

DIFFUSION AND ADOPTION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN TURKISH HIGHER EDUCATION

Kürşat Taştan - Sinan Yılmaz - Nalan Sabır Taştan



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DIFFUSION AND ADOPTION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN TURKISH HIGHER EDUCATION¹

**Kürşat Taştan²,
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¹ This study is derived from Kürşat Taştan's doctoral thesis, numbered 10363752 in Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University, "Evaluation of the Diffusion of Quality Practices in Higher Education in the Framework of the New Institutional Theory".

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The New Motto of the Turkish Higher
Education: Quality

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Abstract

Global developments in higher education have made quality management a fundamental tool of legitimacy. In parallel with the whole world, quality management has started to be institutionalized at the national level and the diffusion of quality management among higher education institutions has accelerated in the Turkish higher education system with the establishment of the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) in 2015. In the study, the diffusion of quality management in Turkish higher education institutions is discussed in detail and it is presented that quality management in higher education has spread throughout Türkiye as a dominant management style and paradigm. The successful studies of THEQC for the normative adoption of quality management are discussed and Opinions-Suggestions on the General Situation of the Turkish Higher Education System are provided in the study, in which the Theoretical Framework of Quality Management in Turkish Higher Education is discussed in detail. The study presents a general framework for the quality journey of Turkish higher education, which has come a long way in reaching world standards.

Keywords

Quality in Turkish higher education, Turkish higher education institutions, Turkish higher education, Diffusion and Adoption, Quality Assurance.

Preface

As a constantly growing global industry, higher education is one of the principle building blocks in increasing the quality of “humans” in every aspect of life and sense. This results in a constant pressure on higher education for developing new strategies and polices towards improvement. Within the framework of improvement strategies and policies adaptation of quality management, which is one of the most important management methods in the corporate realm, to higher education has almost reached a level of maturity. The initial attempts to transfer industry techniques and methods as is did not provide the desired results in higher education quality management. A new Higher Education Quality Movement with common standards and directives developed especially for higher education started in Europe and rapidly found enthusiastic acceptance globally, giving shared direction to higher education.

It was at this point the Turkish Higher Education System began to take the necessary steps to conform closer to global trends and began to address its structural deficiencies in accordance with closer integration with Europe. The establishment of the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) in 2015 is an important milestone in this course.

The present work is derived from the Doctorate dissertation of Kürşat Taştan, which also reflects his experience as an Evaluator within the scope of the Institutional External Evaluation Program in the Turkish higher education system since 2018. The thesis was advised by Sinan Yılmaz and aims to provide a general evaluation of quality management in Turkish higher education and offer new directions. Nalan Sabır Taştan's contributions were crucial in turning the thesis into a beautiful book.

We hope you enjoy reading the book as much as the authors did writing it.

List of abbreviations

CoHE:	Council of Higher Education
ECTS:	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EFQM:	European Foundation for Quality Management
EHEA:	European Higher Education Area
ENQA:	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAR:	The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
EQF:	The European Qualifications Framework
ERA:	European Research Area
ESG:	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
ESU:	European Students' Union
EUA:	European University Association
EURASHE:	European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
IIEP:	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
INQAAHE:	The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
ISO:	International Organization of Standardization
KalDer:	Turkish Society for Quality
NQF-HETR:	National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Türkiye
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PLS-SEM:	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling
QF-EHEA:	Qualifications Frameworks in the European Higher Education Area
THEQC:	Turkish Higher Education Quality Council
TQF:	Turkish Qualifications Framework
TQM:	Total Quality Management
TRNC:	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

TUSIAD:	Turkish Industry and Business Association
UAK:	Inter-University Board
UN:	European Union
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA:	United States of America
YÖDEK:	Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement Commission

1. Quality Management in Higher Education

Universities are important historical institutions that have gained important places in society and have a tradition going on for centuries. Approximately eighty-five institutions, founded in Europe in 1520, with similar functions and uninterrupted histories (the Catholic Church in Iceland, the Isle of Man and Great Britain parliaments in Iceland, several Swiss cantons, and seventy universities) still recognisably exist. However, even though the kingdoms, feudal lords, and monopolistic guilds have gone, seventy universities, still in the exact locations with some of the same buildings, continue their lives with almost the same education and governance methods as on the first day (Kerr, 2001, p. 115).

Centuries after higher education itself, at the end of the 19th century, the foundations of quality assurance began to be laid. During this period, the actual "age of pre-quality" began with the shift from elite to mass higher education, and fundamental changes and challenges emerged for all decision-makers in higher education (Bernhard, 2012, p. 43).

The problems of higher education are those related to growth in general. Growth poses several challenges for the education systems experiencing it and the societies supporting them. These problems can arise in every part of higher education (financing, government and administration; recruitment and selection of students, curriculum and teaching styles; staff recruitment, training and socialization). Therefore, growth affects all kinds of activities and structures of higher education (Trow, 1974, p. 1).

While, approximately 500,000 students were enrolled in higher education institutions worldwide in 1900 (representing as little as 1 percent of college-age people), this number had increased 200-fold to 100 million (20% of college-age people) by 2000. This shows that higher education has grown and expanded tremendously throughout the world over the past century (Schofer & Meyer, 2005, p. 898).

Higher education has been grown rapidly, and its management has become more complex as the demand for higher education increases day by day. With this, the resources allocated from public resources to higher education institutions do not increase at the same rate, and rapid economic and social changes and the knowledge economy and society-based developments increase the expectation of more qualified services from higher education institutions. For these reasons, it becomes necessary to adopt systematic and strategic approaches in education, training, research and other services of higher education institutions (CoHE, 2019a). This necessity brings with it the isomorphic teaching of the same subjects at very similar degrees and with the same perspectives worldwide with the knowledge of literature that finds meaning worldwide. This trend towards isomorphism leads to isomorphism worldwide, where issues related to quality management, students, academic issues, research agendas, community contribution activities, and staff competence are now routinely addressed (Schofer & Meyer, 2005, p. 917).

In this context, new policies have emerged to ensure the quality of teaching and learning as democratic countries significantly expand their higher education systems from elite to mass systems and to universal systems similar to those in the United States, and as new higher education providers expand globally (Dill, 2011, p. 3). In addition, the diversification, privatization and internationalization efforts in higher education are also seen as the main supporters that increase the

interest in quality assurance mechanisms (Bernhard, 2012, p. 44). In addition to these developments, student and staff mobility, the creation of new types of higher education institutions, the franchising of academic programs, distance education (WORLD BANK, 2002) and the literature of higher education that have begun to become supranational have revealed the need for different quality assurance mechanisms and practices. Policymakers, who aim to support higher education institutions' adaptation to these developments of the knowledge economy, keep quality management on the agenda of higher education due to their authority to define the legal and administrative framework in which higher education institutions develop (Neave, 1988, p. 8). So, they ensure that the funds transferred are used correctly and efficiently (Bernhard, 2012, p. 40) and control accountability⁵ and transparency (Işık & Beykoz, 2018, p. 8; Leveille, 2006, p. 6).

Quality management in higher education is a complex and difficult concept to understand. Similarly, quality assurance is equally complex, and there are various approaches to it in different countries and regions of the world (Matei & Iwinska, 2016, p. 11). Harvey and Williams (2010) state that first-generation quality management mechanisms in higher education are mostly inspired and benefit from practices derived from the company sector (such as Total Quality Management [TQM], ISO 9000, or the European Foundation for Quality Management [EFQM] excellence models). However, these practices coexist with new approaches giving more importance to the characteristics of higher education today (Martin & Parikh, 2017, p. 18). Kahsay (2012, p. 45) points out that the ongoing debate on the relevance and applicability of industrial-sourced quality management models to the field of higher education has sufficiently

⁵ While accountability requires external scrutiny of institutions and publishable results, improving quality requires that it be linked to a continuous process of quality improvement at the institutional and academic discipline level (Kis, 2005, p. 3).

proven that no industrial quality assurance model can be selected for higher education for general acceptance and relevance. Although TQM approaches are productive, the results are difficult to measure because operationalizing higher education institutions is highly subjective. Students are both customers and products, the design of academic processes and the use of pedagogies are subjective in nature, and in some cases, academic processes need to be redesigned (Prakash, 2018, p. 8). Therefore, quality management has factors, which determine the quality of higher education and each of which is affected by some other sub-factors of particular importance, like teaching performance and the development of faculty members, the academic policy environment, the development and evaluation processes of students, and the ability to adapt institutions to changes (Bhuiyan & Ahmmed, 2009, p. 1).

The Quality Management approach in Higher Education, which uses the philosophical infrastructure, techniques, methods, and processes of Total Quality Management, requires applying the internal self-evaluations of the institutions (can be divided into sub-sections at the level of programs and faculties if desired), the external evaluations of the regulatory and supervisory institutions, the program accreditations of autonomous and independent evaluation institutions, and management system certificates in an integrated and comprehensive way together with the institutional quality standards for universities.

On the other hand, due to the necessity of providing higher standards of education to more young people around the world, different competencies and skills are becoming the primary conditions for many jobs (Gencel, 2001, p. 165). Within the framework of gaining these competencies and skills, the qualities of the knowledge produced, distributed and made available to the society for use by universities through research are reflected in the characteristics of graduates, such as their ability to act in the real world and

their professional capacity (Matei & Iwinska, 2016, p. 11). This situation shows once again the importance of quality and quality assurance for higher education.

To explain in detail, the topicality and quality of the information produced in universities, its usability in the economy and its potential to transform into technology are of great importance in terms of national and international competitions. A higher education system that can meet these conditions should be established within the framework of quality and accreditation standards, and the activities carried out by academic staff should be qualified to fulfill these requirements (Gencel, 2001, p. 165).

Quality management is an essential feature of higher education outcomes. For example, universities would not be able to fulfill their duties if higher education graduates were unable to perform effectively in their professions due to a “lack of quality” (engineers, doctors, civil servants, secondary school teachers, etc.) (Matei & Iwinska, 2016, p. 11).

With this importance, quality management has been placed on higher education policy agendas and has been actively and continuously addressed throughout the world for the last 35-40 years, although it varies from country to country (Dill, 2011; Martin, 2018, p. 22; Matei & Iwinska, 2016, p. 6). Most important agenda items of higher education institutions are defining, measuring, and assuring quality (Harvey & Williams, 2010) and developing more comprehensive and systematic approaches to control and improve them (Martin, 2018, p. 22).

In some countries, such as the United States, it can be argued that the evaluation and accreditation of higher education within the scope of quality management is an established practice. In other contexts, such as European and Latin American countries, these policies and processes have been used for

about thirty years, while Asian countries have implemented them in the late nineties (Corengia et al., 2014, p. 64).

As stated in the European Students' Union (ESU) report "Bologna With Student Eyes 2015", quality assurance itself serves multiple purposes: it improves learning and teaching, builds trust among stakeholders throughout higher education systems and increases harmony and comparability in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (ESU, 2015).

In parallel to all these international developments, Türkiye, which ranks first among the European Higher Education Area countries in terms of both the number of students in the higher education system and the increase in the number of students over the years (CoHE, 2019b, p. 5), has made significant breakthroughs with policies trying to make a place for itself in the extraordinary global trend of higher education in recent years - although it's too late.

Essentially, quality is related with the process, standards are related with results, quality assurance is related with monitoring, and quality culture is related with implementation. Nevertheless, this is where the simplicity ends, and complexity emerges (Harvey, 2011, p. 1). In this study, the historical context, diffusion and adoption of quality management with the developments in Europe are handled in a multifaceted way to understand better the institutionalization process of quality management in higher education institutions in Türkiye. As Berger & Luckmann (1967, p. 54–55) stated, institutions always have a past of which they are products, and it is impossible to adequately understand an institution without understanding the historical process in which it was produced.

2. Higher Education System in Türkiye

The higher education system in Türkiye consists of higher education institutions organized according to the Higher Education Law No. 2547 and Law No. 2809 on the Organization of Higher Education Institutions. In-Law No. 2547, the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) and the Inter-University Board (UAK) are defined as the top-level bodies regulating higher education throughout the country (CoHE, 2020a; THEQC, 2019a, p. 7; YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM KANUNU, 1981; YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM KURUMLARI TEŞKİLATI KANUNU, 1983).

CoHE is an autonomous and constitutional public legal entity that regulates higher education in Türkiye and guides the activities of higher education institutions in the country. CoHE consists of a Supervisory Board and many units responsible for planning, research, development, evaluation, budget, investment, and coordination activities. To ensure the implementation of educational activities, to train academic staff by the requirements, to monitor and supervise the use of resources allocated to universities, and to ensure holistic, continuous, consistent, and constructive cooperation and coordination between higher education institutions in line with the principles and goals defined for universities are among the primary duties of CoHE (CoHE, 2020a; THEQC, 2019a, p. 7).

UAK, on the other hand, is an academic body above universities (ÜAK, 2020). The duties of UAK include coordinating the education, scientific research, and publication activities of universities, evaluating related applications, making recommendations to CoHE and universities, suggesting

measures to meet the academic staff needs of universities, making applications related to education and scientific research, and publishing activities in parallel with national higher education planning (THEQC, 2019a, p. 7).

Higher education institutions in Türkiye include state universities, foundation universities and basic vocational schools. State and foundation higher education institutions consist of universities and technology institutes; faculties, institutes, schools, conservatories, research and applied study centers at universities and institutes of technology; vocational schools affiliated with universities or institutes of technology; foundation vocational schools established by non-profit foundations independent of universities or technology institutions (THEQC, 2019a, p. 7).

2.1. History of Turkish Higher Education

The history of Turkish higher education is closely related to the history of the Turks and the states they founded centuries ago (UNESCO, 1990, p. 5). First higher education institutions established in Sırçalı, Karatay, İnce Minareli, Atabekkiye, Gökmedrese, Buruciye, Çifte Minareli, and Çaçoğlu during the Seljuk State period (1071-1299) (Mizikaci, 2006, p. 13) are theology schools called madrasas, which were established after the Turks accepted Islam. The most important institution was the Baghdad Nizamiye Madrasa, where religion, language, and law (Islamic law) education was given (UNESCO, 1990, p. 5). The fact that the language of the Qur'an, the holy book of the Islamic religion accepted by the Turks, and spoken in the Arab geography, where Islam spread, was different from Turkish led to the emergence of these first organized theological education units called madrasas.

In the same period, various medical education centers and hospitals were established with the recognition of Medical Sciences. Darüş-Şifa, Darül-Afiye and Darüş-Sihna medical education schools and Gevher Nesibe, İzzettin I Keykavus, Torumtay, Muinuddin Pervane and Pervaneoğlu Ali medical treatment centers were established in this period (Mizikaci, 2006, p. 13).

With the collapse of the Seljuk Empire and the establishment of the Ottoman Empire (1299-1920), the administration changed hands in Anatolian geography. However, because both states were states founded by the same nation and continued the same culture, madrasas remained as higher education institutions. These institutions have played a crucial role in consolidating the Empire strictly based on Islamic principles. The first Ottoman madrasa was Iznik Orhaniye, founded in 1331. The most famous madrasas are Fatih (Sahn-ı Seman Madrasa), Hagia Sophia and Süleymaniye Madrasas. In this period, madrasas were divided into two as general type and special type: General type madrasas continued their activities in the fields of Islam, Islamic Law, Arabic, mathematics, geometry, history and geography, and special type madrasas continued their activities in areas that led to the acquisition of special knowledge and skills such as medicine (UNESCO, 1990, p. 5).

The establishment of higher education institutions in Anatolia, which can be associated with the university concept in the contemporary sense, started with the studies carried out in the XVIII century. In this context, The Imperial Naval Engineering School (Ottoman Turkish: Mühendishane-i Bahrî-i Hümâyûn) was opened in 1776 and The Imperial School of Military Engineering (Ottoman Turkish: Mühendishâne-i Berrî-i Hümâyûn) was opened in 1795 as the first higher education institutions. These schools were established to train competent military personnel for the imperial army (CoHE, 2019b, p. 6).

As a reflection of the effects of the French Revolution in Europe in the Ottoman Empire in this period, the Tanzimat was declared on 3 November 1839 to adapt the state system to western reforms. With the beginning of this reformist new era, the construction of a new civil bureaucracy necessitated innovation in higher education. Thus, higher education became important for Ottoman administrators who wanted to centralize and modernize (CoHE, 2019b, p. 6).

In this period, new educational institutions such as the State Medical School (Ottoman Turkish: Tıphâne-i Âmire) in 1827, the School of Medicine (Ottoman Turkish: Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Şâhâne) in 1839, the School of Administration (Ottoman Turkish: Mekteb-i Mülkiye) in 1859, and the Civil Medicine School (Ottoman Turkish: Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Mülkiye) in 1867 and the Law School (Ottoman Turkish: Mekteb-i Hukuk-ı Şahane) in 1880 were opened. However, unlike these educational institutions (CoHE, 2019b, p. 7), the first and only university of the Ottoman Empire was established under the name of Darülfünun in 1863. Darülfünun, which was closed and reopened several times during the rest of the Ottoman Empire, consisted of medicine, literature, law, engineering sciences departments (Ottoman Turkish: Turuk and Maâbir), and theology department, which was opened later (UNESCO, 1990, p. 6). Darülfünun was granted "scientific autonomy" in 1919 (CoHE, 2019b, p. 8).

With the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire from the stage of history and the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye in 1923, the theologically based madrasa period in higher education ended and almost all schools were integrated into the Ministry of National Education (Turkish: Maarif Vekaleti) structure in 1924 (UNESCO, 1990, p. 6). In the same year, the Ministry of War building, one of the most important public buildings in Istanbul, was given to Darülfünun, the name of Darülfünun was changed to "Istanbul Darülfünunu" with Law No. 493, and its budget was separated from the budget of the Ministry of National Education with Law No. 499. Thus, Istanbul Darülfünun, the only university in Türkiye, has gained an "added budget" and "legal personality" structure. In the same year again, in addition to all these developments, Zonguldak Mining Engineering School (Turkish: Zonguldak Maden Mühendis Mekteb-i Âlisi) was opened as the first higher education institution established after the proclamation of the Republic. In this period when modernization and development in higher education accelerated, Law

School (Turkish: Hukuk Mektebi) in 1925, Higher Agricultural Institute (Turkish: Yüksek Ziraat Enstitüsü) in 1933 and Faculty of Languages, History-Geography (Turkish: Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi) in 1935 were opened in Ankara, the capital of the newly established Republic of Türkiye (These three educational institutions later became Ankara University). In addition, with the decision of the Council of Ministers in 1927 to gain qualification in higher education, the practice that allowed those who did not finish high school to enter Darülfünun and other higher schools were ended. In 1933, due to its hostile attitude towards reforms (UNESCO, 1990, p. 6), Istanbul Darülfünun was abolished, and today's Istanbul University was established as the first university of the new Turkish Republic (CoHE, 2019b, p. 9). With the establishment of Istanbul University, words such as “university”, “faculty”, “rector” and “dean” were added to the literature on higher education in Türkiye for the first time (UNESCO, 1990, p. 6). At this point, it should be noted that a dual system in higher education, in the form of "professional" schools and universities, prevailed both in the Ottoman Empire and in the Republic of Türkiye until 1982 (Erden, 2006, p. 8). At the point reached today, the Turkish Higher Education system with its 202 universities shows an extraordinary development to reach its goals rapidly.

