

Implementation Of Turkish Foreign Policies And Government Support As Driving Forces Of Promoting International Students

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the effect of the implementation of Turkish foreign policies and the government support as the key drivers of promoting international students to study in Turkey. As a way of internationalization of higher education, the study also reviewed the recent development of migration policies and the Grand Student Projects Support as related to the trends of international student movement in Turkey as compared to the other countries in the world. In this literature review article, a search for required and reliable source of information has been made with regard to the subject area using computer and electronic databases; Organization for Co-operation and Development (OECD), Routledge, SAGE, Council of Higher Education of Turkey (CoHE) and The Ministry of National Education of Turkey (MoNE), UNESCO Institution for statistics, Turkish National Education Statistics and other reliable sources. The study findings indicate that the Turkish government and higher education institutions (HEIs) continue to recognize the importance of international students as their number increased more doubled than in the past two decades. The growing number of international students studying in Turkey has largely been driven by the Turkish scholarship initiative programs and migration policy reforms. Further, student immigration plays major role in strengthening peace friendly and the tie between Turkey and other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interest.

Keyword: Foreign policy, government supports, higher education, international students.

Introduction

The Republic of Turkey pursues a dynamic foreign policy with a view of direction-finding the development in a positive way through international strategies, which sought to promote Turkey's international relations, global profile and international competitiveness in a region where the impacts of global changes with regard to the internationalization of higher education and cultural interest are great. Traditionally, international strategies by means of foreign policies can provide information, advice and guidance to the universities and educational organizations on key countries and regions, existing collaboration with overseas institutions and opportunities being developed for international engagement through educational and cultural advancement. Foreign policy has often acted as first point of creating international links and contact with overseas wishing to study in Turkey by promoting international student recruitment and funding, whereas enhanced international educational experience for all, and integration of international academic staff and students. Further, once a barometer of both university internationalization and presence of international students is now a core part of the Turkish government bodies such as the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Prime Minister of the Presidency of Turk Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) for the leading support of higher education internationalization and welcoming students and academic researcher from overseas.

The term international students can be simply defined as those students who have crossed borders for the purpose of study. The term also has been defined by several researchers in different perspectives. However, this study followed the definition of the OECD and Chapman and Chien. "International students" defined as the mobile students who have physically crosses an international border between two countries with the purpose of participating in educational activities in the country of destination, where the country of destination for students is different from their country of origin (Chapman & Chien, 2014; OECD, 2016))

On the other hand, international students also defined as foreign students according to their citizenship. In Turkey, for instance, this person is referred to as a foreign student or/and international student [Yabancı Uyruklu Öğrenci/Uluslararası Öğrenci]. In principle, our current study adopts the measurement of international students based on their mobility, in addition to those pursuing formal tertiary education and other students who have crossed the border in short term courses (those who participate in educational exchange programs). The existing literature has indicated that globally, enrolment of international students has been rising over the past two decades, in different countries, including the U.S, the U.K., Australia, Germany and France (Chien, 2016).

Also literature revealed that the global population of students who move to another country to study continues to rise, reaching almost 3.7 million in 2009, which is more than double the 1.7 million of internationally mobile students in 1995 (Richters, Roodenburg & Kolster (2012). Based on this situation, the OECD has projected that, with demographic changes, international students are likely to reach to 8 million students per year by 2025. Many governments and supranational institutions have shown interest in promoting academic, cultural, social and political ties among countries. This is most evident in the European Union, which, in 2011 set the ambitious goal, that by 2020, 20% of its graduate from higher education would have experience of tertiary-level study or training abroad (OECD, 2016). As the number of international students increased worldwide, the number of international students studying in Turkey also increased, and almost doubled from 43,251 in 2012 to 87,903 in 2015 (ÖSYM, 2012; CoHE, 2015). Despite the fact that Turkey is still a small player in the global market for international students, the Turkish government and higher education institutions continue to recognize the importance of international students in making and strengthening the international relationship and friendship with other countries in the world. The growth of students from overseas to study in Turkey has largely been driven by the Turkish government scholarship initiative, international educational exchange programs such Erasmus and Mevlana program.

The main drivers of internationalization of higher education, particularly the movement of international students to study in another country, is the migration policies of the country (Hawthorne, 2012). New programs and policies for attracting international students have been widely adopted in recent years in several OECD countries; including Turkey, Mexico, Finland, Hungary, France, and Switzerland have each set out their priorities. Several governments adopted comprehensive migration policy frameworks in the form of their national migration strategies as a way of encouraging immigration of international students (OECD, 2015; 2014a).

In response to its change from a transit to a destination, the Turkish migration system underwent a major legal reform with a new Law on foreigners and international protection in April 2013, combining migration and asylum issues. The Law regulates the visa and permit conditions of non-migrant travellers, students, temporary and season workers, researchers and others. As results a new directorate general for migration management within the ministry of interior was given prime responsibilities and authorized to ensure cooperation with public institution and agencies, universities and local government in relation to its duties (OECD, 2015). These Legislative Laws regarding the international students studying in Turkey were adopted from Law [Act No.2922] dated on 14/10/1983 (Araştırma Projesi Raporu [Research Project Report] 2015).

