

# A Comparative Analysis of the Education Systems of Turkey and Canada: The Similarity and the Differences<sup>\*</sup>

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A comparative study was made on the education systems of Turkey, a developing country, and Canada, a developed country with a comparatively high living standard and successful education systems. While education is governed at the national level in Turkey, it is the individual responsibility of the governments of the ten provinces and the territories in Canada. Consequently, for purposes of this study, the education system of the province of Ontario was chosen as representative of Canada as a whole. Comparisons were made of general goals, system administration and school structure. The systems were compared by documentation in tabular form. Their differences were clearly greater than their similarities in each of the categories examined.

*Keywords:* comparative education, Turkey's education system, Canada's education system

## Introduction

The world is continuously changing and developing. It dictates reforms in every field including education. Countries which value education must invest in it just as they invest in scientific research and its applications. Investing in education is investing in a country's future. Curricula then must reflect the country's perception of its future.

Bereday (1964, p. 5) stated that comparative education seeks to make sense out of the similarities and differences among educational systems. Thus, comparative education reveals the similarities and differences between the education systems of the countries being compared. The aim then is to benefit by the comparison. Balcı (2007) defined the aim of comparison as to define, convince, inform and benefit in addition to showing similarities and differences.

Bray (2004) noted some of the purposes of comparative education identified by earlier scholars. He started with one of the great grandfathers of the field of comparative education, Sir Michael Sadler. According to Bray (2004), Sadler suggested that the practical value of studying, in a right spirit and with scholarly accuracy, the working of foreign systems of education is that it will result in our being better fitted to study and understand our own. Bray stated that the emphasis in this quotation is on an individual looking outwards and comparing patterns in other societies with those in his own.

In 1970, Katz drew attention to the importance of the examination of the educational relationships between the developed and the developing countries for comparative educators interested in examining the similarities and differences in the educative process of various groups (Bray, Manzon, & Masemoon, 2007).

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For over a century, researchers and writers have been eliciting features of different education systems. There is a preoccupation with educational performance, achievement and outcomes and a desire to know which countries are achieving faster economic growth and better learning outcomes. Close links between educational and economic performance were assumed (Dimmock, 2007).

UNDP (United Nations Development Program) is the UN's global development network, advocating change and connecting people to help them build a better life by publishing annual reports on their interests (retrieved from <http://www.undp.org/>). According to Human Development Report 2001, Norway was first among 174 countries followed by Australia, Canada, Sweden and Belgium with Turkey in 82th places (Sağır & Yüksel, 2002). In the corresponding report of 2007, Turkey ranked 79 and Canada ranked four among 182 countries. According to this data, Turkey was in the "high human development group" and Canada was in the "very high human development group" (HDR (Human Development Reports), 2009). Canada has always been ahead of Turkey at the UNDP's "quality of life" list. The ability of developing countries to make progress is directly related to their levels of education. Developing countries should follow the developed countries when building their education programs. Canada's success in education was published in the results of the international comparative tests (OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), 2008; Bussiere, Knighton, & Pennock, 2006). While doing comparative studies less developed countries tend to look at more developed countries (Bray, 2007).

Thus, a comparison of the educational systems of Canada and Turkey as shown in this research is clearly useful.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine similarities and differences among the general goals, the system-administration and the school structure of the Turkish and Canadian educational systems.

### **Method**

This study is a comparative educational research study. Comparative studies in education have principally been located in nature, examining educational phenomena in different places. Among the various purposes of comparison, two are remarkable because of the ways in which they shape research methods: One is interpretive and the other is casual-analytic. Concerning interpretive studies which seek to understand educational phenomena, Bereday's comparative method deserves comment. According to Bereday's model for undertaking comparative studies, there is a four-step method of comparative analysis, consisting of description, interpretation, juxtaposition and simultaneous comparison. A prerequisite for any comparative study is to establish the parameters for initial comparability of the chosen units of analysis (Manzon, 2007). This study adopted the classic model presented by Bereday (1964) for comparison of education in two countries. The document analysis for comparison of the considered countries (Turkey and Canada) was done by means of the general goals, the system administration and the school structure.

