

# STRATEGIES FOR THE MARKETING OF HIGHER EDUCATION WITH COMPARATIVE CONTEXTUAL REFERENCES BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND TURKEY

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## ABSTRACT

Education is now a global product with institutions worldwide competing for students and finding ever more creative ways to satisfy student needs and preferences. With the continuing rise in the preference for flexible distance learning, educational institutions are finding that when students and faculty have significantly different cultural backgrounds and learning styles that the expectations of the learning experience can be unfulfilled. In Australia, international students have made education Australia's third largest service export, earning \$5.8 billion. This means that student populations have moved from being homogenous and captive to domestic constraints and expectations, to being multi-cultural, dispersed and subject to a plethora of constraints and expectations. Today in Turkey, education is the responsibility of government however, in recent years, the private sector has entered the market providing educational services at all levels. In particular, after the 1990s, private higher education institutions (HEIs) with a commercial focus have mushroomed.

In 2007, there are 25 private universities in Turkey with more than 2.000.000 students enrolled in these universities. Of these students, more than 1.000.000 are registered in distance education faculties. With such large student numbers competition between private universities for students has intensified particularly over the last 15 years. As a consequence the need to develop strategies for attracting students has become more important. Marketing strategies in Turkey have tended to concentrate on three distinct categories: strategies between governmental HEIs, private HEIs and distance education HEIs. The contribution of technologies to education processes has been immense with students and faculty each learning to adapt to an environment of continuous change and opportunities. This paper seeks to explore the notion that a competitive advantage in marketing of higher education can be attained by customizing learning experiences for particular student cohorts in a pro-active and constructive way.

**Keywords:** Education; higher education; marketing; distance education; marketing strategies, Turkey; Australia

## INTRODUCTION

The fast competition that is taking place in the current global market has affected the educational sector. In Australia, international students have made education Australia's third largest service export, earning \$5.8 billion. This means that student populations have moved from being homogenous and captive to domestic constraints and expectations, to being multi-cultural, dispersed and subject to a plethora of constraints and expectations. In Turkey nowadays, when the education is taken for granted not only the state institutions providing conventional education are prevailed. Starting from 1990's higher education is provided by private universities or other private initiatives either conventionally or extensively. The increase in the products and services that are provided by different parties has affected the educational institutions and the power of marketing communications is utilized in order to pull more buyers (customers) both by private and state institutions. In Turkey although there has been existed a grand examination for gaining an access to higher education every university intends to be the primary choice of the students who will pass this nationwide examination.

The marketing of education is a controversial issue. Although the opinions on the signification of the educational institution as a product and the students as the customers still remains arguable the transformation of the instruction process as a student-based model requires the utilization of the marketing opportunities are used. Teaching has been increasingly developed as a learner-centered model, shaping the process as a life-long learners experience to match their existing knowledge and skills is crucial. At distance education institution-DEI level being market oriented means adapting a client-centered perspective and managing the school in a way that matches the needs of primary and secondary clients. This student-based model is not much different than the client-based utilization of marketing strategy. In the marketing approach the needs and desires of the customers are given a primary and major importance so they are treated as "kings". When this strategy is employed in distant education the course programs and materials are observed to be shaped in accordance with the needs and desires of the students and multimedia use are also observed to be very common with these are presented within the most appropriate channels to the students. The customer "king" transforms into the student "king". Marketing is about achieving organizational goals and these are determined by the values of the organization (its "culture") and shape its decision-making. Marketing helps the DEIs to make them achieve to be identified with those clients for whom they offer an appropriate range of learning opportunities.

The objective of this study is to discuss the notions like advertisement, public relations, personal sales and fairs that make the marketing communication strategies possible in a nationwide manner and compare the higher education institutions both in Turkey and Australia based on the competition that is widespread today.

## A STRATEGY FOR MARKETING

It is the explicit recognition of the tensions between old and new learning styles which our paper seeks to highlight as the basis for attaining a marketing advantage. To allow students to learn in styles that commence with recognition of diverse foundations provides an environment where students are given greater opportunity for academic success.