Purpose of the Study

Generally, the purpose of this paper was to determine the privileges that the Turkish government provides to the international students who come to study in Turkey, and to provide an insight over the trends of international students. Understanding the contribution of the nation policies by reviewing the recent developments of Turkish foreign policies, governmental supports, and substantial strategies as such complements on the promoting international students by means of educational and cultural interests. The results of this study will provide government officials, policy makers and educational leaders with significant information about the development and implementation of foreign policies and government educational

initiative programs towards international students corresponding with the internationalization of higher education. Traditionally, this enables the Turkish government to increase mutual understanding and strengthen the tie which unites Turkey and other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interest. This will assist in the development of friendly and sympathetic, and international cooperation as Turkey develops bilateral peaceful relation with other countries.

Method

The literature review method used to conduct this study, whereby the articles were selected from reliable sources. However, the key words that were used to collect data were foreign policy, international students, internationalization of higher education and student mobility. The information was collected from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Routledge, Springer, SAGE, Council of Higher Education (CoHE), The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the National Education Statistics, and also from the centre of evaluation, selection and placement for higher education students (ÖSYM), and other sources. All sources and information used in this article were strongly limited from the previous articles, working papers and academic reports conducted from the year of 2004 to 2016 as related to the foreign and migration policies, government supports toward international students and the internationalization of higher education strategies.

Findings

The Issues of Foreign Policies as Related to the National Strategic Migration Policies

The foreign policy of any country is the prominently leading factor for promoting international students to study in the hosting country. Fundamental rights and freedoms of international students like any other aliens may be restricted by law, in a manner consistent with international law. The Turkish foreign policies are laid down by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in consultation with the Ministry of Interior in particular, and other relevant ministries and institutions. Restructuring and modification of migration and visa policy towards foreigners resulted in the increasing of international students in Turkey. The new entry, residence and visa policy for the foreigner, including students (Law No.6458) was approved by the Turkish parliament on 4 April 2013 (Içduygu et al., 2013; Açıkgöz & Arıner, 2014). In addition, however, Içduygu et al., (2013) added that Turkish migration law is currently governed by a series of legislative codes on visa policy for foreigners, including students adopted from the prior "Passport Law [No: 5682]" and the "Law on the residence and travel of aliens [No.5683]", which also date back to the 1950s.

The purpose of these codes is to determine the procedures and principles with regard to the foreigners' entry, stay in and exit from Turkey, and to provide protection to the foreigners who applied for in Turkish territory. Also the aim was to modernize and update the implementation of the previous legislation based on the current situation, since the previous passport and residence Laws for foreigner are insufficient. Under the new legislation on "Passport Law" and the "Law related to Residence and Travel of Foreigner in Turkey, some modifications on legal fees for the residence permit in Turkish Legal Fees code number 492 are made. According to the article 83 of this code, stated that foreigner who want to have a residence permit shall pay the required amount of legal Fees. However, in the article 88 stated that foreigner who exempted from the Legal Fees is among the students who study in Turkish schools or universities (Çınar & Çınar, 2013). The current study suggests that an exemption or reduction of the legal fees for residence permits for the foreign students, the number of students who want to study in Turkey will increase as long as the government and universities are able to host more international students with the aim of improving and extending international links and friendship through education.

Trends of International Students In Turkey and Its Rank Worldwide

The international student population has increased globally over the past decades. The mobility of overseas students is arguably a strong indicator of the globalization or internationalization of higher

education. Globally, the number of students studying abroad has dramatically increased to 4.5 million in 2012 (Richters, Roodenburg & Kolster, 2012; OECD, 2014b).

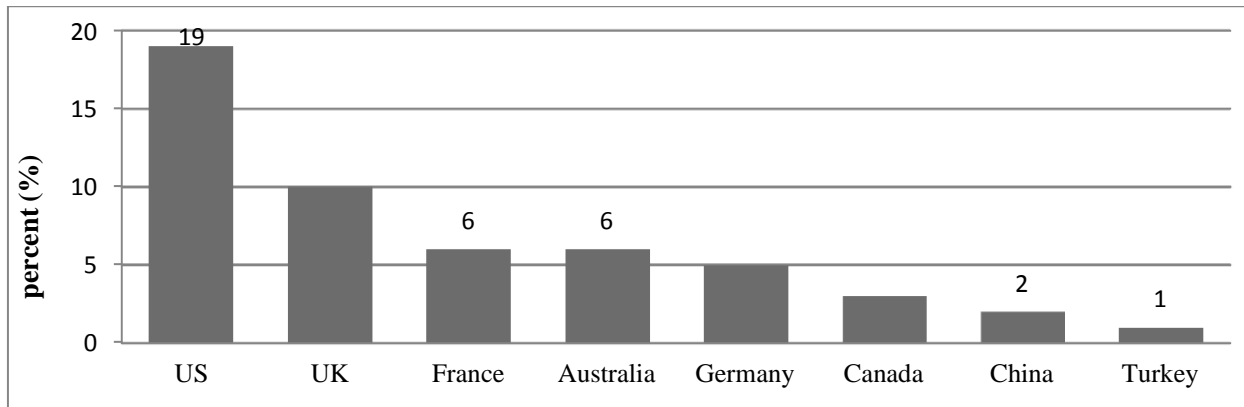


Figure1. The global trend of International Students in 2013. Source: Chien (2016)