Comparisons taking the country as a unit of analysis are prominent in the field of comparative education, but the use of a nation-state as the dominant research framework has been continually challenged. There are regional variations in education within nation-states. In Canada, there are ten provinces and three territories. Each province is responsible for its own educational system (Manzon, 2007). For that reason, while analyzing the education system of Canada, making generalization could lead misleading conclusions. Thus, Ontario was

chosen as a sample for the country.

Hans (1967, p. 1) gave Marc-Antoine Julien's thought as education is based on the facts and observations as the other branches of science and should be classified with analytical tables to find out the principles, and thus, the comparison can easily be done. The results of the document analysis of the education systems of Turkey, Canada and Ontario are given in tables comparatively, similarities and differences are displayed.

### **Findings: Similarities and Differences**

The analysis of the systems being compared here is done in tabular form under the titles: general goals, system administration and school structures.

#### **The Similarities and the Differences in Terms of the General Goals**

Before the comparison of the general goals of Turkey and Canada in tabular form, listing the general goals of their education systems is thought to be useful:

**General goals of the Turkish education system.** Turkish national education system's general goals were defined in Basic Law of National Education No. 1739 as (MoNE (Ministry of National Education), 2005):

The general goals of national education are:

(1) To raise all individuals as citizens who are committed to the principles and reforms of Atatürk and the nationalism of Atatürk as expressed in the Constitution, who adopt, protect and promote the national, moral, human, spiritual and cultural values of the Turkish Nation, who love and always seek to exalt their families, country and nation, who know their duties and responsibilities towards the Republic of Turkey which is a democratic, secular and social state governed by the rule of law, founded on human rights and the tenets laid down in the preamble to the constitution and who have internalized these in their behaviors;

(2) To raise them as constructive, creative and productive persons who are physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and emotionally balanced, have a sound personality and character, with the ability to think freely and scientifically and have a broad worldview, that are respectful for human rights, value personality and enterprise and feel responsibility towards society;

(3) To prepare them for life by developing their interests, talents and capabilities, providing them with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes and the habit of working with others and ensure that they acquire a profession which shall make them happy and contribute to the happiness of society;

(4) In this way, to increase the welfare and happiness of Turkish citizens and Turkish society, and support and accelerate economic, social and cultural development within national unity and cohesion, on the other hand, make the Turkish Nation a constructive, creative and distinguished partner of contemporary civilization (MoNE, 2005).

**General goals of the Canadian education system.** The general goals for the Canadian education system are not found as definite listed items in a single document. The goals are mentioned in different documents with different sentences. In Canada, education is a provincial responsibility. Despite of provincial diversity in educational policies, programs and organization, the common goal is an "educated citizenry". A shared priority is the development of the next generation as effectively and efficiently as possible given competing demands for limited resources (McEwen, 1995).

According to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) (2010a) reports, education in Canada seeks to attain what are generally defined as the four major goals for schooling: (1)

Cultivation of mind; (2) Vocational preparation; (3) Moral and civic development; and (4) Individual development.

**General goals of the Ontario education system.** The general goals of the Ontario education system are defined in the frame of “educated citizenry” as consistent with Canada’s. The Ministry of Education strives to promote a strong, vibrant, and publicly funded education system that is focused on three goals (OMoE (Ontario Ministry of Education), 2010a): (1) High levels of student achievement; (2) Reduced gaps in student achievement; and (3) High levels of public confidence.

Table 1

*Comparison of the Education Systems of Turkey, Canada and Ontario in Terms of General Goals*

General goals of education		
Turkey	Canada	Ontario
Turkish national education system’s general goals were given in three items with very detailed sentences.	According to UNESCO reports, general goals were given in four items. The sentences for goals are not detailed. The common goal is an “educated citizenry”.	The Ministry of Education focused on three goals which are mostly focused on “student achievement”.

