

# Over Education as a Problem of Higher Education Curriculum

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**Abstract**—In recent years, the rate of access to higher education has increased dramatically in Turkey. Although this case provides many advantages in the medium and long term, it is also a source of a significant problem. This problem is "over education" problem. This study addresses the over education problem in the dimension of education and particularly in the context of higher education curricula. As a result of the documentary analysis, we argue that Turkey can alleviate over education problem by adopting a market-oriented higher education model.

**Index Terms**—employment, higher education curricula, over education, unemployment

## I. INTRODUCTION

Turkey has adopted the goal of development through education. In line with this purpose, it has made great investments in education in recent years. In this context, the share allocated to education from the national budget is continuously increasing. The proportion of the budget allocated for education from GDP in the last decade in Turkey amounted to 4% from 2% level [1]. Accordingly, the higher education system grew very rapidly in recent years, with nearly 200 universities and 7 million students, Turkey, has been with Europe's largest higher education system [2] to the economies of these digital developments in .However, the numeric improvements' reflections to the education were highly limited. There are many reasons for this. One of them is the planning problem in education. Education planning is an integral part of general economic and social planning [3].

The next stage of growth in Turkish higher education is the growth in quality [4]. Because only digital growth can lead to other problems besides the waste of financial resources. One of these is the problem of "over education". The problem of over-education is, in short, the fact that the individual has to work in jobs that are below the levels of proficiency gained through education. This concept was introduced by Freeman (1976), who found that these graduates were not as valuable in the market as university graduates increased in the United

States. The university diploma, due to graduate inflation, can no longer afford an advantage in terms of employment, wages, social status and career opportunities [5]. It is possible to see the typical reflections of the problem in Turkey. The fact that the youth unemployment rate is close to twice the overall unemployment rate [6], the hundreds of thousands of prospective teachers waiting to start work [7] and the high unemployment rate seen in higher education graduates [8] are examples of these reflections.

In order to solve the problem, there is a need for planning and implementations that deal with education, economy and labor market together. In the planning of education, the curriculums in higher education have a special importance. Education programs are critical for graduates to acquire the qualifications required by the economy. In this study, the role of higher education programs in employing of university graduates to appropriate programs are discussed.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out by using a documentary source analysis model. Documentary resource review is the examining and analysis of articles and documents on a subject [9].

The data sources of this study are scientific theses, books, articles, newspaper articles, internet related documents and articles which are related to over-education and Turkish higher education programs. These documents have been examined by the researchers carrying out the study, discussed and analyzed in the context of various headings, and some conclusions have been drawn from these comments and suggestions have been presented.

The conclusions of the research and the recommendations based on these results are limited with the available literature information and the comments of the researchers who conducted the study.

## III. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION, CURRICULUM AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Even though it is criticized by some people, the economic dimension of education comes to the fore. It is

so common that the young people going to university in Turkey are not asked, "What are you reading?". Usually, "What will you be?" is the question asked. The reason why education is focused on this result is that the economy has deeply penetrated all sectors and fields, including education. As a result of this, as in the world, in Turkey, the value of education, which has been measured with providing economic output. When this is the case, the relationship between education and labor force and employment becomes compulsory. As a matter of fact, the mission of education is explained as the effective preparation of the labor force in line with social needs [10]. The concept of human capital, which constitutes the main source of economic growth, covers the knowledge, skills and abilities acquired by the individual through education [11], [12]. Curricula are of key importance in this role. Because the curriculum is the compass and the spine of formal education [13].

It is important that the curriculum has a dynamic structure in line with the needs of the individual and the society in order to provide the expected economic benefit [14]. For this purpose, the curricula of higher education should have the qualifications to give the individual the competences required by the economy in accordance with the era. What is required is the development of a flexible curriculum with a strong economic foundation and a technological dimension. However, in Turkey, with some exceptions, higher education curricula away from being updated, detached and has a structure full of theoretical knowledge. While there are many units with different names in universities, the curriculum unit or curriculum team is often neglected. However, each university should establish this unit and constantly update the curricula according to regional, national and international economic demands and expectations. It is important to consult with national and international business and employment-related institutions and organizations for the positive impact of these updates on the labor market. In Turkey, the head of these organizations is Vocational Qualifications Authority. In fact, all this means that universities should review their education policies in order to create employment. In newly opened universities, this issue is an important opportunity for Turkey conversions. The steps taken in this regard in recent years have been touched below.

#### IV. APPLICATIONS IN TURKEY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE OVER EDUCATION PROBLEM'S SOLUTION

In Turkey, there have been very important developments numerically in recent years in higher education but it are not easy to say the same thing for the quality. However, the HEC's [15] statement emphasizing that using trained manpower resources in inefficient ways is not sustainable, is important. This statement is seen as a step for the solution of problems related to education and employment including over education in Turkey.

