universities, Turkey.

## Introduction

The technology that mankind has reached, has shown how important information is. This became important as a huge amount of data has been accumulated to the present day and all that information is acquired and used. As humanity forms data societies, it is observed that the creation of information and making the created information beneficial became something that mankind looked forward to improving. The individuals that form the society try to find their own status and roles along with the age as they conceive the needs of the society. They learn, get or gain through the educational institutions which raise modern generations. It is aimed to form a cultured and well-schooled society (Sözer et al., 2002). As

a human being, the process of learning is being included in the educational system and therefore aimed that the human beings are given a sort of education in which they can improve themselves with knowledge, talent, skill, and also gain the social and occupational skills (Töremen, 2012). With the personal and occupational developments, the individual gains a seat in society. In society, this progress is done through primary school, secondary school, high school, and higher education. During this process where public services are being served, the educational and training environment incrementally prioritizes the progress in the social, cultural, and academic sense.

The individual who participates in the education system, obtains a new skill through knowledge, capacity, sufficiency, and personal development (Fidan, 1985; Ayhan, 1995; Gürsel&Hesapçioğlu, 2008; Töremen, 2012; Sönmez, 2017; Aşıroğlu&Koç-Akran, 2018). While he learns the social and cultural circumstances in the society, he takes steps to have a status and try to complete his career in an occupational way. In other words, in a way the society helps the individuals to complete their education through the services, and in another way, it raises individuals with good careers to the most needed professional groups (Söyler&Karataş, 2011). Therefore, the importance of universities in public and societal life becomes more critical. Especially the higher education institutions in the education system are the places where an individual gains personal development and occupational career skills.

Higher education is the places where individuals are being raised in the education system, are directed to the occupations, and to the group that they fit in, the status that they own are being prepared with care and lastly a place where the society has social-economic expectations (Arap, 2010). These places, starting from the work they do for society in their professional life, doing beneficial works for the best of the society, will answer to the needs of the more developed and thriving society, will pave the way to better positions. Hence, the individual that has had higher education, will be able to use his knowledge, skills, and capacity for society and most importantly for himself. That's why the quality of the higher education services, how they are presented to the individuals, and how the individuals benefit from these facilities matter enormously.

In terms of society, the last step of the education and training environment is very important for the individuals to increase their equipment such as facilities and developments and keeping up with times/modernity. Higher education is the last stop that every individual could arrive and is where the responsibilities, status, career advancements, and the most efficient way of using the learned knowledge. Looking from this perspective, the quality of every individual is directly proportional with the quality of higher education which represents personal development in education and occupational career. A good higher education program, will raise, as a result, well-educated individuals and will increase the possibilities on the way to being a knowledge society. According to Aristoteles and Farabi

(Black, 1990; Streetman, 2008; Cevizci, 2010), the quality of the human beings in society will bring to pass an upper

society. The best way to reach this, in today's world is through higher education. Because, the educated and well-raised individuals of the society, will be included to the public life, and therefore will join to a functional dynamic structure in many areas of the society.

### ***Purpose***

This article, it is aimed to evaluate the importance, approaches to functionality and assesses situations of the foundation universities to the society and to educational life. This article has set forth to show; the contribution that the foundation universities has given to the public universities in terms of society, and education, the competitive environment that these foundation universities have created, and last but not least, to show how the perception is or could be in the future, that these foundation universities has given in the society and in the educational system.

### ***Method***

This investigation has been done by using the observational method. The data has been collected by the literature scanning technique. The books, articles, documents, and reports about this subject have been scanned. Within this framework, the five-year development plans qua society and education, yearly plans, and YÖK Annual Reports have been tried to be accessed properly and within the means.

### ***Concepts***

The concepts subject to the research will be explained sequentially. While the concepts will be explained in the order of society, education, and university and foundation university, the result and suggestions part will be evaluated from the point of foundation universities.