Table 2

*Comparison of the Education Systems of Turkey, Canada and Ontario in Terms of System and Administration*

System administration		
Turkey	Canada	Ontario
Education is free in the public schools. Education services are provided by both public and private schools. Primary education is compulsory. The Turkish education system is organized centrally. Education is on responsibility of the MoNE and all schools are administered by the MoNE except universities. The Council of Higher Education is responsible for the governance of all higher education system. The Ministry of National Education has provincial organizations in 81 cities and 924 districts. There is a directorate of national education in each province and district. City and district directorates consist of branches, bureaus, permanent boards and commissions according to the characteristics of the service.	Education is free in the public schools. Education services are provided by both public and private schools. The length of compulsory school attendance varies by province. In general, primary and secondary education is compulsory. There is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. There is not unique “National Education Ministry” for overall country. The CMEC (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada) was formed in 1967 by the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for education to provide a forum in which they could discuss cooperatively for shared goals in education. Thirteen jurisdictions have their own education policy and ministry. The ministries and their departments have responsibility from elementary education to postsecondary education. Some jurisdictions have two separate departments or ministries, one having responsibility for elementary-secondary education and the other for postsecondary education and skills training. Ministries are responsible for the operation of the departments. Local governance of education is usually entrusted to school boards, school districts, school divisions or district education councils.	Education is free in the public schools. Education services are provided by both public and private schools. Primary and secondary education is compulsory. The governance of education in Ontario is the responsibility of the provincial government, so in the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The colleges and the universities are governed by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Ontario’s schools are administered by district school boards and school authorities. Ontario’s school boards operate the province’s publicly-funded schools.

As seen in Table 1, the basic structure of the Turkish national education system was defined in Basic Law of National Education No. 1739, in which the general goals of the Turkish national education system were given in three very detailed items. The general goals of the Turkish National Education System are especially concentrated on the prospective general features of the Turkish citizens, individual properties of the Turkish society and professional features of the individuals. The general goals for the Canadian education system are not found as definite listed items in a single document. The goals were mentioned in different documents with

different sentences. The common goal is an “educated citizenry”. The general goals according to UNESCO (2010a) are given in four items briefly. Predominant focus of Canadian education is on progressive or child-centred education (UNESCO, 2010a). Because of the provincial structure of the country, the provinces have particular education policies, and each province has their own goals towards the general goals of the country. The Ministry of Education of Ontario has three goals which mostly focused on “student achievement”. It is noticed that the general goals of the Turkish education system are stated with explicit and nationalistic expressions with very detailed sentences, while the goals of Canada’s and Ontario’s education system have more general statements.

### **Similarities and the Differences in Terms of the System-Administration**

As seen in Table 2, there is a difference between compared countries for the duration of compulsory education. Compulsory education contains just primary education in Turkey. The ages for compulsory schooling in Canada vary from one jurisdiction to another, but most require attendance in school from age six or seven to age 16 that contains both primary and secondary education (UNESCO, 2010a).

The structure and administration of education systems of Turkey and Canada have big differences. The Turkish education system is organized centrally, while it is not centrally structured in Canada. The basic structure of the Turkish national education system was defined in Basic Law of National Education No.1739 (MoNE, 2010a). Education is on responsibility of the MoNE and all schools are administered by the MoNE except higher education institutions. The CHE (Council of Higher Education) is responsible for the governance of all higher education system (CHE, 2010). The Ministry of National Education has provincial organizations in 81 cities and 924 districts. There is a directorate of national education in each city and district. City and district directorates consist of branches, bureaus, permanent boards and commissions according to the characteristics of the service (MoNE, 2005). Administration of education is different in Canada. There is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. Within the federal system of shared powers, Canada’s Constitution Act of 1867 provided that “In and for each province, the legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to education”. In the 13 jurisdictions, ten provinces and three territories, departments or ministries of education are responsible for the organization, delivery and assessment of education at the elementary and secondary levels, for technical and vocational education and postsecondary education. Some jurisdictions have two separate departments or ministries, one having responsibility for elementary-secondary education and the other for postsecondary education and skills-training. Each province and territory has one or two departments/ministries responsible for education, headed by a minister who is almost always an elected member of the legislature and appointed to the position by the government leader of the jurisdiction. The CMEC was formed in 1967 by the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for education to provide a forum in which they could discuss matters of mutual interest, undertake educational initiatives cooperatively and represent the interests of the provinces and territories with national educational organizations, the federal government, foreign governments and international organizations. Although the ministries are responsible for the education in jurisdictions, local authorities have important responsibilities on the governance of schools. Local governance of education is usually entrusted to school boards, school districts, school divisions, or district education councils (CMEC, 2008).