The view that all students can be blended into one learning environment as though one stylized type of pedagogy would be suitable for all students in a mixed cohort, presumes that a standardized approach to learning is indeed appropriate.

The concept of 'one size fits all' education may have been appropriate in old economies where students represented a homogenous group from the same cultural group with a known entry level skill set. Where students do not fit this form of stereotyping it makes sense to approach the task of designing an appropriate learning environment which suits the majority of learners. Eisner also claims that

(c)ommunication and multiple intelligence literature suggest that effective teaching involves reaching students, and that reaching students involves taking their frames of reference into account. Knowing where our students are coming from and meeting them there may increase the chance that students will absorb the information we seek to teach (Eisner 2003, 34-5).

Indeed, the arrival of technologies to supplement, enable, enrich and mediate learning experiences challenges traditional education pedagogies. To actively respond to such pressures in a way that is positive can contribute to academic outcomes.

Businesses and governments have called into question the relevance and quality of the education that has been provided by post-secondary institutions as well as their continued ability to deliver education in a manner that the new forces of the globalizing marketplace would deem efficient (Montgomery and Canaan, 2004, p. 740).

Nagy (forthcoming 2007) demonstrated via a case study that student outcomes could be dramatically improved by specifically recognizing the needs of the cohort and tailoring assessment tasks to suit the cohort. This style of customization is a reaction to market needs in a proactive way to ensure that student success is achieved without variation in the quality or content of course design.

To take this analysis one step further, for a chosen unit of study where it is known that the student population incorporates variable educational foundations within the student population, a university could recognize this variation and provide 2 streams of learning for the same material using alternative pedagogies to achieve outcomes. One alternative could embrace student centered learning and the other teacher centered learning. Each of the alternatives may then employ the best practice pedagogies appropriate to the identified style of learning, and utilize different assessment strategies. Students are then free to choose which alternative learning environment best suits their learning foundations and preferences, at the commencement of the subject. This approach has the potential to promote a more confident attitude to learning with less alienation from the learning environment, greater student self esteem and improved learning outcomes.

The term learning styles is used as a description of the attitudes and behaviors which determine an individual's preferred way of learning. Some students tend to focus on facts. Some respond strongly to visual forms of information; others are able to learn more from verbal forms - written and spoken explanations. Some prefer to learn actively and interactively; others function more introspectively and individually. No one learning style is better than another; it is simply that people learn in different ways.

The best learning style is the one that works for an individual in a particular situation. Those universities with sufficiently large and diverse student cohorts may be able to further refine a process of variable pedagogies. Costs would not be significantly different and yet the provision of alternative learning experience can be employed for both on campus and distance education institutions representing a way of marketing subjects that may entice particular students to particular universities.

The marketing strategy we have suggested is another form of product differentiation in the very active market for higher education. Redding (2005) highlights that students already have many choices. He claims that

(i)n most education systems, students can express their preferences through their choice of universities, choice of courses within the university or perhaps even their combination of modules within a degree. The bone of contention, however, is the assumption that having made that choice, the students should defer to the expertise of the deliverer (Redding 2005, p. 411).

Our suggestion places the emphasis back on the student; with the student selecting the mode of learning best suited to their personal learning style.

These choices made available to students can thus be regarded as part of a suite of marketing tools that universities can make use of. Generally, action must be taken to develop a complete marketing program to reach consumers (life-long learners) by using a combination of factors which can be referred to as the 4P's.

