



KADİR HAS ÜNİVERSİTESİ LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ
İLETİŞİM BİLİMLERİ ANABİLİM DALI

**MARKETING HIGHER EDUCATION AND
POSITIONING STRATEGIES OF FOUNDATION
UNIVERSITIES OF TURKEY**

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YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

İSTANBUL, EYLÜL, 2020

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İletiŐim Bilimleri Anabilim Dalı Kurumsal İletiŐim ve Halkla İliŐkiler Yönetimi
Programı'nda Yüksek Lisans derecesi
için gerekli kısmi Őartların yerine getirilmesi amacıyla Kadir Has Üniversitesi
Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü'ne teslim edilmiŐtir.

İSTANBUL, EYLÜL, 2020

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Hazırladığım bu Yüksek Lisans Tezinin tamamen kendi çalışmam olduğunu ve başka çalışmalardan yaptığım alıntıların kaynaklarını kurallara uygun biçimde tez içerisinde belirttiğimi onaylıyorum.

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KABUL VE ONAY

EFE MEHMET CARLIK tarafından hazırlanan **MARKETING HIGHER EDUCATION AND POSITIONING STRATEGIES OF FOUNDATION UNIVERSITIES OF TURKEY** başlıklı bu çalışma **18.06.2020** tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından **YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ** olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ABSTRACT

CARLIK, EFE MEHMET. *MARKETING HIGHER EDUCATION AND POSITIONING STRATEGIES OF FOUNDATION UNIVERSITIES OF TURKEY*, MASTER'S THESIS, İstanbul, 2020.

Higher education marketing literature suggests that internationalization of universities and globalization on higher education create external forces in higher education as massification, expansion and diversification, growth of heterogeneity, and the growth of competition. As a result of those forces, the international student recruitment market has evolved into a buyer's market and required market-oriented approaches. Also, the literature underlines that classical buyer's and seller's relationship is not valid anymore for higher education marketing. The relationship between universities and students is a unique relationship that classical marketing approaches cannot explain. As a result of this unique relationship, universities who cannot adapt their marketing activities by identifying specific stages of students as the customer are failed to fulfill the requirements of market-oriented higher education marketing approaches. The research investigates the positioning strategies and competitive advantage presentations of the top three foundation higher education institutions in Turkey according to the consecutive rankings of QS and Times Higher Education between 2015 and 2019 as Koç University, Sabancı University, and Bilkent University. International student recruitment websites, university main websites, brochures, and Instagram accounts and YouTube channels, which are addressed by the international student recruitment pages of those three universities, are analyzed to identify which features of five fundamental components of higher education positioning strategies are emphasized. In addition, in order to identify the level of emphasis of these components, a quantitative analysis is conducted.

Keywords: higher-education marketing, international marketing, marketing approaches, buyer's market, market orientation, internationalization, positioning strategies

ÖZET

CARLIK, EFE MEHMET. *YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM PAZARLAMASI VE TÜRKİYE'DEKİ VAKIF ÜNİVERSİTELERİNİN KONUMLANDIRMA STRATEJİLERİ*, YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, İstanbul, 2020

Yüksek öğrenimin pazarlaması literatürüne göre üniversitelerin uluslararasılaşması ve küreselleşme yüksek öğrenime yönelik kitleselleşme, genişleme ve çeşitlilik, çok çeşitliliğin artırılması ve rekabetin artması gibi baskı unsurlarını ortaya çıkartmaktadır. Bu baskı unsurlarının sonucu olarak, uluslararası öğrenci temini pazarı alıcı piyasasına dönüşmüş ve piyasa odaklı pazarlama yaklaşımı ihtiyacını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Aynı literatüre göre, klasik alıcı ve satıcı ilişkisinin yükseköğrenim pazarlaması için artık geçerli olmadığını vurgulamaktadır. Öğrenciler ve üniversiteler arasındaki ilişkinin klasik tanımlamalar ile açıklanamayacak özel bir ilişki olduğu belirtilmiştir. Bu özel ilişkinin sonucu olarak, pazarlama aktivitelerine öğrencilerin alıcı konumundaki farklı konumlarını entegre edemeyen üniversiteler, piyasaya dönük pazarlama yaklaşımının gereklerini yerine getirememektedirler. Araştırma Times Higher Education ve QS gibi sıralama kuruluşlarınca son beş yıldır Türkiye'deki en iyi ilk üç vakıf üniversitesi olan Sabancı Üniversitesi, Koç Üniversitesi ve Bilkent Üniversitesi'nin konumlandırma stratejilerini ve rekabet üstünlüğü tanıtımlarını araştırmaktadır. Yüksek öğrenim kurumu konumlandırmasının beş temel konseptine ait hangi özelliklerin tanıtıldığı incelenmiştir. Uluslararası öğrenci temini websiteleri, üniversite ana websiteleri, broşürler, Instagram hesapları ve YouTube kanalları üzerinden bu özelliklerin hangilerinin vurgulandığı hesaplanmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: pazarlama, yüksek öğrenim pazarlaması, uluslararası pazarlama, pazarlama yaklaşımı, alıcı piyasası, piyasa yönelimi, uluslararasılaşma, konumlandırma stratejileri

INTRODUCTION

OECD statistics show that the number of mobile international students within the member countries in 2012 was approximately 2.5 million, while it was 1.5 million in 2007 (OECD, 2018). The increasing popularity of international education and the growing number of students who travel all around the world for their education have a direct relationship with globalization. Economic liberalization that is come up with globalization has brought accessibility to international education. Increasing financial ability makes people interested in alternative ways of education. Political democratization has increased the tolerance against foreigners, especially those who are bringing economic means as tuition fee payments. Moreover, as the most critical outcome of globalization that is directly related to international education is cultural universalization. The rise of a universal culture decreased the chance of potential disharmony of the foreigners and locals and encouraged certain age groups to travel around the world for their education (Weber, 2001). Turkey tries to be a hub for international education, at least within its geographical region. The increasing number of the foundation universities and again the growing number of programs with English medium of instruction make Turkey a player within the international education sector. There are 73 foundation universities in Turkey right now, and nearly all of them are looking for international students to recruit. For their recruitment purposes, all these universities are conducting various marketing actions and implement marketing strategies.

The research focuses on the positioning strategies of the top three foundation higher education institutions in Turkey according to the consecutive rankings of QS and Times Higher Education between 2015 and 2019 as Koç University, Sabancı University, and Bilkent University. Their positioning strategies and competitive advantages that they implicitly and explicitly emphasize in the communication directed to potential international students are analyzed. The main research question is presented as follows:

- What are the fundamental components of positioning strategies of Sabancı University, Koç University, and Bilkent University for international student recruitment?

In addition to the main research question, the following sub-ordinate questions are presented:

- Which components are used by those universities as the fundamental components of positioning strategies of higher education institutions?
- Do those three higher education institutions mainly underline the same or similar characteristics as their competitive advantages?
- Is there any fundamental component of positioning strategies of higher education institutions that are not used by those universities?
- Are there any other possible components of positioning strategies that are used by those universities but which are absent from the literature?

The main aim of the research is to identify whether there is a difference between these three higher education institutions according to the positioning strategies they implement.

The aim of the research can be presented as follows:

- Specification of features that are emphasized by those three higher education institutions as their implicit/explicit advantages over other higher education institutions.

The statements of those three higher education institutions that are targeting prospective international students are analyzed in order to identify their positioning strategies. Popovic et al. (Popovic, et al., 2015) identify the five main components of higher education positioning based on Medina and Duffy's (Medina & Dufft, 1998) study as the learning environment, the reputation of the institution, opportunities for graduates, the image of the destination, and the social integration. Those five components are used as the primary literature for the fundamental components of higher education positioning. The content of their digital channels is analyzed to identify explicit and implicit competitive advantages that are underlined by those three higher education institutions. The analysis of non-digital content might not be relevant since the research focuses on international marketing activities, which is not operated by means of mass media in target countries.

Messages that are given by those universities via international student recruitment webpage and brochures are considered as explicit messages for international student recruitment marketing. The competitive advantages that are explicitly defined by those higher education institutions are analyzed within the content of the messages that target prospective international students. Web pages of those institutions, which include calls for applications in terms of international student recruitment and digital information

brochures, are the content of the analysis.

Messages that are given by those universities via social media channels and main university webpages are considered as implicit messages for international student recruitment marketing. University's main webpages that are not directly addressing the call for applications for prospective international students, social media accounts as Instagram, and YouTube are analyzed in order to identify implicit competitive advantages.



1. HIGHER EDUCATION IN TURKEY

1.1 DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN TURKEY

Turkey's higher education system has been inherited from the Ottoman Empire. Founders of the Republic aimed to use the newly established modern higher education institutions as an instrument to spread the reforms. After the rapid increase in the number of newly established universities in Turkey, the higher education system required a legislative framework to identify the administrative bodies, organizational structure, and educational targets of the higher education institutions. This requirement has brought five different laws that have been created as a result of educational, social, economic, and political changes in Turkey. Also, those laws reshaped the higher since the establishment of modern Turkey, so the higher education system has been experienced various models, patterns, and set of institutions (Gediklioğlu, 1995, p. 149).