In Ontario, education is governed principally by the Education Act and its regulations. There is a Ministry of Education for the governance of Ontario’s education. The Education Act and its regulations set out duties

and responsibilities of the Minister of Education and the duties and responsibilities of school boards, school board supervisory officers, principals, teachers, parents and students (OMoE, 2010b). Ontario’s education system is organized at three levels, within which the Ministry of Education, school boards and schools form the nucleus of the system. Two additional government agencies are in place to measure the effectiveness of the education system (the Education Quality and Accountability Office, the provincial testing agency) and administer self-regulation of the teaching profession of the Ontario College of Teachers (Zegeang & Franz, 2007). The Minister of Education in Ontario is also responsible for developing curriculum; setting policies and guidelines for school trustees, directors of education, principles and other school board officials; setting requirements for student diplomas and certificates; and preparing lists of approved textbooks and other learning materials. Ontario’s schools are administered by district school boards and school authorities. Ontario’s school boards operate the province’s publicly-funded schools (OMoE, 2010b).

In Turkey, curriculum and any other subjects in education are common for all over the country. In contrast of Turkey, while there are a great many similarities in the provincial and territorial education systems across Canada, there are significant differences in curriculum, assessment and accountability policies among the jurisdictions that express the geography, history, language, culture and corresponding specialized needs of the populations served (CMEC, 2008).

**Similarities and the Differences in Terms of the Schooling**

As shown in Table 3, in Turkey, pre-primary education is the level of non-compulsory education for children of ages 36-72 months. The education is offered in nurseries, practice classes and kindergartens. According to Regulation on Pre-school Education Institutions, the institution established with the purpose of offering education for children of ages 36-72 months is denominated as nurseries/practice classes, while the institution established with the purpose of offering education for children of ages 60-72 months is denominated as kindergarten (EURYDICE (Information on Education Systems and Policies in Europe), 2010).

Table 3  
*Comparison of the Education Systems of Turkey, Canada and Ontario in Terms of Schooling—Pre-Primary Education*

Pre-primary education		
Turkey	Canada	Ontario
Covers the education of the children age of three to six. It is a non-compulsory education. The education is offered in nurseries, practice classes and kindergartens.	Covers the education of the children up to age of six. Pre-school programmes or kindergartens, non-compulsory education for five-year-old, with the exception of Prince Edward Island, where it is compulsory. The education is offered in preschools, kindergarten and daycare and childcare centers.	Covers the education of the children up to age of six. It is a non-compulsory education. The education is offered in preschools, kindergarten, daycare and childcare centers. Ontario provides Junior Kindergarten for four to five years and senior Kindergarten for five to six years.

In Canada, pre-school programmes or kindergartens, which are operated by the local education authorities and provide one year of pre-first grade, non-compulsory education for five-year-old, are offered by all provinces and territories with the exception of Prince Edward Island, where kindergarten for five-year-old is considered as a basic part of the elementary programme and is compulsory. The intensity of the programmes also varies, with full-day and half-day programmes, depending on the school board. Ontario provides “junior kindergarten” for four to five years and “senior kindergarten” for five to six years. Ontario provides a full day

of learning to four- and five- year-old in nearly 600 schools, as a part of the province's plan to build a stronger school system and a well-educated workforce. The program will be offered in almost 800 schools in 2011 (OMoE, 2010c).

Table 4

*Comparison of the Education Systems of Turkey, Canada and Ontario in Terms of Schooling—Primary Education*

Primary education		
Turkey	Canada	Ontario
Involves the education and training of children in the age group of six to 14. Compulsory for all citizens and is free at State schools. Primary education institutions are schools that provide eight years of uninterrupted education.	Involves the education and training of children in the age group of six to 14. Compulsory for all citizens and is free at State schools. In most jurisdictions, elementary schools cover six to eight years of schooling. The point of transition from elementary to secondary school varies from one jurisdiction to another, and even within a particular jurisdiction.	Involves the education and training of children in the age group of six to 14. Compulsory for all citizens and is free at State schools. School structure may vary within the Ontario. Elementary schools provide junior kindergarten and kindergarten programs for children aged four and five, and programs for Grades one through eight.

