



Mapping the Internationalization of Higher Education in Türkiye

Türkiye’de Yükseköğretimin Uluslararasılaşmasının Genel Görünümü

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Özet

Bu çalışma ile katılımcı üniversitelerin uluslararasılaşma noktasındaki gelişmelerinin incelenmesi ve uluslararasılaşma haritalarının ortaya çıkarılması amaçlanmıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak, Amerika Eğitim Konseyi [AEK] tarafından geliştirilen ve yazarlar tarafından Türkçe uyarlaması yapılan anket kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılar, devlet üniversitelerinin uluslararası ilişkiler ofislerinden 12 uzman ve yöneticiden oluşmaktadır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre katılımcılar üniversitelerinin uluslararasılaşma düzeylerinin yüksek olduğuna inanmaktadırlar ve uluslararasılaşma çoğunlukla uluslararası üniversite sıralamalarında yükselmek ve ün kazanmak için; başarılı öğretim üyesi, araştırmacı ve öğrenci çekmek için ve öğrencileri küresel ekonomiye hazırlamak için gerçekleştirilmektedir. Ayrıca, katılımcılar üniversitelerinin uluslararasılaşma hızının yüksek olduğuna, uluslararası öğrenci alımının en önemli uluslararasılaşma faaliyetlerinden biri olduğuna ve uluslararasılaşmada uluslararası ilişkiler ofislerinin, rektör yardımcılarının ve rektörlerin yoğun çaba sarfettiğine inanmaktadırlar. Dahası, katılımcı üniversitelerin uluslararasılaşmaya yönelik kurumsal bağlılık düzeyleri yüksektir, katılımcı üniversiteler uluslararasılaşma uygulamalarını uluslararasılaşma faaliyetlerinin türüne göre oluşturulmuş alt idari birimler vasıtasıyla sürdürmektedirler ve uluslararasılaşma kavramı üniversitelerin misyon/vizyon belgelerinde ve stratejik planlarında yer almaktadır. Katılımcı üniversitelerin uluslararasılaşma çalışmaları iç/dış değerlendirmeye tabi tutulmakta ve bu çabalar üst yönetim tarafından sahiplenilmektedir. Katılımcı üniversitelerin belirli sayısal ve coğrafi hedefler belirleyerek uluslararası öğrenci sayılarını arttırmayı hedeflediği, bilinçli ve amaca dönük bir uluslararasılaşma süreci yürüttüğü ve tarihi/kültürel bağlara sahip olunan ülkeleri de uluslararasılaşma sürecine dâhil ettiği görülmüştür. Üniversiteler iş birliği ve ortaklıklarını hem Avrupa hem de dünyanın geri kalanını kapsayacak şekilde genişletmektedirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kapsamlı Uluslararasılaşma Modeli, Uluslararasılaşma, Uluslararasılaşma Politikaları, Yükseköğretim, Yükseköğretimin Uluslararasılaşması.

Abstract

This study aims to examine the collective progress of internationalization and present a map of internationalization of the participant universities. The Turkish version of the American Council on Education’s [ACE] Mapping Survey, which was adapted by the authors, was used as data collection tool. Participants consisted of 12 experts and managers of the international relations offices of 12 state universities. The results indicate that the majority of respondents believe that the level of internationalization at Turkish universities is high and internationalization is most often undertaken to enhance reputation and rankings, attract successful faculty, researchers, and students, and prepare their students for the global economy. Moreover, the participants believe that their universities are internationalizing rapidly, international student recruitment is the top internationalization activity, and the international relations office [IRO], rector, and vice-rector do their best to internationalize. Moreover, the institutional commitment of participant universities to internationalization was found to be high. They carry out internationalization practices through administrative sub-units formed according to the type of internationalization activity and declare their internationalization activities and goals in mission-vision documents or strategic plans. Their internationalization activities are internally/externally evaluated and internationalization efforts are encouraged by the senior management. Participant universities aim to increase the number of international students by setting certain goals and geographical targets, carry out their internationalization activities purposefully and include countries with shared historical and cultural heritage. Universities are expanding their cooperation and partnerships to include both Europe and the rest of the world.

Keywords: Comprehensive Internationalization Model, Higher Education, Internationalization, Internationalization of Higher Education, Internationalization Policies.

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Yükseköğretim Dergisi / TÜBA Higher Education Research/Review (TÜBA-HER), 13(2), 143–156. © 2023 TÜBA

Geliş tarihi / Received: Ağustos / August 18, 2022; Kabul tarihi / Accepted: Nisan / April 13, 2023

Bu makalenin atıf künyesi / How to cite this article: Eriçok, B. & Arastaman, G. (2022). Mapping the Internationalization of Higher Education in Türkiye. *Yükseköğretim Dergisi*, 13(2), 143–156. doi:10.53478/yuksekogretim.1163655

This article is based on the first author’s (corresponding) doctoral dissertation research, under the supervision of the second author.

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Over the past half-century, internationalization in higher education has become an increasingly strategic agenda for universities around the world, with the impact of globalization. In the last decade of the last century, the increasing globalization and regionalization of economies and societies, combined with the knowledge economy and the end of the Cold War, have created a context that provides a more strategic approach to the internationalization of higher education. Faced with the situation, international organizations such as the European Commission, OECD, UNESCO, and the World Bank, national governments, and higher education institutions such as the International Universities Association (IAU) and the European University Association (EUA) placed internationalization at the top of their reform agendas.

As a concept and strategic agenda, internationalization is a relatively recent phenomenon in higher education, influenced by political, economic, sociocultural, and academic reasons (de Wit & Altbach, 2021). Higher education institutions have started rapid change efforts to “become international” in response to increasing geopolitical and economic imperatives; especially research-oriented institutions have reviewed their basic missions in the struggle to be entrepreneurial and market-related (Pusser & Marginson, 2013). A culture of prestige has emerged, influencing the perception of universities as “excellent” or “world-class” in terms of research, teaching, and student experience (Knobelet al., 2013). Therefore, internationalization is positioned as a positive and important element in the development of universities (Marmolejo, 2010).

Pursuing higher education abroad has become an important experience for students enrolled in higher education, and international student mobility policies have received more attention than ever in recent years. International student mobility is one of the important indicators of internationalization and has increased by 5% annually between 1998 and 2018 worldwide. There are approximately 6 million international students worldwide, with nearly 4 million in OECD countries. The United States is the most preferred country for international students in the world. Additionally, approximately 60% of international students worldwide are from Asia (OECD, 2020, p. 226).