Development of higher education in Turkey was realized by establishing modern universities; however, government officials, university administrators, and faculty members thought that there was a need for further reforms on higher education. As a result of this requirement, higher education in Turkey was reorganized in 1946 with the University Law 4936. The organization of the universities had been changed on a minor scale. The significant developments were the introduction of an inter-university council, governing board at the faculty level, and the replacement of councils of professors by the consultative committees. The new law introduced a level of autonomy to the higher education institutions that reduced the authority of the government, but it did not eliminate it completely. The Ministry of Education's approval for any type of decisions which were given by higher education administrators and decision-making bodies. Also, Law 4936 granted academic freedom for universities; however, the definition of the mentioned academic freedom and the way to exercise it wasn't presented and remained unclear (Gediklioğlu, 1995, p. 160). The financial status of the higher education institutions was also defined by Law 4936. The ownership and control of the budget, which was created by the national budget, tuition, and other fees, publications, rents, services, foundation grants, donations and gifts, and income from university hospitals, was given to universities (Timur, 1946, pp. 114-115). Another transformation was experienced in the

senate with Law 4936. The power of the university senate was increased. It started to exercise greater authority and responsibility within the decision-making process of the university. However, the functionality of the faculty council was decreased, and it was authorized to generate faculty rules and regulations. Most importantly, Law 4936 increased the autonomy of universities. Administrators at all levels directly involved the decision-making process on administrative, academic, and financial issues. As a result of this diffused electoral decision-making process, governmental intervention decreased. However, there the decision-making process still did not include the students and junior faculty members (Gediklioğlu, 1995).

The number of secondary school graduates increased rapidly during the 1960s and 1970s; however, admissions to higher education remained stable. As a result of this unbalance number of secondary school graduates and higher education admissions in 1964, higher education admissions have been started to be managed with a university student selection examination on a country basis. The number of students who participated in the Inter-University Student Selection Examination increased 70.000 and 240.000 at the end of the 1970s (Reed, 1975, p. 206). This increasing demand for higher education brought the establishment of many private higher education institutions. These private education institutions tried to respond to the demand which couldn't have been met by the public institutions. Also, these private institutions were depending on the public higher education institutions' teachers on a part-time basis, and they were mainly poorly equipped in terms of library, laboratory, and student services. This type of dependence and low-quality service created opposition from professionals as pharmacists, chemists, architects, and engineers. They were mainly against their colleagues' employment on those private institutions and they justified their arguments with the article 120 of the Constitution 1961 (Gediklioğlu, 1995, pp. 160-161) which states that universities shall be established only by state and by legislation; the universities are public, corporate bodies enjoying academic and administrative autonomy (Constitution of Turkish Republic, 1961). As a result of these oppositions, private higher education institutions that were established in the 1960s were declared unconstitutional, and the Ministry of Education took over most of them (Gediklioğlu, 1995, p. 161). In addition to the increasing demands on higher education, student movements in the 1960s and 1970s have also affected the reorganization of Turkey's higher education system, and in 1973 the

University Law 1750 was introduced (Ataünal, 1993). The new law brought new bodies like the Higher Education Council and Higher Educational Supervisory Council. These new bodies were responsible for arranging human resources, auditing of individual colleges and universities in academic and administrative subjects which includes monetary expenditures, and the evaluation of colleges and universities on a country basis. The law identifies higher education institutions as autonomous and self-governing bodies; however, the existence of the Higher Education Supervisory Council preserved the governmental control mechanism. Moreover, academic freedom of the faculty members was not identified by the Law 1750 and remained unclear. Law 1750 also underlined the importance of student services and proper facilities for a productive study, and any type of fees can be used for the improvement of those student services. The main improvements were made on the internal management of higher education institutions. The law brought a level of participation of the junior teachers and students on the decision-making process of the higher education institutions on teaching and research related topics. The faculty decision-making process allowed elected student representatives and non-academic staff participation, so Law 1750 brought a more democratic government to the higher education institutions (Gediklioğlu, 1995, p. 162).

The higher education system in Turkey was reorganized again in 1981 with Law 2547. The systematic problems which led the government to reorganize the higher education in Turkey presented by Gediklioğlu as follows: the wide variety of laws and types of institutions of higher education and the differences in practice resulting from the variations; the lack of central planning and coordination of higher education on a national basis; the increasing demand for trained manpower for national development; the isolation of higher educational institutions from their environments and from current national issues; the increasing demand for higher education as a means of social mobility; the shortage of teachers at the universities in smaller cities; the decreasing contacts between students and staff; and the increase in student radicalism during the preceding decade (Gediklioğlu, 1995, p. 163). Also, Doğramacı states that lack of comprehensive planning and co-ordination among higher educational institutions in the 1970s made it virtually impossible to assess national priorities in any coherent fashion, and something had to be done to make the universities more responsive to the needs of the society (Doğramacı, 1985, pp. 3-4). Another reason behind the reform of higher education was

the developments in the economy and industry. During the 1960s and 1970s, Turkey's economy and industry expanded, and the demand for trained human resources on vocational and technical areas increased. At that time, higher education institutions of Turkey were focusing on abstract studies, and they were far beyond combining the scientific expertise with environmental resources (Gediklioğlu, 1995, p. 164). As a result of those demands, the Council of Higher Education was established in 1982 under Law 2547. It was appointed as the highest administrative body authorized to plan, coordinate, and supervise the higher education institutions of Turkey. The university was also defined as a "self-governing institution with academic freedom." Moreover, the 1982 Constitution allowed the establishment of private higher education institutions which are affiliated to a trust foundation under state coordination (Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, 1982). The Council of Higher Education became responsible for approving the budgets proposed by the universities; setting minimum degree requirements, proposing a list of candidates for each university presidency; and receiving reports from universities regarding their institutional performance (Gediklioğlu, 1995, p. 165). Law 2547 was the latest major reform attempt of higher education in Turkey. Today, the existing institutions and bureaucratic structure of the higher education system is a continuation of the Law 2547. Since its establishment, the Council of Higher Education enjoying the government of the entire higher education system of Turkey as a superior authority over the institutions.

1.2 FOUNDATION UNIVERSITIES POSITION WITHIN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Since the establishment of the first university of Turkey as İstanbul University in 1933, the number of universities increased regularly, and in 1982 the total number of universities in Turkey was 19 (Durmuş & Günay, 2011, p. 2). After the military coup in 1980, a new constitution was introduced in 1982. Article 130 of the 1982 Constitutions of the Republic of Turkey re-described the responsibility of the state over higher education as follows: for the purpose of training manpower to meet the needs of the nation and the country under a system of contemporary education principles, universities comprising several units and having scientific autonomy and public legal personality shall be established by the State and by law, to educate at different levels based on secondary education, to conduct research, to issue publications, to act as consultants, and to serve

the country and humanity. The same article also allows foundations to establish universities as follows: institutions of higher education may be established, under the supervision and control of the State, by foundations in accordance with the procedures and principles set forth in the law as long as they do not pursue profit (Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, 1982). As a result of Article 130 of the 1982 Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, the higher education system has met with the concept of foundation university. The first foundation university of Turkey has been established in 1984, named Bilkent University (Sargin, 2007, p. 10). Although the expansion of the number of universities in Turkey has been continued, the establishment of the second and third foundation universities of Turkey has been realized after a while as Koç University in 1992 and Başkent University in 1993. In 1994 the total number of universities in Turkey was 56, and only three of them were foundation universities (Durmuş & Günay, 2011, p. 2). Between 1994 and 2006, there was a dramatic increase in the number of foundation universities. Twenty-one foundation universities were established between the given years. Then between 2006 and 2019, 48 foundation universities have been established. So today, there are 73 foundation universities in Turkey, and they are mainly concentrated in developed cities as 48 in İstanbul, 12 in Ankara, and 4 in İzmir (Council of Higher Education, 2019). The motivation behind the experienced expansion of higher education in Turkey is explained by Acer and Güçlü as follows: throughout the world, institutional and cultural trends, internationalization, national development planning, and institutional restructuring have pushed higher education institutions into a more strategic position and specific to Turkey, restructuring universities in a global market economy, reports from the Council of Higher Education on higher education strategies in 2007 and 2014, national development planning activities, public demand for higher education access, a youth population of 16.4%, and the current government policy have enabled higher education to expand throughout the country (Acer & Güçlü, 2017, p. 1912). Another motivation behind the expansion of foundation university is related to the conditions of the public universities. Erguvan claims that the main reason behind the expansion of foundation universities is directly related to the insufficient adaptation of public universities' academic and organizational structure against the market forces and demand. Also, restrictions against public universities, which are created by the legislation with a centrally governed budget, and public universities' inability to respond to growing