As shown in Table 4, in Turkey, Canada and Ontario primary education is compulsory. In Turkey, primary education institutions are schools that provide eight years of uninterrupted education (MoNE, 2010a). In Canada, most jurisdictions and elementary schools cover six to eight years of schooling. The point of transition from elementary to secondary school varies from one jurisdiction to another, and even within a particular jurisdiction. Some school boards break up the elementary-secondary continuum into schools that group together, for example, kindergarten to Grade six, Grades seven to nine (junior high), and Grades ten to 12 (senior high) (UNESCO, 2010a). School structure may vary within the Ontario. Some schools involve just grades K-6 (elementary school) while some of them have also seventh to eighth (middle school) grades. Some of them can be structured as grades only six-seven-eight or just seven-eight (middle grades). There are two publicly funded school systems, public and Roman Catholic, in addition to private and independent elementary and secondary schools throughout the province. There is a big difference in the schooling structure of the compared countries. For Turkey, there is a unique structure of schooling overall the country, for Canada and Ontario, structure of the schooling varies.

Table 5 shows that while secondary education is compulsory for Canada and Ontario, it is not for Turkey. Secondary education level in the Turkish education system encloses all general, vocational and technical education institutions offering minimum four-year education. Secondary education comprises of high schools with four years of education and implementing various curricula. It is handled in two categories as general secondary education and vocational-technical secondary education (EURYDICE, 2010). In Canada, generally secondary education programmes include ninth and 12th grades. It is very difficult to make generalization for school structures of secondary education in Canada. A great variety of programmes, vocational (job training) as well as academic, are offered at the secondary level, usually within the same school. Canada has generally moved away from separate secondary institutions for vocational or work-related training and academic or university preparatory streams. Vocational courses are typically offered during the last two years of secondary school, though some specialization courses may be taken earlier. Short programmes preparing students to practice various trades are also offered, for students who do not wish to prolong their studies or who do not

want to obtain specialized vocational training. The first two years at the secondary level usually offer a core of compulsory subjects supplemented by some optional subjects. In the final two years, there are fewer compulsory subjects so that students can choose more optional courses in specialized programmes that prepare them either to enter the job market or meet the entrance requirements of the postsecondary college, university or institution of their choices. Students who pass the required number of both compulsory and optional courses graduate with a secondary school diploma.

Table 5  
*Comparison of the Education Systems of Turkey, Canada, and Ontario in Terms of Schooling—Secondary Education*

Secondary education		
Turkey	Canada	Ontario
<p>Secondary education schools last minimum four-year including ninth and 12th grades. Free but not compulsory in state schools. Handled in two categories as general secondary education and vocational-technical secondary education. Secondary schools named as “high schools”. General Secondary Education Institutions: General High Schools, Science High Schools, Anadolu High Schools, Anadolu Teacher High Schools, Social Sciences High Schools, Fine Arts High Schools and Sport High Schools; Vocational-Technical secondary education Institutions: Technical and Industrial Vocational High School, Girls Technical and Vocational High School, Hotel and Tourism Vocational High School, Commerce Vocational High School Imam-Hatip Vocational High School, Special Education Vocational High School, Health Vocational High School, Multi-programed High School, Vocational and Technical Training Centers.</p>	<p>After six to eight years of elementary education, pupils proceed to a secondary education programme which includes ninth and 12th grades. Compulsory for all citizens and is free at State schools It is difficult to make generalization for school structure. Grade system for the schools can vary in jurisdictions, even in the same province. Secondary schools named as high schools or secondary schools. A great variety of programmes, vocational (job training) as well as academic, are offered at the secondary level, usually within the same school. Canada has generally moved away from separate secondary institutions for vocational or work-related training and academic or university preparatory streams. Vocational courses are typically offered during the last two years of secondary school, though some specialization courses may be taken earlier. The first two years at the secondary level usually offer a core of compulsory subjects supplemented by some optional subjects. In the final two years, there are fewer compulsory subjects so that students can choose more optional courses in specialized programmes that prepare them either to enter the job market or meet the entrance requirements of the postsecondary college, university or institution of their choice.</p>	<p>Covers the education of after elementary schooling and includes ninth and 12th grades. Compulsory for all citizens and is free at State schools Grade system in schooling varies for the schools in Ontario. Secondary schools named as high schools or secondary schools. A great variety of programmes, vocational (job training) as well as academic, are offered at the secondary level, usually within the same school. There are three categories of secondary school courses: academic, applied and locally developed compulsory courses. Students must complete 30 credits during the four-year secondary school programme, 18 compulsory and 12 optional. They must also pass the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test in order to graduate. Students must complete six Ontario academic credit courses in order to be admitted to a university programme. This can be accomplished during the four-year secondary school programme, or during an additional year after completion of Grade 12.</p>