The 4 P approach to marketing includes product, price, place and promotion are illustrated as follows:

- **Product:** It is a good, service or idea is the consumer's needs for satisfying. Physical product can be described in terms of its physical characteristics and is what most people actually think of as the product (Pardey, 1991, p. 124). Some authors suggest that education is a product. For example; Kaye suggests looking at distance education as a product instead of a tool for distributing education. He says that in order to most efficiently use our resources, the needs of the student/consumer should be assessed. By doing so, we can learn from the students and then apply that knowledge to attract future students while meeting the needs and improving upon the services offered to the current students (Yilmaz, 2005, p. 12). The products have a different name, logo, color and physical attributes. We can say that DE institution is a brand and a brand is a way of differentiating one product from another; the greater the perceived similarity of products, the more important the brand in establishing the differences. Some schools will clearly feel that they are different from others, or that the market perceives differences, which makes it less important for them to establish their corporate identity (Pardey, 1991, p. 132).
- **Price:** This concept embodies more than a value that someone will pay for it. The meaning associated with price changes is contextual. Institutions have different pricing policies and all institutions compete against each other to increase their application and enrollment rates. Pricing policies will impact student choice between institutions.
- **Place:** It is a means of getting the product into the consumer's hands.

The personality of the place sends messages to the target audience. The vehicle which is used to reach the students can be a physical location or a virtual space where the connection speed of internet used, e-mail, can serve as a differentiating mechanism.

- **Promotion:** Promotion is a means of communication between the seller and buyer. It includes advertising, public relations, personal selling, publicity, and sales promotions. If one higher education institution wants to enroll more students than other, it will need to use corporate advertising or engage in activities that create a liaison between the students and the institutions. Publicity provides media coverage to the institutions and visibility can create confidence about an institutions reputation and quality perceptions.

The first private university to use promotional material in Turkey was Bilkent University. Students who attained higher scores than others in the university entrance exam were sent brochures and were invited to be the students of Bilkent. Today, the number of private universities is 25 with all universities routinely engaged in use of marketing communication to enroll new students. Marketing initiatives include print based products and internet-based advertisements, brochures, and word-of-mouth (WOM) communication. According to Buttle (1998: p. 242) WOM has been shown to influence a variety of conditions: awareness, expectations, perceptions, attitudes, behavioral intentions and behaviour. Because of these factors positive WOM may affect the awareness of the private university and this awareness can turn the behavioral intentions of students. Fairs are also benefited to communicate with the students. Every year education fairs are organized and all universities are represented. In Australia it is also common for higher education institutions to routinely engage in advertising and promotion of particular universities by attending promotional events around the world, and by having a strong internet presence.

Where the cost of registration is same between universities, the image of the university plays an important role in the process of selecting that university. The image consists of two criteria. One of it is tangible criteria like, academic staff, profile of the graduated, facility of the university, curriculum, and opportunity for internship etc. Intangible criteria are good or bad experiences about university, negative or positive WOM.

## **GLOBAL CONTEXTS – BORDERLESS EDUCATION**

As education increasing becomes borderless, universities compete for students in the same market, the global market. How universities have individually embraced this phenomenon have implications for their ability to attract certain segments of the education market. Those that continue to rely on 'traditional learning' in relation to the pre technology savvy students in the 'old economy' have a fixed view of the place for education in society. Such views are culturally defined and perceptions of knowledge have tended to be ordered and open to control. Traditional learning has been about imparting traditional knowledge using accepted methods with the expectation that learners would comply with and accept imparted facts. Traditional universities had captive markets based on a mixture of geographical proximity, barriers to market entry based on language, accreditation, culturally defined learning styles, and cost. This style of old economy, based on old perceptions of knowledge and old learning, is a thing of the past (University of Sydney 2003).

The socio-political changes coupled with and, to a large extent, also driven by the ICT revolution, have made it possible for people to become aware of and informed about events and developments in other parts of the world. The proportion of countries practicing some form of democratic governance rose from 40 percent in 1988 to 61 percent in 1998. Macro-economic policies predicated upon privatization rather than central-planning and export-competitiveness rather than import-substitution, are policies that have started to rapidly unify world markets and radically transformed the world economy. This process referred to as Economic globalization is deeply intertwined with technological transformations. New tools of ICT make world's financial and scientific resources more accessible and unify markets into a single market place, aptly called the global market, where intense competition in all conceivable fields, including not only goods, but also services such as education and medical care, further drives scientific technological and socio-economic progress.