As Figure 1 above, shows that over 90% of these students study in the OECD countries, whereas the US, the UK, Germany, France, and Australia shares at least 70% of the total number of international students. While the US leading with (19%) of the total population of international students, the UK (10%) follows, and Turkey represents less than 2% (UNESCO, 2015; Olson, 2016).

Statistically the number of international students has increased in the global level in 2012, Turkey had less than 1% of the total number of international students in higher education institutions (OECD, 2014b; British Council, 2015). However, in 2013 Turkey has shared 1% of the global total number of international students among the destination countries (Chien, 2016). Figure 2 depicts a model for this growth.

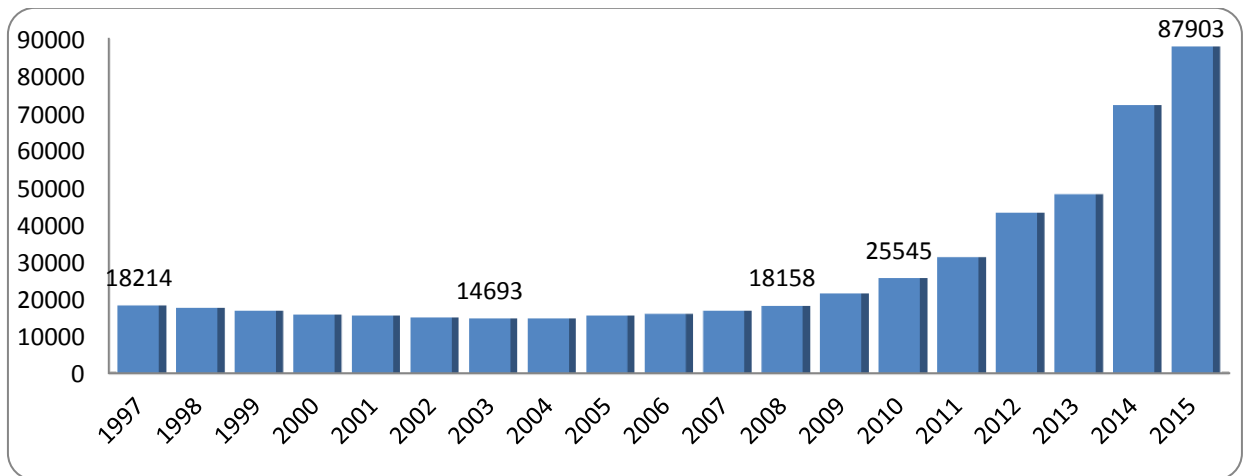


Figure 2. Trends of international students in Turkey from 1997 to 2015.

Source: Data from the ÖSYM 1997-2012, and Higher Education Statistics by CoHE (2013-2015)

Internationally, in Turkey the student mobility was seeing gradually increases over the last two decades as the number of international student increasing across the world. Turkey also progressively is catching up attention of increasing numbers of international students. During the 2013/2014 academic year, the international student population in Turkey increased by 39,720 to a high record of 87,903 in 2015.

Top Source Countries of International Students to Turkey

Turkey has been an education provider and educating students from other countries around the world for more than two decades. The majority of these international students comes from the neighbouring Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, or Greece, and also from the Asian, Middle East, and African countries. Figure 3, Azerbaijan has ranked the first among other student’s sending country to Turkey followed by Turkmenistan and Syria.