In the following section, the analysis of Turkish higher education institutions is made in detail.

2.2. Analysis of Higher Education Institutions

As of 2020, 202 Higher Education Institutions are offering 4-year undergraduate education in Türkiye (CoHE, 2020b). Among these 202 universities, Anka Technology University, Istanbul Health and Technology

University (Semerkand Science and Civilization University⁶), Türkiye International Islam, Science and Technology University and Turkish-Japanese Science and Technology University have not started their activities yet as of the 2019-2020 academic year.

If we analyze these universities according to their foundation years,

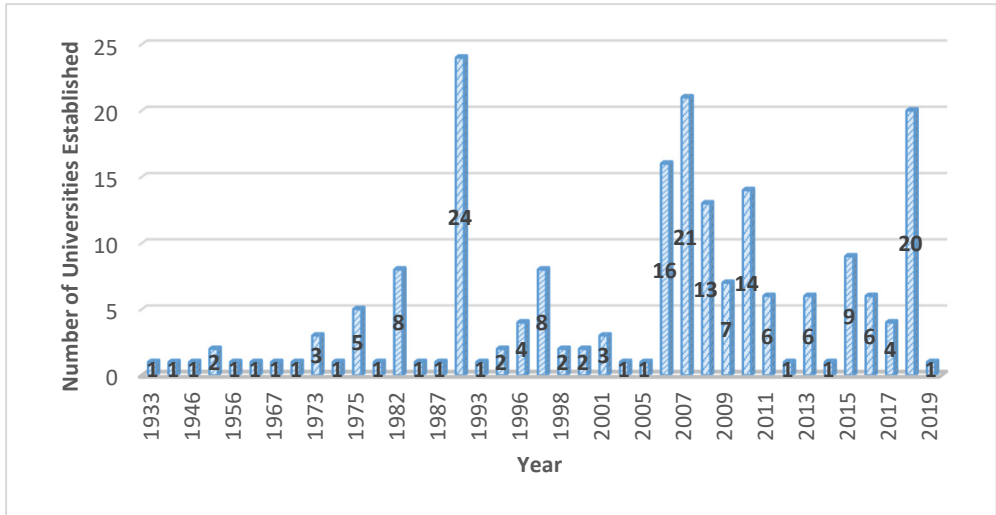


Fig 1. Numbers of Universities Established (by Years)

In the university adventure of the Turkish Higher Education system, which started with the establishment of Istanbul University in 1933, the 1950s were reached with three universities with the establishment of Istanbul Technical University in 1944 and Ankara University in 1946; after that with the establishment of Ege University and Karadeniz Technical University in 1955, Middle East Technical University in 1956, and Atatürk University in 1957, the number of universities continued to increase according to population density and hinterland size.

⁶ The name of Semerkand Science and Civilization University was changed to Istanbul Health and Technology University with Article 13 of the Law No. 7226 on Amending Certain Laws. (Resmi Gazete, 2020).

Hacettepe University in 1967, Boğaziçi University in 1971, Dicle University in 1973 and İnönü University in 1975 were added to these seven universities (CoHE, 2019b, p. 10). Higher education was reshaped with the establishment of CoHE in the 1980s in Türkiye, where French and German models until the 1950s and later American models, albeit in limited numbers, modelled the higher education system with mimetic and normative mechanisms (Erden, 2006, pp. 8–9). After the establishment of CoHE, Anadolu University, Akdeniz University, Dokuz Eylül University, Trakya University, Van 100. Yıl University, Gazi University, and Marmara University were established in 1982 (CoHE, 2019b, p. 10).

This growth policy based on regional size and population density had continued gradually until the 1990s. In 1984, Bilkent University, Türkiye's first foundation university, was established.

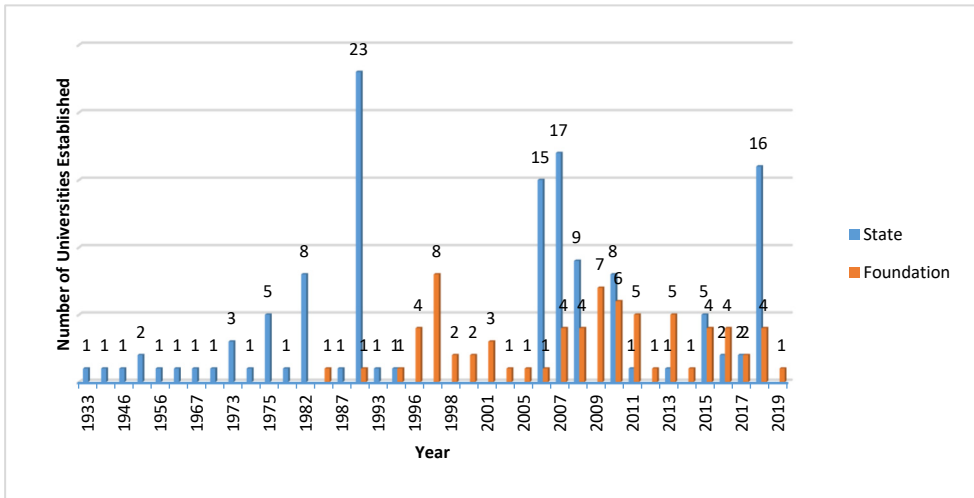


Fig 2. Numbers of State and Foundation Universities Established (by Years)

By 1992, the size of the universities established until that time had been almost doubled, and with the establishment of 24 new universities, a new era was started in terms of higher education in Türkiye.

Between 1992 and 2006, the trend of foundation universities started in higher education, and the total number of universities had reached 77 at the end of 2005, with 22 foundation universities established in this period.

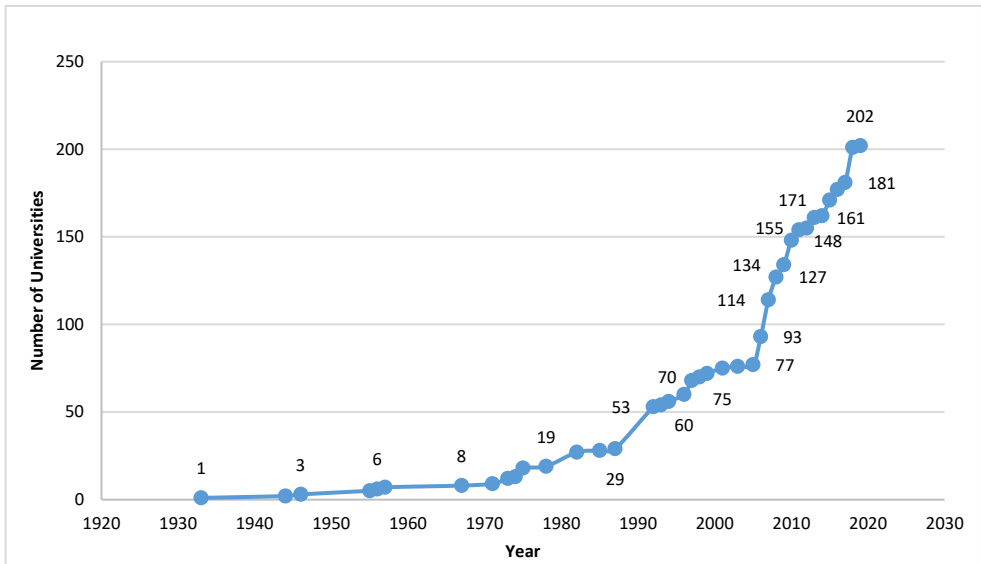


Fig 3. Total Numbers of Universities by Years

As of 2006, as a state policy within the framework of the policy of expanding higher education, 15 state universities were established in 2006, 17 in 2007, and 9 in 2008, due to the desire to establish a university in each province. With foundation universities established in the following years, and establishment of 16 new universities as a result of the division of well-established universities reaching a certain size in 2018, the number of universities had been reached 202 (129 state universities and 73 foundation universities) to 2020.

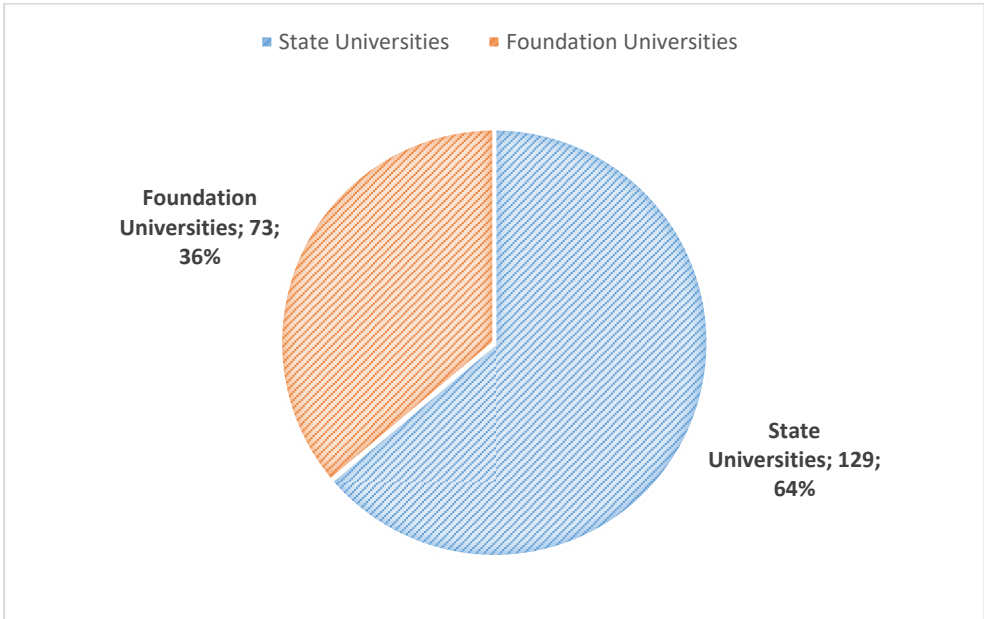


Fig 4. Numbers of State and Foundation Universities

As can be seen in Figure 4, 64% of universities are state universities, and 36% are foundation universities. According to Article 130 of the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye, which emphasizes the need for a balanced spread of universities throughout the country, universities are established by the State by law, and foundation universities cannot be for-profit purposes and are subject to the supervision and control of the State like state universities (TBMM, 1982, p. 25).

As it can be understood from the explanations so far, the transformation process of higher education started in Türkiye as in all over the world in the 2000s, and the field of higher education has expanded continuously. The student body has diversified, and the number of foundation universities has increased (CoHE, 2019b, p. 10).

When this development of universities is considered in terms of the number of instructors and faculty member per student; it is seen in Table 1 that the

increasing density of universities and students is relatively parallel in terms of the number of instructors, but the increase in the number of faculty member has not caught this momentum.

Table 1. Increase in the Number of Universities on the Basis of Academic Staff and Students

YEAR	NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES			NUMBER OF FACULTY MEMBERS	NUMBER OF INSTRUCTORS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS*	FACULTY MEMBER-STUDENTS RATIO	INSTRUCTOR-STUDENTS RATIO
	State	Foundation	Total					
1950	3	-	3	1950		24815	1: 12.73	
1967	8	-	8	6786		123683	1: 18.23	
1975	18	-	18	14445		321568	1: 22.26	
1984	27	-	27	6826	20333	335165	1: 49.10	1: 16.48
1992	51	2	53	11491	34280	927251	1: 80.69	1: 27.05
2005	53	24	77	30668	79555	2299421	1: 74.98	1: 28.90
2008	94	33	127	37820	96105	2876778	1: 76.06	1: 29.93
2015	109	62	171	68342	147969	3611406	1: 52.84	1: 24.40
2020	129	73	202	86176	174494	3823435	1: 44.37	1: 21.91

***ONLY FORMAL EDUCATION STUDENT NUMBERS ARE USED. OPEN EDUCATION STUDENT NUMBERS ARE NOT INCLUDED.**

Source: DrDataStats.com (2021; "Yıllara Göre Türkiye'de Yükseköğretim Verileri (1923/24-2019/20)," <https://www.drdatastats.com/yillara-gore-turkiyede-yuksekogretim-verileri>, (Date of access: 06.01.2021); UNESCO (1990); Higher Education in Turkey, Monographs, (Der: L. C. Barrows), UNESCO-CEPES; CoHE (2020c); "Yükseköğretim Bilgi Yönetim Sistemi," <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr>.

The distribution of these 202 universities by cities and regions is shown in Figure 5.

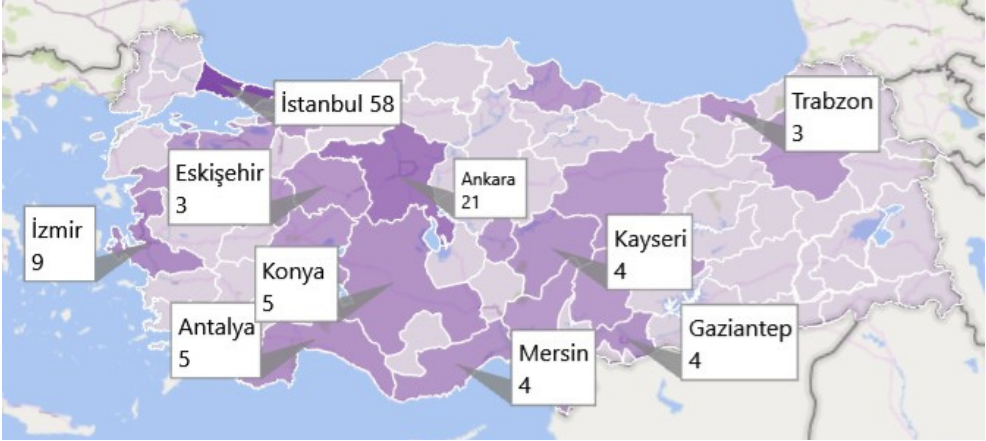


Fig 5. Distribution of Universities by Cities

İstanbul is the locomotive of higher education in Türkiye, with 58 universities. Following İstanbul, Ankara is the second-largest university city with 21 universities. Following these two big cities with well-established universities, İzmir with 9 universities, Antalya and Konya with 5 universities each, Gaziantep, Kayseri, and Mersin with 4 four universities each, and Eskişehir and Trabzon have 3 universities each are the leading university cities of Türkiye. In addition to these, Adana, Afyonkarahisar, Balıkesir, Bursa, Erzurum, Hatay, Isparta, Kahramanmaraş, Kocaeli, Kütahya, Malatya, Nevşehir, Sakarya, Samsun, and Sivas provinces each have two universities, while there is no province without a university in Türkiye.

Although universities in Turkish higher education are classified as 1923-1946 period, 1946-1981 period, and post-1981 period, which generally express significant structural changes (Sargın, 2007, p. 136), universities are classified as 1923-1950 (3 universities), 1951-1980 (16 universities), 1981-1990 (10

universities), 1991-2005 (48 universities), 2006-2017 (104 universities) and after 2018 (21 universities) in this book.

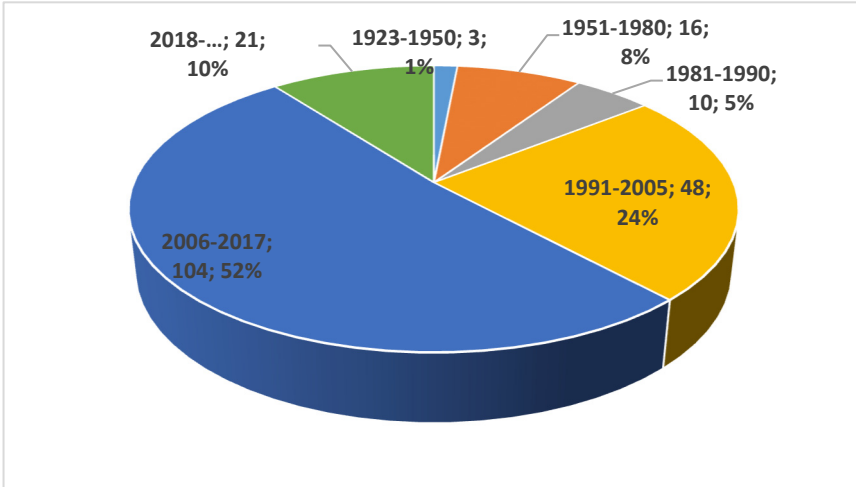


Fig 6. Classification of Universities According to the Years of Establishment

As shown in Figure 6, the number of universities, 29 in 1990, reached 77 in 2005 and 181 in 2017, completing its spread throughout the country. In 2018, the number of universities had been reached 202. When these values are considered, it is possible to say that the classification in the Turkish Higher Education system as mentioned above becomes clear automatically.

On the other hand, in this conceptual analysis of universities, it is necessary to mention the information of a small number of Turkish universities in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings and Times Higher Education Index (THE) rankings, which are among the university ranking lists accepted around the world.

Table 2. Turkish Universities in the QS World University Rankings

Ranking	University
465	Koç University
521-530	Sabancı University
551-560	Bilkent University
601-650	Middle East Technical University
651-700	Boğaziçi University
751-800	İstanbul Technical University
801-1000	Ankara University
801-1000	Hacettepe University
801-1000	İstanbul University

Source: QS Quacquarelli Symonds (2020); "QS World University Rankings 2021: Top Global Universities," <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2021>.

Table 3. Turkish Universities in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings

Ranking	University
401–500	Çankaya University
401–500	Sabancı University
501–600	Bilkent University
501–600	Hacettepe University
501–600	Koç University
601–800	Boğaziçi University
601–800	İstanbul Technical University
601–800	Middle East Technical University
801–1000	Atılım University
801–1000	İstanbul University
801–1000	Karabük University
1001+	Acıbadem University
1001+	Akdeniz University

1001+	Anadolu University
1001+	Ankara University
1001+	Bahçeşehir University
1001+	Başkent University
1001+	Çukurova University
1001+	Dokuz Eylül University
1001+	Ege University
1001+	Erciyes University
1001+	Gazi University
1001+	Gaziantep University
1001+	Gebze Technical University
1001+	İstanbul Medipol University
1001+	Izmir Institute of Technology
1001+	Marmara University
1001+	Ondokuz Mayıs University
1001+	Selçuk University
1001+	Süleyman Demirel University
1001+	TOBB University of Economics and Technology
1001+	Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University
1001+	Yeditepe University
1001+	Yıldız Technical University

Source: Times Higher Education (2020); "World University Rankings 2020," https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2020/world-ranking#!/page/0/length/25/locations/TR/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/stats.