The convergent and mutually reinforcing impacts of globalization and the ICT revolution have radically changed not only the methods and structures of production, but also the relative importance of factors of production along with the profile of the workforce. The transformation of industrial societies to knowledge societies and a global knowledge economy is characterized by the increased importance of knowledge, both technical knowledge (know-how), and knowledge about attributes (information and awareness) (Guruz, 2003, p. 2-3). The new economy embraces new knowledge, using new knowledge transfer mechanisms (technologies) in flexible contexts with few barriers preventing participation. Notions of lifelong learning and a knowledge society coupled with the revolution in digital technologies have enabled education and education processes in ways previously unimagined. The harnessing of technologies for learning has also fostered greater transparency in education processes in accord with the "market" perspective supporting a standardized (Marginson & Considine, 2000, p. 177), non-discriminatory approach to education which can meet professional requirements and is offered to all qualifying students on the same basis (Parker 2005). It is not our intention to contribute to the debate concerning whether it is appropriate to regard students as customers, or whether education can or should be regarded as a product. We acknowledge that this debate is the subject of much contention.

However, higher education has evolved with the 'new economy' and warrants being considered within a competitive framework. As commonalities in degree and postgraduate programs increase allowing for qualifications to become portable worldwide, competition between suppliers of higher education is increasing.

Before considering a marketing strategy which can be applied to both contexts, we will make comparisons between a mature higher education market with limited local growth potential, Australia, and a country with a rapidly expanding market and significant growth opportunities, Turkey. The rapidly changing countries of central, eastern and southern Europe provide examples of changing growth markets with significant opportunities for innovation in higher education. The most significant development has been the rise in private universities which did not exist prior to the 1990's. These private institutions filled a vacuum when the state resources could not fulfill the upsurge in demand emerging from the value placed on education in economies that were increasingly adopting market economics principles.

The recognition that "(a) strong system of education is vital to the prosperity of any modern state" (Galbraith 2003, p.539), came quickly in the emerging economies with

private institutions stepping in to meet demand in many European countries. Galbraith also points out that the private provision of higher education is relatively rare worldwide (with the exceptions of United States of America and Japan), and sharply contrast with the experience of Western Europe where education is overwhelmingly public in nature.

Higher education, too, was viewed by many as a purely public service, but has now evolved as a semi-public service, with an associated cost, a social and a personal return. Coupled with fiscal constraints and shrinking public resources allocated to tertiary education worldwide, this new view of higher education has led to the introduction and rise of market forces in tertiary education. Privatization and attempts to establish quasi-market structures have been key elements in formulating and implementing higher education policies, not only in developed countries, but also in the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America and Eastern European countries in transition. These consist of introduction of real tuition fees, revenue diversification through sales of goods and services produced by institutions and an increased share of private institutions of various types, both non-profit and for-profit (Guruz, 2003, p. 29). In Turkey, since 1990s, the private sector has entered the market providing educational services at all levels and effectively changing the landscape of higher education in country.

It is not coincidental that foreign capital has been attracted to higher education opportunities in Europe where demand has exceeded supply over the last 2 decades. However profit motivations do not always support an environment of quality and equity with these issues continuing to be problematic. In recent times there are increasing calls for fragmented, disparate systems between countries to become more understandable and comparable as the importance and need of a mobile and flexible workforce in knowledge based economies continues to rise. The most recent significant moves in Europe to increase standardization in higher education have emerged as a consequence of the European Bologna Process, a plan to integrate the higher education frameworks of 45 European countries by 2010. With origins commencing in meetings held in Bologna in 1999 relating to 29 countries that subsequently expanded to include many more countries as a result of the most recent meetings in Bergen, in 2005. The Australian Minister for Education, Science and Training, Julie Bishop, suggests that the Bologna Process

is about mobility for students and graduates—about bringing together a disparate array of systems and working towards a consensus model that enables students, and institutions and employers to more readily understand and translate qualifications across national borders ... to improve Europe's international position in higher education (Bologna National Seminar 2006, Bishop, p. 2).