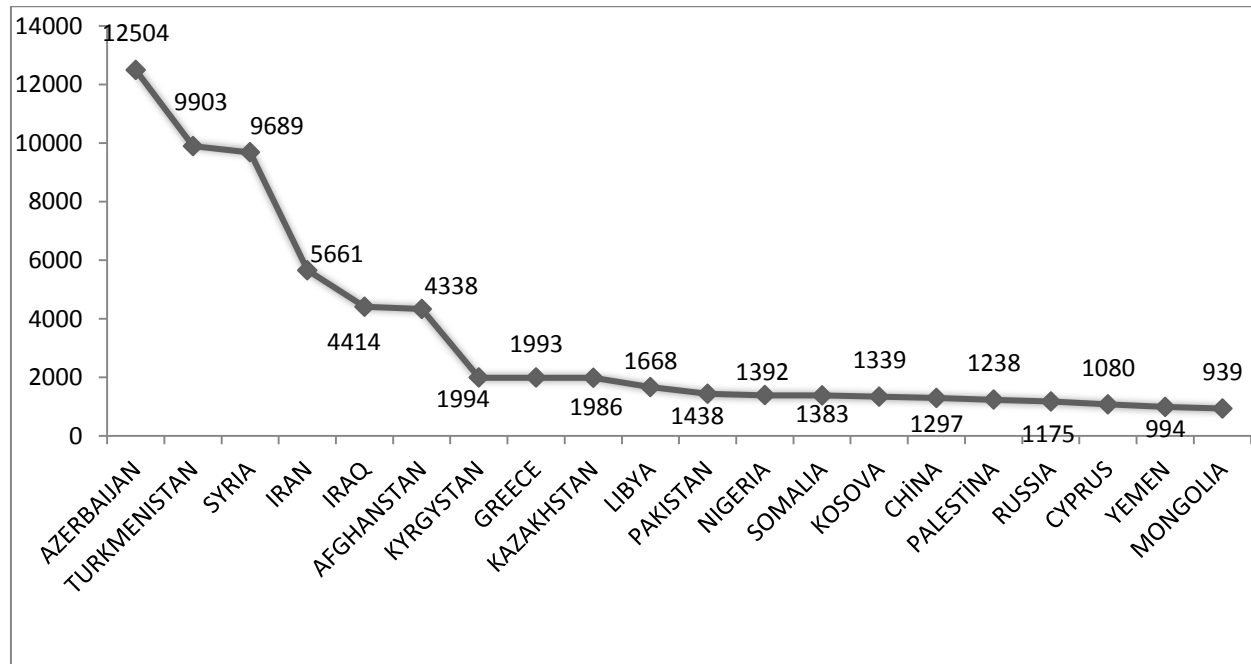


Figure 3. The top 20 students’ sending countries to Turkey in 2015-2016 academic year.
Source; Data from the Statistics of CoHE [YÖK] 2015

Top Destination Cities and Universities for International Students in Turkey

The international students are mostly found in both public and private universities. In addition, the first five ranking universities with enrolled international students are Istanbul and Marmara University (Istanbul), Anadolu University (Eskişehir), Uludağ (Bursa) and Ankara universities. Istanbul University ranked the first, with more than 5000 international students, which shares 7.36% of all international students coming to study in Turkey (Bakır and Şimşek, 2016). Similarly, other international students also found in the cities like Edirne, Samsun, and Sakarya (Çentinsaya, 2014). Traditionally, as a competition of hosting international students increases the government and universities are trying to make themselves more attractive to the foreign students by establishing significant relationships with other countries through educational initiative framework and academic exchange programs.

The Public University Partnerships

Establishment of international joint or bond universities was an opportunity for the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) and the Interuniversity to ensure the quality of national education system relative to the international level. On its way of implementing its foreign policy toward international students and internationalization of higher education, the Turkish government took the decision of signing several cooperation agreements in the higher education framework. In the report of Çentinsya (2014) showed that between 1992 and 2010 the agreements were signed between the Turkish government with Kazakhstan,

France, Kyrgyzstan and German government. The agreements were focused on the establishment of joint state universities (see Table 1 below)

Table 1. International Joint Universities

Name of University	Year	Country's Member	Location
Ahmet Yasevi Turkish-Kazakh University	1991	Turkey-Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan
Galatasaray University	1992	Turkey-France	Turkey
Turkey-Kyrgyzstan Manas University	1995	Turkey-Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyzstan
Turkish-Germany University	2010	Turkey-Germany	Turkey

Source: Çentinsaya (2014) and Kavak and Baskan (2001)

Erasmus Educational Exchange Program

In the internationalization policies of education in Turkey, various administrative decisions made to support higher education institutions in attracting international students. Adjusting educational and migration policies facilitates international student mobility. In order to escalate internationalization of higher education in terms of quality and quantity as a major educational goal, the Turkish government through CoHE and MoNE established public body known as