demand from a young population are other significant causes of the rapid expansion of foundation universities in Turkey (Erguvan, 2013, p. 154). After all, foundation universities have been encouraged by the existing higher education system, and a significant expansion of foundation universities have been experienced (Mızıkacı, 2010, p. 143). However, this expansion and a dramatic increase in the number of foundation universities in Turkey brought discussions about their quality and diversity among the institutions. A dramatic increase in the number of universities without an expansion plan created vulnerability for some universities regarding their academic and educational qualities (Mızıkacı, 2006, p. 21). After this rapid expansion of universities, a significant diversity regarding the quality of education appeared (Kavak, 2010). Also, another inequality appeared regarding the educational quality among the old and newly established foundation universities (Ergüder, et al., 2009, p. 21). Acer and Güçlü state that all those studies show the quality of universities is not parallel to their growth (Acer & Güçlü, 2017, p. 1913). The absence of diversity among the university appears as another problem caused by the rapid expansion of foundation universities in Turkey. According to Schofer and Meyer, the expansion of higher education brings a significant amount of isomorphism all around the world (Schofer & Meyer, 2005). The global market forces encourage the expansion of foundation universities; however, the existing features of the sector lead the universities to imitate each other and this imitation brings the isomorphic adaptation (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, pp. 63-82). This type of isomorphic adaptation defined by Meyer and Rowan as a process where a successful model has been copied with the purpose of surviving in the market (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 344). In the case of foundation universities of Turkey, the absence of experience and the coercive pressure of the regulatory institutions are presented as the main reason behind the isomorphic nature (Aypay, 2003, p. 117). Also, newly established universities mainly struggle with the absence of insufficient academic staff and physical infrastructure, so imitating the previously established universities considered a reasonable behavior for them (Mızıkacı, 2010, p. 134). All these features and forces resulted in the absence of diverse institutions, and as a result of this absence of diversity, higher education institutions in Turkey are highly homogenous (Acer & Güçlü, 2017, p. 1913).

Since the establishment of the first foundation university of Turkey, the existence of such institutions in Turkey's higher education system has been discussed. There are both

oppositions and supports for the existence of foundation universities in Turkey. One of the supportive arguments is related to the supply of higher education. The existence of foundation universities responds to the demand for higher education, decreases the responsibility of the state on financial matters, and creates an alternative for students who consider study abroad (Yetkin & Atabek, 2006). Another supportive argument is related to competition among universities. The existence of foundation universities increases competition in higher education, and this competition leads them to create alternative ways for student recruitment. Also, this competition contributes to the scientific production of Turkey and decreases the number of brains drain of educated citizens. Moreover, foundation universities provide better opportunities than state universities in terms of student-focused service, quality teaching staff, hands-on training, cooperation with the business community, and quick adaptation to new technologies, and instruction in a foreign language (Sarıcaoğlu, 2012). The program preferences of the students in foundation universities also provide an insight into the positive outcomes of the existence of foundation universities in higher education. More than 40% of the students who enrolled in foundation universities prefer to study programs such as economics, management, and administrative studies. The preferability of the same programs on state universities is relatively low due to their adaptation problems on market needs and lack of functionality regarding the market principles (Erguvan, 2013, p. 154). This preference also shows the relationship between the existence of foundation universities and economic globalization because those graduates of foundation universities prefer to work for multinational companies (Yalcintan & Thornley, 2007, p. 830). Also, Erguvan underlines the economic aspects of foundation universities as they are creating employment and increasing corporate tax. In the long run, foundation universities are significant participants of the overall economic development of Turkey with the investments they make (Erguvan, 2013, p. 158).

The main argument of the opposition against the existence of the foundation universities in Turkey's higher education system is related to their financial status. The 1982 Constitution underlines that institutions of higher education, which are established by foundations, cannot pursue profit (Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, 1982). However, they have become profit pursuing institutions, and because of the high tuition fees they are charging, the number of students who enjoy studying in a foundation

university is very limited. According to the Council of Higher Education statistics, the total number of university students for 2019 is 7.580.502, and only 7,85% as 595.116 of those students are studying in foundation universities (Council of Higher Education, 2019). Moreover, there is a considerable gap between the tuition fee that foundation universities charge and the amount of money that they are spending per student (Council of Higher Education, 2019). Also, the students who enrolled in foundation universities belong to higher socioeconomic families, and this condition increases the inequality in reaching the educational opportunities (Tansel & Güngör, 2002). Another controversial issue about the foundation universities in Turkey is related to their institutional structure. Comparing to state universities, the Rectors of foundation universities may be only a member of Boards of Trustees, whereas they are the chief executive officers in state universities. In terms of academic leadership, autonomy, and institutionalization, this power structure can be problematic. The Board of Trustees can create power conflicts on the official representation of the legal entity and decision-making process of academic appointments (Ergüder, 2010, pp. 70-71).

1.3 ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

University admission procedures are determined by Law 2547. A central exam for high school graduates is implemented by the Student Selection and Placement Center every year, and the participants apply to universities with their score and rank on this central exam.

Article 45 of Law 2547 defines the undergraduate admission for citizens of Turkey as follows: Students are admitted to institutions of higher education by means of an examination prepared in accordance with provisions specified by the Council of Higher Education. In the evaluation of examination results, the performance of students during their secondary education is taken into account. Quotas are allocated for the placement of top-ranking graduates of secondary schools; placement is carried out, taking into account their preferences and entrance examination scores. In the selection of students for higher education institutions, additional points are calculated based on performance on during secondary education, in a manner to be determined by the Student Selection and Placement Center, and added to their entrance examination scores. Those students who are graduates of professionally – or vocational-oriented secondary schools and who apply

for an undergraduate program in the same area, will also have their entrance examination scores supplemented by a coefficient to be determined (The Law on Higher Education, 1981). Besides, the post-graduate admission is defined in Article 50 as follows: Higher education institutions shall conduct examinations to select those university graduates who wish to study for a master's or doctorate degree, or specialization in a field of medicine, according to principles determined by the Inter-university Board. The institutions of higher education prepare the necessary plans and take the necessary measures in order to meet demands concerning post-graduate study (The Law on Higher Education, 1981).

On the other hand, international student admission procedures are differentiated from the admission of citizens of Turkey and principles for the acceptance of international students are defined by Law 6287 as follows: Regularizing principles of directives or regulations approved by the university senates on accepting students from abroad through methods to be employed in accepting students such as minimum scores of nationwide examinations of countries, international examinations, middle education average grades, examination conducted by the university, and presenting it to the approval of the Higher Education Council. Addition of financial assurance amount to the conditions and principles of the university for the students from abroad in order to ensure their continuation of higher education in our country. Owing to the fact that students from abroad must obtain Student Visa in order to obtain education at every phase of higher education institutions in Turkey, universities must arrange an "acceptance letter" or any equivalent letter for the students they accept, Upon the acceptance of higher educational institutions' related rules, for the students who apply in interim period, the analysis will be conducted by the higher education institution and the candidates who fulfill the application conditions will be arranged a "pre-acceptance letter" or any equivalent document for the next year in a number not to exceed 1/3 of the previous year quota of the university for the foreign students. In order to have foreign students prefer our country for higher education, to prepare introductory documents and catalogs that publicize universities in our country, to encourage universities to take part in educational fairs abroad and formation of International Students Office within the universities to assist the applicant or registered students. By designating application calendar within the scope of student quotas of higher education institutions for the students from abroad, specifying it in the academic calendar, and informing the Directorate of Higher Education Council about the students who have been

registered. Evaluation of the Turkish language level of the students from abroad through criteria designated by the university of acceptance and within the frame required documents by the Higher Education Institution (Law 6287, 2012).

There are three main differences between national and international student admission process in Turkey's higher education system. The first difference is related to the way of application. According to Law 2547 (The Law on Higher Education, 1981), national students who want to be admitted to a university in Turkey need to participate in the central exam, and they are placed according to their exam score and rank. However, according to Law 6287 (Law 6287, 2012), international students can apply for universities in Turkey individually, and the acceptance is given by the university directly. The second difference among the national and international student admission process is related to the placement. Domestic students make a preference list, and they placed one of these preferences according to their central exam score, national rank, and other candidates' preferences. International students can apply as many as universities they want to apply, and they can get acceptance even from all of them, so unlike national students, they can make their preference for enrollment among the universities they get the acceptance. The third difference is related to the admission criteria for universities. For national students, the admission is mainly based on the national

university exam score and ranking. The score requirement is different for each university; however, the minimum admission score is determined by the Student Selection and Placement Center. On the other hand, according to Law 6287, universities can determine their own admission criteria, so unlike the regulations for national students, international admission procedures vary among universities and might be based on different exams and qualifications (Law 6287, 2012). All these differences among the national and international student admission procedures require different methods, strategies, and frameworks for marketing higher education in the domestic and international markets.