Today, global competition, major transformations, and changes in international political conjuncture put increasing pressure on the needs, expectations, and demands of the higher education system. Criticisms that universities, as the main actors in the higher education system, cannot adequately meet these expectations and cannot respond quickly and appropriately to the expected outputs for the needs of the knowledge economy and society, are frequently expressed on various platforms in Türkiye, as in many other countries. Therefore, the internationalization

trends of higher education, which have been showing their effect at the global level for a long time, have become an important issue for Türkiye as well. Türkiye aims to be at the top of the world scale with configurations such as student exchange programs and quality assurance systems (Erdoğan, 2019).

Background of Internationalization in Türkiye

The internationalization of higher education dates back to the Ottoman Period. In this period, internationalization studies were carried out for the modernization of institutions, but today it is seen that the aim of universities in the global higher education field is more dominant (Göver, 2015). With the establishment of the Turkish Republic, a different kind of globalization became possible. As the German-Jewish and antifascist teachers were exiled from Germany, Türkiye had a window of opportunity. Consequently, a legion of anti-Nazi German, German-Jewish, and Austrian-Jewish scholars, artists, librarians, and teachers left Germany to accept various positions in the education sector in Türkiye (Seyhan, 2022). In 1982, the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) was established, and a structure was formed with which all universities were affiliated. In the 49th government program (1991), it was foreseen that Türkiye would become a centre of attraction in the wide area where the Turkic Republics are in the 2000's (Neziroğlu & Yılmaz, 2013). The Great Student Project, which aims to bring thousands of students from the Turkic Republics with state scholarships since the 1992-93 academic year (Kavak & Baskan, 2001), confirmed this prediction. In the early 2000's, Türkiye was involved in the Bologna Process, the aim of which was to create a flexible and easily mobile European Higher Education Area. The internationalization efforts of Turkish universities have taken on a more institutional structure after the 2010's and the concept has taken place in the 10th Development Plan (T.R. Ministry of Development, 2013, p. 33). The efforts to enhance the internationalization of higher education in Türkiye have been fostered by various initiatives, including the identification of strategic development areas and potential solutions, as noted by Çetinsaya (2014). Kadioğlu and Özer (2015) recommend the adoption of internationalization as a government policy, the preparation of a comprehensive strategy with the input of all stakeholders, and a high-level commitment to this approach. Furthermore, the Presidency of Strategy and Budget in Türkiye (2019) highlights the importance of increasing institutional capacity. The Internationalization Strategy Document in Higher Education 2018-2022 was developed as a comprehensive strategy policy by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE, 2017), which showcases the practices for internationalizing higher education in Türkiye and aligns strategic objectives and goals.

According to Çetinsaya (2014) and Erdoğan (2014), Türkiye reports low levels of internationalization, and



the country falls behind the OECD average in terms of international students, as cited by Tekneci (2016). However, the higher education system in Türkiye has taken significant steps towards internationalization in recent years. In fact, Özvar (2023) claims that Turkish universities are attracting considerable interest from all over the world, and the number of international students is growing rapidly, especially in a world where internationalization and student mobility are on the rise. As a result, young people from almost every corner of the globe have an idea of what it is like studying at Turkish universities. This is further evidenced by the significant increase in the number of overseas students in Türkiye, from 18,000 in 2000 to over 300 thousand.

In Turkish literature, there is a limited number of comprehensive studies addressing the internationalization of higher education from a holistic perspective (Bulut Şahin, 2017; Ergin, 2017; Kireççi et al., 2016; Selvitopu, 2016; Şişmanoğlu Kaymaz, 2018; Taşçı, 2018; Vural Yılmaz, 2014, 2016). Existing research mainly focuses on specific topics such as the internationalization of particular institutions (Dölek & Taşçı, 2018), mobility (Aba, 2013; Önder & Balcı, 2010; Şimşek & Bakır, 2016), the Bologna Process (Büyükgöze & Özdemir, 2016; Yağcı, 2010; Yalı, 2017), quality (Göver, 2023), and international students (Arkalı Olcaç & Nasır, 2016; Özer, 2012, 2017; Özoğlu, Gür & Coşkun, 2015). Empirical studies tend to focus on other aspects of internationalization, and there is currently no comprehensive mapping research using a comprehensive internationalization model for the internationalization of Turkish campuses.

Comprehensive Internationalization Model (ACE-CIGE Model)

The Comprehensive Internationalization Model, also known as the ACE-CIGE Model, is a framework that assists universities in incorporating international, intercultural, and global perspectives into all aspects of their institution. The American Council on Education (ACE) established the CIGE model to aid universities in becoming more international in all facets. By using this model, universities can develop comprehensive internationalization policies. The model is composed of six interrelated parts (ACE, 2013; Helms, Brajkovic & Struthers, 2017):

- **Articulated Institutional Commitment:** This dimension entails making a clear and public commitment to internationalization at all levels of the institution, including mission statements, strategic plans, funding allocation, and formal assessment mechanisms.
- **Administrative Leadership, Structure, and Staffing:** This dimension involves creating leadership, organizational structure, and staffing to support comprehensive internationalization initiatives, such as reporting structures, staff and office configurations, etc.

- **Curriculum, Co-curriculum, and Learning Outcomes:** This dimension emphasizes the inclusion of global and intercultural perspectives into course material, extracurricular activities, and final assessments, such as general education and language requirements, co-curricular activities and programs, and specified student learning outcomes.
- **Faculty Policies and Practices:** This dimension refers to creating guidelines and procedures that encourage faculty participation in internationalization initiatives, such as providing funding for international research and sabbaticals and facilitating opportunities for faculty members to advance their careers through international experience, including hiring guidelines, tenure and promotion policies, faculty development opportunities, etc.
- **Student Mobility:** This dimension involves promoting and facilitating student mobility, including study abroad programs, international internships, and exchange programs, such as education abroad programs and international student recruitment and support.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** This dimension refers to the process of forming partnerships and agreements with external groups to promote internationalization, including institutional partnerships, joint and dual/ double degree programs, branch campuses, and other offshore programs.

The ACE-CIGE Model is intended to aid higher education institutions in creating a comprehensive plan for the process of internationalization. Unlike approaches that focus on just one aspect of internationalization, this model adopts a holistic approach. By assessing their current level of internationalization, institutions can use this model to develop a strategic plan for expanding their global presence and ongoing efforts.