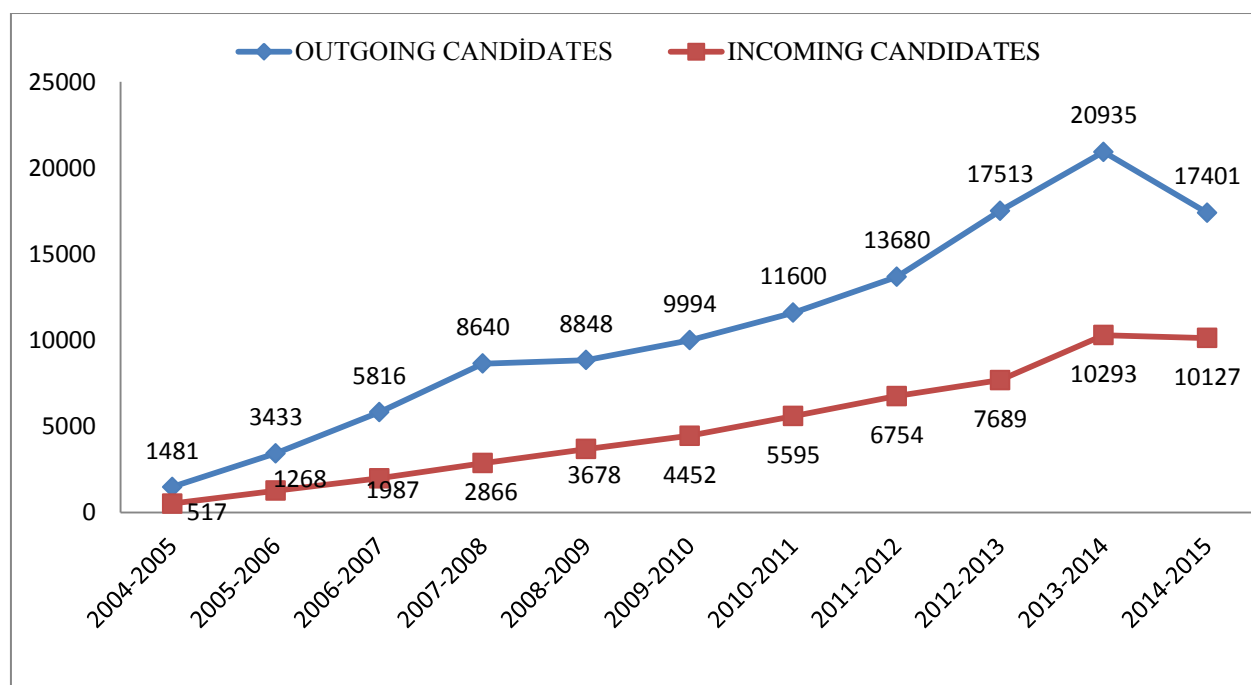


Figure 4. Erasmus Students and academic staff Mobility [2007-2014] in Turkey

Source: Turkish National Agency (2016)

Turkish National Agency in 2003. The body was purposeful established for implementation and facilitation of students and academic staff mobility within the scope of Erasmus educational training and youth international exchange programs. As Figure 4 shows, in eleven years the number of candidates; students and academic staff participated in the Erasmus program in Turkey have grown constantly; from 1998 candidates

in 2004/05 to 31228 in 2013/14. Despite in the recent year of 2014/2015 the number of participants was not well increased but can not compared in the last decade. However the number is expected to rise up.

Mevlana Educational Exchange Program

The Erasmus program was considered as an important catalyst for the establishment of a new Mevlana program in 2011, particularly in students and academic staff mobility. The program was based in Turkey as it established by the Turkish government with the aim of exchange students and academic staff between the Turkish HEIs and HEIs of other countries. Unlike Erasmus, Mevlana protocol agreements include all candidates who wish to study at university of any country, regardless of the geographical borders. As shown in Figure 5, approximately more than 7000 candidates include students and staff benefited from the Mevlana from 2013 to 2017.

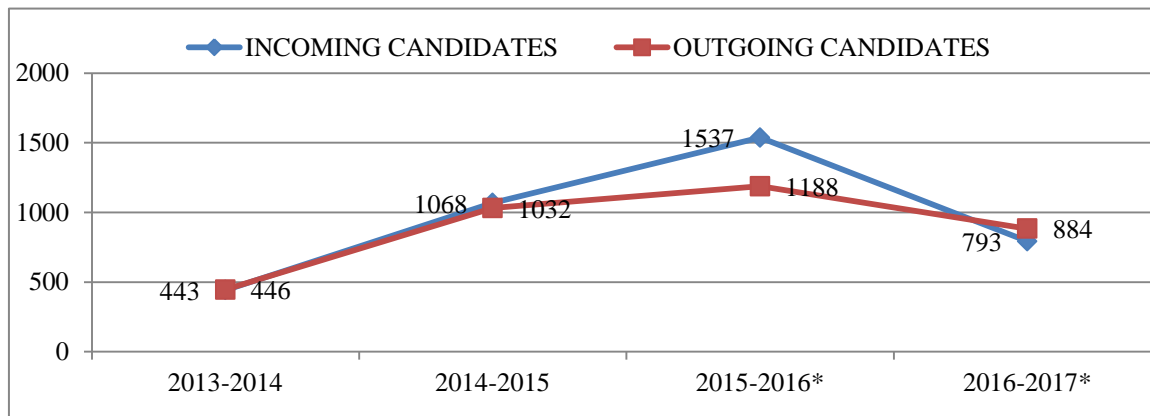


Figure 5. Mevlana Students and Staff mobility 2013-2017. Source: Turkish National Agency (2016)
NOTE. *. The above figure does not include number of an outgoing staff mobility

Scholarship and Governmental Supports

Government strategies have continued to drive a range of international experience for student over the past years by providing full financial support to the foreign students who wish to study in Turkey. The General Directorate of the European Union and Foreign Relation is the public body established within the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) which responsible for announcing and provide a scholarship to the foreign students who are entitled to receive it (Özçetin, 2013). The government scholarship includes different level of education such as Associate, Bachelor, Masters’ and Doctorate (PhD) degree. Figure 6 portrays the model of growth in the year basis.