### ***Society***

Because human beings are social creatures, they formed societies by coming together with other people. By coming together, sharing the same space and culture, interacting with, by regulating the social life, the human beings form the society (Dictionaries, 2014). They provide and maintain the social structure and dynamism created by various institutions. Thus, individuals take culturally what the society has within the social structure, which helps them to accommodate to the society and become a part of the society (Doğan, 2012). It could be said that the lifestyle that shapes with the social life, is effective with the aims and objectives of one. Because individuals are the product of their own culture. For individuals, social reality is effective in every aspect of life (Coser&Merton, 1987; Macionis, 2012). While the values of a society being gained to individuals, individuals with various ideals continue their lives (Ozankaya, 1986). To gain the values and norms of a society, many

socialization tools can be mentioned. These are the most prominent and important ones as family, peer, education, and mass media. Education, which is one of the socialization tools, performs one of the most important functions in terms of the continuity and dynamism of societies. The individuals can take their education from kindergarten to higher education. On the one hand, individuals progress through the educational opportunities offered by their society in the name of personal development and self-knowledge, on the other hand, they can reach a situation where cultural ones are given and have a status in the society with the educational institution. Based on this, it becomes clear how important education and especially higher education is, in terms of individuals' status and roles in society. It can be said that the opportunity to have the values of the society and to determine the lifestyle as an individual within the framework of the ideals of the society, by living it in life with the status and roles it has, is mostly given by educational institutions.

### ***Education***

It can be said that education, which is one of the most important institutions of society, is shaped according to the opportunities that societies have. Individuals live in line with their goals with the opportunities and opportunities offered to them in society. With education, individuals are subjected to an acculturation process by taking the values of society (Fidan, 2012). With the formal implementation of education, by implementing the programs planned for the purposes, individuals gain the desired behaviors and knowledge in the society. Education, which is deliberately defined as the individual's inability to bring about changes in line with the goals through his own life (Akyüz, 2014; Ertürk, 1997), can be said to have the opportunity to present the individual format desired by the society. The process of implementing the social and individual development of individuals in the school environment, by reducing the effect of external factors and preparing an environment that is chosen and under control is, of great importance for societies. Culture and knowledge belonging to the society are gained to individuals through education (Tezcan, 2010).

The implementation of the plans and programs made in a controlled manner from preschool to higher education is carried out in specially prepared and selected places such as schools and universities. It is one of the most important goals of societies to prepare individuals for the roles and status they need with personal development and professional competencies. From this point of view, it can be said that universities are shaped in line with the needs of individuals (personal development, gaining a profession) and the wishes and goals of society. Considering the importance of education in terms of social, cultural, and economic development (Devecioglu& Kurt, 2013), the roles undertaken by universities in society can be seen more clearly.

### ***University (State and Foundation Universities)***

With the educational opportunities it gives or offers to the members of the society, it has the opportunity to have a structure open to dynamic change and development. In this context, universities play an important role. In the education system, universities constitute the last

stage of -especially- the professional competence of individuals. As an institution, the university is an autonomous body that produces and distributes knowledge for the public good and conducts education and research (Balyer & Gündüz, 2011). Considering the public interest, it can be said that having a profession is determined as the primary goal for individuals with the education received, together with the transmission and use of information in the society. In this respect, universities, regardless of gender differences, are places where objectives are achieved without taking into account short-term calculations, by keeping science and research in the foreground, to educate individuals in the society to have a profession (Russell, 2001). Higher education in line with the Higher Education Law No. 2547; It is defined as “the entire education-training at all levels in the national education system, based on secondary education, covering at least four semesters”. Universities are democratic places where research in the field of science is carried out freely, where ideas are freely expressed, science is brought to the forefront, which is not pursued commercial purposes and does not move away from the perception of the society (Güneş&Demirtaş, 2002).

Higher education institutions provide education in two ways as state and foundation universities. Universities are opened to train human resources that are needed and competent in the study and to contribute to different branches of science (Özden, 2008). While state universities are fully state-sponsored, foundation universities are universities opened under a founding foundation. While foundation universities are financially and administratively autonomous, state universities do not have autonomy in these matters, and both institutions operate as higher education institutions subject to the provisions specified in the constitution (Özaslan et al., 1998). Education and training at universities within this framework are tried to be carried out with state and foundation universities. State universities should take into account socio-economic expectations while meeting the employment needs with the state's facilities and staff. Considering the education, and socio-economic conditions that the society expects from the state university, the places, and roles that foundation universities can take become more evident. In other words, society needs institutions with different conditions to improve the quality of education and to take it further with the competitive environment. Considering the social and economic conditions of the individuals in this society provides different opportunities for individuals.