As globalization continues to expand and prepare students for a diverse and complex world becomes increasingly necessary, internationalizing higher education is a critical issue. Consequently, research on this topic is vital to advance discussions about the benefits, challenges, and strategies for internationalization. The Comprehensive Internationalization Model (ACE-CIGE Model) has emerged as a strategic tool for internationalizing higher education institutions. This article aims to contribute to the existing literature by offering a comprehensive overview of the current state of internationalization in Turkish higher education, exploring its various elements, and emphasizing its primary dimensions. By synthesizing internationalization in Türkiye across six dimensions, this research will provide new insights and stimulate further discussion on this topic. Furthermore, it will offer guidance to institutions seeking to develop or enhance their internationalization strategies. Ultimately, this article seeks to make a significant contribution to the literature and map the internationalization of Turkish higher education from a holistic perspective, based on the

opinions of university managers and experts involved in internationalization practices. This study aims to examine the collective progress of internationalization and present a map of internationalization at Turkish campuses and the following research questions will guide this study.

What is the reported level of internationalization in Türkiye in terms of,

1. overall status and trends?
2. articulated institutional commitment?
3. administrative leadership, structure, and staffing?
4. curriculum, co-curriculum, and learning outcomes?
5. faculty policies and practices?
6. student mobility?
7. collaboration and partnership?

Method

This study aims to examine the collective progress of internationalization at Turkish campuses by using a quantitative survey model. Survey research designs are quantitative research procedures in which investigators administer a survey to a population sample or the entire population to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the participants (Creswell, 2012). In this study, a survey model was used because the internationalization activities of universities from the past to the present were examined in various dimensions. This study was found ethically appropriate according to the meeting of Hacettepe University Senate, Ethics Committee on 06 August 2019 (Document Number: 35853172-300).

Participants

International students have been identified as significant indicators of the internationalization of higher education in several studies and reports (Francis, 1993; Horn et al., 2007; Knight, 1994; Özer, 2012; Özoğlu et al., 2012). Therefore, participants for this study were selected based on the Internationalization Strategy Document in Higher

Education (CoHE, 2017) published by the CoHE. This document lists the top 20 universities with the highest number of international students. In the study, 18 state universities from this list were included, while 2 foundation universities were excluded due to possible differences in the motivation for internationalization.

A sample was not taken in this study, and all of the 18 state universities within the scope were invited to participate. Twelve universities agreed to take part in the study, and data were collected from the experts and managers of the international relations offices of these universities.

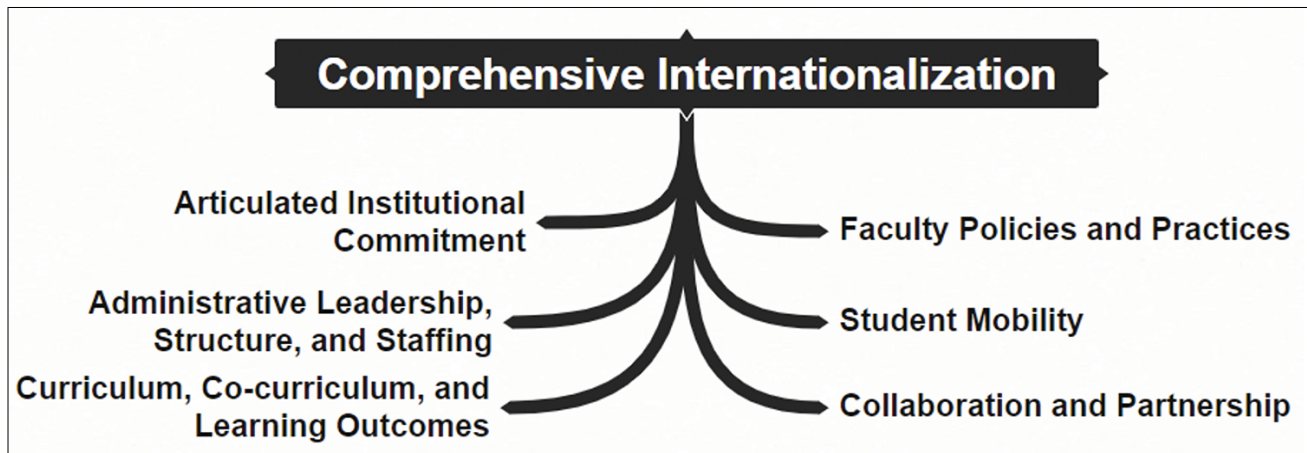
Data Collection Process

In order to collect data, permission was requested from all 18 universities. While 12 universities provided a positive response, there was no reply from the remaining 6 universities. The 12 universities that responded were contacted and provided the necessary information for the study and the online data collection form. The managers and experts of these universities were then sent the online survey form, and data were collected over a period of two months.

Data Collection Tool

The Centre for Internationalization and Global Interaction of the American Education Council developed a data collection form for the mapping of the internationalization of United States universities, which was used in this study. This form is still used to measure the internationalization of universities regularly, comprehensively covers internationalization, and has an institutional infrastructure, which influenced our decision to use it. Additionally, as the form will contribute to the literature on the internationalization of higher education in Türkiye, we translated it into Turkish and used it in this study. The form consists of several sections, including the overall status and trends of internationalization, and the demographic data

■ **Figure 1.** Comprehensive internationalization model of CIGE.





of the participants. This section covers questions about the reported overall level of institutional internationalization, reported motivations for internationalization, reported acceleration of internationalization, highest priority internationalization activities, and the most vital catalysts for spurring internationalization. In addition to the overall status and trends part, the model consists of six target areas/dimensions: (1) Articulated Institutional Commitment, (2) Administrative Leadership, Structure, and Staffing, (3) Curriculum, Co-curriculum, and Learning Outcomes, (4) Faculty Policies and Practices (5) Student Mobility, (6) Collaboration and Partnerships (ACE, 2013). ■ Figure 1 shows the model.