3. Theoretical Framework of Quality Management in Turkish Higher Education

Each country has a unique context for quality assurance due to many factors; geography, population size, demography, economic level, human capacity, education system and quality assurance needs. Therefore, these countries first evaluate their local needs and available resources, they learn from international experiences such as International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies (INQAAHE), The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and adapt them in the second step, and they establish their quality assurance systems that meet their national and regional demands in the third and last step (Arain et al., 2013, pp. 67–68).

According to Rakic (2001), after conceptualized organizational space and isomorphism in the institutional theory literature, several indicators such as student mobility and quality assurance reflect the convergence between national higher education systems, regardless of the differences between the structures of higher education systems of EU member states (Cai & Mehari, 2015).

Within the scope of this convergence, the studies of European countries to create a common European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and European Research Area (ERA) have been shaped by the Bologna process. Following these developments, the studies have been developed by supported with transition studies to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) within the Qualifications Frameworks in the European Higher Education Area (QF-

EHEA) and harmonization processes with the European Higher Education Quality Assurance System. The studies carried out in this framework have generally focused on strengthening European higher education, raising the quality levels, and establishing quality assurance systems in higher education systems with commonly accepted standards (CoHE, 2019a). As a result, Europe now has an advanced and sophisticated quality assurance environment combining regional (European) and national frameworks, standards, principles and institutions (Matei & Iwinska, 2016, p. 7).

Within the scope of Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), each country sets quality assurance standards suitable for its education system and evaluates its education systems in the light of these standards. In the same context, countries establish quality agencies to evaluate the quality improvement activities of higher education institutions and ensure that the quality levels of higher education institutions are determined by external evaluators (CoHE, 2019a).

In this context, the most appropriate system that Türkiye can take as a role model or integrate its own higher education system is the European Higher Education system, regardless of the regional area it is in or the EU membership processes it is trying to maintain politically. Unlike the USA, Canada, or Australia, which are among the world's leading countries in higher education (where the government has only a reduced role in quality assurance in these three countries), the state is the primary source of funding for higher education (for state universities) in Europe, as in Türkiye. The state has a decisive role in the higher education system and the quality system in higher education, from the adoption to implementation and supervision of regulations (Matei & Iwinska, 2016, p. 7).

At this point, it would not be wrong to say that Türkiye has failed to show the necessary progress in the studies carried out in the period starting in the 90s in Europe, until the establishment of the ESG in 2005 and then the official establishment of the EHEA in 2010. Universities in Türkiye have started to establish a quality assurance system, like universities in developed countries, only with the internationalization and quality strategies in higher education followed by the political authority in recent years. Mizikaci (2006, p. 64) made the following determinations for Turkish Higher Education in her work titled Higher Education in Türkiye, which he prepared for UNESCO;

“...Some universities are of very high quality with an excellent research and graduate reputation, while many others are little more than secondary schools. ... While belated, the rise of quality assurance and accreditation systems at the national level was inevitable. So far, however, fresh initiatives are scarce.”

Indeed, the studies carried out in terms of quality management in higher education in Türkiye until 2001 had consisted of individual studies at the faculty level that started in the mid-90s and a limited number of accreditation applications.

In these years, when the implementation of the quality improvement standards system (such as ISO 9000 standardization) and/or quality principles at administrative levels was considered sufficient to establish a quality management system, the current confusion about how to implement quality management in a university has also been experienced in Türkiye (Mizikaci, 2006, p. 65).

Although official national initiatives were made in this process, these initiatives could not be concluded. In 1997, the Turkish University Quality Assessment Project was carried out as a pilot project in cooperation with CoHE

and the British Consulate, and within this scope, 13 departments from 8 universities in different fields were included. Within the scope of the project, an opening conference, two workshops, four study tours, and two pilot evaluations were held, and in the light of the results obtained, a feasibility report was prepared for the establishment of a quality assurance system similar to that in OECD and EU countries at universities in Türkiye. The project was aimed to initiate studies on improving the quality of universities in Türkiye, increasing their traceability and accreditation, and establishing a quality assurance system through self-evaluation, peer review, performance evaluation, reporting of results, and establishing a national quality office. However, the project has not been implemented (CoHE, 2007, p. 102).

Within the scope of the "Pre-Service Teacher Training of the National Education Development Project" (EPDAD, 2016, p. 1) carried out in cooperation with CoHE and the World Bank in 1998, studies were initiated to establish an accreditation system that could be applied for education faculties and set an example in the higher education system (CoHE, 1999). Within the framework of the project, the book "Standards and Accreditation in Teacher Education in Turkey" was prepared by the CoHE Accreditation Working Group and project consultants, which tries to reveal an accreditation model for the Turkish higher education context. Although standards were determined, evaluation tools were developed, and pilot accreditation visits were made to faculties with this study, the studies were left unfinished due to the end of the project and some other reasons (EPDAD 2016, p. 1; Mizikaci 2006, p. 65; CoHE, 1999).

As a result of Türkiye's participation in the Bologna Process in 2001, the first systematic studies on quality assurance in the Turkish higher education system started. Within the scope of the Bologna Process, the integration studies

of higher education institutions into the EHEA were firstly carried out among academic programs (EURYDICE 2020, p. 1; CoHE, 2019b, p. 19).

In 2002, with the Regulation on Academic Evaluation and Quality Control in Higher Education Institutions, the concept of Internal Evaluation entered the Turkish Higher Education System. With the regulation, the Commission for Academic Evaluation and Quality Control in Higher Education, whose members were selected from UAK's members, was established by UAK. Additionally, with the regulation, universities had been obliged to submit their Institutional Internal Evaluation Reports to the Commission by the end of April 2003, according to the criteria determined by the Commission, and share them with the public (ÜAK, 2002).

In 2004, the "National Team of Bologna Experts" was first formed within the framework of systematic studies within the body of CoHE, and through this commission, studies were performed to raise awareness about what needs to be done in the process of harmonization of higher education with the EHEA. Six projects contributed by the National Team of Bologna Experts, by organizing research, seminars, workshops, conferences, and field visits, under the coordination of CoHE and the Turkish National Agency, have been completed so far (CoHE, 2019a, p. 19).

The first official initiative that succeeded in terms of quality in Türkiye, to establish quality standards in higher education and to ensure international compatibility in this field, was to establish Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement Commission (YÖDEK) with "Regulation of Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions" (CoHE, 2005) in accordance with ESG (*Avrupa Yükseköğrenim Alanında Kalite Güvencesi Standartları ve Yönergeleri (ESG) (Türkçe Versiyon)*, 2015; Durman, 2005; ENQA, 2009) by CoHE in 2005 with the basic aim of

developing and evaluating the quality of education, training and research activities. During this period, the Higher Education Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement Guide (Yükseköğretim Kurumlarında Akademik Değerlendirme ve Kalite Geliştirme Rehberi, 2006; Yükseköğretim Kurumlarında Akademik Değerlendirme ve Kalite Geliştirme Rehberi, 2007) was created and published by defining the necessary processes and performance indicators for the academic assessment and quality improvement studies of universities to be carried out systematically (EURYDICE, 2018). In addition, higher education institutions were expected to implement quality assurance and assessment systems by preparing the Academic Evaluation Commission (ADEK) report.

With the YÖDEK Regulation, the task of the Academic Evaluation and Quality Control Commission in Higher Education, which was previously established within the UAK, came to an end. Despite this, the Institutional Internal Evaluation system has been further developed, and its rules have been clearly defined. In addition to the Institutional Internal Evaluation system, the concept of Institutional External Evaluation has also been made official in higher education, and it has been stated that higher education institutions can obtain Quality Certificates from independent quality institutions by having an external evaluation for their education, training, research activities and administrative services (CoHE, 2005). In this period, it was not possible to talk about organizations that can make this evaluation in its current sense in Türkiye. Evaluation meant by the regulation was the certification of management or laboratory services such as ISO 9000, and program accreditations made by international organizations and the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Engineering Programs (MÜDEK) in those years.

YÖDEK became a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in 2007 (YÖDEK, 2019; CoHE, 2019b). YÖDEK, which is the first quality initiative of the Turkish higher education system at the national level, operated as the YÖDEK Commission under CoHE until 2015, but it could not obtain an independent institution status (THEQC, 2019a, p. 10).

Another notable development in this period is the initiation of national qualifications framework studies in Türkiye to implement the decisions taken at the Bergen Meeting in 2005. In this framework, the Commission of Qualifications for Higher Education was established in 2006. A draft National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was developed for associate, bachelor, master and doctorate levels in line with the Qualifications Framework for the European Union Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). As a result of the studies carried out with different working groups during the process, the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Türkiye (NQF-HETR) was fully accepted in 2010. The process of referencing the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) was initiated by the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) in 2014. Then, it was decided at the meeting held in Brussels in 2017 that TQF was referenced to the EQF (CoHE, 2019b, pp. 19–20).

In addition, the regulation of diploma supplement (DS) applications developed to recognize higher education institutions in the field of EHEA separately for associate, bachelor, master and doctorate degrees was made compulsory by CoHE in 2005 (CoHE, 2021).

In another development in this period, the "Public Financial Management and Control Law" numbered 5018 in 2003 and the "Regulation on Procedures and Principles Regarding Strategic Planning in Public Administrations" in 2006

as the secondary legislation of this Law was published, within the framework of harmonization with the EU *acquis*. With the regulation, it was made obligatory for all public administrations to make their medium and long-term goals, basic principles and policies, targets and priorities, performance criteria, the methods to be followed to achieve them and the allocation of resources within a strategic plan (5018 Sayılı Kamu Malî Yönetimi ve Kontrol Kanunu, 2003; Kamu İdarelerinde Stratejik Planlamaya İlişkin Usul ve Esaslar Hakkında Yönetmelik, 2006).

By 2010, there were very few countries in the world that had not developed national programs for quality assurance in higher education (Reisberg, 2010, p. 7) and the system tried to be developed in Türkiye had not been fully functioning. In this period, Türkiye's high success in terms of access to higher education and schooling rate in higher education made it necessary to bring growth in terms of qualification and quality to this horizontal and numerical growth (CoHE, 2019b, p. 5).

With these quality-oriented studies of CoHE, 73 universities in Türkiye (22.5% of all fields) received the Diploma Supplement label between 2009 and 2013, while 31 universities (35% of all fields) received the ECTS label. These projects carried out within the scope of the Bologna process formed the basis for the quality assurance processes (THEQC, 2019a, p. 10).

The most important of these projects is the "Implementation and Sustainability of EHEA Reforms in Turkish Higher Education System (Turquas) Project" carried out between 2016-2019 in the scope of the Erasmus+ Program (CoHE, 2019b, p. 19). Within the scope of the project, six work packages were concluded, namely the implementation of the Higher Education Qualifications Framework, quality assurance practices in higher education, workload-based recognition, student workload-based crediting (ECTS), ensuring the quality assurance of the project, and dissemination and use of the project results (CoHE, 2019c).

It would be appropriate to evaluate these developments until 2015 as the coercive formal pressures applied to universities by the Republic of Türkiye through CoHE within the framework of European Union studies in Türkiye.

According to Institutional Theory, nation-states often exert coercive pressure and impose their frameworks on higher education systems (Scott, 2001; Scott & Meyer, 1994). The argument for coercion by political and legal environments as a source of institutional isomorphism (Dacin et al., 2002; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) is seen in these formal pressures.

However, all these coercive pressures did not generally find meaning due to both a social structure in which culturally informal relations are established and the irregularity or uncertainty in the operation of control and sanction mechanisms (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 342).

In the specified period, in addition to these coercive pressures, there is also the existence of mimetic and normative mechanisms, albeit to a lesser extent.

In the developments experienced within the framework of mimetic mechanisms, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) applications which can be considered as the starting point of quality assessment systems in Turkish higher education come the first. This American accreditation body includes the accreditation process of engineering programs. The first ABET evaluation in Türkiye was the evaluation process that started to evaluate the bachelor programs of the Chemical Engineering and Mining Engineering Departments of the METU Faculty of Engineering in 1993. In the ABET process, METU was followed by Bilkent University, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul Technical University and TRNC Eastern Mediterranean University (METU, 2021).

The studies that started with the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) principles in Marmara University Engineering Faculty in 1995 (Marmara Üniversitesi, 2021) continued in many universities.

Another development within the framework of mimetic mechanisms is the evaluation processes of some universities within the scope of the Institutional Evaluation Program (IEP), which started as the Quality Culture Project of the European University Association (EUA). Voluntary evaluations that started with Boğaziçi University (1998 – 1999), continued with Marmara University (2000 – 2001), Middle East Technical University (2001 – 2002), Uludağ University (2002 – 2003), Istanbul Technical University (2003 – 2004), Erciyes University (2003 – 2004) and Ankara University (2004 – 2005), reaching 45 universities as of today (EUA IEP, 2021; IEP, 2021; Visakorpi et al., 2008, p. 51).

On the other hand, as normative mechanisms in terms of quality assurance in the Turkish Higher Education system, the evaluation of engineering programs that started with the Engineering Evaluation Board formed by the Engineering Deans Council (MDK) in 2002, this board's attaining the status of an association in 2007 (MÜDEK) and a subsequent follow-up in other fields. In this way, the evaluation studies and associations spread.

If we take a closer look, within the framework of the impact of the accreditation movement that started with ABET, an independent platform called the Engineering Evaluation Board was established in 2002 by the Engineering Deans Council (MDK), which consists of the deans of the faculties providing engineering education in Türkiye and the TRNC. The board started evaluating engineering programs in 2003 and was restructured as the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Engineering Programs (MÜDEK) in 2007 (MÜDEK, 2021). MÜDEK's successful work has encouraged the establishment of new accreditation bodies focusing on various disciplines and programs (THEQC, 2019a, p. 10): the Architecture Accreditation Board (MİAK) (MİAK, 2021) in 2007, the Association For

Evaluation and Accreditation of Programs in Faculties Of Science, Arts, Arts And Science, Letter And History-Geography (FEDEK)(FEDEK, 2021) and the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Medical Education Programs (TEPDAD) (TEPDAD, 2021) were established in 2010.

All these pressure mechanisms (coercive, mimetic and normative) have aimed at realizing institutional change in the implementation of quality management of universities in Türkiye since the mid-1990s in an integrated and mutually supportive manner. However, it is seen that higher education institutions could not keep up with the TQM practices, which underwent a rapid expansion in the industry under the leadership of the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD) and the Turkish Society for Quality (KalDer) in the 1990s. On the other hand, Türkiye could not achieve the desired level of success in the studies carried out in the period that started in Europe in the 90s, until the establishment of the ESG in 2005 and then the official establishment of the EHEA in 2010. Therefore, it is considered that this institutional change tried to be realized, had not been realized. In other words, it is not possible to say that the efforts to institutionalize quality management in Turkish higher education have been successful as of the specified period.

In this period, the confusion in the literature about how quality management could be applied in a university has an impact on the failure of quality management to be institutionalized. However, despite all these confusions, studies in this direction were also insufficient in these periods when quality standards (ISO 9000) or only program accreditation were considered sufficient to establish a quality management system. So, a national quality management system could not be developed in the field of higher education.

The contribution of the fact that the quantitative growth studies in the Turkish higher education system were only completed in this period (1990-2015) in the failure of this institutionalisation appears like an undeniable reality. Because the number of universities, which was 29 in 1987, increased to

53 in 1992, 77 in 2005, 148 in 2010 and 171 in 2015. In other words, from 1987 to 2015, a growth of 590% was achieved, and it is not possible to institutionalize quality management at the same time in a higher education system where this quantitative growth takes place.

By 2015, the adoption of the current version of the ESG as a reference pointing to the criteria by which quality assurance agencies and activities in the EHEA were evaluated also means that a global paper on how quality management can be applied in higher education has been developed. In this period, CoHE's goal of access to higher education and, accordingly, quantitative and horizontal growth of higher education institutions resulted in success. Thus, a new era has started to implement differentiation policies in the form of quality-centred growth and the development of related processes to realize the qualitative growth target of the Turkish higher education system.

The failure to obtain the desired efficiency from the processes carried out by YÖDEK within the body of CoHE until 2015, and the need to establish a national quality assurance agency to systematically follow up the reform studies carried out, were the sources of these new policies. Within the framework of this new period, YÖDEK was abolished with a new regulation called "Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education" (CoHE, 2015) on 23.07.2015 and the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) was established within the body of CoHE (CoHE, 2019a; THEQC, 2019a, p. 7).

Thus, the quality assurance system in Türkiye has become a systematic national model, within the scope of the general model stated by Van Vught and Westerheijden (1994), following the international literature, based on; the establishment of THEQC as the national quality agency, the internal evaluation process carried out annually by the universities, an external evaluation process carried out regularly in every five years, and public reporting. This system has also been arranged to include accreditation and evaluation elements to

guarantee the quality of the learning outcomes determined on a program basis in the context of the "National Qualifications Framework" (CoHE, 2019a).

In the light of all these explanations, it would be appropriate to consider 2015, the year THEQC was founded, as a milestone for the Turkish Higher Education system. THEQC, which was established within the scope of Regulation on Higher Education Quality Assurance, has become a public institution with administrative and financial autonomy with the provisions added to the Higher Education Law in July 2017 (Resmi Gazete, 2017). With this date, the responsibility of providing quality assurance in the Turkish higher education system, which was given to the responsibility of CoHE with the Higher Education Law No. 2547 enacted in 1981, was transferred to THEQC (THEQC, 2019a, p. 9).

On the other hand, within the scope of the main project "Diversity: Specialization and Differentiation of Mission", based on the fact that universities cannot be the same except for basic values and teachings, and they should be structured with different thematic areas and different missions, it was decided to diversify in a structural sense and to direct some universities to education, some to research and technology production, and some to studies focused on contributing to regional development in 2016 (CoHE, 2020c, pp. 4–8).

3.1. THEQC Period in Turkish Higher Education

Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) is an administratively and financially autonomous national quality assurance agency and responsible for managing and monitoring the quality assurance dynamics of higher education institutions in Türkiye, analyzing education and research activities, administrative services, and accreditation in accordance with national and international quality standards, and making evaluations through authorized independent external evaluation institutions. The main responsibilities of

THEQC include carrying out the external evaluation of higher education institutions, authorizing independent accreditation institutions, and helping to internalize quality assurance in higher education as an institutional culture (EURYDICE, 2020, p. 1; THEQC, 2019a). In this context, the Turkish Higher Education Quality Assurance System consists of establishing and operating the internal quality assurance system in higher education, the institutional external evaluation program, the institutional accreditation program, and the program accreditation processes carried out by independent external evaluation and accreditation institutions.