1.4 INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN TURKEY

There is a direct link between the internationalization of higher education and globalization. Erdem suggests that globalization has brought the mobility of the faculty and students into higher education (Erdem, 2012, p. 114). Yalcintan and Thorney argue that higher education is globalized in terms of its curriculum, academics, relations, and

students (Yalcintan & Thornley, 2007, p. 825). Student tourism, knowledge exchange between researchers, international commercialization of thought programs, the opening up of university agents, sister universities, franchising practices, and other international cooperation mechanisms might be considered as different levels of globalization of higher education (Ozsoy, 2002, p. 90). Higher education institutions became a component of global branding and also became a component of competition among big global cities as London, New York, and Sydney (Urry, 1998). In this sense, competition among the higher education institutions is also appeared (Yalcintan & Thornley, 2007, p. 825) and one of the main components of this competition in global economy is the international students; because they contribute to the local economy with the tuition fees they pay and the expenditures they make (Sadlak, 1998, p. 105). Healey also suggests that like businesses, higher education is also internationalizing. For many countries, higher education is now a significant export sector, and higher education institutions are attracting international students from all over the world (Healey, 2008, p. 33). Qiang also states that "internationalization of higher education is seen as one of the ways a country responds to the impact of globalization yet at the same time respects the individuality of the nation" (Qiang, 2003, p. 249). Knight defines the internationalization of higher education as "the process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching, research, and service functions of the institution (Knight, 1993, p. 21). Knight also proposes the four approaches of internationalization in higher education as a process approach, activity approach, competency approach, and organizational approach (Knight, 1994, p. 3). The process approach evaluates internationalization as a process that involves the international dimension to the main functions of the institution. The activity approach defines internationalization regarding the curriculum, scholar/student exchange, and technical type of activities. The competency approach focuses on internationalization regarding developing new skills, knowledge, and attitudes in students, faculty, and staff. And the organization approach concentrates on developing a culture in the higher education institution that values intercultural and international viewpoints and initiatives (Knight, 1994, p. 4). On the other hand, Van der Wende suggests that internationalization is not a product of a process; instead, it is an ultimate goal for higher education institutions to improve the quality, restructuring, and upgrading of higher education systems and services (Van der Wende, 1997, p. 19). Aigner et al. propose three reasons for

internationalization of higher education as follows: interest in international security, maintenance of economic competitiveness, and fostering of human understanding across nations (Aigner, et al., 1992). Warner suggests three internationalization models for universities. The first model, competitive model, underlines that creating international content for campus life and curriculum increases the competitiveness of the student, institution, and country in the global marketplace. The second model, the liberal model, defines internationalization as an ultimate goal of self-development and global education in a changing world. The social transformation model as the third model underlines that the most significant aim of internationalization of higher education is providing an intense conscious about the international and intercultural issues regarding equity and justice and participate in social transformation actively and critically (Warner, 1992, p. 21). Moreover, Knight and De Wit underline the four rationales of internationalization of higher education as a political rationale, economic rationale, academic rationale, and cultural and social rationale (Knight & De Wit, 1995). The political rationale is associated with a country's international position as security, stability and peace, and ideological influence. The economic rationale is related to the economic effects of internationalization of higher education as international competitiveness, institutional income, and net economic income. The academic rationale involves the functions and goals of higher education. Reaching international academic standards on teaching and research is considered as one of the main reasons for internationalizing higher education. The cultural and social rationale focuses on the culture and language and their importance on understanding other cultures, languages, and diversity (Qiang, 2003, pp. 252-253). The internationalization of higher education in Turkey is one of the important components of state development plans since 2013. The Tenth Development Plan 2014-2018 aimed at the share of Turkey from the global international student will be increased by 1,5% in 2018 (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Strateji ve B, 2013). Also, the Eleventh Development Plan 2018-2023 of Turkey underlines that according to the internationalization attempts on higher education in Turkey, the number of the international students in Turkey increased to 146.000 in 2018 from 73.000 in 2015 (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Strateji ve B, 2019). On the other hand, the Council of Higher Education has been published the Strategic Plan for Internationalization of Higher Education 2018-2022 in 2017. According to the plan, the

three main themes for internationalization are presented as the accessibility of education, quality of education, and institutional capacity. The plan also emphasizes that the policies that encourage the international students and faculty members' integration to Turkey's higher education system are essential. So, in order to increase the number of international students and faculty members in Turkey, the accessibility of higher education requires attention. On the other hand, the quality of higher education in Turkey is the main point to realize the increase in international student and faculty member number. And finally, the institutional capacity of the higher education system should be ready to respond to increasing international demand (Council of Higher Education, 2017). The same strategy plan suggests two main targets for the internationalization of the higher education system of Turkey. The first target is making Turkey a center of attraction for higher education. In order to realize this target, the actions will be taken are presented as follows: increasing the number of international students in Turkey, increasing the number of international faculty members in Turkey, attracting successful academicians with backwards brain-drain, increasing the number of international student and faculty exchange programs participants, increasing the number of accommodation options for international students, increasing the international cooperation potential of universities, increasing the international visibility of higher education, increasing the number of the programs in foreign languages, increasing the capacity of the faculty members in teaching in foreign languages, increasing the number of the agreements with other governments and multi-national corporations. The second target for internationalization of the higher education system of Turkey is increasing the institutional capacity of the higher education. In order to realize this target, actions will be taken are presented as follows: establishment of the Department of International Relations under Council of Higher Education, recruitment of experts on internationalization, creation of interaction between institutions regarding to the developments, updates and trends on internationalization, recruitment of representatives for embassies in target countries (Council of Higher Education, 2017). Globalization and internationalization of higher education in Turkey is internalized by foundation universities more than the state universities. According to Yalcintan and Thornley, foundation universities in Turkey emphasize the global instead of the locals on their marketing activities. Especially it is very common to observe phrases like global competition, globalization, and information society on their marketing

products (Yalcintan & Thornley, 2007, p. 830). On the other hand, the international recognition level of the state universities in Turkey is higher than the foundation universities (Tekeliođlu, et al., 2012, p. 198). Also, according to Selvitopu and Aydın, universities that concentrate on social, cultural, and political aspects of internationalization are relatively more successful than others (Selvitopu & Aydın, 2018, p. 816).



2. MARKETING HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1 MARKETING AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Marketing is a wide concept to define in a single way. The most basic definition is made by the American Marketing Association as follows: Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (The American Marketing Association, 2017). However, in order to understand the concept of marketing in an analytical way and evaluate the concept within higher education, the literature needs to be overviewed. Kotler and Levy argue that marketing is the task of finding and stimulating buyers for the firm's output and requires continuous attention to the changing needs of customers and the development of new products, with product modification and services to meet these needs (Kotler & Levy, 1969, p. 10). On the other hand, Krachenberg defines marketing as follows: Marketing deals with the concept of uncovering specific needs, satisfying these needs by the development of appropriate goods and services, letting people know of their availability, and offering them at appropriate prices, at the right time and place (Krachenberg, 1972, p. 380). It is also argued that marketing cannot be considered as in the old sense of making the sale; the new sense of marketing is satisfying customer needs (Kotler, et al., 1999, p. 9). On the other hand, Kotler and Levy bring the concept of organizational marketing. They argue that, when a society reaches a certain level that shortages of food, clothing, and shelter are no longer the main problems, organizations start to gain influence to meet other social needs. So, these organizations become wide and start to require the same managerial activities as marketing. Moreover, the meaning of marketing for those non-business organizations is product improvement, pricing, distribution, and communication (Kotler & Levy, 1969, p. 10). Organizational marketing concept suggests that every organization produces a product of one of the following: physical products, services, persons, organizations, and ideas. Universities and colleges are defined as non-business organizations, and their production is presented as their organization (Kotler & Levy, 1969, p. 12).

Marketing higher education is not a new concept for universities. Cutlip underlines the first movements of higher education marketing as a promotion of institutions' services and interest through their public relations, student recruiting, fund-raising, and lobbying efforts; moreover, he underlines that higher education institutions have changed and developed themselves to make them more attractive (Cutlip, 1970). Also, Pelletier says that the marketing concept in higher education has become popular in the 1970s and has become controversial in time. At the very beginning of the discussions of marketing higher education, there were two camps as purists and pro-marketers. The purists argued that there is no need to create a demand for education because education has an inherent value that creates its own demand. Education cannot be sold as a mass consumption product was the main argument of the purist view. On the other hand, the pro-marketers argued that marketing is an effective tool to bring a competitive edge, and it gives positive outcomes (Pelletier, 1985, p. 54). Also, Yalcintan and Thornley argue that higher education institutions are now restructuring regarding models of business organizations to become centers of excellence. They also became the center for educating qualified labor, which is required by the capitalist mode of production (Yalcintan & Thornley, 2007, pp. 825-826). Litten defines marketing as "a frame of mind in which questions are asked about the optimum relationship between an organization and its environment, or parts of its environment, and action is taken that is informed by the answers to those questions" and he argues that higher education has been dealing with development of services and the promotional activities that are identified as marketing in business (Litten, 1980, p. 41). Pelletier defines the two purposes of marketing higher education as follows: to encourage enrollment and to assist the fund-raising effort (Pelletier, 1985, p. 57). Krachenber underlines that every university is engaging in some amount of marketing activity. Many of them try to increase the number of students they have and use some advertisement methods like posters, bulletins, and announcements. Also, scholarships and subsidies are used to convince students. In general, education, which might be considered as their product, is being marketed (Krachenberg, 1972, p. 370). However, marketing higher education is not simply marketing a product or service as it is done in business. Pelletier claims that the marketing approach in education and business is basically the same. Also, many techniques are identical. However, education as a product is a special case, and marketing in education is not the same as marketing in business (Pelletier, 1985,