Foundation universities, whose objectives coincide with the national education system, are higher education institutions that try to present the demands and situations that state universities cannot meet (Hesapçioğlu&Özcan, 1995) with wider opportunities. Education services and facilities are offered differently in state universities – which have a financial equivalent to each other- and in foundation universities. This situation leads foundation universities towards achieving a certain standard both in terms of academia, buildings, and facilities. It is envisaged that the education received has a monetary value and that the foundation universities, which try to balance the money received from the students with

their budgets (Gürüz, 2001), are expected to open on the condition that they support education, not for profit.

As of 2020, Turkey has a total of 207 universities, foundations, and government (Council of Higher Education, 2020). 130 of them are state universities and 77 of them are foundation universities. It is noteworthy that foundation universities are generally established in three major cities. There are 44 foundation universities in Istanbul alone. The number of state universities in Istanbul is 13. So, the number of foundation universities across Turkey 2020 constitutes 30% of all.



**Figure 1:** Geographical Distribution of Foundation University in Turkey (Hopoğlu of 2012)

In addition to the state universities that started to open in every province, new foundation universities have recently been operating outside of the three major metropolises and the existence of foundation universities in eastern provinces (just like state universities) will likewise increase the quality of education. When education is generally considered as a public service, while higher education service is also provided by the state, both the changes in the functions of the state and the ideas of increasing the competition and quality of education

have revealed new approaches in the field of education (Söyler & Karataş, 2011). In the field of education with foundation universities, the opening of non-profit higher education institutions, increasing the quality, and ensuring equal opportunity have created the

opportunity to increase the options of receiving higher education for individuals in the society.

With education, it can be possible to prevent divisions and divisions within the society by having the opportunity to eliminate ignorance, poverty, and inequality of opportunity in society. But a view like the one in "Figure 1" can bring the concepts of ignorance, poverty, and separation as social problems in other dimensions, society in general and the individual in particular.

The preference of foundation universities and their perception by the society are directly proportional to how foundation universities introduce themselves to society. Education services that are received from the first levels in the society, especially when it comes to the high school and university levels, leave the place of "being educated" and "being a useful individual" to "having a profession", "being appointed immediately" and "having a high-income job".

Students who chose foundation universities gave the reasons for their choice according to the educational understanding in the society and perceived similarly by the members of the society. According to the answers of the students studying at foundation universities in Izmir, "Determination of Foundation University Preference by Analytical Hierarchy Process" (Özgüven, 2011: 288) is as follows:

1. Amount of Contributions
2. Number of Quotas
3. Numerical Width of Academic Staff
4. Number of Courses (available for graduation)
5. The Number of Years the University has Operated
6. Basing Points for attendance
7. Physical Structure of Buildings
8. Campus Area
9. Cultural Events

## Conclusion

In terms of society and education, it is of great importance that the planned, programmed and infrastructure works are completed by the state and foundation universities and higher education is provided for the purpose. Especially foundation universities should support state universities with their cooperation and competitive environment, and they should come to the forefront especially with the field in which they differ, in terms of adding and gaining to society and education with their means.

Besides, foundation universities should offer various scholarship opportunities, without any profit, for students who want to study but do not have the opportunity to do so. Otherwise, it might be the case that foundation universities remain a structure where elites can receive

education among universities that have started to provide mass education with our age. Considering that personal benefit is more important than social benefit in higher education (Tathioğlu, 1990), it can be said that individuals will be more effective and successful with their wishes and desires in education offered for a certain price and time. At this point, foundation universities can become a center of attraction for individuals with university facilities and equipment. But opening up to certain cities and regions may prevent individuals from being equally benefited in terms of social benefit.