In Ontario, there are three categories of secondary school courses: academic, applied and locally developed compulsory courses. Students pursuing academic courses are generally thought to be destined for post-secondary studies at a university. Those pursuing applied, are generally thought to be destined for post-secondary studies at a college or in an apprenticeship program. Students must complete 30 credits during the four-year secondary school programme, 18 compulsory and 12 optional. They must also pass the Ontario secondary school literacy test in order to graduate. Students must complete six Ontario academic credit courses in order to be admitted to a university programme. This can be accomplished during the four-year secondary school programme, or during an additional year after completion of Grade 12 (UNESCO, 2010a).



In Turkey, the ninth grade in vocational and technical upper secondary education institutions is common in all branches. The pupils are separated to selected branch curriculum in the tenth grade and field curriculum in 11th grade. The practical training of the students attending to vocational and technical upper secondary education institutions is conducted in real work and servicing environment according to the provisions of Vocational Education Law. The education is conducted as theoretical education in schools for two days in a week and practical training in enterprises for three days in a week. In the senior class, the pupils attending to practical training in enterprises are also introduced to business life. For graduation from a secondary school in Turkey, there is no extra test like in the case of Ontario. Also in Turkey, no educational stage or school type exists between secondary education and higher education.

Table 6

*Comparison of the Education Systems of Turkey, Canada and Ontario in Terms of Schooling—Post-secondary Education*

Post-secondary education		
Turkey	Canada	Ontario
<p>Higher Education Council administrates all higher education institutions. Available in both government-supported and private institutions. Higher education is provided by universities, high technology institutes, higher vocational schools and other off-university higher education institutions (higher police and military schools and academies, advanced technology institutes and conservatories). Graduates of vocational and technical secondary education institutions enroll to the vocational higher education institutions considered sequel or proximate to the graduated branch free of examination, if desired. There are totally 166 higher education institutions in Turkey.</p>	<p>There is no unique national body in the country for administration of postsecondary education institutions. Available in both government-supported and private institutions, which offer degrees, diplomas and certificates. Postsecondary education is provided by universities, colleges or programmes offered by different education institutions. Universities usually offer undergraduate (bachelor's) and graduate (master's and doctoral) programmes. The term "college" in Canada refers to career-oriented post-secondary institutions. University degrees and applied degrees are offered in some colleges and institutes, and others provide university transfer programs. Canada has 163 recognized public and private universities and 183 recognized public colleges and institutes including those granting applied and bachelor's degrees.</p>	<p>The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities is responsible for the administration of laws relating to postsecondary education and skills training. Available in both government-supported and private institutions, which offer degrees, diplomas, certificates. Postsecondary education provided by universities, colleges or programmes offered by other educational institutions. The term "college" in Ontario refers to career-oriented post-secondary institutions. They issue diplomas and certificates, unlike universities which issue degrees, e.g., BA, BSc and graduate degrees. Colleges offer certificate programs, which take one year or less, diploma programs, which take two or three years, apprenticeship and certification programs for skilled trades, such as a carpenter, chef, or welder and programs that lead to a bachelor degree. Some programs offered with universities can give a degree and a diploma. Universities generally issue degrees, e.g., BA, BSc and graduate degrees with mostly theoretical courses and some of them also have applied courses. There are 19 universities and 24 colleges of applied arts and technology,</p>