p. 56). Litten explains the different nature of marketing in business and marketing in higher education with their orientation points. Business firms and free enterprises are mainly market-oriented. Their historical product orientation has succeeded by the market orientation, where the products are no longer creating their own demand. Instead, consumer satisfaction and desires became more important than the technical production concerns. Higher education marketing, on the other hand, still involves marketing orientation regarding its private economic benefits; however, the product orientation is also carried. Higher education marketing cannot only concentrate on public demand and still maintain its intellectual tradition as creating a literate, thoughtful, and creative populace (Litten, 1980, pp. 51-52). Contrary, Pelletier suggests in the very beginning of adopting the business marketing techniques into higher education marketing, universities evaluated the marketplace through their own eyes. The programs that they were offering were designed regarding the interests of the university. During that time, the higher education market was a seller's market where the product creates its own demand. The responsibility to fit in what is offering belonged to the consumer. However, today, the higher education market is a buyer's market where the consumer shapes the product with its behaviors. In order to be successful, universities must make every effort to evaluate the market through the eyes of the buyer because today, successful marketing for higher education starts with the consumer (Pelletier, 1985, p. 57). Litten also suggests that the institutional diversity of the universities is not only related to the educational programs they offer, but also related to their environment, campus culture, and the administrative and governance processes. This type of institutional diversity is also subject to the differences of marketing in business and marketing in higher education. It is very rare in business to involve employees, customers, or products into the management and marketing process. However, it is a very common nature of marketing in higher education to involve those components. In higher education, the faculty, as employees, are directly in control of some of the marketable services as the curriculum. Also, students as consumers and alumni as the product are generally involved in the decision-making process (Litten, 1980, pp. 52-53). On the other hand, Krachenberg argues that universities do not have a single market to operate. The first market group for universities is obviously their students with their segmented needs and satisfaction levels. The second market group for universities is their alumni, who still have interests in the university and

its operations. The third market group for universities is the government. And the last and main market group is the public, and its importance for universities is growing year by year (Krachenberg, 1972, p. 371).

Rivera Camino and Ayala underline the importance of the market orientation approach in higher education marketing as follows: "the study of market orientation in the field of education is important because universities face new competitive situations for which they are not prepared" (Rivera-Camino & Ayala, 2010, p. 126). The increasing level of globalization, technological innovations, and the consideration of education as a new competition field among the countries create internal and external constraints for universities. So, in order to overcome those constraints, universities develop new strategies (Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). However, despite those constraints and new challenges, higher education institutions still couldn't develop appropriate models and strategies to become more competitive and survive (Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2003). However, the market orientation model in higher education marketing is not considered as business culture and philosophy, or not just an implementation. Market orientation model in higher education marketing is considered as a management choice and integrates strategy and coordination. The model also identifies the components of market orientation as student orientation, worker orientation, competitor orientation, company-donor orientation, environment orientation, and inter- functional coordination (Rivera-Camino & Ayala, 2010, pp. 127-128). One of the most important components of market orientation model on higher education marketing is student orientation. Students are considered as customers who need to be satisfied within the market (Morris, et al., 2007). The model also suggests treating workers as a market. The level of worker satisfaction and commitment is very important in non-profit making services for quality and accuracy (Bennett, 1998). Donors in a non-profit organization are considered as foundations, government agencies, corporate clients, and volunteers. Since the resources are limited for higher education institutions, they need to develop strategies to receive donations to operate (Rivera-Camino & Ayala, 2010, p. 128). Competitor orientation also considered one of the most important components of the market orientation model for higher education institutions. There is always competition among universities for student recruitment, and this competition requires the development of strategies and implementations (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003). As a result of globalization, higher

education institutions are experiencing a new environment to operate (Middlehurst, 2001), so that's why the consideration of the environment as one of the components of the market-oriented model is appropriate (Rivera- Camino & Ayala, 2010, p. 129). The last component of the market orientation model of higher education marketing is inter-functional coordination. It is defined as the capacity of the organization to generate market value by reaching cooperation with other units (Rivera- Camino & Ayala, 2010, p. 129).

There are four forces as the massification of higher education, expansion and diversification, growth of heterogeneity in higher education, and the growth of competition in higher education, which leads to higher education into market orientation (Smith, et al., 1995). Massification of higher education has brought the topics of teaching, examination, performance, physical facilities, institutional management, financing, and quality of the student life into the debate in higher education. As a result, higher education institutions have started to discuss how they provide quality on those topics (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009, p. 30). Expansion and diversification in higher education increase the competition of higher education institutions for international student recruitment. Maringe and Gibbs claim that expansion and diversification bring expanded choices for students and indirectly trigger institutions to respond to students' preferences (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009, p. 31). Massification and expansion of higher education have brought the heterogeneity as the growth of diversity and difference. Maringe and Gibbs argue that as a result of globalization, options for higher education are no longer limited in national boundaries. Also, increasing levels of heterogeneity in higher education have brought a new way of outward-looking, which is forcing higher education institutions to abandon their safe zones. Also, this new outward- looking has introduced the requirement of being more explicit on marketing activities and strategies. This new multicultural diverse group of international students requires a new way of understanding. Higher education institutions that cannot offer solutions to fulfill the needs of diverse international students are lack behind the competition (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009, p. 32). The increasing level of competition among the higher education institutions on international student recruitment is both a result of and respond to market orientation (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009, p. 33). Australia and New Zealand, as very successful actors of the international student recruitment market, welcomed that level of competition and used it as a legislative force

to generate institutional development (Mazzarol, et al., 2000, p. 42). On the other hand, another significant actor in the international student recruitment market, the United Kingdom, established University Funding Council to encourage universities to take a position against each other's funding activities (Smith, et al., 1995, p. 11).

One of the most critical discussions for market-oriented international student recruitment is related to the student's position. Svensson and Wood argue that many universities have been influenced by marketing metaphors and consider themselves as the supplier of knowledge, and they address students as customers. They say that the relationship between students and universities is not a simple customer seller relationship. They illustrated their argument with an example of car sales. None of the automobile sellers questions your ability and capability to buy a car and drive it; however, universities both try to sell their products and at the same time, question students' ability and capacity to have a university degree. That's in any case, the relationship between students and universities cannot be a typical customer and seller relationship. (Svensson & Wood, 2007, p. 18). Moreover, Maringe and Gibbs argue that students are more than customers on their simple and direct exchange with universities, and they explain it with a hat metaphor (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009). Mintzberg presents the hat metaphor to illustrate students' position on their exchange with universities. He suggests that students wear four different hats, and each of these hats represents a specific relationship they have with universities during their study (Mintzberg, 1996). The first hat is the client hat. Students wear that hat when they are gathering information about the university by making inquiries and asking for advice. The second hat is the customer hat. This hat represents the relationship between universities and students, which is related to students learning needs. Students wear that hat when they are acting for their customer satisfaction. The third hat is the citizen hat. Students wear that hat when they act as citizens of their campuses. As citizens of their campuses, they have rights and responsibilities. When they conduct a relationship with their universities regarding those matters, they wear the citizen hat. The final hat is the subject hat. Students wear this hat when they find themselves as the subject of sanctions, rules, or regulations which are implemented by the higher education system. Since the relationship between students and universities is not a simple customer and seller relationship, market-oriented higher education marketing activities require adequate responses to those specific stages of students, which are

explained with the hat metaphor.

Positioning strategies of higher education institutions has become one of the most important components of higher education marketing as a result of market-oriented approaches. Ljiljana and Dukic defines positioning as the creation and maintenance of an image for a more recognizable and convenient visibility comparing to the competitors (Ljiljana & Dukic, 2013, p. 237). Also, Wilson and Gilligan defines positioning as the process which creates a value and image for the customers to make them aware about the institution among the other competitors (Wilson & Gilligan, 2002, p. 302). Besides, Popovic et al. underlines that, positioning is directly related to the consumers and competition. The main function of the positioning is making the consumers aware about the institution and its proposal which is different than its' competitors offers (Popovic, et al., 2015, p. 646). In this sense, the process of communication which emphasizes the components that differs the institution from its competitors has a significant importance (Ljiljana & Dukic, 2013). Maringe and Gibbs suggest that positioning strategies are also need to followed by higher education institutions which operate in a highly competitive market (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009, p. 60). However, Popovic et al. (Popovic, et al., 2015, p. 647) states that creating a positioning strategy for a higher education institution is very difficult due to the characterization of the higher education sector which contains significant level of regulation and uniformity (Niculescu, 2009). In addition to that, most of the higher education institutions are using the similar contents as excellence, quality or achievement and most of them are beyond being unique. As a result of this, marketing activities of higher education institutions fundamentally makes the institutions all the same for prospective students (Temple & Shattock, 2007, p. 81). That's why higher education institutions should create their positioning strategies based on their specific or unique features along with the intangible characteristics as the reputation (Price, et al., 2003) and the value (Mazzarol & Hosie, 1996) they provide.

Popovic et al. underlines the importance of Medina and Duffy's study (Medina & Dufft, 1998) on positioning strategies that suggests five fundamental components of higher education positioning as the learning environment which includes the personnel and the physical environment as the rooms and physical resources; reputation of the institution which includes the awareness of the brand as the achievements and education standards; opportunities for graduate which includes employment and expected salary; image of the

destination which includes aspects as political stability, security and hospitality; and aspects of social integration (Popovic, et al., 2015, pp. 647-648).