Due to the structure of the system, higher education institutions have been required to establish quality assurance systems within their bodies, to set quality commissions to reinforce internal representation, participation and inclusion, and to submit annual internal evaluation reports to THEQC (CoHE, 2015; THEQC, 2018a). In addition, according to the Regulation, higher education institutions must be evaluated by THEQC at least once every five years as part of the Institutional External Evaluation Program (THEQC, 2019a, p. 11). Accordingly, the activity fields of THEQC are shaped as follows (THEQC, 2019a, p. 17):

1. Establishing and ensuring the effectiveness of internal and external quality assurance mechanisms in the higher education system,
2. Evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching, research and development, and governance systems of higher education institutions in accordance with national and international quality standards,
3. Recognition and authorization of independent external evaluation and accreditation bodies,
4. Internalization and dissemination of the quality assurance culture in the higher education system.

THEQC uses its own evaluation criteria developed by taking into account national (TQF and NQF-HETR) and international (ESG and EHEA) standards in addition to the "Plan-Do-Check-Act" cycles created by taking into account the ideas and comments of internal and external stakeholders while evaluating the quality of higher education institutions (THEQC, 2019a, pp. 18–21).

THEQC Quality Assurance System Evaluations are carried out in four categories and the criteria of these categories (Figure 7). These categories⁷ are “Leadership, Management And Quality”, “Learning and Teaching”, “Research and Development” and “Social Contribution” categories (THEQC, 2022e).

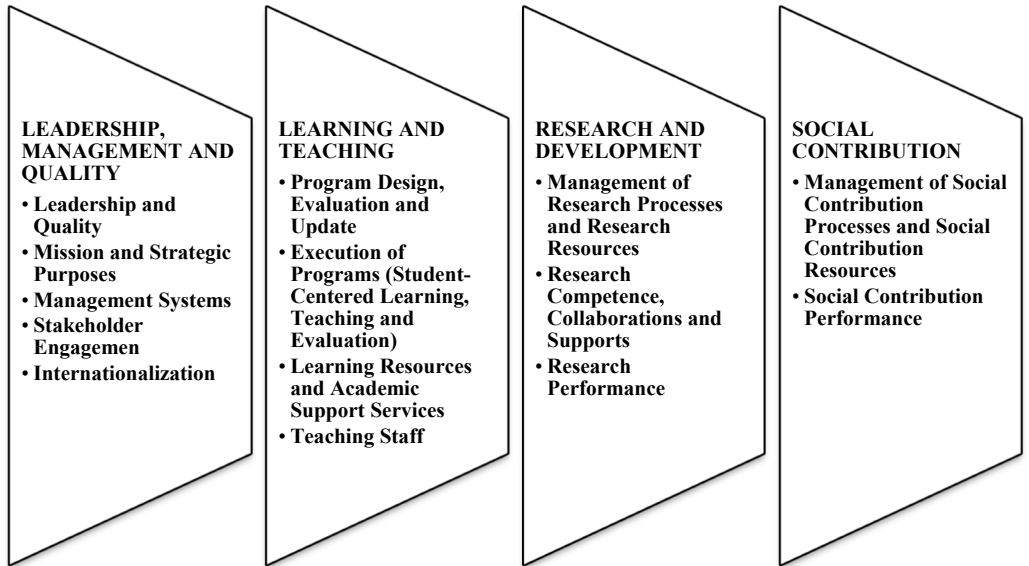


Fig 7. THEQC Quality Assurance System Categories and Criteria

Source: THEQC (2022e); "Kurumsal Dış Değerlendirme ve Akreditasyon Ölçütleri (Sürüm 3.0)," YÖKAK, Ankara.

⁷ THEQC constantly updates its guidelines and criteria. The new guide is External Evaluation and Accreditation Guide 3.0 which published in 2022. In the previous guide (External Evaluation Guide 2.0) the titles were quality assurance system, education and training, research and development, social contribution and management system (THEQC, 2021a)

On the other hand, with the awareness that the information systems related to quality assurance are often fragile, data is scarce, and computer-aided solutions are not readily available in higher education institutions in developing countries (Martin, 2018, p. 25), THEQC started to create a "Quality Assurance Management Information System - QAMIS" in 2018. QAMIS has various user interfaces, including higher education institutions, external evaluation teams, accreditation institutions and THEQC members. While QAMIS provides an online platform for evaluators and quality commission members, it facilitates monitoring improvements in higher education institutions by years (THEQC, 2019a, pp. 18–20).

THEQC, which was established in 2015, gained independent status in 2017 and created awareness on quality among higher education institutions, updated its quality assurance regulation in 2018, and redefined its structure and duties (THEQC, 2018a, 2019a, pp. 12–17):

1. To determine national policies and strategies regarding quality assurance in the higher education system and to share them with the public,
2. To carry out activities for the development and dissemination of quality culture in the higher education system,
3. To encourage the establishment of internal quality assurance systems in higher education institutions and to guide higher education institutions in this regard,
4. To monitor the studies on higher education quality assurance systems at the national and international levels, and to carry out collaborative studies at the national and international levels,
5. To determine the principles, quality indicators, and rules to be applied in external evaluation and accreditation,

6. To make an external evaluation of the quality levels of education, research and development, social contribution and administrative services of higher education institutions at least once in five years and to evaluate higher education programs, when necessary,
7. To evaluate and monitor the activities of higher education institutions within the scope of mission differentiation and specialization program, and present the relevant results to the CoHE,
8. To organize events and make publications to inform higher education institutions about the processes to be applied in external evaluation and accreditation,
9. To evaluate the institutional feedback reports of higher education institutions after the external evaluation process, prepare and publish the Higher Education Quality Assurance Status Report every year, including recommendations for quality improvements, and present it to the information of the relevant stakeholders, especially the CoHE,
10. To operate in the fields of external evaluation and accreditation, to evaluate the registration applications of private law legal entities applying for registration within the framework of principles and rules determined, to monitor the activities of these institutions, to obtain information when necessary, and to warn them when necessary, or to cancel their registrations,
11. To represent Türkiye under the supervision of international organizations on quality assurance in higher education,
12. To cooperate with the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) on issues related to the higher education quality assurance system,
13. To evaluate the level of implementation of the provisions in the Procedures and Principles Regarding the Quality Assurance of the Qualifications to be Included in the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) in higher education institutions.

THEQC is a member of European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), Council for Higher Education Accreditation / International Quality Group (CHEA / CIQG) and Association of Quality Assurance Agencies of the Islamic World (AQAAIW) (EURYDICE, 2020; THEQC, 2021b, 2021c). THEQC also applied to the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) in 2019, but the acceptance process has not yet been concluded. The evaluation status of THEQC on this topic is “A country-wide Quality Assurance system is implemented, but it has not (yet) been fully aligned with the ESG” (European Commission, 2020). According to EQAR, the application process is expected to be completed in 2021 (EQAR, 2020).

The Republic of Türkiye, which reflects its aim of entering the European Union in its basic policies for nearly 50 years, has not shown the desired and idealised development in the field of Higher Education. However, it has achieved European standards in various fields, and the establishment of THEQC was one of the important steps of the State that wants to change this situation. The success of THEQC in its studies and the integration of the Turkish Higher Education system into the EHEA are among the priorities of the Republic of Türkiye. In this framework, the statements “The higher education system will be made to have a globally competitive, quality-oriented and dynamic structure, and practices aimed at increasing the qualifications of higher education institutions will be continued” in the Eleventh Development Plan (2019-2023) of the Republic of Türkiye (*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti 11. Kalkınma Planı (2019-2023)*, 2019) highlight the support given to quality studies.

As of the point reached, within the scope of all these studies, the comparison of the last three reports regarding Türkiye's Bologna Process implementation in the Bologna Process Implementation Reports, that is, the progress Türkiye has shown, is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Bologna Process Türkiye Implementation Report

Title	2015 Report	2018 Report (2016/2017)	2020 Report (2018/2019)
Stage of implementation of ECTS	Almost all criteria are met	All criteria are met	All criteria are met
Stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement	Almost all criteria are met	All criteria are met	All criteria are met
Stage of implementation of national qualification frameworks	Almost all criteria are met	All criteria are met	All criteria are met
Level of student participation in external quality assurance system	Only one criteria is met / None	Some criteria are met	Almost all criteria are met
Level of international participation in external quality assurance	Some criteria are met	Only one criterion is met / None	Almost all criteria are met
Level of openness to cross border quality assurance activity of agencies registered to EQAR	Some criteria are met	All criteria are met	All criteria are met
Stage of development of external quality assurance system	Some criteria are met	A nationwide Quality Assurance system is in place but not (yet) fully aligned with ESG.	A nationwide Quality Assurance system is in place but not (yet) fully aligned with ESG
Measures to support the access of under-represented groups to higher education	Some criteria are met	Only one criteria is met / None	Some criteria are met (Two of the four criteria)
Recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning	Some criteria are met	None of the criteria is met / Data not available	Almost all criteria are met
Measures to support the retention and completion of students from under-represented groups	New	Only one criterion is met / None	Only one criterion is met / None
Portability of public grants and publicly-subsidised loans	None of the criteria is met / Data not available	None of the criteria is met / Data not available	Some criteria are met (Portability for credit mobility, without restrictions. No portability for degree mobility or not all major support measures are portable for degree mobility)
Supporting the mobility of students from under-represented groups	None of the criteria is met / Data not available	Only one criterion is met / None	Some criteria are met (Two of the four criteria)

Source: European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2018); The European Higher Education Area in 2018: Bologna Process Implementation Report European Education, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.; (2020); The European Higher Education Area in 2020: Bologna Process Implementation Report, Luxembourg.; THEQC (2019a); Self-Assessment Report Of Higher Education Quality Council of Turkey (THEQC), YÖKAK, Ankara, p. 9-10.

All criteria have been met in the stage of ECTS implementation, the stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement, the stage of implementation of national qualification frameworks and the level of openness to cross-border quality assurance activities of EQAR registered agencies. Almost all criteria have been met in the level of student participation in the external quality assurance system, the level of international participation in external quality assurance, and recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning. Measures to support the access of under-represented groups to higher education, the portability of public grants and publicly subsidized loans, and supporting the mobility of students from under-represented groups have already been met. Only one criterion is met under the heading “Measures to support the retention and completion of students from underrepresented groups”. Under the heading “The stage of development of external quality assurance system”, it is stated that “A nationwide Quality Assurance system is in place but not (yet) fully aligned with the ESG”.

THEQC, which tries to ensure the ESG criteria to be met fully by developing the Turkish higher education system in the subjects covered under these headings, annually submits the Institutional Self-Evaluation Reports (ISERs) prepared by higher education institutions for the previous year and Institutional Feedback Reports (IFRs) prepared by the evaluation teams during the institutional external evaluation process (THEQC, 2019a, pp. 18–20). With these reports, the general situation of the Turkish higher education system is shared with the stakeholders and the public.

As the elements of the quality assurance system established by THEQC at the national level, the internal quality assurance system, institutional external evaluation program, institutional accreditation program and program accreditation should be analyzed under separate headings.

3.1.1. Establishment of Internal Quality Assurance System in Higher Education Institutions

The first task of THEQC is to establish an internal quality system that will help higher education institutions achieve their mission and goals. With the Regulation on Higher Education Quality Assurance, all Higher Education institutions are required to establish and implement quality assurance systems (CoHE, 2015). Moreover, all higher education institutions must prepare ISER for the previous year and share these reports with their stakeholders through their websites. These reports are also published on the THEQC official website (THEQC, 2019a, pp. 18–20).

Self-evaluation reports prepared by institutions are the primary data source regarding implementing the quality assurance system of institutions and guiding the external evaluation process (EURYDICE, 2020, p. 2).

The scope of self-evaluation reports, which can also be considered as the annual status report on the operation of the internal quality assurance system, is defined in the regulation, which was renewed in 2018 (THEQC, 2018a):

1. Higher Education Institutions prepare self-evaluation reports periodically every year and include improvements in the internal quality assurance system in the annual report.
2. The self-evaluation report of the Higher Education Institution should contain explanations on how the quality assurance processes in the institution are defined and operated, how it is ensured that the targeted qualifications in the curriculum are achieved, how performance indicators are monitored and how continuous improvement cycles are closed. This information should be supported by evidence.

3. A self-evaluation report to be prepared to cover education, research, social contribution activities and administrative services in a higher education institution should cover;
 - The quality policy, and the methods and processes followed, which are determined in the light of the national strategy and objectives of higher education and are compatible with the mission, vision and strategic goals of the institution
 - Administrative/organizational processes and activities implemented by the institution to achieve its mission and goals,
 - Internal quality assurance system, in which academic and administrative units evaluate key performance indicators and measurable targets to ensure that the institution achieves its mission and goals, and includes periodic review of these,
 - The improvement activities related to the fields that emerged in the previous internal and external evaluation and need to be improved.

It is very important to structure the internal quality assurance system established in a higher education institution in a way that is integrated with the vision, mission and strategic goals and includes all of the education and training, research, and social contribution activities and administrative services that support them.

3.1.2. Institutional External Evaluation Program

Within the framework of the THEQC Institutional External Evaluation Program, the evaluation process of higher education institutions is defined in the Regulation on Higher Education Quality Assurance (THEQC, 2018a). According to the Regulation, all higher education institutions in Türkiye (state universities, foundation universities and basic vocational higher schools) are required to submit annual self-evaluation reports to THEQC and be evaluated by THEQC at least once every five years as part of the Institutional External Evaluation Program

(EURYDICE, 2020, pp. 4–5). The Institutional External Evaluation Program includes the evaluation process consisting of a preliminary evaluation, site visit and preparation of the institutional feedback report through the internal evaluation report of the institution via external evaluators appointed by THEQC (THEQC, 2018a). This process is the evaluation of higher education institutions, integrated with ISER, based on the criteria specified in the Institutional External Evaluation and Accreditation Guide published by THEQC (THEQC, 2022e) under the titles⁸ of “Leadership, Management And Quality”, “Learning and Teaching”, “Research and Development” and “Social Contribution”.

Higher education institutions must undergo an external evaluation process at least once every five years (THEQC, 2019a, p. 17). Thus, the external evaluation process seeks to understand what a particular institution wants and how it challenges predetermined criteria to fulfil them. In this process, objectives, tasks and related strategic plans are examined. Institutional Feedback Reports are prepared for the evaluated institutions at the end of the external evaluation process carried out regularly by THEQC. The reports passing the consistency check of THEQC are then shared with the public on the website of THEQC. In the external evaluation processes, the focal points determined by THEQC are addressed in the dimensions of accountability, learning outcomes, transparency, evidence-based approach and innovation. The data obtained from these processes are among the important resources that higher education institutions use to improve their research, education and training, and social contribution and management processes (EURYDICE, 2020, p. 2).

The Institutional external evaluation program is carried out by peer evaluators appointed by THEQC to take part in the external evaluation processes of higher education institutions. An evaluator pool consisting of evaluators who had

⁸ In the previous guide (External Evaluation Guide 2.0) the titles were quality assurance system, education and training, research and development, social contribution and management system (THEQC, 2021a)

previously worked in accreditation institutions and gained experience in quality studies and candidates who applied to THEQC's first external evaluator application call was created within the scope of the assignment of evaluators for the first time in 2016. In the same year, after the first external evaluator training was given to the candidates in the evaluator pool, evaluation teams were formed among the successful candidates according to their experience and interest (THEQC, 2019a, pp. 18–20). Evaluator application calls and evaluator trainings are held by THEQC at regular intervals every year. As of 2019, there are 527 evaluators in the THEQC system (THEQC, 2020a, p. 20).

Between December 2015 and October 2019, THEQC organized 16 information and sharing meetings for higher education institutions, 11 evaluation and feedback meetings with institution managers and team leaders, five external evaluator trainings and four workshops (THEQC, 2020a, p. 20).

On the other hand, a Mentoring Program was launched for higher education institutions subject to external evaluation by THEQC in 2018 and 2019 to guide higher education institutions and transfer experiences in the institutional external evaluation program (THEQC, 2019a, pp. 18–20).

Within the scope of THEQC's institutional external evaluation program, 20 universities in 2016 (Table 5) (THEQC, 2016, 2017a, p. 23), 50 universities in 2017 (Table 6) (THEQC, 2017b, 2018b, p. 6), 44 universities in 2018 (Table 7) (THEQC, 2016, 2018c), 41 universities in 2019 (Table 8) (THEQC, 2019b, 2019c), 14 universities in 2020 (Table 9) (THEQC, 2019a, pp. 18–20, 2020a), and 13 universities in 2021 (Table 10) (THEQC, 2022c), a total of 182 universities were subjected to external evaluation process. Thus, the external evaluation processes of all universities that have graduated students have been completed (THEQC, 2020b). These universities are shown in Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 by years.

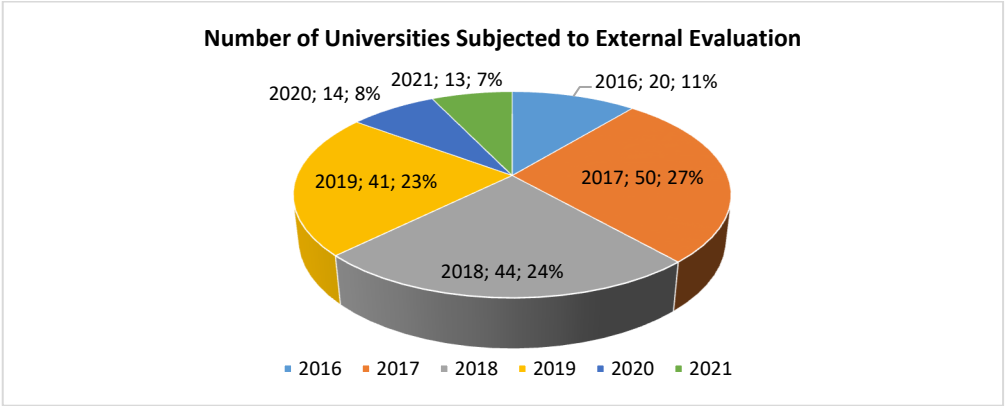


Fig 8. Distribution of Universities Subjected to External Evaluation Process by THEQC by Years

Table 5. Universities Subjected to External Evaluation by THEQC in 2016

University Name

Akdeniz University	İzmir University of Economics
Anadolu University	İzmir Katip Çelebi University
Atılım University	Kapadokya Vocational School ⁹
Bülent Ecevit University	Karadeniz Technical University
Düzce University	Mersin University
Erciyes University	Ömer Halisdemir University
Hacettepe University	Özyeğin University
İstanbul Medipol University	Sakarya University
İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	Selçuk University
İstanbul University	TED University

Source: THEQC (2016, 2017a); "YÖKAK 2016 Kurumsal Dış Değerlendirme Programı," <https://yokak.gov.tr/raporlar/kurumsal-geri-bildirim-2016-raporlari>, (Date of access: 07.07.2020).; "Yükseköğretim Değerlendirme ve Kalite Güvencesi 2016 Yılı Durum Raporu," [http://yokak.gov.tr/Common/Docs/Site_Activity_Reports/2016-Yükseköğretim Değerlendirme ve Kalite Güvencesi 2016 Yili Durum Raporu.pdf](http://yokak.gov.tr/Common/Docs/Site_Activity_Reports/2016-Yükseköğretim_Değerlendirme_ve_Kalite_Güvencesi_2016_Yili_Durum_Raporu.pdf).