The researchers obtained permission from the developers to manage the Turkish translation process of the survey. Two experts in the field translated the form into Turkish, and a pilot data collection session was carried out with an expert who practices internationalization at a state university, using this version. Detailed notes were taken on the problems that emerged during this pilot data collection session, and points that were unclear about the form were defined. Based on these notes, several corrections were applied to the form, including changes to the options for the question “Who have been the most vital catalysts for spurring internationalization” in the Overall Status and Trends section. Expressions like CEO/president were changed to “rector,” and options were included that reflected the context, such as the Higher Education Council, the Quality Board, and the Bologna Coordinating Commission. Feedback was received during the pilot data collection session that led to the addition of an option to Question 5 in the Administrative Leadership, Structure, and Staffing dimension. The option “Administrative personnel other than those working in the International Relations or Programs Office are unlikely to participate in these activities” was added since experts indicated that due to the rigid centralized structure in Türkiye, it is not possible to transfer financial resources to the administrative staff working in another department. To address concerns that managers and experts who carry out internationalization practices of universities in Türkiye may not have an idea about the questions related to curriculum outcomes, the option “I have no idea” was added to the questions in the Curriculum, Co-

curriculum, and Learning Outcomes dimension. Other changes included the addition of the “optional English preparation” option in the 6th question of the Curriculum, Co-curriculum, and Learning Outcomes dimension and the removal of the option “No, but some departments or programs have such policies” in the question “Are there specific, campus-wide guidelines for developing/approving new partnerships and/or assessing existing partnerships?” to account for the centralized structure of higher education in Türkiye. After making the necessary changes to adapt the form to the Turkish context, another pilot data collection session was planned using the new version. A few suggestions from the expert were applied after this session. The survey form serves as an inventory rather than a scale, so the back translation stage used in scale adaptations was not applied to this process. The result of this study was a Turkish version of the survey form that reflects the Comprehensive Internationalization Model of ACE.

Analysis of Data

In this research, the dimensions of the Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement’s (CIGE) comprehensive internationalization model (ACE, 2013) were used as the theme for the analysis. The frequencies were used in the analysis of the data because closed-ended questions were asked to the participants and the answers were explained according to the dimensions of the comprehensive internationalization model.

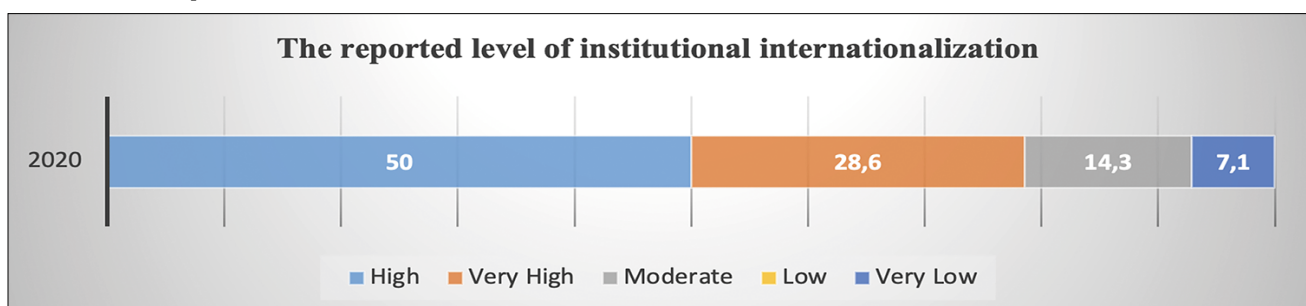
Findings and Discussion

As the survey consisted of closed-ended questions, frequencies were utilized to analyse the data, which were categorized based on the dimensions of the comprehensive internationalization model.

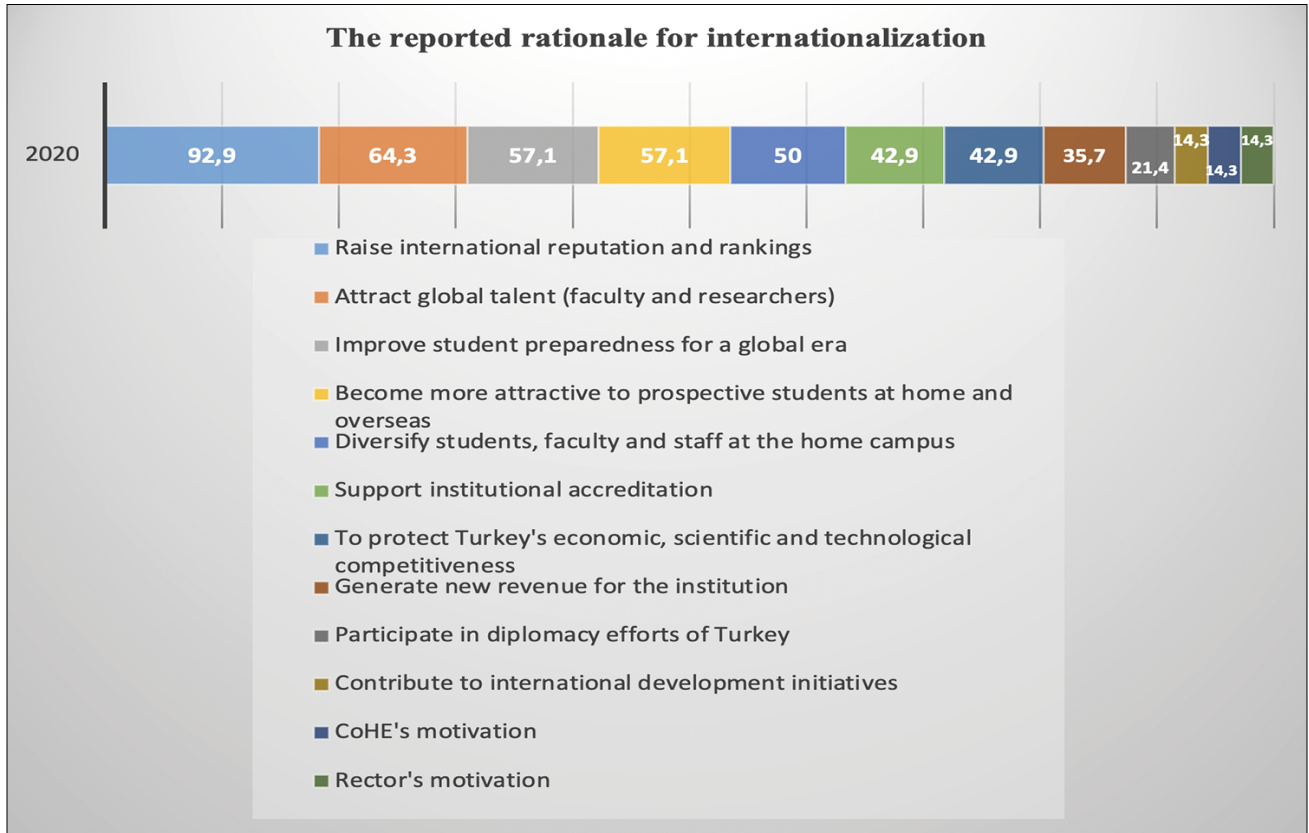
The Trends of Internationalization in Türkiye

In the present investigation, the participants were requested to provide some overall assessments regarding internationalization. According to the findings, half of the respondents rated the level of internationalization as being high. The findings are shown in ■ Figure 2.