The quality of Australian higher education is already well regarded internationally. However, with a small population of 21 million people and a shrinking domestic market Australia needs to be attune to developments overseas which will influence the market for international students, its main source of growth opportunities. The minister for education has made it clear that

(t)he Bologna Process and the increased incidence of teaching in English at European institutions, will help those institutions challenge our traditional markets in Asia. As the competition for students intensifies both at home and overseas, the pressures will intensify on universities to distinguish themselves

yet still offer students a high quality education experience (Bologna National Seminar 2006, Bishop, p. 3).

This viewpoint is based on perceptions that the European Union (EU) is, or has been, regarded as an economic and political force without perceived "prestige of institutions, labour market acceptance of qualifications and innovation capacity of institutions" (Bologna National Seminar 2006, Richard, p.12). Efforts to raise the international profile of European higher education, clearly has implications for the Australian higher education market.

While Australia resides outside the immediate influence of the Bologna Process, Turkey is more directly affected. After a call for contributions by the EU, in June 2004, the Turkish National Agency established a National Team of 12 Bologna Promoters. In less than six-months the team prepared a working plan that generally contributed to the implementation and understanding of the Bologna process in Turkey. The activities concerning the European Credit Transfer System-ECTS and Diploma Supplement implementations in Turkey have been carried out by the universities under the supervision of the Council of Higher Education (YOK). Universities have been participating in mobility schemes within the context of EU education, training and youth programmes under the coordination of the National Agency. By law, it is the responsibility of the Council of Higher Education and the Interuniversity Council to see to it that a national system of quality assurance with a structure and function comparable to its transnational counterparts is established and implemented. In their last meeting, both the Council and the Board have expressed their willingness to establish a national quality assurance system and re-acknowledged that the establishment of this action has top priority in their agenda after being briefed about the existing practices by some higher education institutes in Turkey. It is expected that there will not be any need for a legislative change and, hence, the process will be completed before the 2007 ministerial meeting.

Evidence of Turkey's rising quality comparability in global contexts is evident in specific areas. For example, the pioneering higher education institutions in search of international recognition of some of their programmes, sought accreditation with ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology-USA) in the first half 1990's. Most of the engineering programmes of 4 universities were evaluated by ABET at different times and received "substantial equivalence" from ABET (ABET's only accreditation for countries outside the USA). These universities have since then been co-operating with ABET for quality assurance of the engineering programmes and more higher education institutions followed them afterwards. This co-operation has also motivated all the engineering faculties to establish a national system of quality assurance for engineering programs.

The meetings and the workshops of the deans of all the engineering faculties, which started in late 1990's, gave birth to a national accreditation system of engineering programmes-MUDEK-, similar to ABET2000. Although MUDEK does not yet have any official recognition by the responsible bodies, it stands a good chance of being a part of the national system for engineering programmes after some revisions with due regard to the requirements of the Bologna process (e.g.: international peers in the governing body); since it is already a partner in EUR-ACE (European Accreditation Programme for Engineering, an ongoing Socrates programme) and since Turkish universities have already been well received.

Among other international quality assessments exercised by the higher education



institutions in Turkey are several reviews by EUA through its Institutional Review Program (IRP) and the accreditation process of Joint Commission of International Accreditation for hospitals (for the case of university hospitals). Three universities participated in the first phase of the Quality Culture Project conducted by EUA, in 2002-2003. For the second phase of the Quality Culture Project, which took place in 2003-2004, one Turkish university was chosen as one of the 45 participants from 24 European countries that were selected. Two universities were selected for the third phase of the above-mentioned project that will be carried out in 2005. The reviews concluded that, there is a need felt by the government, society, the employment sector and the Council of Higher Education (YOK) to promote and secure Turkish universities' reputation internationally, particularly, within other OECD and EU countries". The 2001 regulations for quality assurance accepted by the Interuniversity Board, the practices and the pilot project mentioned above now provide a solid background to establish a national system, including all the desired elements in it, like international participation, co-operation and networking (Bolonya Sureci Kapsaminda..., Kucukyavuz, S. & et al., 2005).