⁹ Kapadokya Vocational School, which started education in the 2005-2006 academic year in Mustafapaşa Village of Nevşehir Province Ürgüp District with five programs and 68 students, turned into Kapadokya University with the law numbered 7033 published in the Resmî Gazete on 1 July 2017 (Kapadokya Üniversitesi, 2020; Resmi Gazete, 2017).

Table 6. Universities Subjected to External Evaluation by THEQC in 2017

University Name

Abant İzzet Baysal University	Gebze Technical University
Abdullah Gül University	İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University
Adıyaman University	İnönü University
Adnan Menderes University	İstanbul Aydın University
Afyon Kocatepe University	İstanbul Teknik University
Ahi Evran University	Izmir Institute of Technology
Ankara University	Koç University
Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University	Marmara University
Atatürk University	Mehmet Akif Ersoy University
Balıkesir University	Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University
Başkent University	Mustafa Kemal University
Bingöl University	Okan University
Boğaziçi University	Ondokuz Mayıs University
Bursa Technical University	Middle East Technical University
Cumhuriyet University	Osmaniye Korkut Ata University
Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University	Piri Reis University
Çankaya University	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University
Çukurova University	Süleyman Demirel University
Dicle University	Trakya University
Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi	Uludağ University
Ege University	Uşak University
Fırat University	Van Yüzüncü Yıl University
Gazi University	Yaşar University
Gaziantep University	Yeditepe Üniversitesi
Gaziosmanpaşa University	Yıldız Technical University

Source: THEQC (2017b); "YÖKAK 2017 Kurumsal Dış Değerlendirme Programı," <https://yokak.gov.tr/raporlar/kurumsal-geri-bildirim-2017-raporlari>.

Table 7. Universities Subjected to External Evaluation by THEQC in 2018**University Name**

Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	Demirođlu Bilim University
Ađrı İbrahim Çeçen University	İstanbul Kùltür University
Aksaray University	İstanbul Ticaret University
Altınbaş University	Kadir Has University
Amasya University	Kafkas University
Artvin Çoruh University	Kahramanmaraş Sùtçü İmam University
Bahçeşehir University	Kastamonu University
Batman University	Kocaeli University
Beykent University	Kto Karatay University
Bilecik Şeyh Edebalı University	Kùtahya Dumlupınar University
Çađ University	Maltepe University
Dođuş University	Manisa Celâl Bayar University
Erzincan Binalı Yıldırım University	Necmettin Erbakan University
Eskişehir Osmangazi University	Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University
Galatasaray University	Ordu University
Giresun University	Pamukkale University
Harran University	Sabancı University
Hasan Kalyoncu University	Tekirdađ Namık Kemal University
Hitit University	TOBB University of Economics and Technology
Işık University	Ufuk University
İstanbul Arel University	Üskùdar University
İstanbul Bilgi University	Yozgat Bozok University

Source: THEQC (2018c); "YÖKAK 2018 Kurumsal Dıř Deđerlendirme Programı," <https://yokak.gov.tr/raporlar/kurumsal-geri-bildirim-raporlari?termYear=2017>.

Table 8. Universities Subjected to External Evaluation by THEQC in 2019

University Name

Adana Alparslan Türkeş Science and Technology University	Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University
Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University	Kırıkkale University
Alanya Hamdullah Emin Paşa University	Kırklareli University
Avrasya University	Kilis 7 Aralık University
Bartın University	Mardin Artuklu University
Bayburt University	Mef University
Bezm-i Âlem Vakıf University	Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University
Biruni University	Munzur University
Bitlis Eren University	Muş Alparslan University
Çankırı Karatekin University	Nişantaşı University
Erzurum Technical University	Nuh Naci Yazgan University
Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University	Siirt University
Gümüşhane University	Sinop University
Hakkari University	Şırnak University
Iğdır University	Toros University
İstanbul Ayvansaray University	Yalova University
İstanbul Esenyurt University	Türk Hava Kurumu University
İstanbul Gelişim University	Türk-Alman University
İstanbul Medeniyet University	Ardahan University
İstanbul Şehir University	Haliç University
Karabük University	

Source: THEQC (2019b); "YÖKAK 2019 Kurumsal Dış Değerlendirme Programı," <https://yokak.gov.tr/raporlar/kurumsal-geri-bildirim-raporlari?termYear=0>.

Table 9. Universities Subjected to External Evaluation by THEQC in 2020

University Name	
Antalya Bilim University	İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University
Bandırma Onyedi Eylül University	İstinye University
Beykoz University	Konya Food and Agriculture University
İskenderun Technical University	Sanko University
İstanbul 29 Mayıs University	Social Sciences University of Ankara
İstanbul Gedik University	University of Health Sciences - Turkey
İstanbul Rumeli University	Yüksek İhtisas University

Source: THEQC (2020a); "YÖKAK 2020 Kurumsal Dış Değerlendirme Programı," [https://api.yokak.gov.tr/Storage/AnnouncementFiles/23-06-2020/136/2020 Yili KDDP.pdf](https://api.yokak.gov.tr/Storage/AnnouncementFiles/23-06-2020/136/2020%20Yili%20KDDP.pdf).

Table 10. Universities Subjected to External Evaluation by THEQC in 2021

University Name	
Afyonkarahisar Health Sciences University	Konya Technical University
Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University	Kütahya Health Sciences University
Eskişehir Technical University	Malatya Turgut Özal University
İbn Haldun University	Sakarya University of Applied Sciences
İstanbul University-Cerrahpaşa	Tarsus University
İstinye University	Trabzon University
Kayseri University	

Source: THEQC (2020a); "YÖKAK 2020 Kurumsal Dış Değerlendirme Programı," [https://api.yokak.gov.tr/Storage/AnnouncementFiles/23-06-2020/136/2020 Yili KDDP.pdf](https://api.yokak.gov.tr/Storage/AnnouncementFiles/23-06-2020/136/2020%20Yili%20KDDP.pdf).

In addition to the institutional external evaluation program, THEQC initiated a thematically specific external evaluation process within the scope of the English Preparatory Schools Minimum Evaluation Criteria (THEQC, 2021d) for English Preparatory Schools (EPS) upon the request of CoHE. The national policies of CoHE and the willingness of EPSs to improve their quality

assurance systems voluntarily due to the absence of any independent national accreditation institution operating in the field of foreign language education in Türkiye, are the factors underlying the EPS external evaluation program. In this context, the English Preparatory Schools External Evaluation Pilot Program, in which the EPSs of 10 higher education institutions were subjected to external evaluation, was organized by THEQC in 2018. The program results were presented to CoHE in 2019 (THEQC, 2019a, pp. 17–20).

3.1.3. Institutional Accreditation Program

The Institutional Accreditation Program is an external evaluation method enabling the quality assurance, education and training, research-development, social contribution and management system processes in higher education institutions to be evaluated within the scope of the "plan-do-check-act" cycle. The Institutional Accreditation Program is carried out by the evaluation teams formed by THEQC within the scope of the Institutional External Evaluation and Accreditation Criteria and the Institutional External Evaluation and Accreditation Guide (THEQC, 2021e, 2021a).

Higher education institutions to be included in the Institutional Accreditation Program are annually determined among voluntary pilot universities by THEQC. At the end of the Institutional Accreditation Program evaluation process, Institutional Accreditation Reports are prepared by the evaluation teams and a decision on accreditation is made by THEQC considering these reports (EURYDICE, 2020, p. 2; THEQC, 2021e):

- Full accreditation (for five years)
- Conditional accreditation (for two years)
- Providing support to the higher education institution in the context of quality assurance practices

11 universities in 2020 and 12 universities in 2021 (Table 11) that completed the Institutional External Evaluation Program were included in the Institutional Accreditation Program (THEQC, 2020b, 2022d). All universities in the program were entitled to receive accreditation certificates (full or conditional).

Table 11. Universities Institutionally Accredited by THEQC

University Name	
2020	2021
Akdeniz University	Atılım University
Ankara University	Başkent University
Atatürk University	Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University
Ege University	Dokuz Eylül University
Erciyes University	İnönü University
Gaziantep University	İstanbul Aydın University
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University	Karadeniz Technical University
İstanbul Technical University	Kırşehir Ahi Evran University
Koç University	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University
Ondokuz Mayıs University	Sakarya University
TED University	Selçuk University
	Yıldız Technical University

Source: THEQC (2020c, 2022d); "YÖKAK Kurumsal Akreditasyon Programı," [https://api.yokak.gov.tr/Storage/AnnouncementFiles/23-06-2020/136/2020 Yili KAP.pdf](https://api.yokak.gov.tr/Storage/AnnouncementFiles/23-06-2020/136/2020%20Yili%20KAP.pdf); <https://yokak.gov.tr/raporlar/akredite-olan-kurumlar?termYear=2020>

3.1.4. Program Accreditation

Program Accreditation refers to the evaluation and external quality assurance process that measures whether a higher education program meets the standards based on academic, administrative and operational criteria (EURYDICE, 2020, pp. 4–5) determined by THEQC (THEQC, 2021f).

THEQC is responsible for the authorization and recognition activities of accreditation bodies in Türkiye. The processes of authorization of national accreditation bodies and recognition of international accreditation bodies are

carried out within the scope of the principles and criteria determined by THEQC. Since 2016, the "YKS" Higher Education Programs and Quotas Guide (Formerly "ÖSYS" Higher Education Programs and Quotas Guide) contains program information accredited by accreditation bodies authorized or recognized by THEQC (EURYDICE, 2020; THEQC, 2019a, p. 17, 2021f).

In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of accreditation institutions operating in the Turkish Higher Education Quality Assurance System. In this framework, 20 associations were approved by THEQC to carry out quality assurance activities (Table 12) (THEQC, 2021g, 2022a).

Table 12. Accreditation Institutions Authorized by THEQC

First Registration Year	Accreditation Organization
2007	Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Engineering Programs (MÜDEK)
2010	Association For Evaluation and Accreditation of Programs in Faculties of Science, Arts, Arts and Science, Letters and History-Geography (FEDEK)
2010	Turkish Psychological Association
2011	Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Medical Education Programs (TEPDAD)
2012	Association for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Veterinary Institutes and Programs (VEDEK)
2014	Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs (EPDAD)
2014	Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Nursing Education. Programs (HEPDAK)
2014	Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Pharmacy Education Programs (ECZAKDER)
2018	Evaluation and Accreditation Board for Communication Education-Turkey (İLEDAK),
2018	Association of Evaluation and Accreditation of Health Sciences Programs (SABAK)
2018	Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Tourism Education (TURAK)

2019	Islamic Sciences Accreditation Agency (İAA)
2020	Sports Sciences Association - Sports Sciences Education Programs Evaluation and Accreditation Board (SPORAK)
2020	Accreditation Association of Dental Education Programs (DEPAD)
2020	Landscape Architecture Education and Research Association (PEMDER)
2020	Social Sciences, Humanities and Liberal Arts Accreditation and Rating Association (STAR)
2020	Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Agricultural Engineering Educational Programs (ZİDEK)
2021	Association for Language Education, Evaluation and Accreditation (DEDAK)
2022	Design And Planning Accrediting Association (TAPLAK)

Source: THEQC (2021g, 2022a); "Yükseköğretim Kalite Kurulu,", <https://yokak.gov.tr/akreditasyon-kuruluslari/tescil-suresi-devam-edenler>.

In addition to these national accreditation institutions, ten international accreditation institutions have also received authorization from THEQC (Table 13).

Table 13. International Accreditation Institutions Authorized by THEQC

International Accreditation Organizations

Agency for Quality Assurance (AQAS)

Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)

Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA)

International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE)

The Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences (AHPGS)

Accreditation Agency for Study Programs in Engineering, Informatics, Natural Sciences and Mathematics (ASIIN)

Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)

Aviation Accreditation Board International (AABI)

The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE)

Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR)

Source: THEQC (2021h, 2022b); "Yükseköğretim Kalite Kurulu,", <https://yokak.gov.tr/akreditasyon-kuruluslari/uluslararasi-taninan-akreditasyon-kuruluslari>.

The program accreditation process in Türkiye continues according to the demands of higher education institutions (THEQC, 2019a, p. 11). While the number of higher education institutions with accredited programs was 54 in 2016, this number increased to 85 as of 2019 (THEQC, 2020a, p. 55). Similarly, the number of accredited programs has increased over the years. The number of accredited programs was recorded as 433 (5.56%) in 2016, 504 (5.91%) in 2017, 529 in 2018 (6.03%), and 670 in 2019 (7.37% of all programmes) (THEQC, 2019a, p. 12).

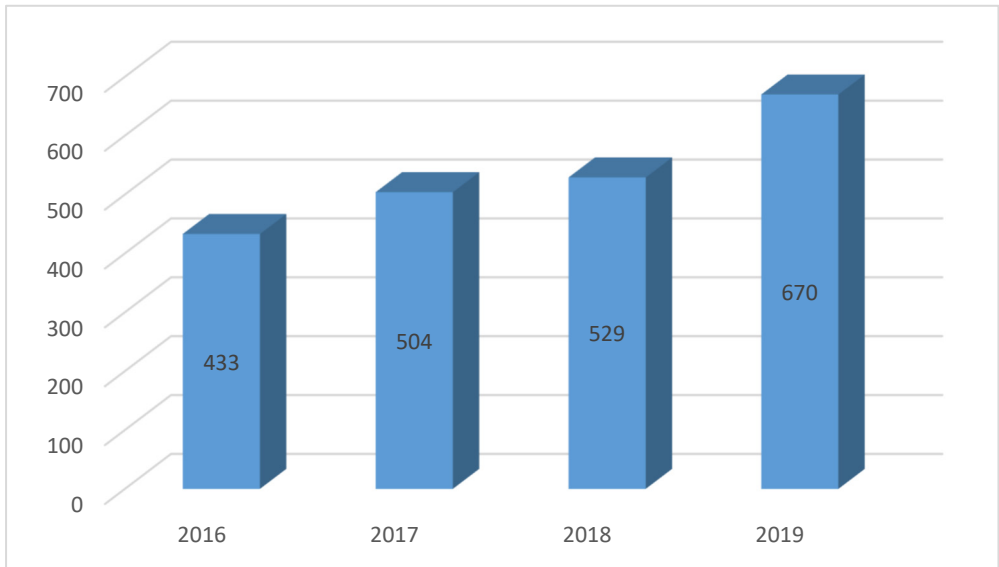


Fig 9. Numbers of Accredited Programs by Years

Source: THEQC (2019a); Self-Assessment Report of Higher Education Quality Council of Turkey (THEQC), YÖKAK, Ankara, p. 12.

Engineering programs have a significant role in the number of accredited programs throughout Türkiye. The ratio of accredited engineering programs among graduates is approximately 34.7%. However, this rate is 39.7% in medical faculties that are accredited at the faculty level. The field with the lowest number of

accredited programs is social sciences. Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul Gelisim University, Istanbul Medipol University, Karadeniz Technical University, Kocaeli University, Dokuz Eylul University, Sakarya University, Hacettepe University, Istanbul Aydın University, Yeditepe University, Ankara University and Middle East Technical University are the leading universities with accredited programs in Türkiye (THEQC, 2020a, pp. 56–57).

3.2. Diversity: Specialization and Mission Differentiation Project

The quality-oriented growth of the Turkish Higher Education system, which started with the execution of quality studies in higher education by an independent national quality assurance agency (THEQC), took a new dimension with the main project “Diversity: Specialization and Mission Differentiation” in 2016 (CoHE, 2020c, p. 8). With the project, some universities were diversified structurally according to their qualifications and the determined quota, and it was decided that some universities should be directed towards studies focused on education, some on research and technology production, and some on regional development (CoHE, 2020c, p. 4).

In this context, in parallel with the quality studies, policies that pave the way for universities to discover their realities have been produced with the "Regional Development-Oriented Mission Differentiation and Specialization" and "Research-Oriented Specialization" studies within the scope of the "Diversity: Specialization and Mission Differentiation Project".

At this point, it should be noted that extra sub-standards and a detailed set of performance indicators added to the standard Quality Assurance procedures are used when performing external evaluations of universities identified under the Diversity: Specialization and Mission Differentiation project. The evaluations of these universities are based on the weighting of the focus area (i.e., research, agriculture, animal husbandry, etc.) in the education and training,

research and development, social contribution and management systems of the relevant higher education institutions. Evaluation results are included in the IFRs of these higher education institutions. This is a subsidiary assessment of other performance monitoring mechanisms used by CoHE. CoHE uses THEQC's self-evaluation report to allocate appropriate funding and support these universities (THEQC, 2019a, p. 17).

3.2.1. Regional Development-Oriented Mission Differentiation and Specialization

Regional Development-Oriented Mission Differentiation and Specialization studies were initiated with the cooperation of CoHE and the Ministry of Development, especially for higher education institutions established after 2006, with the aim of both increasing the contribution of universities to their region and encouraging specialization in certain areas (CoHE, 2020d, 2020c).