■ **Figure 2.** The reported level of institutional internationalization.



■ **Figure 3.** The reported rationale for internationalization.



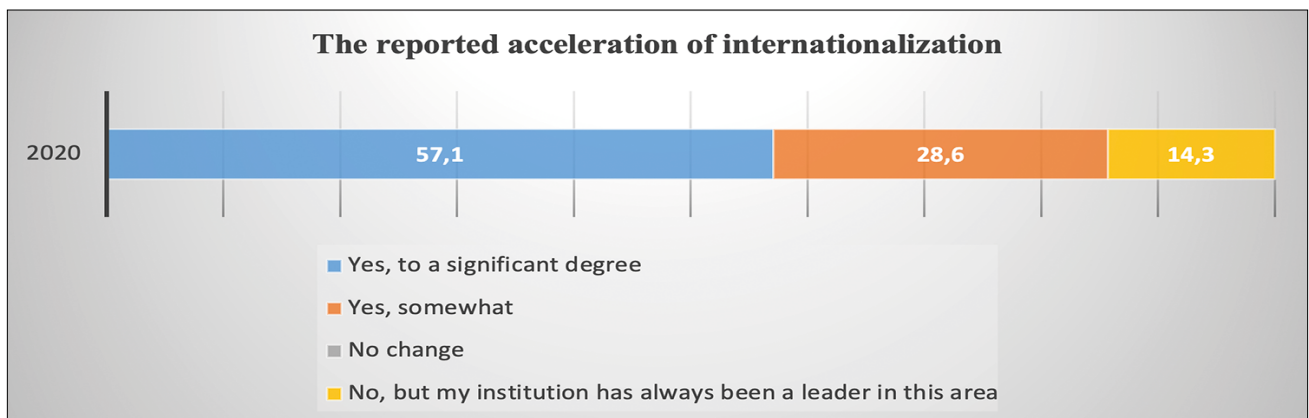
One of the questions posed to the participants in this study focused on their reported reasons for their universities' internationalization efforts. Analysis of the participants' responses revealed that a significant proportion, 92.9%, identified raising international reputation and rankings as a primary rationale for internationalization. The findings are shown in ■ Figure 3.

Analysing the findings related to the reported acceleration of internationalization, it was discovered that over half of the participants reported an increase in the internationalization

acceleration of their respective universities in recent years. The findings are shown in ■ Figure 4.

As part of this research, the study also examined the internationalization activities undertaken by universities. Participants were asked to identify their universities' top priority internationalization activities. The results indicate that recruiting international students is reported by all participants as the highest priority. This is followed by faculty mobility and increasing opportunities for Turkish students to study abroad. The findings are shown in ■ Figure 5.

■ **Figure 4.** The reported acceleration of internationalization.





■ **Figure 5.** The highest priority internationalization activities.



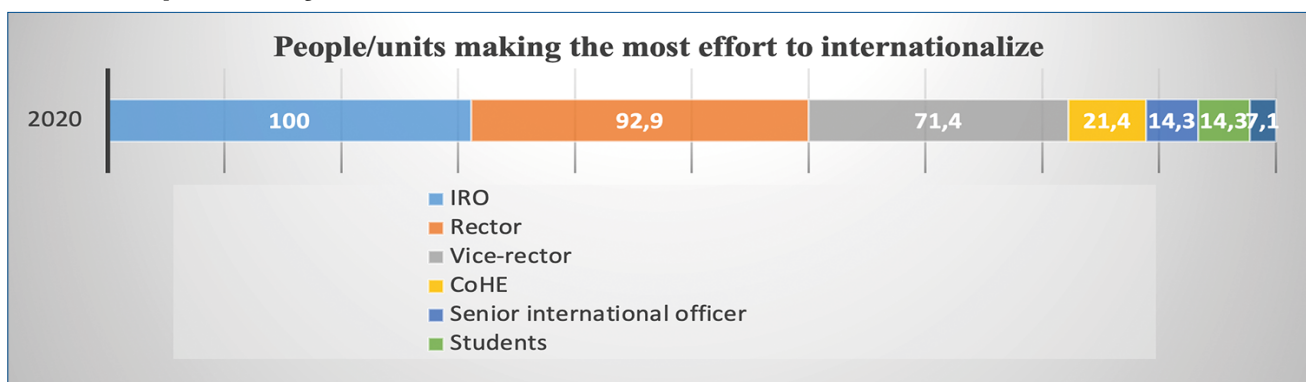
The final inquiry presented to the participants in this study pertained to the key individuals or units responsible for the most significant contributions to the internationalization efforts at their respective universities. The outcomes of this research indicate that the office of international relations and the rectors are making the most substantial efforts, with the vice-rector following closely behind. The findings are shown in ■ Figure 6.

Upon general evaluation of manager and expert views, it has been revealed that the reported level of internationalization in Türkiye is high. However, it is worth comparing this finding to the results of the original survey form used to evaluate the internationalization levels of universities in the USA since 2008. The original survey form reported a moderate level of internationalization (35% in 2011, 37% in 2016, 38% between 2016 and 2020 pre-COVID-19, and 29% from 2020 to 2021 during COVID-19) (Soler et al., 2022). Furthermore, while the rationale of raising international reputation and rankings (92.2%) is dominant in Türkiye, the most frequently cited reasons in the USA were “improving student preparedness for a global era” (70%) and “diversifying students, faculty, and staff” (64%), indicating

a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion across all organizational structures. In addition, while fewer people in the USA indicated that internationalization had accelerated on their campuses over time, the majority of Turkish participants reported that it had significantly accelerated (57.1%) or somewhat accelerated (28.6%). The priorities of internationalization activities were also similar between the USA and Türkiye, with recruiting international students, increasing study abroad for local students, and partnerships with institutions/organizations abroad being the top three priorities. However, the main catalysts for campus internationalization differed between the two countries, with International Relation Offices, rectors, and vice-rectors being the most important in Türkiye.