Free mobility is of the most importance to the Turkish universities. In general, universities encourage the mobility of academic staff and students. Many universities organize exchange programmes, workshops and summer schools in co-operation with universities abroad. The major problem for the mobility is funding, so far composed of limited university resources. Most of the universities have established their International Offices and have connections w

ith the National Agency responsible from all EU programmes concerning mobility. The National Agency Turkey was established in January 2002 to carry out required activities to enable Turkey's participation in EU education & Culture Programs. Turkey is now preparing for participation in Socrates programmes with some training and promotional activities as well as some promising pilot projects. The aim of the Student mobility project is 'learning by-doing' experience; and also to monitor the implementation process and outcomes concerning this project.

Life Long Learning there is no regulated requirement on life long learning. But public training centers and continuing education centers of universities serve also as life long learning centers. And, pen Education Faculty of Anadolu University, Eskisehir is organize LLL. (HIGHER EDUCATION IN TURKEY: Implementing..., [www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Turkey.pdf](http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Turkey.pdf), retrieved 19.03.2007)

Anadolu University is aware that the success of the mobility programmes depends on an organised international relations body inside the institution. For this purpose, after the agreement between Turkey and the European Union to enter the LLP II Programme and the Framework Project FP6 in 2002, the efforts have been concentrated on the establishment of an international office in order to organize the four existing units, which are SocLeoYouth (LLP-Leonardo-Youth), FP6, European Documentation Centre and Non-European International Affairs. (<http://www.uib.anadolu.edu.tr/index.html>, accessed 28.03.2007)

As a result, the Office for International Affairs has been established in mid 2003. In order to undertake the LLP/Erasmus Programme, an Institutional Coordinator has been appointed and the deans of all the faculties have appointed their respective Departmental Coordinators.

Anadolu University considers its European Policy as a major aspect of its wider

international policy, especially after 2001 when Turkey became a candidate to become a member of the European Union. As we are willing to cooperate with European universities and eager to be a part of all sorts of European educational programmes, we have already started making the necessary adjustments in all units of the university to be more transparent and more open to international cooperation. Seminars have been implemented throughout the university in order to inform the academic staff and the students about the LLP/Erasmus scheme, and ECTS credits have already been assigned in most of the departments. Works on the Diploma Supplement have recently been completed.

The EU and many other countries have already made significant progress in building strengths in higher education by mobilizing the new technologies and flexible modes of education provision. This has spawned the creation of 'corporate, virtual and for profit universities with for profit universities being the most aggressive at expanding their activities into the domestic markets of other countries. In doing so there is a presumption that a standard education product can be used for students enrolled from anywhere around the world. While the new economy and new learners are embracing many new modes and methods, the movement from the old to new learning paradigms has not been without creative, financial and cultural tensions. As those seeking to take part in the new knowledge revolution bring embedded learning foundations and abilities based on the old paradigms, learners in the new learning environment struggle to adapt. Montgomery and Canaan (2004) confirm a need for

the development of ethnographies of higher education that consider how local, national and global structures interpenetrate and interact to shape and stratify student's educational choices and experiences ... as a consequence of the ways in which informal and formal curricula and student learning during primary and secondary school has been structured (Montgomery and Canaan, 2004, p. 739).

The recognition that increasing similarities in higher education, which theoretically allows the 'education product' to become more standardized does little to recognize that student groups are becoming less homogenous.

## THE TURKISH CONTEXT

There are 53 state and 25 foundation (private non-profit) universities in Turkey which are all governed by the same Higher Education Law no. 2547 enacted on November 4, 1981. At present, enrolment in the foundation universities accounts for only 5.7 % of the total and, it is rather unlikely that enrolment in Foundation universities will near those in the state universities in a foreseeable future.

According to OSYM statistics at academic year of 2005-2006, all Turkish universities have 2.342.898 student in HE system. 992,235 of who are female and 1.350.663 were male. 810.705 of whom were registered to the tradition HE institutions, and 1.532.193 of who were registered to the distance education institutions and 1.100.000 are active student and nearly more than 400.000 of them passive students who are not re-registration in this academic year.