2.2 MARKETING HIGHER EDUCATION IN TURKEY

The increasing demand for higher education in Turkey hasn't decreased the competition pressure for foundation universities because the demand for higher education institutions is not homogeneous and the number of the students who can effort the high tuition fees of foundation universities is very limited (Demirtaş, 2012, p. 213). As a result of this increasing competition, a significant amount of money is spent by the foundation universities of Turkey for their marketing activities. According to the Council of Higher Education statistics, the total amount of money which was spent by Turkey's foundation universities between 2016 and 2017 for their marketing activities was 194.823.441,9 TL. Between 2017 and 2018, the expenditure reached 219.476.023,6 TL and increased 12,7% (Council of Higher Education, 2019). This increasing marketing expenditures also reflected in the number of enrolled international students in foundation universities. In 2016 the number of enrolled international students in foundation universities of Turkey was 18.632. In 2017, the number of enrolled international students was 22.734. Comparing to 2016, it increased by 22%. In 2018, the number of enrolled international students was 30.673. Comparing to 2017, it increased by 34% (Council of Higher Education, 2019). However, the number of international students who are studying in the foundation universities in Turkey also shows the level of competition. There is an unequal distribution of international students among the universities. The highest number of international students in a foundation university is 3.479. On the other hand, there are thirteen foundation universities in Turkey which have less than ten international students (Council of Higher Education, 2019).

Consumer marketing or Business to Consumer marketing is defined as an ongoing process of developing and performing the marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion) of products and services to consumers (Richard & Washington, 2016, p. 20). In addition, marketing strategies on services that are developed to use more than one channel are defined as multichannel marketing (Rangaswamy & Van Bruggen, 2005, p. 7). As service providers, marketing activities of foundation universities of Turkey for international student recruitment are categorized under Business to Consumer marketing

activities. And also, since they are operating with more than one channel in their marketing activities for international student recruitment, it can be said that foundation universities of Turkey are implementing multichannel marketing. Weinberg et al. suggest that multichannel marketing is a very complex activity and involves a number of components, processes, and decisions (Weinberg, et al., 2007, p. 385). So, the marketing activities of foundation universities for international student recruitment should be analyzed deeply. Marketing activities of foundation universities of Turkey might be categorized under five categories.

The first marketing activity is social media marketing. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube are the main social media channels for foundation universities of Turkey. Fifty-five foundation universities have an Instagram account. There are fifty-three foundation universities who have a Facebook page. Fifty-two foundation universities have a Twitter account. There are 39 foundation universities who have a Youtube channel. Universities implement social media campaigns through posts that illustrate their programs, campus facilities, faculty members, scholarship, and many other features they have.

The second marketing activity is the subscriptions of online portals and directories. There are four main international education portals that foundation universities of Turkey operate, such as FindAMaster, StudyPortals, Keystone Masterstudies, and LLM Guide. FindAMaster is a database of Master's degree programs and includes more than 25.000 postgraduate courses around the world. It hosts two foundation universities from Turkey and presents 45 master programs in total (FindAMasters, 2005). StudyPortals is an online database for higher education institutions. It serves more than 36 million students around the world by representing more than 190.000 programs and 3.200 higher education institutions (StudyPortals, 2008) The sub portal of StudyPortals, the Bachelor's Portal hosts 24 foundation university from Turkey, and it presents 640 bachelor's programs in total (Bachelor's Portal, 2008). The other sub portal of StudyPortals, the Master's Portal, hosts 19 foundation universities in Turkey and presents 482 master programs in total (Master's Portal, 2008). The last sub portal of StudyPortals, Ph.D. Portal, hosts 12 foundation universities and presents 138 Ph.D. programs in total. The other online portal is LLM Guide. The portal provides up to date directory of Master of Law programs worldwide and hosts two foundation universities from Turkey with eight different LLM

programs (LLM Guide, 2001).

The marketing activity of foundation universities in Turkey is participating in recruitment tours that are organized in target countries. Ministry of Trade supports 14 sectors by giving incentives to encourage entrepreneurs on their commercial activities. Higher education is one of those 14 sectors which are supported by the Ministry of Trade because foundation universities' international student recruitment activities are considered as one of the activities which increase the foreign currency inflow. Ministry of Trade announces a list of supported international education fairs on target countries every year, and all of the foundation universities of Turkey are participating in those fairs on their target countries. As a part of the ministry incentives, 50% of fair participation expenditures, including the participation fees and transportation costs, are paid back to the universities by the Ministry of Trade. In 2019, foundation universities of Turkey were participated 204 international education fairs in 65 countries and promoted their programs (Hizmet İhracatçıları Birliği, 2018).

The fourth marketing activity of foundation universities is marketing through education agencies in their target countries. Education consultancy agencies promote universities' programs to prospective international students and collect contract basis commissions from universities. Ministry of Trade incentives also involves commission payments of the foundation universities of Turkey and 50% of their annual commission expenditures are reimbursed (Hizmet İhracatçıları Birliği, 2018). Unfortunately, there isn't any statistical data about how many international agencies are working with the foundation universities of Turkey. However, one of the Ministry of Trade supported international organization, ICEF, which organizes massive events to gather universities, and international education agencies provide statistics every year. According to 2018 event statistics, 3621 agents, university and service providers meet, and nearly all of the foundation universities of Turkey participated in this event (ICEF, 2018).

The last marketing activity for foundation universities of Turkey is international university ranking systems. Times Higher Education and QS are the most well-known international university ranking systems. These ranking systems rank universities under certain conditions and publicize set of rankings annually. Being presented by those ranking systems is a prestigious status for higher education institutions and this status is a valuable content for their marketing activities. Times Higher Education ranks

universities under the categories of world university rankings, Europe teaching rankings, university impact rankings, and by subject rankings. According to world university rankings 2020, there are eleven foundation universities of Turkey which are ranked for different categories. There are also 24 foundation universities from Turkey in the QS rankings system at the moment; however, only 3 of them are ranked. The rest are presented as members of the ranking system without being ranked yet (QS Top Universities, 2020).

2.3 MARKETING APPROACHES OF FOUNDATION UNIVERSITIES OF TURKEY

The internationalization process of higher education in Turkey indicates that international student recruitment activities in Turkey are head towards market orientation. The 10th and 11th Development Plan of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey set goals that directly relate marketing Turkey's higher education. Increasing the number of international students in Turkey is one of the main aims. Also, making Turkey an attraction point for international faculty and students is presented as a significant achievement. Council of Higher Education has been published the Strategic Plan for Internationalization of Higher Education 2018-2022 in 2017 as the main guideline for internationalization of higher education institutions and their marketing activities for international student recruitment. This strategic plan underlines the importance of the preferences of international students. It suggests strategic actions to increase the attraction by designating target countries and intensifying marketing activities in those countries. Also, the weak points of the existing higher education structure for international marketing are addressed as accessibility, inadequacy of the programs which are taught in English, poor accommodation conditions, integration problems, institutional problems, unqualified academic and administrative staff, publicity and branding (Council of Higher Education, 2017). All these attempts and projections show that the international student recruitment market is acknowledged by higher education in Turkey as a buyer's market and requires market-orientation. Also, marketing channels for foundation universities of Turkey illustrate the existing market orientation. All of the categorized marketing activities target the preferences of consumers and operated in a buyer's market. However, existing conditions of foundation universities of Turkey and their marketing activities for

international student recruitment cannot fulfill the requirements of market-oriented strategies and lag behind the strategic targets. Analyzing the physical and academic conditions of foundation universities of Turkey according to their response on four forces as the massification of higher education, expansion and diversification, growth of heterogeneity in higher education, and the growth of competition in higher education which leads higher education into market orientation might be illustrate their existing condition.

Massification of higher education has brought the topics of teaching, examination, performance, physical facilities, institutional management, financing and quality of the student life into the debate in higher education. Higher education in Turkey has also experienced massification with legislative changes on 1980s and expansion on 2000s. However, foundation universities of Turkey are lack behind those concerns that are brought by massification. Regarding the quality of teaching, examination performance, physical facilities, institutional management, financing, and quality of the student life, international ranking systems as Times Higher Education and QS might be presented as the primary indicator. Times Higher Education ranks universities under the categories of world university rankings, Europe teaching rankings, university impact rankings, and by subject rankings. According to world university rankings 2020, only ten foundation universities of Turkey are ranked. The ranking methodology of world university rankings is presented as teaching (the learning environment), research (volume, income, and reputation), citations (research influence), international outlook (staff, students and research), and industry income (knowledge transfer). The highest-ranked university ranked within the top 401-500 best universities in the world. Five of those ten universities are ranked within the top 1000+ best universities in the world as the lowest ranking degree. There isn't any university from Turkey ranked under European teaching rankings. There are 11 foundation universities of Turkey in university impact rankings 2020 of Times Higher Education. Impact rankings methodology is presented as good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation, and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; peace, justice, and strong institutions; and partnership for the goals. The highest-ranked university in this category is ranked as the 72nd best university in the world, and five universities are ranked as the

lowest ranking of 301+ under this category. There are 11 subjects on Times Higher Education rankings 2020 as clinical, pre-clinical and health; life sciences; physical sciences; psychology; business and economics; education; law; social sciences; engineering and technology; computer science; and, art and humanities. There six foundation universities from Turkey ranked for clinical, pre-clinical and health; 4 for physical sciences; 1 for psychology; 1 for business and economics; 2 for social sciences; 4 for engineering and technology; 1 for computer science; 1 for art and humanities. There isn't any foundation university that is ranked for life sciences, education, and law (Times Higher Education, 2020). The QS rankings evaluate universities according to six metrics as academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty/student ratio, citations per faculty, international faculty ratio, and international student ration. There 24 foundation universities from Turkey in the QS rankings system at the moment; however, only 3 of them are ranked. The rest are presented as members of the ranking system without being ranked yet. The highest raked foundation university of Turkey is ranked as the best 451st university in the world (QS Top Universities, 2020).