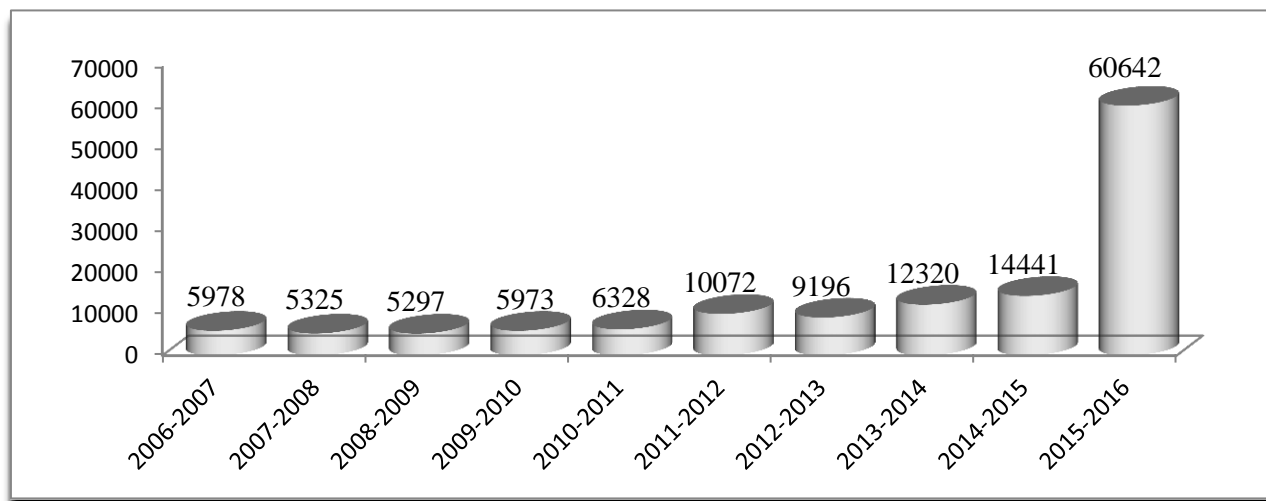


Figure 6. The number of international students sponsored by the Turkish government scholarship
 Source: MoNE-National Education Statistics (2006 - 2016)

The number of international students who beneficiaries [received] the Turkish government scholarship has increased by 54,664 students to a high record of 60,642, in which the figure was more than doubled in the past ten years. Here the government scholarship plays significant role as motivator among the international students to study in Turkey.

Discussion and Implementation

International Students through " Intra-Regional Mobility"

As the broad outline of student mobility slowly changes, political and demographic changes continue to shape government policies towards international students. These views according to Benson (2015) report, suggested that the balance of host countries is steadily beginning to change; though currently, the US and UK still remain the most popular countries for hosting international students. As a result, their traditional market share declined with Australia and Canada increasing popularity alongside expanding within intra-regional mobility. In Asia, for example, ASEN states are working to encourage domestic students to study in Asia rather than heading to western universities, and this end, have established a common space of HE to encourage cross-border student mobility and academic integration across Southeast Asia. Likewise, a great interest has been evident about academic activities in terms of students and teaching staff mobility in Turkish universities. Primarily, establishing Turkish National Agency (TNA) in 2003 to facilitate the integration of the Turkish Universities into the EU Erasmus and international youth community programs (Bilecen, 2009; Turkish National Agency, 2010). Similarly, in 2013 new Mevlana Turkish educational exchange program has been established after observing a short European’s successful development of the Bologna Process and European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (CoHE, 2014).

In fact, the process has been an important opportunity for reconstruction and internalization of the Turkish HE system, including a credit transfer protocol in order to improve the quality and visibility of HEIs at the international level. Correspondingly, during the 2013/2014 academic year, 54 Turkish HEIs have signed Mevlana academic exchange protocol with 41 countries, and currently, there are approximately 125 universities from 34 countries (Çetinsaya, 2014), and all Turkish HEIs across the country are actively participating in these programs, including Erasmus (Furuzan, 2012). Moreover, candidates can benefit from exchange programs conducted by the universities through different cooperation agreement, such as cooperation protocols and joints, dual degree program protocols. These kinds of mobility and exchange encourages not only domestic students to study abroad, but also students from other countries to study in Turkey. This may help Turkish HEIs to share their rich historical and cultural heritage, inspiring the cultural respect and understanding the differences while increasing multi-cultural interaction through education.

The New Global Landscape of Joint Universities

In this era globalization combines economic, educational and cultural changes, and HE is implicated all these changes. Education and research are key elements in the formation of the global or international joint universities, being foundation to knowledge, the take-up of technologies, cross-border association and sustaining complex communities. Correspondingly, over the past decades a number of universities have opened branch campuses overseas, for instance, Nottingham's Campus in Ningbo, China and NYU's branch in Abu Dhabi. Further, the trend has continued to increase; Lanchester and Strathclyde universities, both signed an agreement in to establish Campuses in Lahore-Pakistan (Benson, 2015). Over the past years similar approach was used by the Turkish government as strategic policy to drive a range of international experience by giving a priority to the internationalization of education through academic cooperation and establishing partner universities. In a part of responding, Kavak and Baskan (2001), the Turkish government through bilateral agreements with central Asian and European countries, several international joint universities have been opened [See Table 1]; these academic projects are explicitly supported by government initiatives. In addition, the recent report of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM), showed that on June 2016 the Turkish and Japanese government has signed an agreement entitled to establish a new joint public university; the Turkish-Japanese University of Science and Technology [TJU] in Istanbul, Turkey (TBMM, 2016). Many of these universities have been explicitly designed to attract international students who might not be in a position to travel to Turkey for their education- a move that has been timed to fit with the projected expansion in the number of students entering higher education in Europe East and central Asian countries.