Table 14. Regional Development-Oriented Mission Differentiation and Specialization Project Universities

Period	University	Field of Specialization
1. Period - 2016	Bingöl University	Agriculture and Basin Based Development
1. Period - 2016	Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University	Animal husbandry
1. Period - 2016	Düzce University	Health and environment
1. Period - 2016	Kırşehir Ahi Evran University	Agriculture and geothermal
1. Period - 2016	Uşak University	Textile, leather and ceramics
2. Period - 2018	Aksaray University	Health and Sports
2. Period - 2018	Kastamonu University	Natural Tourism and Forestry
2. Period - 2018	Muş Alpaslan University	Animal husbandry
2. Period - 2018	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University	Tea
2. Period - 2018	Siirt University	Agriculture and Animal husbandry

3. Period - 2019	Artvin Çoruh University	Medicinal and Aromatic Plants
3. Period - 2019	Bartın University	Smart Logistics and Integrated Zone Applications
3. Period - 2019	Hitit University	Machinery and Manufacturing Technologies
3. Period - 2019	Kırklareli University	Food
3. Period - 2019	Yozgat Bozok University	Industrial Hemp
4. Period - 2021	Batman University	Energy
4. Period - 2021	Giresun University	Hazelnut
4. Period - 2021	Gümüşhane University	Mining
4. Period - 2021	Iğdır University	Agricultural Products with High Added Value
4. Period - 2021	Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University	Precision Agricultural Practices and Innovative Processing Technologies
4. Period - 2021	Munzur University	Strategic Raw Materials and Advanced Technology Applications
4. Period - 2021	Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University	Natural and Cultural Heritage Tourism

Source: CoHE (2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2022b); "Bölgesel Kalkınma," <https://bolgesel.kalkinma.yok.gov.tr> (Date of access: 05.07.2020); "Bölgesel Kalkınma Projeleri," <https://bolgesel.kalkinma.yok.gov.tr/hakkinda/proje-hakkinda>. (Date of access: 13.07.2020); "Yök İhtisaslaşacak Üniversite Sayısını 15'e Çıkardı," <https://www.yok.gov.tr/Sayfalar/Haberler/2020/yok-baskani-ih-tisaslacak-5-yeni-universiteyi-acikladi.aspx>. (Date of access: 30.01.2020), Yök'ün "Bölgesel Kalkınma Odaklı Misyona Farklılaşması ve İhtisaslaşma Programına" 7 Yeni Üniversite Dahil Edildi <https://bolgeselkalkinma.yok.gov.tr/Sayfalar/bolgesel-kalkinma-odakli-universite-ziyaretleri-burdur.aspx>, (Date of access: 15.08.2022).

As can be seen in Table 14, the project, in which five universities are selected in each call period (4th period seven universities), is aimed at ensuring the integration of universities with the city and region where they are located and specializing in a specific field with the expectation of developing economic, social and human capital (CoHE, 2020e). Within the scope of the project, 22 universities have been determined so far.

The Project is aimed to diversify the programs supporting the mobility between the economic actors in their regions, develop education programs that will meet the regional needs, employ students and graduates who know the region better and create region-based learning processes (CoHE, 2020d).

3.2.2. Research-Oriented Specialization

As another sub-project of the “Diversity: Specialization and Mission Differentiation Project”, the concept of “research universities” began to be embedded in the Turkish higher education system in 2016. In this framework, Research-Oriented Specialization Universities have been determined to develop the research infrastructure and research human resources further, and open up universities for industry-oriented research and opportunities to transform technology into trade-application (CoHE, 2020c, p. 5, 2020g).

Table 15. Research Universities

Research Universities	
Ankara University	İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University
Atatürk University	İstanbul University
Boğaziçi University	İstanbul University- Cerrahpaşa
Bursa Uludağ University	İstanbul Technical University
Çukurova University	Izmir Institute of Technology
Ege University	Karadeniz Technical University
Dokuz Eylül University	Koç University
Erciyes University	Marmara University
Fırat University	Middle East Technical University
Gazi University	Sabancı University
Gebze Technical University	Yıldız Technical University
Hacettepe University	

Source: CoHE (2020c, p. 20; 2022a); Yükseköğretimde İhtisaslaşma ve Misyona Farklılaşması Araştırma Üniversiteleri, <https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Yayinlar/Yayinlarimiz/2020/misyon-faklilasmasi-ve-ihstiaslasma-arastirma-universiteleri.pdf>; Araştırma Üniversiteleri., <https://www.yok.gov.tr/Sayfalar/Universiteler/arastirma-universiteleri.aspx>

With the Research-Oriented Specialization Universities project, it is aimed that deep-rooted universities gain a more competitive structure in the global sense by differentiating their missions in the research focus. Within this framework, 58 universities applying to the project were evaluated with a 3-stage evaluation program in terms of the number of scientific publications, the number of international collaborative publications, the amount of international cooperation project funding, the number of doctoral graduates, the number of citations, the project fund amount, the number of patent documents, the number of 100/2000 doctoral students, and mission, vision and objectives, research budget, research management policy and strategies, human resources and research infrastructure. At the beginning of the project, 11¹⁰ research universities and 5 candidate research universities were determined (UFUK2020, 2017; CoHE, 2020c, p. 18,19).

As of 2022, with a decision taken by CoHE, the status of candidate research universities was completely abolished, candidate universities were upgraded to the status of research universities, and foundation universities were given the right to be research universities (CoHE, 2021c). Currently, there are 23 research universities, including 20 state universities and 3 foundation universities (Table 15).

Research universities are defined as universities having research priority and research culture, which reflects from education to knowledge and technology transfer activities, from cooperation with public and industry to international cooperation, together with research outputs that have a significant role in the development of science (UFUK2020, 2017).

¹⁰ While the number of research universities was 10 in the first determinations, Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa was added to this list after Istanbul University was divided into two as Istanbul University and Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa with the decree issued for the division of Universities in 2018, and the number of research universities became 11 (YÖK, 2020f).

Research universities are different from other universities, and they primarily focus on research that further develops the thematic areas they dominate and are expected to establish centres of excellence in their fields (CoHE, 2020c, p. 13).

Contrary to the Regional Development-Oriented Mission Differentiation and Specialization project, which included five universities in each call period, it is stated that there will be no increase in the number of research universities and candidate research universities, and new universities that maintain their current positions, and lose them and rise to the lost positions will be included in the system (CoHE, 2020c, p. 24).

4. Diffusion and Adoption of Quality Management Among Higher Education Institutions¹¹

4.1. Diffusion and Adoption Time

The development of institutional theory as a coherent paradigm and thus making a lasting contribution to organizational analysis has been realized by giving both conceptual and empirical answers to questions such as who causes the change in institutionalization processes and who acts to spread this change to more than one organization and why does they want to spread this change (Tolbert & Zucker, 1996, p. 186).

On the other hand, Fiss et al. (2012) and Schneiberg and Clemens (2006) state that empirical research is required to use other indicators of institutionalization rather than a simple increase in the number of adopters to demonstrate that a rapidly spreading practice is institutionalized convincingly. Based on their explanation, Boxenbaum and Jonsson (2017, p. 32) argue that defining such indicators can be methodologically difficult, and adoption should be shown to be associated with changing norms, collective beliefs or laws, as demonstrated in this book. The conditions under which diffusion is causally related to institutionalization should be identified in studies (as stated in the previous section) (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 32).

In this context, an empirical explanation of diffusion based on the conceptual explanations in the previous section is discussed in this section.

¹¹ Descriptive statistics of the disclosures in this section are included in the Appendix.

While 151 of 158 universities analyzed in the study stated the year of adopting quality management, seven universities did not answer this issue. The years of universities to adopt quality management are given in Table 16 and Figure 10.

Table 16. Quality Management Adoption Years of Universities

Year	Frequency	Total Frequency	Percent
1995	1	1	0.7
1999	1	2	1.3
2002	1	3	2.0
2003	2	5	3.3
2005	4	9	6.0
2006	2	11	7.3
2007	1	12	7.9
2008	4	16	10.6
2009	1	17	11.3
2010	5	22	14.6
2011	1	23	15.2
2012	7	30	19.9
2013	3	33	21.9
2014	5	38	25.2
2015	25	63	41.7
2016	27	90	59.6
2017	25	115	76.2
2018	22	137	90.7
2019	13	150	99.3
2020	1	151	100.0
Total	151		
Missing Data	7		

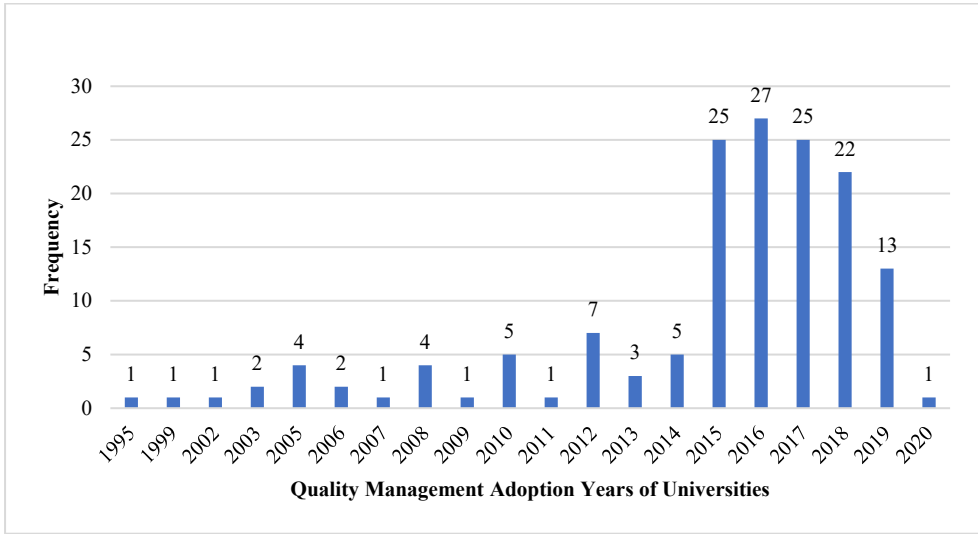


Fig 10. Quality Management Adoption Years of Universities

According to Table 16 and Figure 10, the quality journey of Turkish Universities, which started with one university in 1995, reached 38 in 2014. With the establishment of THEQC in 2015, 25 universities in 2015, 27 universities in 2016, 25 universities in 2017, 22 universities in 2018 and 13 universities in 2019 have adopted quality management.

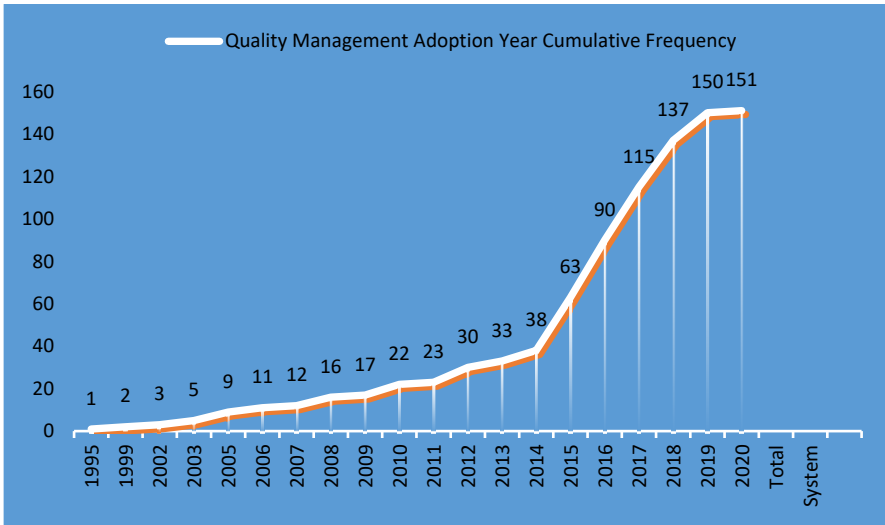


Fig 11. Years of Universities to Adopt Quality Management (Cumulative)

When the adoption times are analyzed by years, the adoption of Quality Management started with one university in 1995, reached nine universities in 2005, 11 universities in 2006, 16 universities in 2008, 22 universities in 2010, 30 universities in 2012, and 38 universities in 2014. While 1 to 7 universities adopted Quality Management every year until 2014, the number of universities that adopted quality management increased to 63 (increase rate 66%) in 2015, 90 (43% increase rate) in 2016, 115 in 2017 (increase rate 28%), 137 in 2018 (19% increase rate) and 150 (increase rate 10%) in 2019. As can be seen from the figures, the number of universities that have adopted Quality Management has significantly increased rapidly every year since 2015. The increase in the number of universities adopting quality management from 2014 to 2020 is 400%.

As shown in Figure 11, the progress of diffusion in the adoption of quality management aligns with the studies initiated by CoHE and THEQC in 2015 to improve quality management. According to this, while the spread of quality

management started with a few universities in 1995, the main spread emerged with the establishment of the institutional context since 2015, upon the establishment of the national quality assurance system following the literature and ESG criteria with the legal regulations enacted by THEQC. These results show that the diffusion process of Quality Management in Turkish Higher Education Institutions started in the mid-1990s, but the actual diffusion started in 2015.

In the face of the spread of TQM in Türkiye in the early 1990s in the institutional context in which TÜSİAD and KALDER were influential (Özen, 2002, p. 75) and the start of quality assurance studies in the EHEA in the same period, it is seen that universities are not affected from this institutional context and they are late on an issue that they should be a pioneer in terms of social dynamics in adopting quality management.

In addition, it should be noted that this delay in the Turkish higher education system is valid not only for newly established universities but also for all universities.

Table 17. Distribution of Quality Management Adoption Years of Universities by Years of Establishment

	Quality Management Adoption Years																				Total
	1995	1999	2002	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
1923-1950	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
1951-1980	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	4	4	0	1	0	15
1981-1990	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	9
1991-2005	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	1	1	4	0	3	0	0	9	7	1	4	1	0	37
2006-2017	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	2	2	5	13	15	18	15	9	1	84
2018-...	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	4

Total	1	1	1	2	4	2	1	4	1	5	1	7	3	5	25	27	25	22	13	1	151
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As seen in Table 17, 2 universities established between 1923-1950 stated that they adopted quality management in 2015. Among the 15 universities established between 1951-1980, the adoption of quality management was achieved with two universities in 2005, 1 university each in 2006, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2019, and 4 universities in 2016 and 2017. Among the nine universities established between 1981-1990, 1 university in 2002, 2005, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016, and 2019, and 2 universities in 2017 adopted quality management. It is seen that 16 of the 26 universities (62%) that were established until 1990 and participated in the research adopted quality management after 2015, and 2002 was the first year when these universities adopted quality management.

It is seen that among 37 universities established between 1991 and 2005, 1 university each in 1995, 1999, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2017 and 2019, 2 universities in 2003, 3 universities in 2012, 4 universities in 2010 and 2018, 7 universities in 2016 and 9 universities in 2015 adopted quality management.

When these results are evaluated, it is seen that 38 (60%) of the 63 universities that were established until 2005 among the universities participating in the research adopted quality management after 2015.

Among 84 universities established between 2006-2017, 1 university each in 2007 and 2020, 2 universities each in 2012 and 2013, 3 in 2008, 5 in 2014, 13 in 2015, 15 in 2016, 18 in 2017, 15 in 2018, and 9 in 2019 adopted quality management.

When the numbers given are analyzed, it is seen that 113 (75%) of the 151 universities participating in the research, indicating the year of adoption of quality management, adopted quality management after 2015.

Information about the establishment years of the quality coordinators or units responsible for the quality processes of the universities are shown in Table 18.

Table 18. Establishment Years of Quality Coordinatorships / Responsible Units

Year	Frequency	Cumulative Percentage
1996	1	0.7
1999	1	1.4
2003	3	3.4
2005	2	4.7
2006	2	6.1
2007	1	6.8
2010	6	10.8
2011	1	11.5
2012	2	12.8
2013	5	16.2
2014	4	18.9
2015	16	29.7
2016	27	48.0
2017	34	70.9
2018	27	89.2
2019	14	98.6
2020	2	100.0
Total	148	

One hundred forty-eight universities answered the question about the establishment year of the quality coordinatorships / responsible units for quality processes, and 10 universities did not answer this issue. Starting from 1996 until 2015, 28 universities have established quality coordinatorships or units responsible for quality processes. A total of 120 universities (81%), 16 in 2015, 27 in 2016, 34 in 2017, 27 in 2018, 14 in 2019 and 2 in 2020, started to establish quality coordinatorships / responsible units for quality processes in 2015.

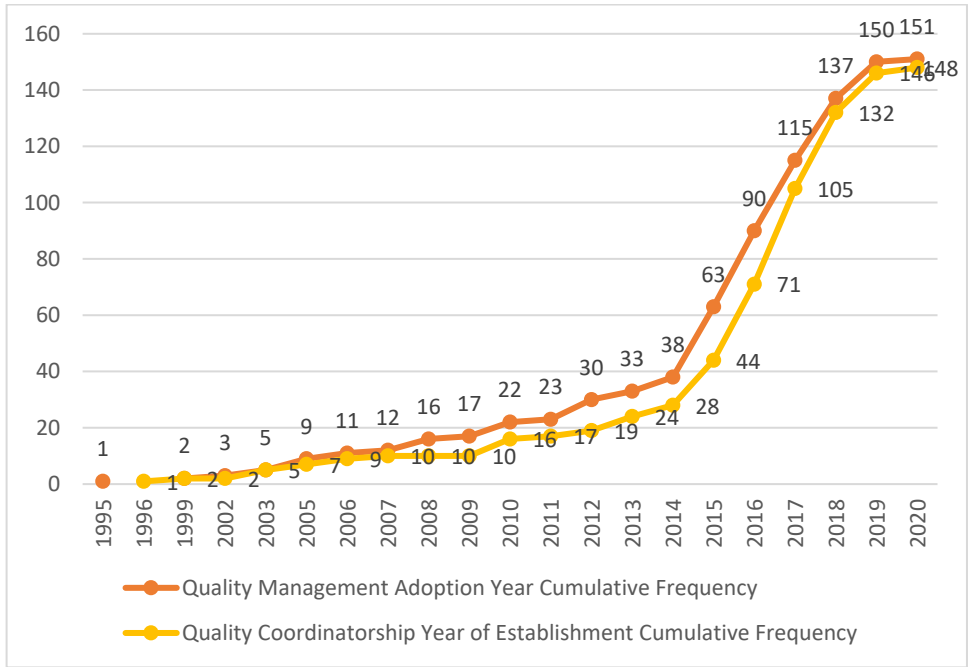


Fig 12. Comparison of Adoption Years of Quality Management and Establishment Years of Quality Coordinatorships

When the years of establishment of the quality coordinatorships / units responsible for quality processes of universities are compared with the years of adopting quality management, it is seen in Figure 12 that the general trend is the same. The change that has been experienced since 2015, both in the years of adopting quality management and in the establishment years of the quality coordinatorships / units responsible for quality processes, is striking. While 25% of universities adopted quality management before 2015, the rate of establishing a quality coordinatorship / unit responsible for quality processes is 19%. However, with the adoption of quality management and the establishment of institutional units responsible for quality quickly, from 2015 to 2020, the diffusion of quality management is almost complete.

In the light of all these general data, it can be stated that the subject of "quality management of higher education institutions" has turned into a dominant management style and paradigm for Turkish universities as of the current period. Quality management has been one of the essential ways of legitimation for Turkish universities in the institutional context and has spread throughout Türkiye, guided by legitimacy concerns (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017; Colyvas & Jonsson, 2011).

The diffusion¹² of quality management in the Turkish higher education system is consistent with the arguments of "adoption through diffusion process" (Tolbert & Zucker, 1983) and "all organizations adopting an application before or after adopt it with both economic and social concerns" (Özen, 2013, p. 129) which stated in the diffusion literature of institutional theory.