Comparing the findings of the current study with those of the original study, some differences and similarities have been identified. These differences can be attributed to the centralized structure of Turkish higher education, which may have influenced the views of respondents. Additionally, it is evident that the timing of this study, conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic, may have contributed to certain discrepancies in the results.

■ **Figure 6.** People/units making the most effort to internationalize.



The Articulated Institutional Commitment of Universities to Internationalization

Our study reveals that the majority (92%) of universities in the study group incorporate internationalization or related concepts in their mission and vision statements. Furthermore, internationalization or related concepts are predominantly (67%) included in the strategic plans of universities. Additionally, our findings indicate that most universities (67%) conduct documentation studies for internationalization purposes, and the majority (92%) have a dedicated team aimed at developing internationalization studies. Moreover, more than half of the universities (73%) subject the impact or progress of their internationalization practices to both internal and external evaluations.

Guimaraes, Finardi, Kadri, and Taquini (2020, p. 9) investigated how the concept of internationalization is reflected in university mission statements, finding that while most universities do not include the term “internationalization” directly, related statements are present. However, Soler et al. (2022) found that 43% of universities in their survey include internationalization in their mission statements. Similarly, Ayoubi and Massoud (2007, p. 345) found that 74% of universities in England include statements about internationalization in their mission statements, and Kajberg (2004) found that half of the European libraries and information institutions in their study group included internationalization in their institutional mission statements. In this current study, almost all universities included internationalization in their mission statements, indicating a similar trend in the institutional adoption of internationalization. Taşçı (2018) also found that universities in their study group have awareness of internationalization. The emphasis on internationalization in mission statements can be interpreted as a reflection of this awareness, and thus the findings of both studies are similar.

Administrative Leadership, Structure, and Staffing of Universities for Internationalization

The study findings revealed that in the majority of universities in the study group, there is more than one unit leading international activities (83%). It was also found that the majority of the universities (92%) have a full-time manager who supervises or coordinates internationalization activities and programs. The study results indicate that the international relations office coordinators are generally (50%) vice-rectors. Moreover, the full-time administrators who are responsible for supervising or coordinating internationalization activities and programs at universities are mostly (83%) accountable to the rector of the university.

The study shows that universities in the research group implement internationalization activities under the

leadership of more than one full-time senior executive, who reports to the rector, the highest-level manager. This indicates institutional acceptance of university internationalization. Bang (2013) notes that university top managers’ vision and support are crucial for internationalization. Aydınli and Mathews (2020, p. 9) examined the internationalization practices of 40 higher education institutions and identified the top manager of the institution and the international relations office as the most crucial internal driving force. In the original survey, faculty (49%), presidents (47%), and SIOs (47%) were perceived as the most essential catalysts for campus internationalization (Soler et al., 2022). Selvitopu (2016) studied corporate international strategies and found that top management adopts, supports, and participates in the internationalization process.

Curriculum, Co-curriculum, and Learning Outcomes of Universities for Internationalization

Upon conducting this study, it has been discovered that 67% of universities have established precise international learning objectives. However, a considerable portion of managers and specialists (33%) involved in universities’ internationalization efforts have stated that this matter is not their unit’s responsibility, and consequently, they lack knowledge about it. The study reveals that the undergraduate curriculum is being internationalized in the vast majority of universities (83%). However, some managers and experts (17%) do not have a detailed understanding of these initiatives as they are not responsible for them. In some of the universities (17%) a commission is responsible for internationalizing the undergraduate curriculum, while in others (58%), it is carried out by each unit or department. All universities (100%) offer elective or compulsory foreign language courses. The compulsory foreign language courses are implemented in the form of two-term courses (21%), compulsory preparatory classes (37%), and optional preparatory classes (27%). Most faculties, departments, or programs (67%) include compulsory or common elective courses on international subjects, while some managers and experts (33%) do not have information about these courses. Finally, almost all universities (92%) provide international partnerships, joint diploma programs, and international cooperation options to their students. The study found that international partnerships, joint diploma programs, and international cooperation options are available in various fields such as Law, Theology, History, Anthropology, Archaeology, Linguistics, and Psychology (17%), Science (16%), Social Sciences (14%), Business (11%), and Health Sciences (11%). Additionally, the study revealed several opportunities provided to international students such as match/partner programs for integration with Turkish students (27%), meeting places for students interested in international issues (31%). These findings demonstrate that Turkish universities are taking steps to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for international students.



The use of technological platforms by universities serves various purposes, such as providing joint and dual degree programs with international partners (11%), offering massive open online courses (7%), and recruiting international students through online information sessions and university fairs (30%). Furthermore, these platforms support students studying abroad, with virtual counselling sessions being offered by 15% of universities. Additionally, 22% of universities use these platforms to facilitate course-level collaborations between their faculty, students, and colleagues abroad.

De Wit and Altbach (2021, p. 44) recommend that the internationalization of the curriculum, international and intercultural learning outcomes, and foreign language education are essential steps to take internationalization to the next level. In a study of libraries and higher education institutions in Europe, Kajberg (2004) found that most schools included international subjects in their curriculum and made efforts towards internationalizing them. The study also revealed that the majority of the schools provided their students with opportunities to study abroad. Thus, the findings of both studies are similar in these respects.

Faculty Policies and Practices of Universities for Internationalization

Based on our study, it was found that 75% of the managers and experts who handle the internationalization practices of universities do not know whether the universities provide funding for internationalizing courses or programs. However, the universities in the study group mostly provide funding for various international activities, including hosting international faculty events (64%), directing students to study abroad (100%), and conducting research or education abroad (100%). On the other hand, 67% of the managers and experts are not informed about whether the universities offer workshops for the internationalization of the curriculum or the use of technology in internationalizing courses.

Moreover, 50% of the managers and experts do not know whether universities provide lectures and integration workshops to international students. While universities mostly (67%) offer opportunities for their faculty members to develop their foreign language skills, only some universities (41%) provide awards to faculty members for international activities. In terms of monitoring international education or research activities, it was found that statistical data is mostly requested (53%) from international relations offices, and some (35%) universities keep these data through a system, database, or software.

Lack of communication and lack of awareness could be the reason why many managers and experts responsible for internationalization practices in universities lack information about the availability of funding for internationalizing courses or programs, workshops for internationalizing

the curriculum or the use of technology, and lectures and integration workshops in the academic departments. As can be seen, it is important to develop academic working environments. Kara and Çalık (2022) assert that faculty members' main reason for going abroad from Türkiye is to reach an academic environment conducive to academic work.