Reshaping Higher Education Institutions Through "Bold Expansion Policies"

Corresponding to the global market, Rajkhowa (2014), many higher education sectors in different countries become more competitive. With regard to the government effort and support toward the internationalization process of higher education, resulted in the increasing demand of making Turkey as a hub of international student destination. In a responding to this, various expansions and strategic plans adopted by the government on attracting international students to Turkey have been seen over several past years. There are evidences that the government took a broader approach to establish several new Public Universities (PUs) since the early 1980s. In the same ways, the most dramatic increases of the PUs came after 2005 when the government adopted a "Bold Expansion Policy", that proposed every province across the country would have at least one PUs. Practically, based on this policy 41 new PUs were established between 2006 and 2008 (Özoğlu, Gür & Gümüş, 2016). As a result, as of September 2014 the total number of [Private and Public] universities has more than doubled to 176 universities (CoHE, 2014; British Council, 2015), as a way to strengthen and diversify the international academic research profile. According to the CoHE's data, as of 2013-2013 academic year showed that 80% of these international students studying in the State Universities while 20% in the Private [Foundation] Universities (Kalkınma Bakanlığı [Ministry of Development], 2015). In addition, Marginson and Van der Wende, (2006) suggested that in any consideration of the future of higher education, the internationalization and global aspect must be taken into account.

Implementation of the Bologna and EHEA's Strategic Policies (Europeanization)

A case in point here is the Europeanisation of HEIs, and it has set of origins in the growth of internationally mobile students and explicit commitment to a common European HE zone in order to facilitate such international activities within Europe (Marginson & Van der Wende, 2006). Since the EHEA has gained in popularity as a study destination, the competition with European Universities that offering HE courses in English has also increased among the Bologna and EHEA countries' members, particularly non English speaking countries. These [non-English speaking] countries have made an effort in promoting international students to study in their universities by providing many courses in English language (Hashimoto, 2013). A major selling point for HE in Bologna and EHEA countries is the provision of education in a widely spoken language, which in fact, English is more becoming the *Lingua Franca* of higher education in Europe (Westerheijden et al, 2010).

Turkey like other non- English speaking countries, the main language of instruction is Turkish in many of the HEIs across the country. With regard to the strategic plans to adopt the Bologna and EHEA policies, students in Turkish Universities were encouraged to learn or improve a second [English] language on widening access to and increasing their participation in higher education within the EHEA countries (Bilecen, 2009; Bektaş-Çetinsaya, 2012). Practically, some universities started using English, German or French as a language of instruction preceded by one year language preparatory classes. Fortunately, the number of universities which use English as a medium of instruction has significantly increased. However, some universities have programs in which about 30% of the courses use English as the language of instruction. In other hand, most of the universities which use Turkish as medium of instruction benefit from the fact that now they provide at least several courses in English language (Bilecen, 2009; CoHE, 2014). This will appeal to a much wider market of international students to study in Turkey. The authors suggest that this is what we can call the "*Global English*" where the driver here is the vertical patterning of language and degree status. English is a premier language of the professions and the only global language of science, research and academic publication.

Scholarship Scheme and Government Supports

It is in the national interest for the Turkish government to provide a stable source of financial support to give students in developing and conflict zone countries the opportunities to study in Turkey, in order to improve the range and quality of educational alternative, increase mutual understanding and building lasting links between Turkey and those countries. Provision of scholarship for foreign/international students to study in Turkey has proven over time to be an effective means of creating a strong bond between Turkey and the future leadership of those countries, and at the same time, assist countries substantially in their development efforts. Study in Turkish universities by international students enhances trade and economic relationship by providing strong multicultural contact. In this view led to increased funding for education sectors, which attract and enable the more enrolments of international students through scholarship schemes (Benson, 2015), and at the same time, hosting international students is one of the most visible results of the globalization of higher education (Bulic, 2015; British Council, 2015). Moreover, such funding supports to the international students came largely from the Turkish government through its numerous funding [Grand Students Project] scholarship schemes. Luckily, new approaches have been adopted by the Turkish government for providing a full governmental (Özoğlu et al., 2015). Further, this scholarship program, along with several other scholarships that offered to the international students had significant impacts on promoting not only Turkish language and culture, but also strengthening traditional and international links of Turkey Republic with other countries (Kavak & Baskan, 2001). Like religiosity (Dziwornu, Yakar & Temurçin, 2016), the scholarship opportunities and the low studying costs make them [international students] to choose Turkey as their choice of destination for study (Şeremet, 2015; Öz, 2016). Additionally, according to the National Educational Statistics showed that during the 2015-2016 academic year, over half population of international students who studying in Turkish universities have been sponsored by the Turkish government scholarship, and these numbers are expected to increase in the next years. These funding opportunities encouraged local and international academic research as well as the enrolment of international students in ever increasing numbers.