Expansion and growth in higher education have also been experienced in Turkey during the first decade of the 2000s. However, diversification cannot be realized. The total number of the bachelor's programs which are offered by foundation universities in Turkey is 3150, and 2996 of them are identical. The number of unique programs is only 154 (Council of Higher Education, 2019). Also, the number of English taught undergraduate programs is only 803 within the 3500 total number of undergraduate programs (Study in Turkey, 2019). So, the limited number of English taught undergraduate programs also decreases the effect of the expansion of the higher education institutions in Turkey.

Today, foundation universities of Turkey are also lag behind diversity and multiculturality. According to the Council of Higher Education statistics of 2017-2018, 22.724 international students enrolled in foundation universities in Turkey, and they are coming from only 50 different countries. Also, the top ten highest number of international students by nationality represents more than 50% of the total international student population (Council of Higher Education, 2019). So, in terms of diversity, the table is very pessimistic. Moreover, the Council of Higher Education's strategic plan cannot address the absence of diversity accurately. The plan suggests the designation of target countries for international student recruitment and addresses a specific concentration on

those countries. However, the main criteria for this designation are presented as cultural and religious ties, language familiarity with Turkic countries and geographic interconnectedness. It follows from this that, existing strategic plan and targeting attempts are not helping foundation universities of Turkey regarding diversity and multiculturalism requirement of market orientation approaches for international student recruitment.

Higher education in Turkey also lags behind to respond to the high level of competition for international student recruitment. Although student admission regulations of the Council of Higher Education are quite strict for domestic students, it is relinquished for international students. Especially for foundation universities, the determination of the admission criteria and tuition fees are done by the board of trustees. As a result of this individuality, foundation higher education institutions of Turkey cannot take a position against each other, and the effects of the high level of competition might be overwhelming for many of them. Additionally, institutional development for the higher education of Turkey is also lag behind the requirements of market-oriented international student recruitment activities. The given examples of successful international student recruitment actors as Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom have established their international education agencies as British Council, Study in Australia, and Study in New Zealand. These government agencies allow universities to act together in international student recruitment activities and help them avoid the harmful effects of a high level of competition. However, a similar national agency for collective international marketing activities of universities in Turkey hasn't been established yet. As a result of the absence of that level of institutional development, foundation universities of Turkey are vulnerable against the high level of competition of international student recruitment.

Foundation universities in Turkey have also problems on responding the unique buyer's and seller's relationship between international students and universities. Analyzing the physical and academic conditions of foundation universities of Turkey according to Maringe & Gibbs's (2009) hat metaphor, which defines international students' different stages on their relationship with universities, illustrate their existing condition as well. Their response to those stages of international students might be illustrated by analyzing some statistics as student-to-staff, student-campus area, student-library area, student-hard copybook ratios, and also by analyzing their research and development and library expenditures. The average student-to-faculty ratio for foundation universities in Turkey

is 43,27 (Council of Higher Education, 2019). The same ratio for the top 100 universities in Times Higher Education 2019 rankings is 5,88 (Times Higher Education, 2019). The average student-campus area ratio for foundation universities in Turkey is 46 square meters, and in 29 foundation universities of Turkey, the existing campus area per student is less than 20 square meters. The average ratio for the student per library area in the foundation universities of Turkey is 0,46 square meters. The student-hard copybook ratio average for foundation universities of Turkey is 7,1 books per student, and in 40 universities, the ratio is below 5. The average research and development budget of foundation universities in Turkey is 23.465.157 TRY, and eight universities don't have a research and development budget. Also, the top five highest international student recipient foundation universities of Turkey are below the averages on all of those statistics (Council of Higher Education, 2019). On the other hand, according to International Student Satisfaction in Europe 2016 report of Study Portals, Turkey presented as the second last (StudyPortals, 2016). As a result, foundation universities of Turkey cannot respond appropriately to those specific stages of students, which are explained with the hat metaphor as the outcome of the unique relationship between universities and students in the international student recruitment market.

Positioning strategies of higher education institutions has become one of the most important components of higher education marketing as a result of market-oriented approaches. In this sense, positioning strategies and competitive advantages that the top three foundation higher education institutions in Turkey according to the consecutive rankings of QS and Times Higher Education between 2015 and 2019 as Koç University, Sabancı University, and Bilkent University implicitly and explicitly emphasize in the communication directed to potential international students are analyzed.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research focuses on the positioning strategies of the top three foundation higher education institutions in Turkey according to the consecutive rankings of QS and Times Higher Education between 2015 and 2019 as Koç University, Sabancı University, and Bilkent University. Their positioning strategies and competitive advantages that they implicitly and explicitly emphasize in the communication directed to potential international students are analyzed.

The main aim of the research is to identify whether there is a difference between these three higher education institutions according to the positioning strategies they implement.

The aim of the research can be presented as follows:

- Specification of features that are emphasized by those three higher education institutions as their implicit/explicit advantages over other higher education institutions.

The main research question is presented as follows:

- What are the fundamental components of positioning strategies of Koç University, Sabancı University, and Bilkent University for international student recruitment?

In addition to the main research question, the following sub-ordinate questions are presented:

- Which components are used by those universities as the fundamental components of positioning strategies of higher education institutions?
- Do those three higher education institutions mainly underline the same or similar characteristics as their competitive advantages?
- Is there any fundamental component of positioning strategies of higher education institutions that are not used by those universities?
- Are there any other possible components of positioning strategies that are used by those universities but which are absent from the literature?

3.2 THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The statements of those three higher education institutions that are targeting prospective international students are analyzed in order to identify their positioning strategies. Popovic et al. (Popovic, et al., 2015) identify the five main components of higher education positioning based on Medina and Duffy's (Medina & Dufft, 1998) study as the learning environment, the reputation of the institution, opportunities for graduates, the image of the destination, and the social integration. Those five components are used as the primary literature for the fundamental components of higher education positioning. The content of their digital channels is analyzed to identify explicit and implicit competitive advantages that are underlined by those three higher education institutions. The analysis of non-digital content might not be relevant since the research focuses on international marketing activities, which is not operated by means of mass media in target countries.

Messages that are given by those universities via international student recruitment webpage and brochures are considered as explicit messages for international student recruitment marketing. The competitive advantages that are explicitly defined by those higher education institutions are analyzed within the content of the messages that target prospective international students. Web pages of those institutions, which include calls for applications in terms of international student recruitment and digital information brochures, are the content of the analysis.

Messages that are given by those universities via social media channels and main university webpages are considered as implicit messages for international student recruitment marketing. University's main webpages that are not directly addressing the call for applications for prospective international students, social media accounts as Instagram/Facebook, and YouTube are analyzed in order to identify implicit competitive advantages.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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Messages that are given by those universities via social media channels and main university webpages are considered as implicit messages for international student recruitment marketing. University's main webpages that are not directly addressing the call for applications for prospective international students, social media accounts as Instagram, and YouTube are analyzed in order to identify implicit competitive advantages.

International student recruitment websites, university main websites, brochures, Instagram accounts and YouTube channels, which are addressed by the international student recruitment pages of those three universities, are analyzed to identify which features of five fundamental components of higher education positioning strategies are emphasized. In addition, in order to identify the level of emphasis of these components, a quantitative analysis is conducted. International student recruitment websites, university main websites, and brochures' emphasizing level of the components are calculated by the percentage of the number of words that are used to present competitive advantages. Instagram accounts' emphasizing level of the competitive advantages is calculated by the percentage of the number of posts that are related to the presentation of competitive advantages. For all three universities' Instagram accounts, the posts between 01 April 2015 and 01 April 2020 are considered for the analysis. YouTube channels' emphasizing level of the competitive advantages is calculated by the percentage of the number of minutes that are related to the presentation of competitive advantages. For all three universities' YouTube channels, the videos between 01 April 2015 and 01 April 2020 are considered for the analysis.

4. POSITIONING STRATEGIES OF TOP 3 RANKED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN TURKEY

4.1 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

After a detailed analysis of the content of websites and digital channels, I found that the features that those three universities are underlining as their explicit and implicit competitive advantages in terms of the learning environment can be classified into ten categories as campus, classrooms, dormitories, faculty members, interdisciplinary education, laboratories, library, research, sports centers, and student-faculty ratio.