As shown in Table 6, in Turkey, higher education system consists of universities, high technology institutes, higher vocational schools and other off-university higher education institutions (higher police and military schools and academies, advanced technology institutes and conservatories) (EURYDICE, 2010). In Canada and Ontario, postsecondary education is provided by universities, colleges or programmes offered by different education institutions (UNESCO, 2010a). In Turkey, Canada and Ontario post-secondary education differs in structure. Although in Turkey, Higher Education Council (Website <http://www.yok.gov.tr/en/>) administrates all higher education institutions, in Canada, there is no unique national body for administration of postsecondary education instructions. In Ontario, The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities (retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/>) is responsible for the administration of laws relating to postsecondary

education and skills training. In Turkey, on behalf of the Council, the Higher Education Supervisory Board supervises and controls the universities, the units attached to them, and the teaching staff and their activities. The Centre (ÖSYM Student Selection and Placement), established in 1974 and affiliated to the Council of Higher Education in 1981, is primarily concerned with the selection and placement of students in higher education programmes. The ÖSYM also offers services to higher education institutions for the administering of examinations, which are either inter-university in nature or being held in a large scale (UNESCO, 2010b). Graduates of vocational and technical secondary education institutions enroll to the vocational higher education institutions considered sequel or proximate to the graduated branch free of examination, if desired (EURYDICE, 2010).

In Canada, colleges, such as technical and vocational institutions, community colleges, cégeps and other institutes of technology, offer programmes for continuing education and developing skills for careers in business, the applied arts, technology, social services and some health sciences. Programmes vary in length from six months to three years. There are also private vocational or job-training colleges in some provinces. In general, colleges award diplomas or certificates only; they do not award academic degrees. The term “college” in Ontario refers to career-oriented post-secondary institutions. They issue diplomas and certificates, unlike universities which issue degrees, e.g., BA, BSc and graduate degrees (UNESCO, 2010a).

In Turkey, the number of the higher education institutions is 166, 102 of which are state universities, 52 have foundation status and 12 are vocational schools (GDHE (General Directorate for Higher Education), 2010). Canada has 163 recognized public and private universities and 183 recognized public colleges and institutes. That is totally 346 postsecondary education institutes. There are 19 universities and 24 colleges of applied arts and technology in Ontario, totally 43 postsecondary education institutes (CMEC, 2008). When we look at the population of the countries, Turkey’s population is almost 2.3 times of Canada’s. If we consider this fact, it can be said that the numbers of Turkey’s higher education institutes is very less comparing to Canada’s. But, it should be noted that in Turkey, new higher education institutions have been building and the number is increasing every year.

### **Results and Discussion**

When the findings of document analysis are evaluated at the end of the research, it is observed that Turkish and Canadian (Ontario) overall education systems have major differences, although there a few similarities. The similarities can be summarized as follow:

- (1) In both of the countries’ general goals, educated citizenry is a dominant feature;
- (2) Education is free in State schools;
- (3) For both of the countries, primary schooling is compulsory;
- (4) Completeness rate of a full course of primary for both countries are close each other. For Canada gross intake rate to last grade of primary is 96% and for Turkey it is 93% (UNESCO, 2010c).

It is noticed that the structural differences of educational administrations lead some differences on the implementation of education. According to the results of this study, the similarities are fewer than the differences. However, these similarities form the foundation of the education system. So, it can be easier for Turkey to develop her education level. The main differences in terms of the general goals of the educational systems, the structures of the administrations and the school organization can be summarized as follow:

- (1) The general goals of the Turkish education system are stated with explicit expressions, with very

detailed sentences, while the goals of Canada's and Ontario's education system have more general statements;

(2) In Turkey, administration of education is central and it is constructed in common standards and benchmarks. In Canada, administration of education is provincial. Although in Canadian, education common standards are also important, there is more focus on the provincial and institutional administration and also interests and potential of each student are very important. In federal systems, major differences exist among provinces in the structure and contents of education. In Canada, a 1992 report commissioned by the Economic Council made explicit comparisons across both countries and provinces. The report noted wide variations in available resources for education in different provinces and recommended measures to promote greater coherence in systems of education (Bray, 2007);