Student Mobility for Internationalization

In this study, it was discovered that the majority of universities (83%) have plans to increase the number of international students for the entire institution or specific academic units. Specifically, 75% of universities have numerical targets to increase the number of international students in both undergraduate and graduate programs, while 17% aim to increase the number of international students without a numerical target. Half of the universities (50%) aim to increase the number of international students within certain geographical targets, whereas 25% aim to increase the number of international students without specific geographical targets. Geographical targets for universities include the Asian continent (16%), the Turkic Republics (13%), Balkans (13%), the European continent (9%), the African continent (9%), the Middle East countries (9%), the Arab countries (6%), USA (3%), the Far East countries (3%), and no target (13%).

In the pursuit of attracting a larger number of international students, universities face various challenges. Among these challenges, negative perceptions of Türkiye's geographic location (28%), conflicts in neighbouring countries (24%), and biases held by other countries towards Türkiye (20%) are some of the most significant. Universities also reported issues related to their reputation (12%) and inadequate infrastructure (8%).

The universities participating in the study have identified several advantages in increasing the number of international students. These advantages include the presence of internationalization goals (24%), strong infrastructure (22%), cultural and historical affinity with the countries of origin of the students (22%), political unrest in the students' home countries (12%), Türkiye's favourable geographical location and image (10%), and Türkiye's reputation (7%).

The participant universities offer several forms of financial support to increase the number of international students, such as scholarships or financial aid (67%), financial assistance for travel expenses of personnel involved in the process (75%), and financial support for agreements aimed at boosting international student numbers (59%).

Moreover, the majority of universities (92%) provide Turkish language instruction to international students, and a vast majority (83%) offer various options for English language learning.

Some universities offer individualized academic support services to international students (33%) and integration support services to Türkiye and/or the region where the university is located (67%). The majority of universities (92%) provide support services to aid the integration of international students into the university community, while 50% offer housing support. Additionally, 83% of universities have an institutional counselling unit service and language support services for international students who are learning Turkish. However, 25% of universities do not have an alumni unit for international students, and more than half (58%) do not offer support services to the family members of international students. Finally, the majority of universities (67%) do not provide support services for finding a host family for international students.

The participation of students in training and internship activities abroad is on the rise (83% and 92%, respectively). Furthermore, the majority of universities (59%) have reported an increase in the number of students participating in research activities abroad. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that a significant percentage of managers and experts (33%) who are responsible for the internationalization practices of universities lack information about the number of students participating in research activities abroad.

In the last two decades, the extent and diversity of international student mobility have significantly increased, and researchers from various fields have placed great emphasis on this topic (Gümüş, Gök & Esen, 2019, p. 17). It is evident that student mobility, being an important dimension of internationalization, has received significant attention from international organizations, national governments, and universities, making it a crucial indicator. The above findings indicate that Türkiye has emerged as a destination for student mobility, alongside countries that have traditionally been at the forefront of this phenomenon. According to Kondakçı, Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter (2018, p. 517), international student mobility is a matter that concerns not only economically, politically, and academically stable and developed Western countries but also nations with different economic, political, and academic characteristics. Furthermore, their analysis of regional hubs of attraction revealed that Türkiye is one such hub for international student mobility. Other studies by Kondakçı (2011, p. 588) and Kondakçı et al. (2016, p. 303) also suggest that Türkiye is an attractive destination in the periphery for both international student movement and international migration. Lastly, Porfirio (2012, p. iv) identified student mobility as the top internationalization strategy, with studying abroad being the most effective means.

Collaboration and Partnership of Universities for Internationalization

The findings of the study indicate that universities are increasingly establishing partnerships for internationalization purposes. Specifically, 56% of universities reported an increase in the number of partnerships, with 53.8% extending their partnerships beyond countries within the Bologna Process to other countries worldwide. Moreover, the majority of universities (75%) have a formal strategy for establishing international partnerships, while 17% are still in the process of defining their strategy. In terms of partnership types, universities collaborate with a range of partners, including universities abroad (63%), foreign governments (16%), non-governmental organizations (16%), and companies (5%).

Based on the research findings, it can be inferred that all universities (100%) have designated staff responsible for establishing international partnerships. Most universities (30%) have partnerships in diverse regions and countries without a particular emphasis on any specific location. Notably, universities have established partnerships with various countries, including China (10%), Azerbaijan (10%), Turkic Republics (10%), Arab Countries (10%), Russia (7%), Iran (15.4%), Germany (7%), England (3%), Japan (3%), and African Countries (3%).

The research findings reveal that 33% of universities provide dual degree programs in collaboration with foreign universities, while 42% are currently engaged in establishing partnerships for this purpose. A quarter of the universities offer joint degree programs with foreign institutions, and 17% are in the process of developing such programs. However, 33% of the universities do not offer any joint degree programs. Furthermore, it is worth noting that only one university has a branch campus, and the remaining universities do not have any such campus or office.

Senay et al. (2020) noted that internationalization has emerged as a prominent theme in higher education research in Türkiye. Consistent with this trend, Chang and Lin (2018) conducted a study to analyze indicators for implementing internationalization in universities, as perceived by students and faculty members. The study found that international learning activities and partnerships were among the most significant and practical indicators. In another study, Gao (2019) aimed to identify indicators for evaluating the internationalization levels of universities and making comparisons. He categorized the indicators under six themes, namely research, student, faculty, curriculum, participation, and management. It is noteworthy that the themes of these two studies are similar to those explored in the current research.



Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that the level of internationalization in Turkish universities is high, as reported by the participants in response to the first research question. The primary reasons for pursuing internationalization include improving the university's reputation, attracting talented faculty and researchers, preparing students for the global era, and increasing the attractiveness of the university to prospective students. Furthermore, the pace of internationalization efforts is rapid, with a particular focus on recruiting international students. The study also found that the International Relations Office, rector, and vice-rector play critical roles in driving internationalization efforts forward. Overall, these results demonstrate the importance of internationalization as a strategic priority for Turkish universities.

The second part of the research question (1b: Articulated Institutional Commitment) examined the degree of institutional commitment of universities to internationalization. This section of the research analysed the presence of internationalization in the universities' mission-vision documents and strategic plans, the existence of internationalization-oriented institutional documents, the study team for internationalization, and the evaluation of internationalization studies. The research revealed that participant universities included their internationalization practices and objectives in their institutional documents and subjected their internationalization practices to internal or external evaluation. Consequently, the research findings showed that the institutional commitment of universities towards internationalization is high.