In this academic year totally 15.481 foreign students were registered to the Turkish HE institutions from all over the world. 5.152 of them female and 10.329 are male. Most of them come from Turkic Republics, North Cyprus Turkish Republic, or Europe. Even, at in this academic year 29 Australian students registered Turkish HE

institutions that 19 are female and 10 are male. (OSYM, 2005-2006 Academic year Statistics of academic year, in Turkish and English language, <http://www.osym.gov.tr/BelgeGoster.aspx?F6E10F8892433CFF7A2395174CFB32E174B6113DA2B1A6EC>)

Foreign students who wish to pursue their undergraduate study in Turkey must have completed their secondary education in a high school/secondary school or a similar institution in which the education is equivalent to that of a Turkish high school. Secondly, they must take the Entrance Examination for Foreign Students (YOS). The YOS consists of two tests. The first test is the Basic Learning Skills Test which assesses abstract reasoning. The questions have a minimal dependence on language but explanations are given in English and Turkish. The second test is the Turkish Language Proficiency Test which assesses the candidates' comprehension of written Turkish. The YOS is usually administered in June by the Student Selection and Placement Centre (OSYM). Language courses are organized for the international students at the universities where the medium of instruction is Turkish.

The fees for national students in institutions of higher education are fixed and announced by the Council of Higher Education, taking into consideration the character and duration of the period of study in various disciplines and also the nature of the individual higher education institutions. The portion of these fees to be paid by the State is determined each year by the Council of Ministers and allocated to the budget of the institution concerned on a per-student basis. The remaining portion of the fees is paid by the student. The portion paid by the State is to be a minimum of 50%. Foreign students pay the tuition fee three times more than the Turkish students. The tuition fee must be paid in a single sum and in the foreign currency to be determined in accordance with the current exchange rate (Summarized from Bolonya Sureci Kapsaminda..., Kucukyavuz, S. & et al., 2005).

## **THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT**

Australia has 37 public universities, 2 private universities and approximately 130 other higher education providers, the latter generally offering vocational and technical education qualifications in smaller specific disciplines catering to specific markets. In 2005 there were 665,526 undergraduate students and 263,504 post graduate students with international students making up 25% of total enrolments. The most favored areas of study for international students are management, accounting and information systems making up 60% of enrolments. Because of structural issues and funding of higher education by government, private universities have not yet attained a strong presence in Australia. This does not mean that the need for economy and efficiency usually characterized in for profit contexts, does not play a part in university administrative and policy decisions.

In the last three decades government has transformed the public sector by imposing market-based models as a means of inducing efficiency and economy for the public purse. These changes have impacted tertiary education by introducing diversity in offerings, in participation and in operational structures. As a consequence, Universities are increasingly 'customer-focused' as they compete with each other and, in addition, with emerging industry-based alternative suppliers of tertiary education. Depending on the faculty of study Australian students are most commonly subsidized by government funding and can pay from \$490-\$1021 (and higher in the fields of medicine and more prestigious programs) per subject for undergraduate subjects where a typical degree is composed of 24 subjects. International students

are not subsidized by the government and pay much higher costs for their education. The costs can vary between universities and can range from \$1875–3,313 per subject for a typical undergraduate degree (<http://www.deakin.edu.au/fees>, accessed 28/03/07). English proficiency must also be demonstrated via testing using a range of options recognized by the Australian Government for tertiary studies.

The future viability of higher education is significantly impacted by Australia's ability to provide a quality international higher education experience with overseas markets continuing to be the source for sector growth. The Australian academic landscape, in comparison with Turkey, is small and to a significant degree mature, with limited opportunities for expansion in the domestic market. 80% of Australia's international students come from Asia and China where the quality reputation of universities is well regarded. However, like the current European initiatives, Asian countries are increasingly building their own capabilities meaning that competition will become an even greater issue with the need for positions of marketing strength to be created.