Despite the generally accepted views on the importance of cultural diversity and the internationalization of Turkish HEIs, and the overall drive in this regard, several studies have recently shown their concerns and critics about these efforts of declaring the ambition of attracting international students and transforming Turkish HEIs into the internationalization processes as a bleak. For instance, in the recent study by British Council (2015) criticized that in Turkey there is no clear and identifiable policy when it come to international students; therefore, it is not possible to say that Turkey has an effective international student policy. The growth of higher education has doubled, but the number of international students has not increased by a similar amount. Despite the fact that the students who are attracted to Turkey are truly "international", but most come from the Turkic republics, Central Asian and Balkan countries. In addition, despite with these scholarships attraction, international students in Turkish universities are not always filled and more than 40 percent fail to graduate (British Council, 2015) or returning home without their degree for a reason of finance and difficulties with language and cultural adjustment (Belic, 2015; Özoğlu et al, 2015; Titrek et al, 2016; Dziwornu et al, 2016).

In the report of the British Council (2015) proposed an alternative of internationalization model for Turkish HEIs, particularly in higher education policy. Since it seems likely that the number of students coming from the traditional [Turkic Republics, Central Asian and Balkan countries] regional market is reaching its limit, and universities see future expansion in the number of students coming from the Middle East and Africa increases. The consideration would have to be given to offering more English-medium courses, if this market is tapped and the numbers of international students doubled (British Council, 2015). This suggestion also was strongly supported in the study conducted by (Bilecen, 2009; Şahin and Alkan, 2016). However, despite such critical views as held by the British Council (2015), the thrust for internationalization of Turkish HEIs continues to gain momentum and the international student population in Turkey has steadily increased, especially from the past five years until present.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In this literature review, the following topics were discussed: the foreign policy with regard to the international bilateral agreements in academic frameworks, history and trends related to international students studying in the Turkish universities; impact of international students on developing international relations between Turkey and international students' home countries in the world. It was shown that the international student population in Turkey increased after 2010, followed by major efforts and shifts in the Turkish foreign policies and educational policies with regard to the internationalization of higher education in Turkey. Özoğlu et al (2015), these early efforts were primarily driven by social and political rationale, as reflected in the government support, the Grand Students Project. Also the agenda stressed the importance of internationalization by underlining academic and economic imperatives as an important step forward to improve the quality and competitiveness of higher education system in Turkey.

Various structural, executive and legislative decisions have been made to assist higher education institutions in attracting more international students, as Turkey broaden its focus of internationalization agenda. Furthermore, the government encouraged every province to have at least one university, while CoHE encouraged universities to establish a well functioning international student office, which sought to address orientation program to the international students. Addition, the executive decisions was made to increase more countries, levels and fields of study for the scholarship. National Education Statistics (2006) showed that the government scholarship was targeting students only from the Turkic Republics, Central Asian and Balkan countries in 2006-2007. However, currently the scholarships are intended for candidate international students from all over the world who want to study in Turkey (www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr) As of 2015-2016 academic year candidate from more than 170 countries were accepted to pursue their education in different fields of study, including Associate, Bachelor, Masters degree and PhD in addition with Turkish language course, expertise in medicine and research study (National Education Statistics, 2015).

Numerous of studies have documented on studying overseas has importance and benefits for the international students themselves, the host, and perhaps their home countries. Although most international students leave their countries with optimism and resolves to their academic and career dreams, making them prone to endurance or resilience, their retention in school may be explained partly by the nature of Turkish immigration law governing international students; this law dictates that they maintain their visa status only as long as they remain students. Whereas different studies have reported the benefits of encouraging student mobility across the countries, other studies have highlighted the negative consequences associated with this practice. Nonetheless, the bulk of literature seem to favour foreign policies and higher education policies that encourage global students and skill-worker migration.

Generally, Turkey continues to attract and increasing number of international students due to its geographical position as a bridge between the east and the west and recent shifts in the pattern of humanitarians migration following the political turmoil in the Middle East. The global student migration plays major role in cultural awareness, the expansion of worldviews, and strengthening the tie between nations in political and economic basis. Attentively, the author of this study recommended that: Although international students increased, the government should attract more students from other geographical regions to study in Turkey, and also reducing the limit number of scholarships for international students, and give equal consideration Another is to expand the school curriculum to involve more relevant program areas. This might be achieved by increasing more field studies on the diverse needs of international students. Such developments would enhance international student persistence at universities. Furthermore, policies

governing the job market in Turkish for international students need to be improved; for instance, making the number of hours for those international students is legally allowed to work more flexibly. Finally, regarding to the future studies, more research should be done on the social, cultural and economic impact of international students to the local people [Turks] in Turkey.

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