Opening new foundation universities in Antalya, Mersin, Konya, Adana, Gaziantep, and Diyarbakir, apart from Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, which are generally in three major cities in the country, and continuing to open them in other cities depending on the demand for higher education, together with state universities, it will enable individuals living in these regions to benefit more and more from these opportunities. The primary aim of foundation universities is to educate individuals with professional competence by providing a good education (Yaşar, 2001), but cannot provide equal opportunity because it's not spreading equally all over the country. However, having universities in 81 provinces and providing higher education services are important in ensuring equal opportunity. Establishing the infrastructure of foundation universities in other provinces, opening their branches will reveal an educational opportunity and understanding that will spread to the general. Thus, the demographic accumulation of the population in certain cities will be prevented and similar opportunities will be achieved in other cities. Since universities will have a better command of the structure and social life of the society in the cities and regions where they are located, they can have the opportunity to make strategic research and social analysis appropriate to their location.

Foundation universities that emphasize their own social structure and regional status and provide education, accordingly, can have the opportunity to be more successful. It can be said that being a world-class university passes through understanding and improving the environment and region it is in. At the same time, this will bring life-long learning to the fore among individuals who have lost their education or have not had the opportunity to complete their education before, and individuals in the society who have the opportunity to develop themselves with the facilities of the university. Foundation universities were established as a part of the system, not an alternative to state universities (Söyler & Karataş, 2011), and provide education services to society. Lifelong learning activities can also be supported from this framework and spread throughout society. Considering the contributions of individuals to society, creating environments where personal development and professional competence can be given will provide the opportunity to give the highest benefit to the society they create. Thus, the presence of foundation universities in every region of the country, their opening considering their regional needs, and their greater interest in the problems of the places where they are located will create many opportunities, opportunities, and innovations in terms of both individual, social, production and economy.



In order to solve the issue of "transferring qualified personnel in the state university", which is one of the areas where foundation universities are criticized the most, foundation universities must train their personnel in their own fields. In the coming years, the staff that foundation universities have trained will be in a position to benefit both themselves and state universities in terms of society and education.

It is always expected by society that universities are more sensitive to social problems and contribute to the solution process and offer democracy and tolerance by guiding science and scientific perspective. Especially with the participation of foundation universities, more work can be done in this field and the opportunities that have the benefit of the society can be used. It can be said that society started to break this structure gradually with universities and foundation universities that could not be fully opened to citizens and especially to parents. People from all walks of life can have the position of seeing a university or examining its facilities. In addition, it provided the opportunity for high school students to meet with their faculty members during the activities of foundation universities to explain their opportunities and attract students. From this point of view, the perception of the university that has existed in society for a long time, which is separate from the society, has also disappeared and started to spread to society.

Especially in terms of education, with the rapid change of the world and the beginning of globalization to be felt more effectively, the location of foundation universities and the areas to adapt to change may be faster and more comfortable in terms of financial opportunities than state universities. In this context, in order to increase the quality of education, the faculty members in the university must transfer their knowledge and train individuals in terms of professional competence. However, in Turkey, the number of faculty members who do pedagogical education systematically or lectures deliberately, apart from education faculties, is few. In terms of education, lecturers should receive training in pedagogical fields such as classroom management, assessment and evaluation, program and material development, educational psychology, and educational sociology that will improve students' high-level skills (Küçükcan & Gür, 2009). Considering what is provided to the society and the individual through educational services, it becomes more apparent how important it is for higher education to be planned, programmed, and fit for purpose with state and foundation universities.

### **Recommendations**

The following can be suggested for the current dimensions of foundation universities in terms of society and education:

- Considering the possibilities of the individuals and their individual capacities, abilities, and skills, the opportunities of the university can be expanded, and these opportunities can be offered to different layers of society.

- As a result of the fact that foundation universities are more concerned with the realities and problems of the region by spreading across the country, plans can be made within the framework of their contribution to social life, production, and economy in their regions.
- It is important for foundation universities to specialize in a particular field. Thus, scientific developments and their contributions to society and education can provide benefits that cannot be ignored.
- Since the opening of foundation universities in metropolitan areas cannot provide the general benefit and equal opportunity, a strategy that will spread to these universities throughout the country should be followed. This situation may prevent the demographic distribution from clumping in certain places.
- It is important for foundation universities to train their own staff according to the fields in which they differ scientifically.
- Foundation universities should operate within the framework of the rules determined by YOK, and these practices should not be exceeded, situations and formations that will lower the standards of foundation universities should be avoided.

### **Conflict of interest**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

### **Funding**

The author(s) received no financial support for the research.

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