(3) Turkey is a developing country, so education policy is searching for the best. The schooling rate for pre-primary education has reached 38.55% in the academic year of 2009-2010 (MoNE, 2010b), while it was 33% in the academic year of 2008-2009 and 11% in 2003. More strategies have been developed to expand pre-primary education and increase the quality of educational programs (MoNE, 2008). Recent data showed that at a pan-Canadian level, 95% of five-year-old attended pre-elementary or elementary school (UNESCO, 2010a) in Canada. Last years, in Turkey studies have been done for compulsory education in the pre-primary education. The MoNE is planning for compulsory education all over the country in the pre-primary education for 2013-2014 education years;

(4) In Turkey, secondary education is not compulsory yet, although it is compulsory in Canada. There are continuing studies for that in Turkey. At the 18th General Assembly of the National Education Council (November 1-5, 2010), implementation of compulsory education to 13 years, including one year of pre-school education, in the form of 1 + 4 + 4 + 4 model, was adopted by a majority vote (MoNE, 2010c; CNNTurk, 2010);

(5) In Turkey, secondary schools handled in two categories as general secondary education and vocational-technical secondary education. Canada has generally moved away from separate secondary institutions, it has different programs in the same secondary schools. It can be another study to examine these programs. The society related courses of secondary schools in Canada are also interesting;

(6) In Canada, vocational education is very popular and individuals have a chance of possessing a good profession even if they could not go to a university. In Turkey, vocational education needs to be improved. In one aspect, the revival of the country's economy is directly related to the development of vocational education. The young people who could not go to university should be directed to take vocational education in the early period of their life. So that, these people are trained as technical staff and can be employed in the industrial field. In this way, the unemployment rate could be reduced and the money spent on education could be gained again as trained people in the country's economy. To heal the vocational education in Turkey, it is recommended that a detailed research should be done and vocational education in Canada can be a model for Turkey;

(7) In Turkey, prospective university students have to take university entrance exam which is applied centrally by OSYM. In Canada, there is not a central exam for cross-country;

(8) If the populations of the countries are compared, Turkey's population is almost 2.3 times of Canada's.

The researcher stayed in Ottawa, ON and Canada for one year between the year of 2004 and 2005. During this period, she found an opportunity to make observations at a public school and audited the science and technology classes of sixth and seventh grades. She was able to observe the one-to-one differences of both countries' classrooms. In her Ph.D. theses (Güven, 2009), she compared the science education systems of Turkey and Canada, and science and technology programs of Turkey and Ontario.

From her observation, it can be derived (Güven, 2009):

(1) The population of Canada, according to Turkey, is not much. And, this increases the quality of schools in Canada. Because, the number of the students in the classrooms in Turkey is much higher than the ones in Canada (about 38 in Turkey, while 28 in Canada);

(2) The quality of the equipment of public schools in Canada is not similar to the public schools in Turkey. The public schools in Turkey have less equipment and visual material;

(3) Generally, there are classrooms for the courses in Canada, while there are only classrooms for the students in Turkey. The teachers have their own classrooms in Canada, so they can conduct the related activities better, such as experiments. These classrooms have many tools to make the experiments more attractive. Additionally, the teacher can use this classroom as his/her office and prepare the course materials much better. In Turkey, some public schools began to construct this type of classrooms, but they do not have enough material in yet. It is recommended that Turkish schools should increase the number of this kind of classrooms with enough equipment in it.

In the last years, some development and improvement efforts have been attempted in the education system of Turkey (Bulut, 2007). For example, with the implementation of eight-year compulsory education in 1997, the education system has been restructured and education programmes for primary education, general secondary education, vocational secondary education, vocational courses and private schools and institutions have been reorganised (UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund), 2010). New curricula for primary and secondary schools have been developed and are being implemented for primary and secondary schools with ongoing changes since 2004 in Turkey (Bulut, 2007). Although these are good progresses for Turkey, there are continuing problems in education. UNICEF (UNICEF, 2010) declared in the web page about Turkey that: "Turkey is one of the world's fastest-growing economies, but the benefits are not shared by all". This case is important if the subject is education. The quality of education is directly relational to the social and economical levels of the countries. So, the budget for the public education should be increased.

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