With the completion of the diffusion, quality management is becoming increasingly institutionalized as more and more universities adopt quality management, or it is widely understood that quality management is a necessary component of the rationalized organizational structure (Tolbert & Zucker, 1983, p. 35).

In fact, this also applies to the general institutionalization of quality management in higher education outside the Turkish context. The rapid spread and legitimacy of quality management serve as a driving force for later adopters.

Universities adopt quality management to provide legitimacy in the eyes of state institutions such as CoHE, THEQC, UAK, national and international organizations related to quality, and the society, by adopting the normatively presented quality management in the EHEA and thus in the Turkish higher education system.

¹² For a more comprehensive assessment of institutional theory paradigms of quality management in Turkish higher education, refer to the authors' work (Taştan 2020).

In organizational networks where control of resources and authority is centralized in a few influential organizations, as in many countries, when a formal element of structure is institutionalized, i.e., innovation is legalized by higher-level organizations through statutory mandate or other formal means, subordinate organizations often respond by quickly incorporating the innovation into the formal structure. However, legal requirements alone do not always ensure adoption (Tolbert & Zucker, 1983, p. 26). It is seen that the coercive pressures initiated by CoHE and UAK in Türkiye in the 2000s did not yield results, however, with the establishment of THEQC (as explained in the previous section), success was achieved, and a systematic national quality management process was started.

In this institutional context, the most significant reason for the success after 2015 is that, THEQC, as a "corporate entrepreneur", has been working on organizations to reconstruct and creates a normative pressure (Özen, 2002, p. 80) to adopt quality management in higher education since 2015, unlike the coercive pressures of CoHE and UAK. At this point, THEQC leads to establish normative systems that enable higher education institutions to define their goals or objectives (for example, to be accredited) and to determine appropriate ways to pursue these goals and objectives (curriculum development, satisfaction surveys, etc.) (Scott, 2014, p. 64).

4.2. Adoption Format

The procedures, principles, and conditions related to implementing quality management in higher education have been formulated to be appeared in technical character thanks to ESG. Scott and Meyer (1991) states that it is often hard to empirically distinguish between technical and institutional rules and procedures because the formulators of institutional rules try to make them

technically understandable by their nature. This paradigm is valid for quality management in higher education.

In this framework, long efforts and developments in the field of quality assurance in higher education, the existence of a supranational reference and the completion of diffusion necessitated the evaluation of whether the existing quality processes and systems lead to quality improvement in Turkish higher education. That is, in the words of Westphal et al. (1997, p. 366), rather than guessing whether universities have adopted quality management or not, it is necessary to discover how they define and implement it.

In this framework, the scale of Özen (2000, 2002), which operationalized Westphal et al. (1997)'s "customization-conformity" criterion as a "conformity scale"¹³ to determine normative compliance with quality management in higher education, was made operational in terms of higher education. In this operationalization, the quality management structure, methods, processes and techniques used in Martin and Parikh (2017)'s study titled "Quality management in higher education: Developments and drivers Results from an international survey" were used instead of the techniques, processes and methods used in the industry. This new scale was named "Quality Management Conformity Scale in Higher Education"¹⁴.

As a result of the analysis of the scale, the arguments of the institutional theory that the organizations adopt innovation as first normative, then rational (Zbaracki, 1998, p. 604) or first rational and then normative (Westphal et al., 1997, p. 374) differ in terms of the Turkish context of quality management in

¹³ The customization or conformity scale developed by Westphal et al. (1997) was operationalized as the conformity scale by Özen (2000, pp. 7–8) and later reused (Özen, 2002, pp. 76–77)..

¹⁴ For detailed information, see Taştan and Yılmaz's study entitled "The Operationalization of the Quality Management Conformity Scale for Higher Education: The Quality Management Conformity Scale in Higher Education".

higher education. It is seen that the universities adopting the quality management first adopt normative, while the universities adopting it later do not fully implement the normative context and adopt it ceremonially. Accordingly, the more the institutions implement the ceremonially adopted innovation, the more they can reach normative rules and the more rationality they comply with the normative rules.

In addition, in the analyzes performed with the PLS-SEM model, in which the results of the Quality Management Conformity Scale in Higher Education were used (Taştan & Yılmaz, 2021, pp. 89–90), it was found that the normative pressure mechanisms in Turkish higher education institutions had a positive and significant effect on the form of compliance and thus quality in Turkish higher education. The results obtained from the Quality Management Conformity Scale in Higher Education are supported by the conclusions that “the behavior of complying with the normative context (application by complying) brings normative/ceremonial adoption” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Oliver, 1991; Özen, 2002, 2013, 2015, 2000; Scott, 2014; Tolbert & Zucker, 1983; Westphal et al., 1997; Zbaracki, 1998), which was stated in the institutional theory literature in terms of compliance behaviour with management.

Accordingly, rationality occurs in the form of rational development of normatively adopted quality management practices by the same practitioners, rather than the period of diffusion, in the first normative-then rational adoption thesis for quality management in higher education.

4.3. Other Factors Affecting Adoption

It was also found in the analysis based on the level of participation of staff and students in quality management that universities implement quality management in a narrow framework and by a narrow team, separating it from other technical processes.

Table 19. Level of Participation in Quality Management

		QM participation level of staff	QM participation level of students
N	Valid	133	120
	Missing Data	25	38
Mean		35.11	23.15
Median		20.00	6.00
Minimum		1	0
Maximum		100	100

First, when the data on the staff participating in all quality-related practices are analyzed in the ratio of the number of people participating in the implementation of techniques, processes and methods within the scope of quality management to the total number of staff, it is seen that the answers given vary between 1 and 100, the average staff participation rate is 35.11%, and the median value is 20. While the number of universities stating that quality management is implemented with full staff participation is 9, the number of universities with more than 70% staff participation is 30 (20%).

Table 20. Staff Participation Level Frequency Table

Ratio	Frequency	Percent
1	4	3.0
2	5	3.8
3	4	3.0
5	5	3.8
7	3	2.3
9	1	0.8
10	21	15.8
13	1	0.8
15	5	3.8
16	1	0.8
17	1	0.8
19	1	0.8
20	20	15.0
23	3	2.3
25	3	2.3
30	10	7.5
35	1	0.8
40	2	1.5
45	1	0.8
48	1	0.8
50	2	1.5
55	1	0.8
56	1	0.8
57	1	0.8
58	2	1.5
60	3	2.3
70	4	3.0
75	1	0.8
80	7	5.3
85	3	2.3
90	4	3.0
94	1	0.8
98	1	0.8
100	9	6.8
Total	133	100.0

As can be seen in Table 20, the participation level of the staff is below 50% in 70% of the universities. The participation rate of the staff in approximately 50% of the universities is below 20%. This situation clearly shows that only a specific part of the employees participates in quality management, the implementation of quality management is carried out with this small number of staff, and the technical processes of universities (education and training, research, management, etc.) are kept separate from quality management and continue to be carried out within the current order.

When the participation of the students in the implementation of the techniques, processes, and methods within the scope of quality management is analyzed, the answers vary on a scale between 0 and 100, the average student participation rate is 23.15%, and the median value is 6. Only five universities state that they implement quality management with the full participation of students, who are the most important internal stakeholders of universities.

Table 21. Student Participation Frequency Level Table in Quality Management

Ratio	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	3	2.5	2.5
1	36	30.0	32.5
2	6	5.0	37.5
3	4	3.3	40.8
4	1	0.8	41.7
5	9	7.5	49.2
6	2	1.7	50.8
10	12	10.0	60.8
11	2	1.7	62.5
12	1	0.8	63.3
13	1	0.8	64.2
20	7	5.8	70.0
30	3	2.5	72.5

31	1	0.8	73.3
38	1	0.8	74.2
39	1	0.8	75.0
40	1	0.8	75.8
45	2	1.7	77.5
50	3	2.5	80.0
51	1	0.8	80.8
53	1	0.8	81.7
55	1	0.8	82.5
60	4	3.3	85.8
70	1	0.8	86.7
77	1	0.8	87.5
78	1	0.8	88.3
80	7	5.8	94.2
89	1	0.8	95.0
99	1	0.8	95.8
100	5	4.2	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

According to Table 21, while the participation rate of students in quality management is below 5% in approximately 50% of the universities, the participation rate is around 20% in 70% of them.

It is clearly seen with these results that the participation of students in quality management is worse than that of staff participation in addition to the already low staff participation in the implementation of quality management.

The fact that the participation rates of the two most important components of the higher education system (students and staff) in quality management are so low appears to be an issue that needs to be improved in the Turkish Higher Education system in general. However, it should not be forgotten that Turkish Higher Education system, which has made significant progress in the journey of quality management in a short time, has just begun its systematic quality management studies.

5. Reasons for the Success of THEQC and Institutional Change of Quality Management in Turkish Higher Education

As stated in the book's "Theoretical Framework of Quality Management in Higher Education" chapter, the coercive formal pressures of the Republic of Türkiye through CoHE and UAK to establish quality in higher education until 2015, studies carried out by higher education institutions within the framework of mimetic pressure mechanisms and normative pressure mechanisms, mainly in the form of accreditation associations, form the basis of the work of THEQC. However, these studies have not shown the desired success in establishing quality management in higher education systematically.

At this point, how THEQC achieves success, what it does better or what it changes becomes essential. Unlike the coercive pressures of CoHE and UAK, the most important reason for the success that came after 2015 is that THEQC, as an "Institutional Entrepreneur", has formed a normative pressure on organizations to reconstruct and adopt quality management (Özen, 2002, p. 80) in higher education since 2015.

As Scott (2014, p. 64) states, normative systems include both values and norms. Here, values are concepts preferred or desired along with the establishment of standards against which existing structures or behaviours can be compared and evaluated while norms describe legitimate means to achieve valuable aims by specifying how things should be done. At this point, THEQC

encourages the establishment of normative systems that, since its foundation, enable higher education institutions to define their goals or objectives and to determine appropriate ways to follow these goals and objectives.

How this normative pressure has brought about a change in the Turkish context is better explained by Greenwood et al. (2002)'s model of institutional change. According to this, the triggering effect for the institutionalization of quality management in higher education is the establishment of THEQC to manage the quality management process with legal regulation as a separate institution with its own identity and independent from CoHE. With the establishment of THEQC, the quality management studies that were previously carried out under the roof of YÖDEK within the body of CoHE passed to the dissolution stage. Later, studies to theorize quality management in the field of higher education were started by THEQC. In this framework, universities were obliged to write their own internal evaluation reports through the guidelines determined following ESG standards. An evaluator pool consisting of volunteer participants was created, training was given to evaluators, and universities were subjected to an institutional external evaluation process starting from 2016. By the end of 2020, the institutional external evaluation process of all higher education institutions that have graduated has been completed.

THEQC primarily analyzes Institutional Self-Evaluation Reports (ISERs) and annual performance reports prepared annually by universities, observes whether procedures, structures, processes and policies related to quality management are used and seeks documented evidence of specific quality improvement practices. Thus, external control over the adoption of quality management is ensured by regularly reviewing the quality of services provided by universities. THEQC also provides control of these review activities by identifying the areas where universities are successful and unsuccessful in terms of quality management through Institutional Feedback Reports (IFRs), which are prepared as a result of regular external institutional evaluations.

In addition, how the achievements are realized and examples of good practice are shared with the public. By this way, quality management in higher education is theorized in the context of Türkiye. Moreover, the use of the information obtained from these reports in training and meetings contributes to the theorizing and institutionalization of quality management. All these developments are normative pressures related to the institutionalization and theorization of quality management.

On the other hand, program accreditations, service certificates or quality studies randomly applied by universities in Türkiye have begun to transform into the implementation of quality management at an institutional and strategic level with the establishment of THEQC. In addition, the fact that THEQC operates as a quality assurance agency and has no regulatory effect on administrative (finance, human resources, etc.) issues, even though it is a government institution, is another reason why THEQC's pressures are in a normative form.

On the other hand, the most crucial point in feeling this normative context in the Turkish higher education system is undoubtedly that THEQC activates the quality volunteers in the higher education system. THEQC brings together quality volunteers and academics, other employees and students who are unaware of each other and work in different universities, who have started or intend to catch up with world standards in their professions long ago, and who believe in quality studies without an organization, despite taking part in accreditation institutions related to their fields. THEQC also tries to make these quality volunteers better equipped with actions such as guiding, supporting, organizing training and certification. On the other hand, it is suggested to the evaluators to contribute to the studies in the institutions where they work, in addition to the evaluation activities to provide a two-sided benefit. In addition, THEQC establishes professional standards for quality assurance. These studies of THEQC give legitimacy to the actions of those who want to implement quality management.

The origins of normative pressures are based on the influence of society's expectations in general and professional organizations in particular (Greenwood

et al., 2002) on the practices of organizations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In this context, it is possible to say that an international context of quality management in higher education has been formed with the global acceptance of the normative framework formed as a result of the quality management literature, the development of quality management and quality management in higher education in the world, quality studies in the European Higher Education Area and the formation of standards.

Based on the explanations of Westphal et al. (1997, p. 371), open opportunities to improve performance with the programs required by quality management were perceived, technical efficiency gains were sought, quality practices were customized to the unique problems and opportunities faced by organizations, and a legitimacy area has been created for quality management in EHEA. Accordingly, it is possible to say that the normative pressure on other European universities has increased with the relative success of the adoption model of the European universities, which were the first to adopt quality management. Thus, other universities that adopted quality management later, instead of looking for a way to adapt quality management to their capabilities, prefer to apply quality management by imitating the models, that is, following the models, developed by the first adopters and becoming institutionalized in the EHEA. This gives rise to the empirical emergence of institutional isomorphism in the form of increasing adherence to the adoption of normative quality management over time. In this way, what quality management in higher education is or what it should include has turned into a global paradigm.

In this context, the results obtained from the study (Taştan, 2021) conducted to determine how Turkish higher education institutions implement the quality management in this normative level created in the EHEA and to analyze how much they internalize QM are essential in terms of showing the satisfactory level that the Turkish Higher Education System has reached in the last 5-6 years.

6. Opinions and Suggestions on the Situation of the Turkish Higher Education System

Quality management in higher education is a process that explains in detail what needs to be done technically, especially with the ESG, and beyond that, it is a practical discourse on the agenda of the whole world rhetorically. Obviously, ESG brings success to higher education institutions, and thus quality management in higher education, which is operated in accordance with the ESG, 'takes a value beyond the technical requirements of the task at hand', as in the words of Selznick (1957, p. 17).

ESG has introduced a quality management system structure that produces effective solutions for universities, is consistent, brings efficiency to technical processes, and includes institutional rules (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 355). ESG embodies a cleverly developed rationality and mastery of technical processes. Therefore, technical processes and institutional processes should not conflict, and inconsistency should not occur in structures that adopt quality management in accordance with the ESG (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

However, academic processes are not included in the quality management due to reasons that may arise from the institutional structures of higher education institutions that adopt quality management, the lack of qualified personnel to implement quality management (Westphal et al., 1997), the weak organizational structure to monitor quality management, and the newness of the adoption. However, in the case of Türkiye, there may be situations where

structures to create the annual ISERs mandated by THEQC are established, or quality management is applied only in administrative processes. This means that quality management is separated from academic processes (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, pp. 27–28).

Although decoupling is among the alternatives as a behaviour model, it is a correct behavioural model for institutions to comply with this normative plane or adapt the normative plane to themselves in the face of intelligently determined normative innovations such as ESG. A university can establish a structure to monitor “quality” and implement it fully so that there is no structure-action separation. However, if the university operates or constructs this structure poorly, that is, if it is aware that the structure is a weak tool to measure "quality", it is possible to say that quality management is kept separate from academic processes.

It is understood from this that how the innovation is constructed and what it includes are the most important factors determining how the adoption behaviour will be directed. The fact that quality management in higher education makes all technical processes a part of institutional quality assessment is the most crucial reason why the context in which technical processes and institutional rules conflict does not emerge in higher education, as in the industry. Nevertheless, when quality management adoption is driven by pressures to conform rather than technical requirements, universities may obtain legitimacy benefits rather than technical performance benefits from this adoption (Westphal et al., 1997, pp. 367–368). In the Turkish context, the adoption of quality management is considered to be driven by compliance pressures, except for a few leading universities.

When the data derived from the doctoral study of Taştan (2021), the studies of (Taştan & Yılmaz, 2021) and this book are generally evaluated, it is seen that

Quality Management is generally adopted in a normative manner, that includes ceremonially. Accordingly, it is seen that a group of universities that adopt quality management in the early period in the Turkish higher education system are one step ahead of other universities, and those universities adopting it in this early period represent Türkiye in indexes such as THE and QS, and also lead the studies of THEQC.

Moreover, while organizations in the form of ceremonial adoption gain legitimacy by appearing to adopt the mythical practice on the one hand, and on the other hand, they can solve the dilemma of the technical efficiency and institutional legitimacy by "decoupling" the adopted practice from existing organizational practices. Organizations in the form of ceremonial adoption try to implement the new practice as it is as a standard model, without adapting it to their own conditions (Özen, 2013, pp. 128–129).

It should be stated here that the fact that changes can be largely ceremonial does not mean that they are unimportant; more ceremonial practices lead to greater homogeneity, less variation and diversity. Thus, ceremonial adoption can bring about significant internal changes (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, pp. 150–155). This is the most critical indicator of the change caused by institutional isomorphism. Such internal consistency is an essential tool of inter-organizational coordination and increases organizational stability (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 155). Similarly, Tolbert and Zucker (1994, pp. 21–22, 1996, p. 183) suggest that the urge to diffuse reflects implicit or explicit theorization of structures as they shift from simple imitation to a more normative basis and that the variance in the form that structures take in different organizations decreases as theorization develops and becomes more explicit.

Therefore, the inter-organizational prevalence of ceremonial adoption among universities does not prevent the full institutionalization of quality management in higher education. Moreover, the results obtained by implementing a management style that includes the principles, systematic techniques, routines (Özen, 2002, p. 49) and procedures brought by quality management are monitored by many institutions and organizations within a global system. Announcing the results of these monitoring to the public is an essential source of legitimacy for universities.

It should be emphasized that quality management has become a phenomenon dominating universities as the "zeitgeist" and has become a necessity in higher education, whose outputs are followed, focused on developing higher education institutions and achieving worldwide standards. At the current point and in the upcoming periods, no higher education institution that wants to be successful will not be able to leave the change in higher education brought about by quality management in the dimension of ceremonial adoption or claim that it provides change by keeping its official structures separate from academic affairs. The rational adaptation of the developed standards and procedures to academic affairs and the fact that the improvements to be provided by quality management are monitored and followed by national and supranational regulatory institutions, governments and universities around the world would force universities to apply quality management by adapting it according to their qualifications. "Measurable academic success" emphasized by Oplatka and Hemsley-Brown (2010, p. 9) has become the most important factor for the survival of universities. For these reasons, it will never be possible to say that the implementation of Quality Management is applied in a purely ceremonial or purely rational manner.