In the third part of the research question (1c: Administrative Leadership, Structure, and Staffing), the study investigated the leadership, structure, and staffing of universities for internationalization. The research revealed that participant universities have at least one unit responsible for internationalization practices, and a full-time senior manager who reports to the rector is responsible for overseeing these activities. In addition, administrative sub-units are formed in participant universities based on the type of internationalization activities, and senior management takes ownership of and closely monitors these initiatives. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that universities in Türkiye have a well-defined administrative structure and staffing for internationalization activities.

In the fourth part of the research question (1d: Curriculum, Co-curriculum, and Learning Outcomes), the focus was on investigating the internationalization curricula and learning outcomes of universities. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the participant universities are committed to providing their students with an international curriculum, which includes compulsory or elective courses and foreign language instruction. However, the study

also revealed that the managers and experts responsible for internationalization practices in these universities lack certain information regarding curriculum and learning outcomes. Overall, this research highlights the importance of continued efforts to ensure that internationalization efforts are aligned with curriculum and learning outcomes for the benefit of students.

In the fifth part of the research question (1e: Faculty Policies and Practices), the faculty policies and practices of universities towards internationalization were explored. The findings indicate that participant universities provide financial support to faculties for hosting international events, student mobility, overseas activities, research, and foreign language studies. However, it was also found that the managers and experts responsible for internationalization practices in participant universities may lack information on the internationalization practices and learning outcomes of courses and curricula. These results highlight the need for better communication and coordination between faculty and internationalization managers in order to ensure the effective implementation of internationalization policies and practices.

The sixth part of the research question (1f: International Students) investigated the situation of international students regarding the internationalization of universities. The findings reveal that participant universities have set specific numerical and geographical targets to increase the number of international students. However, some universities aim to increase the number of international students without such targets. Despite the efforts to attract more international students, participant universities face several difficulties in achieving their goals. Consequently, the findings suggest that increasing the number of international students is a complex and challenging process that requires careful planning and effective strategies.

The study identifies several challenges that participant universities in Türkiye encounter in attracting international students, including negative perceptions of the region, conflicts in neighboring countries, and biases against Türkiye held by other countries. These difficulties have impacted Türkiye's image in the international arena and hindered the efforts of universities to attract international students. However, the research also highlights various advantages that universities possess in increasing the number of international students. Despite the challenges, the commitment of institutions towards internationalization, the inclusion of internationalization practices in institutional documents, and the availability of resources for international events, student mobility, overseas activities, research, and foreign language studies are promising factors for future growth in this area.

In conclusion, the participant universities have several advantages in their efforts to increase the number of

international students. Firstly, they have established clear internationalization goals and possess robust internationalization infrastructures. Additionally, the historical and cultural ties between Türkiye and the home countries of international students provide a conducive environment for their recruitment. This indicates that the universities are purposefully pursuing their internationalization objectives. Furthermore, the universities have incorporated countries with historical and cultural ties into their internationalization plans. The findings of the research indicate that participant universities prioritize the academic and social growth of international students. These universities offer various programs to support the development of language skills in Turkish and English, counselling services, and scholarships. However, the research also revealed that participant universities lack specific studies on the post-graduation status, family needs, and housing requirements of international students. Nonetheless, the results suggest that the level of internationalization among the students of participant universities has increased, as seen in the rise of international student involvement in studying abroad, internships, and research activities. After investigating the cooperation and partnerships of universities for internationalization within the seventh part of the research question (1g: Collaboration and partnerships), it can be concluded that the internationalization situation of participant universities in this aspect is constantly expanding to cover the entire world. The research revealed that participant universities are carrying out internationalization practices in cooperation and partnerships in line with a certain strategy and management approach. Furthermore, the partnerships of the universities vary and include various regions without a specific focus. However, it was found that participant universities have limited availability of branch campuses abroad.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, several recommendations can be made to improve the internationalization efforts of universities. Firstly, it is recommended that internationalization studies should be spread throughout the university to ensure a more comprehensive approach. Second, the job descriptions of the units responsible for internationalization should be clarified, and the role of faculty members in internationalization should be strengthened and encouraged. Third, universities should periodically review their internationalization targets and evaluate the realization of these targets. Fourth, a system, database, or software should be developed to monitor international education or research activities more effectively. Fifth, universities should consider establishing alumni units to create a strong network of international students and provide career and networking opportunities. Additionally, the availability of support services for international students, especially for those coming with

their families, should be increased, and studies should be carried out for the needs of international students and their families. Moreover, international collaborations and partnerships of universities should be diversified. Programs to help international students integrate into the university community and the local culture, such as language courses and cultural events, should be developed. It is also recommended that the administrators, experts, and faculty members who handle the curriculum and learning outcomes should continue their studies on the internationalization of universities in a more coordinated and interactive manner. Universities should work to improve communication between the international relations office staff and academic departments. Lastly, researchers should conduct studies to evaluate the effectiveness of support services and to identify areas where improvements can be made. These recommendations can help universities to enhance their internationalization efforts and provide a better educational experience for international students.

The universities for which data were collected within this research are limited to 12 state universities, which are among the top 20 universities with the highest number of international students in the report named Internationalization Strategy Document in Higher Education (2018-2022) (CoHE, 2017).

Yazar katkıları / Author Contributions: Birinci yazar: Makalenin yazılması, verilerin toplanması, verilerin yorumlanması ve raporlaştırma. İkinci yazar: Fikir, danışmanlık, eleştirel okuma ve dönütler. / *First author: Writing the article, collecting the data, interpreting the data and reporting. Second author: Opinion, counselling, critical reading and feedback.*

Fon Desteği / Funding: Bu çalışma herhangi bir resmi, ticari ya da kar amacı gütmeyen bir fon desteği almamıştır. / *This work didn't receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.*

Etik Standartlara Uygunluk / Compliance with the Ethical Standards: Yazarlar bu makalede araştırma ve yayın etiğine bağlı kaldığını, Kişisel Verilerin Korunması Kanunu'na ve fikir ve sanat eserleri için geçerli telif hakları düzenlemelerine uyulduğunu ve herhangi bir çıkar çakışması bulunmadığını belirtmiştir. / *The authors stated that the standards regarding research and publication ethics, the Personal Data Protection Law and the copyright regulations applicable to intellectual and artistic works are complied with and there is no conflict of interest.*



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