The education system and curricular changes in universities in recent years are examples of these steps. The first steps taken to ensure the adaptation of university graduates to the labor market often refer to the transition

to in-job training practice. In fact "in business education" concept, is one of the principles of Turkey's ancient system of vocational training in the Ahi System [16]. However, afterwards Turkey passed from work-based model to a model based on school curriculum which is acquainted with the problem of curricula including intense theoretic subjects. Because this reflected in a negative way to Turkey's economy, now in universities in succession, the curriculum "in job training" is mostly started to being carried out. The most typical example of this is the clinical training model and internship engineering approaches implemented by the faculties of engineering and the faculties of education [17]. "7 + 1 Model" as referred to in this aspect of the practice in Turkey are contacted below.

These approaches, which support graduates to find jobs suitable for their positions, contribute to the solution of the problem of over-education in a sense. In Turkey, the first university which has started to carry these practices out is Gaziantep University. Gaziantep University began to practice this ten years ago. So, in time, it has gained serious extent on the positive results obtained. 95% satisfaction from internship engineering practice and 75% of these students sent to on-the-job training [18] are typical of these positive results. Coşkun [19], explains internship in engineering as, "the students learn the theoretical and practical knowledge at the workplace, under the supervision of experienced faculty members to implement and develop". Internship engineering, which is different from the internship in the undergraduate process, generally means that the students spend the last year of their undergraduate education in the workplace.

In many universities, internship engineering practice is carried out with the support of local dynamics related to employment and labor. As an example, in-service insurance and fees of internship engineering students are paid with the support of these local institutions and organizations. Some universities establish a unit on the subject and place their students in on-the-job training according to the results of this unit's market research. These units function as a kind of net career consultancy as a result of school-industry cooperation. Thus, in addition to developing the application of theoretical knowledge, the student is provided with the opportunity to learn the real dynamics of the business world. Moreover, the student has already established business connections without graduating, which is important in terms of efficient use of labor resources and can also help to solve the problem of over-education.

#### V. RESULTS

There have been salient statistical developments in higher education in Turkey for the past few years. By 2018, a total of 7.740.502 students were actively studying at Turkish universities, where 158.098 academics were working [20]. As a result of the imbalance of education and economy, the problem of over education, which is different from classical unemployment, is related to graduate inflation; it seems to be a fate that all higher

education graduates will face, except for a few exceptional programs. The problem of over-inclination damages the labor-employment-wage balance, causes economic losses and causes many socio-psychological problems.

Most of the higher education graduates in Turkey face over education problem and this problem is related to education, economy and employment in many ways. One of the main reasons for over education problem is opening higher education programs without considering supply and demand balance and the ineffectiveness and the lack of compliance of the programs with the labor market. As a result of this, university diplomas become worthless and cause alumni inflation and over education.

The inflation of graduates is one the biggest obstacles for Turkey that is hindering the positive reflections occur in economy in the recent years. Necessary measures should be taken urgently so that this situation does not discredit the university degree. These measures can be listed as promoting technological and high added value production, planning work and employment and training together, guiding more vocational and technical education at high school and associate level and reviewing higher education curricula.

In this study, the review of higher education curricula in the solution of university graduation inflation and thus the problem of over-education was discussed and the following conclusions were reached. The discussion has focused basically on the assumption that the curriculum has an important role in the employment problem of the higher education graduates in Turkey because training in the higher education is related to the interaction among students, curriculum, academics, universities and business world. The quality of the graduates is also closely associated with the quality of these variables and the interaction among them. It is well-known that in Turkey, there are serious troubles in the interaction particularly between the universities and business world from among these variables. Therefore, the employment problem of the university graduates is largely associated with the lack of essential communication and interaction between the universities and business world. To overcome this problem, implementations like internship engineering initiated at many universities should be expanded in Turkey. A curriculum unit and curriculum development team should be established at each university. This team can be formed from university members, representatives of relevant public institutions / organizations, labor market representatives and students. This team should relieve the curricula of almost every branch from the weight of the Industry Age and adapt it to the Information Age paradigm. If necessary, several universities can come together and do this work. In addition to the curriculum, scientific courses and practices to be continuously updated and developed, courses or activities that provide technological, informatics, social and personal development should be added. Especially, it is important that curricula and theses at graduate level are carried out in line with the real labor market or public demands and needs (order logic). Thus,

from the undergraduate to the doctoral degree college graduates will be to enhanced more suitable positions and get employment chances, and this contributes to the solution of the problem with many labor and employment, especially over education. In this context, the applications like intern engineering or 7 + 1 model need to be developed in line with economic and social realities of Turkey. With this regard, while some universities continue training the masses, other universities in collaboration with the business world may offer education with the clinical model as part of on-the-job training. Even more, some other universities may be positioned as specialization or thematic universities by specifically focusing on some technological fields.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

"The authors declare no conflict of interest"

#### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

EO wrote the introduction, SE wrote the methodology, BA wrote the rest of the paper; and all authors had approved the final version.

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