Quality Management is a well-designed methodology for evaluating, improving and ensuring the desired results of a process, program or service. For this reason, the diffusion, promotion and implementation of quality management in higher education helps to improve the quality of higher education, better use of resources, and increase the acceptability and reliability of higher education institutions at home and abroad. To explain in more detail, quality management has been institutionalized “with a broad understanding of them as appropriate and necessary components of efficient and rational organizations” as stated by Tolbert and Zucker (1983, p. 26) and has become one of the most important tools that universities include in their official structures to maintain their legitimacy, as rationalized institutional rules (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 319, 344) that require them to act in that direction (Tolbert and Zucker, 1983, p. 26). In the Turkish higher education system, universities generally provide legitimacy for establishing a quality assurance system by complying with the standards, directives and guidelines determined by THEQC in accordance with the ESG.

Universities that cannot realize the institutional change provided by quality management in higher education will not be able to take place in the university rankings that are starting to take shape globally, just like the Champions League in football or the Euroleague in basketball, and they will only exist in their national fields. They will be in the last places in those national fields. As Oplatka and Hemsley-Brown (2010, p. 6) expresse, it is an inevitable process for higher education institutions to be exposed to the pressure of critical institutions in the institutional environment such as government, industry and financial institutions. As the universities entering the ranking lists increase over time and the successful examples are shared with the public, it will be impossible to continue education life by being insensitive to them.

In addition to these, the possibility of not being preferred and the expectation of success due to the increasing number of accredited programs and universities with quality certificates will lead to inquiries by society, government, industry and financial institutions. Especially considering the public pressure at the local level, it is thought that the administrators who do not successfully implement quality management in the universities of which they are managers will fail and be considered unsuccessful. Of course, this situation is not only about the managers. So, the regulatory bodies/commissions that appoint, propose or determine the managers and the Presidential office that make the appointments should also be aware of this situation.

Apart from this, there are issues that the State, CoHE, THEQC and universities should do and develop to ensure the development of quality management in the Turkish higher education system. It is possible to bring Türkiye's higher education system to world standards by implementing quality management.

First of all, universities should implement quality management as a whole in an integrated manner with all their units, structures and all components of quality management. Attempting to achieve and ensure quality part by part or on unit basis is the most common mistake realized by most universities. In order to ensure the quality of an institution, it is necessary to consider a system as a whole with all its parts, sub-sections and complementary elements. There is a possibility that the incomplete quality of a component may render the entire system inadequate (Arain et al., 2013, p. 67).

On the other hand, in order to eliminate the uncertainties that may arise in institutions such as how to apply the specific routines and standards required by quality management, how to measure and evaluate the applied standards, lack of personnel who have the competence and knowledge about the subject, and

lack of education (Westphal et al., 1997, p. 371), a structure should be established at universities to provide professional guidance to the units. It is thought that these structures can be very beneficial if they provide direction and control to universities under the supervision of THEQC. The lack of technical support at decentralized levels for quality management is an obstacle to the institutionalization of quality management (Martin, 2018, p. 57). It should be noted that, since repeatable routines are easily transferred to organizational newcomers and are easily maintained over time (Zucker, 1991, p. 104), universities that have managed to establish quality management institutionally once can proceed more easily in maintaining the quality culture than in the establishment phase.

Undoubtedly, accreditation is an important quality assurance tool that can help universities in cases where the processes are implemented ceremonially due to the fact that it is not easy to establish improvement-oriented quality processes (Williams & Harvey, 2015, p. 5). Based on the fact that the quality management processes in the Turkish higher education system are largely ceremonial, it is necessary to focus on the issue of accreditation. Normative pressure from accreditation bodies provides an additional incentive to comply (Scott, 1987). Westphal et al. (1997, p. 370) also recommend encouraging accreditation studies to raise the adoption of Quality Management to higher levels. It is hopeful that THEQC is also aware of this situation and constantly encourages universities to accredit.

One of the critical issues is that the bureaucratization caused and created by quality management processes is not allowed to reduce or destroy quality. On the other hand, to support the implementations and policies of THEQC, higher education institutions that implement and strive to implement quality management should be motivated and encouraged with more budget and staff

opportunities within the framework of a policy created according to specific standards. In other words, it is suggested that the state should activate the coercive pressure power of the state to set up an encouraging reward and sanction system with respect to the improvement of processes that develop the normative context, such as accreditation, certification, and studies of THEQC to evaluate universities. In this activation, rules should be interpreted, conflicts should be resolved, supports and sanctions should be designed, and a stable system of rules should be established by monitoring undesirable effects with surveillance mechanisms (Scott, 2014, pp. 62–64). As in many countries, the integration of the certification processes with the budget distribution should also be carried out in Türkiye. The universities that do not have certificates in the fields (for example, programs that have not started or successfully completed the accreditation process at the end of the targeted period, management standards, information security, etc.) should be sanctioned in terms of budgeting or the budget distribution principles or should be redefined according to the certification rate.

In addition, it is recommended by THEQC to encourage successful universities, good practice examples, evaluators, administrators and new ideas with magnificent award ceremonies to institutionalize quality management and encourage success. These award ceremonies can increase the social status of universities (by developing categories like universities with the most accredited programs, universities accrediting the most programs for the first time during the year, universities with the most score changes according to the monitoring results, the most innovative application of the year, universities showing improvement, universities acting courageously, universities showing determination, etc). Such awards ceremonies can turn into essential incentives that can motivate adoption, and there are examples in various countries.

On the other hand, perhaps the most critical issue for quality management success in higher education institutions is the inclusion of all stakeholders, especially academics, into the quality system. Here, academics have special importance as they are the subjects producing quality education. As Prakash (2018, p. 9) stated in his statements, higher education institutions should realize that the working conditions and conditions of academicians are essential to reveal quality (Newton, 2002), appropriate methods should be used to establish the trust of academicians, and opportunistic policies should be excluded from the process (Harvey & Newton, 2004).

It is essential for all stakeholders in the higher education system to be represented equally in all mechanisms related to higher education and to influence the decision-making processes for the development of quality at the national level. Similarly, no defined criteria indicate the quality required from universities in the appointment of a rector, vice-rector or dean. In addition, existing practices that are not suitable for quality management, such as the fact that merit is not clearly regulated and applied in human resources policies, cause the quality management to be undesirable or the reality and credibility of the practices and policies required by quality management to be viewed with suspicion. Looking at the practices with suspicion causes practice to be adopted ceremonially or even not to adopt it at all (Zbaracki, 1998). Also, studies show that organizations keep the new practice separate if they experience strong coercive pressure to implement a new practice and do not trust the actor who puts pressure on them (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, pp. 21–24).

In general, all stakeholders responsible for implementing quality management within the Turkish higher education system want it to be implemented outside of themselves; CoHE, UAK and THEQC want from Universities, Universities from Faculties, Faculties from Departments and

Programs, Departments and Programs from Academics, Academics from students and administrative staff. Perhaps the main reason for being late in quality management and not implementing it comes from our failure to realize that quality starts with ourselves first.

If Türkiye wants to take place in the global higher education market and be successful, it should construct the quality management in a way to improve the processes of knowledge, production and transfer of knowledge (Corengia et al., 2014, p. 74), which is the most important mission of a higher education institution. In addition, it should ensure “a compromise between privatization, academic autonomy and state control” (Young, 2002, p. 79) in the field of higher education simultaneously with quality management studies. Higher education should be genuinely restructured with this compromise, breaking free of all shackles of government regulation (Dill, 2003, p. 136).

In addition, Türkiye, which can be considered as one of the countries with weak domestic academic traditions (Ramirez, 2006, p. 138) in the face of new institutional realities (the emergence of more service providers, tighter organizational ties, and a more centralized role of the educational institution in society) (Meyer & Rowan, 2006, pp. 2–3) forcing higher education institutions to be more market-oriented and entrepreneurial, needs to systematically implement quality monitoring and accountability, new institutional forms and configurations and moral capital policies in higher education (Meyer & Powell, 2018, pp. 6–7) within the framework of the "world" model constructed in higher education.

The pandemic marked 2020, refugees, environmental and natural disasters and changing technologies are reshaping higher education. The continuing growth of digital technologies, which had to make great advances, especially during the pandemic, and the decreasing travel costs are the essential elements of this change. From electronic communication between academics, instructors

and students, to curriculum offerings using internet platforms and hybrid teaching (e.g., MOOC), internet technology continues to transform the higher education landscape and practices. The increasing popularity of educational transformation of students, staff and faculty members and various types of international branch campuses reshaping global higher education (Meyer & Powell, 2018, p. 8) are also predicted to be among the important trends of higher education in the upcoming period. The theme of the INQAAHE 2021 Conference (INQAAHE, 2021) held in Glasgow in June 2021 is “Re-imagining the Quality of Higher Education in an Age of Uncertainty”. The conference also focuses on four emerging themes in higher education:

- Digital disruption for HE brings disruption for quality assurance
- New quality agendas for external and internal quality assurance
- Quality assurance supporting changing student journeys
- Maintaining trust in the face of uncertainty

In this context, the Turkish higher education system should also reconsider its institutional strategies, focusing in particular on sustainability, the importance of openness, the role of university missions and how to make this vision a reality (EUA, 2021) in line with the vision of the European Universities Association (EUA), which is preparing for 2030 with the theme of “Universities Without Walls” revealing the vision of resilient and effective universities serving European societies for a better future.

Appendix

Descriptive Statistics Information on the Data Used in the Book

The universe of the research consists of 198 Higher Education Institutions that provide undergraduate education registered in the Higher Education Information Management System (CoHE, 2020b) in the 2019-2020 academic year.

Although the whole population was tried to be reached by the Total Population Sampling Technique as the sample size, data that could be used in the analysis were obtained from 158 universities (80% of the population) within the framework of the research.

Findings Regarding Participants

Within the scope of the research, the online questionnaire was sent to 2853 e-mail addresses from 198 higher education institutions that have at least undergraduate education in terms of education level and started their education life. Information was obtained from 158 of the 198 higher education institutions reached.

A total of 204 people from 158 higher education institutions contributed to the research by filling out the online questionnaire. Of these 204 forms, 3 forms were eliminated during the preparation of the data for analysis. As a result, a total of 201 forms were used in analysis studies.

Accordingly, 3 universities with 4 participants each, 5 universities with 3 each, 24 universities with 2 participants each, and the remaining 126

universities with 1 participant each participated in the survey on behalf of their institutions.

The questionnaires were filled in by top managers directly responsible for the establishment or operation of Quality Management (if Quality Management was adopted), quality commission members, quality evaluators and quality office managers.

The duties of the officials who filled out the questionnaire are shown in Table A-1.

Table A-1. Distribution of duties of those who answered the questionnaire

Duty	Count	Percent
Rector	5	2.5
Vice-Rector	26	13.0
Quality Unit Manager	66	33.0
Quality Unit Deputy Manager	12	6.0
Non-Administrative Quality Commission Member	30	15.0
Quality Unit Staff	6	3.0
Administrative Unit Manager	26	13.0
Academic Unit Manager	17	8.5
Academic Unit Deputy Manager	9	4.5
Institutional Unit Response	3	1.5
Total	200	100.0

Duty information was marked by 200 participants. According to Table A-1, 5 Rectors, 26 Vice-Rectors, 66 Quality Unit Managers, 12 Quality Unit Deputy Managers, 6 Quality Unit Personnel, 26 Administrative Unit Managers, 17 Academic Unit Managers, 9 Academic Unit Deputy Managers and 30 Quality Commission Members who do not have any administrative duties completed the questionnaire. While 3 universities stated that the questionnaire was answered institutionally, data could not be obtained from 1 university in this

context. All of those who answered the questionnaire were members of the institution's quality commission or responsible staff related to quality management, whose questionnaire was directed by the relevant institution.

The academic and administrative titles of those who answered the questionnaire are shown in Table A-2.

Table A-2. Distribution of titles of those who answered the questionnaire

Title	Count	Percent
Professor	78	39.6
Associate Professor	29	14.7
Dr. Faculty Member	20	10.2
Lecturer/Res.Assist.	27	13.7
Secretary-General /Deputy Secretary-General	3	1.5
Head of Department/Faculty Secretary	18	9.1
Other Administrative Manager	22	11.2
Total	197	100.0

Title information was marked by 204 participants. According to this, of those who filled out the questionnaire, 78 were Professors, 29 were Associate Professors, 20 were Dr. Faculty Members, 27 were Lecturers/Research Assistants, 3 were Secretary-General/Deputy Secretary-General, 18 were Department Heads/Faculty Secretary, and 22 were Other Administrative Unit Managers.

Descriptive Statistical Information at Organizational Level

The comparison of the universities participating in the research and the universities in the Turkish Higher Education System are shown in Tables A-3 and A-4.

Table A-3. Comparison of Universities and Analyzed Universities 1¹⁵

	Number of Universities	Number of Institutional Externally Evaluated Universities	Number of Universities in the Mission Differentiation Project	Number of Research Universities	Number of Candidate Research Universities	Number of Universities Participating in the Institutional Accreditation Program
All Higher Education Institutions	198	169	15	11	5	11
Higher Education Institutions Included in the Analyzes	158	152	15	8	5	10
Rate of Participants in the Analysis	80%	90%	100%	73%	100%	91%

Table A-4. Comparison of Universities and Analyzed Universities 2¹⁶

	THE	QS
All Higher Education Institutions	35	9
Higher Education Institutions Included in the Analyzes	28	7
Rate of Participants in the Analysis	80%	78%

As can be clearly seen in Tables A-3 and A-4, 158 (80%) of 198 universities actively conducting education and training activities, 152 (90%) of 169 universities included in the Institutional External Evaluation Program by

¹⁵ The data in the table consists of the information on 15 June 2021.

¹⁶ The data in the table consists of the information on 15 June 2021.

THEQC, all 15 universities included in the Mission Differentiation Project, 8 (73%) of 11 universities determined as Research Universities, all 5 universities selected as Candidate Research Universities, 10 (91%) of 11 universities included in the Institutional Accreditation Program by THEQC, 28 (80%) of 35 Turkish Universities in THE index, and 7 (78%) of 9 Turkish Universities in the QS index are represented in the research.

Table A-5. Representation Rate of Universities in Research by Year of Foundation

Classification of Foundation Years	Number of Universities	Number of Universities
		Participating in the Research
1923-1950	3	3
1951-1980	16	15
1981-1990	10	9
1991-2005	48	39
2006-2017	104	88
2018-...	21	4
Total	202	158

When universities are classified according to their establishment years, all 3 universities established in the 1923-1950 period, 15 (94%) of the 16 universities established in the 1951-1980 period, 9 (90%) of the 10 universities established in the 1981-1990 period, 39 (81%) of 48 universities established in the 1991-2005 period, 88 (85%) of 104 universities established in the 2006-2017 period and 4 (19%) of 21 universities established after 2018 are represented in the research, which is shown in Table A-5.

Table A-6. Representation Rate of Universities Undergoing Institutional External Evaluation in Analysis¹⁷

Evaluation Year	Number of Evaluated Universities	Number of Evaluated Universities Participating in the Research	Percent
2016	20	20	100.0
2017	50	47	94.0
2018	44	36	82.0
2019	41	35	85.0
2020	14	14	100.0
Total	169	152	90.0

When the representation rate of the universities, which are subject to the THEQC Institutional External Evaluation program stated in Table A-6, in the research is analyzed, all of the universities that had an Institutional External Evaluation in 2016, 47 (94%) of the universities that had an Institutional External Evaluation in 2017, 36 (82%) of the universities that had an Institutional External Evaluation in 2018, and 35 (88%) of the universities that had an Institutional External Evaluation in 2019 and all of the universities that had an Institutional External Evaluation in 2020 are represented in the analyses. 13% of universities had an Institutional External Evaluation in 2016, 31% in 2017, a total of 47% in 2018 and 2019, out of 23.5% per year, and 9% in 2020. Thus, the evaluation of all universities that have graduated has been completed by 2020.

As seen in Table A-7, 113 (88%) of 129 state universities and 53 (73%) of 73 foundation universities are represented in the research. While 68% of the universities participating in the research are state universities, 32% of them are foundation universities.

¹⁷ The data in the table consists of the information on 15 June 2021.

Table A-7. Types of Universities Participating in the Research

Type of University	Number of Universities	Number of Universities Participating in the Research	Comparative Percentage
State	129	106	82.0
Foundation	73	52	71.0
Total	202	158	78.0

As can be seen from the tables and explanations above, almost all Turkish Higher Education Institutions are represented in the research. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that the findings of this research reveal a general picture of the Turkish Higher Education System.

The evaluations of the universities participating in the research according to their ranking in THE Index are shown in Table A-8.

Table A-8. Rankings of Universities in THE Index

Rankings	Number of Universities	Percent
401-501	2	7
501-600	2	7
601-800	2	7
801-1000	3	11
1001+	19	68
Total	28	100.0

Accordingly, among the universities participating in the research, there are 2 universities in the rankings of 401-500, 501-600 and 601-800 worldwide, 3 universities in the rankings between 801-1000, and 19 universities in the rankings above 1001.

The QS index rankings of the universities participating in the research are shown in Table A-9.

Table A-9. Rankings of Universities in QS Index

Rankings	Number of Universities	Percent
465	1	14
521-530	1	14
601-650	1	14
751-800	1	14
801-1000	3	43
Total	7	100

Among the universities participating in the research, there is 1 university in the 465th place in the QS index rankings, 1 university in the 521-530, 601-650 and 751-800 rankings, and 3 universities in the 801-1000 rankings.

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Türkiye, which has not been accepted as a full member of the European Union due to political reasons, is one of the important countries of Europe with its historical and geopolitical position, military and economic power and institutional infrastructure.

The quantitative growth of Turkish higher education, which started in the 2000s in direct proportion to the country's greatness, has resulted in Türkiye's attempts to become one of the leading European higher education countries, with expansive physical campuses and high-tech distance learning opportunities.

In the book, the reflections of the higher education quality studies in Türkiye, which followed the studies starting with the Bologna process in Europe, and the systematic studies of Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC), which was established as a national quality assurance agency in 2015, are tried to be illustrated based on the data of a scientific study.

Higher education quality studies, which started with the establishment of THEQC, have been a turning point for the Turkish higher education system. Turkish higher education, where the diffusion and adoption of quality management by ESG standards have been completed in general, has the potential to create Europe's most successful universities in the next ten years by applying quality more and more.

DIFFUSION AND ADOPTION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN TURKISH HIGHER EDUCATION

Kürşat Taştan - Sinan Yılmaz - Nalan Sabır Taştan



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