The growth in the Australian international student market over the last 10 years has benefited from the quality and equity policies common to large public universities in Australia. Students that meet entrance requirements are able to enjoy the same quality of education as domestic students. At Deakin University, equity policies ensure that all student groups receive the same learning experience within a standardized framework. The framework is founded upon presumptions concerning generic skills held on entry and expectations of skills that graduates will develop during their studies.

To differentiate between student cohorts in Australia is met with condemnation on the grounds of equity and culturally defined best practice pedagogy. The old style differentiation of students by physical location based on whether that were distance and face-to-face does not exist. All students receive the same resources, access to university systems and staff and pay the same fees. Discriminatory practices and processes are unacceptable with a "one size fits all" approach resulting in learning environments that regard students as they were a homogenous group. From an ethical viewpoint, it can be argued that the promise of a western style education based on an English standard is what students that enroll at Australian institutions expect. However, this viewpoint is difficult to sustain when evidence indicates that by showing greater flexibility in teaching styles students can achieve better outcomes (Nagy 2006). Asian students often represent the majority in certain post-graduate business programs. There is much research to support the notion that Asian learning styles are very different to Western style learning paradigms with students preferring a teacher centered rather than student centered learning paradigm (Garrison and Anderson 2003). This reflects the foundations acquired from primary and secondary school education which are culturally bounded and impact the types of generic skills which students bring to university studies.

## LIMITATIONS

The offering of alternatives learning environments using the same course materials may be viewed as a discriminatory practice which marginalizes one form of learning experience over another. It is possible that students preferring a teacher centered learning experience may be criticized for perhaps not acquiring skills during the learning process which are consistent with the acquisition of lifelong learning skills. However these are defined, it can be argued that such skills can be acquired in different contexts without the need to foster them in every unit of study at a

university. It may be sufficient that the skills associated with any perceived shortcomings of a particular learning paradigm are sufficiently covered elsewhere in other subjects. Or, alternatively, can more appropriately be fostered with a specific subject of study rather than as part of a body of knowledge.

Another important limitation of this article is the Australian and Turkish HE contexts are not sufficiently similar in their student markets. Whilst this may have been true of the past, competitive forces are becoming more global and, as the Bologna initiatives have shown, decisions made in one part of the world have ripple effects in more distant markets.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

As indicated in this paper the higher education systems of the two countries illustrated are not so similar. In Turkey, most of the universities are state based and privates are non-profit foundation based. However, private universities charge much more than government universities. Average students fee of private universities start from \$5.000 up to \$15.000 per year.

The fees vary according to the field of study and the prestige or popularity of the university. The cost of state based university students is approximately \$100-\$1,000 and is generally the same at each university. The two types of universities compete with each other; however there is more competition between private universities. State based universities are more limited in their ability to engage in marketing activities because of budget constraints.

For Turkey in particular, marketing in the area of distance education has significant implications for traditional universities'. As an illustration Anadolu University's Open Education Faculty has many more students than that of the traditional universities. The Open Education Faculty students pay small fees of approximately \$100-\$150 per year. But since the year 2000 other institutions have commenced offerings distance education and Anadolu University needs to review its marketing activities, in the traditional and Open & Distance Education fields, in response to the increased competition. It can be said that the importance of understanding marketing applications by university administrators is raising rapidly in the Turkish HE system.

Though existing in different markets Australia in a mature market with limited domestic growth opportunities, and Turkey in a rapidly expanding market with emerging new a market entrant, the path ahead for universities in both countries is undoubtedly one of greater competition. The standard laws of supply and demand continue to infiltrate higher education institutions.

Competition between institutions and countries together with the drive for profitability will promote innovation in education offerings. The proactive stratification of education as a marketing tool recognizes that students are from multiple and often contradictory social locations which provide possibilities and constraints in the education process.

To deliberately recognize some of these possibilities empowers the student learning process by providing more choice in a competitive higher education market. As the number of for profit private higher education institutions continues to increase so marketing niches will develop.

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