Sabancı University explicitly underlines eight of those ten competitive advantages. The main location of the explicit presentation of the competitive advantages of the learning environment is the international student recruitment webpage. On the other hand, all of those ten categories are presented by Sabancı University, implicitly. The main location of the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages of the learning environment is the university's main webpage and YouTube Channel.

Koç University explicitly and implicitly underlines nine of those ten competitive advantages. The main location of the explicit presentation of the competitive advantages of the learning environment is the brochure. On the other hand, the main locations of the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages of the learning environment are the university's main webpage and Instagram account.

Bilkent University explicitly and implicitly underlines eight of those ten competitive advantages. The main location of the explicit presentation of the competitive advantages is the international student recruitment webpage. On the other hand, the main location of the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages is the university's Instagram account.

In terms of explicit presentation of the competitive advantages, Koç University's Student-Faculty ratio presentation is not presented by Sabancı University explicitly and Bilkent University neither explicitly and implicitly. Koç University and Sabancı University explicitly present interdisciplinary education as a competitive advantage; however, it is not presented by Bilkent University. In terms of explicit presentation of the competitive advantages of all three universities, Bilkent University does not underline

anything different than Koç University and Sabancı University. Besides, Sabancı University also does not underline anything different than Koç University. Among all these three universities, Koç University is the only university that explicitly presents a different competitive advantage than other universities, which is the Student-Faculty ratio.

In terms of implicit presentation of the competitive advantages, Bilkent University does not underline anything different than Sabancı University and Koç University, and it does not present the Student-Faculty ratio which is presented by both Koç University and Sabancı University, implicitly. On the other hand, Koç University does not underline anything different than Sabancı University. Among all these three universities, Sabancı University is the only university that implicitly presents a different competitive advantage than other universities, which is Student-Faculty ration.

Table 1 Competitive advantages in terms of Learning Environment and location of content

	Sabancı University	Koç University	Bilkent University
Explicit			
International Webpage	Student Recruitment Campus	Campus	Campus
	Classrooms	Faculty Members	Classrooms
	Dormitories	Interdisciplinary Education	Dormitories
	Interdisciplinary Education	Laboratories	Faculty Members
	Laboratories	Research	Laboratories
	Library	Sports Centers	Library
	Research	Student-Faculty Ratio	Research
	Sports Centers		Sports Centers
Brochure	Campus	Campus	Campus
	Dormitories	Dormitories	Dormitories
	Interdisciplinary Education	Faculty Members	Faculty Members
	Laboratories	Interdisciplinary Education	Laboratories
	Library	Laboratories	Library
	Sports Centers	Library	Research
		Research	Sports Centers
		Sports Centers	
		Student-Faculty Ratio	
Implicit			
Main Webpage	Campus	Campus	Campus
	Dormitories	Classrooms	Dormitories
	Faculty Members	Dormitories	Faculty Members
	Interdisciplinary Education	Faculty Members	Laboratories
	Laboratories	Interdisciplinary Education	Library
	Library	Laboratories	Research
	Research	Library	Sports Centers
	Sports Centers	Research	
		Sports Centers	
Instagram	Campus	Campus	Campus
	Classrooms	Classrooms	Classrooms
	Dormitories	Dormitories	Dormitories
	Faculty Members	Faculty Members	Faculty Members
	Interdisciplinary Education	Laboratories	Laboratories
	Laboratories	Library	Library
	Library	Research	Research
	Research	Sports Centers	Sports Centers
	Sports Centers	Interdisciplinary Education	
	Student-Faculty Ratio		
YouTube	Campus	Campus	Campus
	Dormitories	Faculty Members	Classrooms
	Faculty Members	Laboratories	Faculty Members
	Interdisciplinary Education	Research	Library
	Laboratories		
	Research		

4.2 REPUTATION OF THE INSTITUTION

After a detailed analysis of the content of websites and digital channels, I found that the features that those three universities are underlining as their explicit and implicit competitive advantages in terms of the reputation of the institution can be classified into thirteen categories as accreditations, faculty research awards, Financial Times Rankings, international collaborations, memberships, Nature Index Rankings, patents, publications, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings, technology transfer, Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings, TÜBİTAK Entrepreneurial and Innovative Universities Index, and additionally international research awards that are given by the universities.

Sabancı University explicitly underlines five of those thirteen competitive advantages.

The main location of the explicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding the reputation of the institution is the international student recruitment webpage. On the other hand, twelve of those thirteen categories are presented by Sabancı University, implicitly. The main location of the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages of the learning environment is the university's main webpage.

Koç University explicitly underlines nine of those thirteen competitive advantages. The main location of the explicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding the reputation of the institution is the international student recruitment webpage. On the other hand, eleven of those thirteen categories are presented by Koç University, implicitly. The main location of the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages of the learning environment is the university's Instagram account.

Bilkent University explicitly underlines five of those thirteen competitive advantages. The main location of the explicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding the reputation of the institution is the international student recruitment webpage. On the other hand, Bilkent University implicitly underlines nine of those thirteen competitive advantages. The main location of the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages is the university's main webpage.

In terms of explicit presentation of the competitive advantages, all three universities underline something different than each other. Sabancı University explicitly underlines the TÜBİTAK Entrepreneurial and Innovative Universities Index as a different competitive advantage than Koç University and Bilkent University. Koç University underlines three different competitive advantages than Sabancı University and Bilkent

University as accreditations, faculty research awards, and memberships. On the other hand, Bilkent University underlines Nature Index Rankings as a different competitive advantage than Sabancı University and Koç University.

In terms of implicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding the reputation of the institution, Sabancı University underlines TÜBİTAK Entrepreneurial and Innovative Universities Index as a different competitive advantage than Koç University and Bilkent University. Koç University does not underline anything different than Sabancı University regarding the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding the reputation of the institution. Besides, Koç University underlines Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science, which is underlined by Sabancı University as Sakıp Sabancı International Research Award, as a different competitive advantage than Bilkent University.

Table 2 Competitive advantages in terms of Reputation of the Institution and location of content

	Sabancı University	Koç University	Bilkent University
Explicit			
International Student Recruitment Webpage	International Collaborations	Accreditations	Nature Index Rankings
	Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	Financial Times Rankings	Publications
	Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	International Collaborations	Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings
	TÜBİTAK Entrepreneurial and Innovative Universities Index	Memberships	Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings
	Technology Transfer	Patents	
		Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	
		Technology Transfer	
		Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	
Brochure	International Collaborations	Accreditations	International Collaborations
	Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	Faculty Research Awards	Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings
	Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	Financial Times Rankings	
		International Collaborations	
		Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	
		Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	
Implicit			
Main Webpage	Faculty Research Awards	Faculty Research Awards	Accreditations
	Financial Times Rankings	International Collaborations	Faculty Research Awards
	International Collaborations	Patents	International Collaborations
	Patents	Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science	Memberships
	Publications	Technology Transfer	Nature Index Rankings
	Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings		Patents
	Sakıp Sabancı International Research Awards		Publications
	Technology Transfer		Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings
	Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings		Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings
	TÜBİTAK Entrepreneurial and Innovative Universities Index		
Instagram	Accreditations	Accreditations	Accreditations
	Faculty Research Awards	Faculty Research Awards	Faculty Research Awards
	Financial Times Rankings	Financial Times Rankings	International Collaborations
	International Collaborations	International Collaborations	Memberships
	Memberships	Memberships	Patent
	Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	Patent	Publications
	Sakıp Sabancı International Research Awards	Publications	
	Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	
		Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science	
		Technology Transfer	
		Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	
Youtube	International Collaborations	Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science	
	Sakıp Sabancı International Research Awards	Technology Transfer	
	Technology Transfer		

4.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATES

After a detailed analysis of the content of websites and digital channels, I found that the features that those three universities are underlining as their explicit and implicit competitive advantages regarding opportunities for graduates can be classified into four categories as the career center, career opportunities, employability, and internship.

Sabancı University and Koç University explicitly underlines all of those four competitive advantages. The main location of the explicit display of the competitive advantages is the international student recruitment webpage for Sabancı University and brochure for Koç University. On the other hand, Bilkent University explicitly underlines none of those four competitive advantages.

Sabancı University and Koç University also implicitly underlines all of those four competitive advantages. The main location of the explicit display of the competitive advantages is their Instagram accounts for both Koç University and Sabancı University. Bilkent University implicitly underlines three of those four competitive advantages. The main locations of the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages are the university's main webpage and Instagram account.

In terms of explicit and implicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding opportunities for graduates, there is not any difference between Sabancı University and Koç University. They explicitly and implicitly underline all of those four competitive advantages and do not present anything different than each other.

In terms of implicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding opportunities for graduates, Bilkent University underlines three of those four competitive advantages and does not present anything different than Sabancı University and Koç University.

Table 3 Competitive advantages in terms of Opportunities for Graduates and location of content

		Sabancı University	Koç University	Bilkent University
Explicit				
International	Student	Career Center	Career Center	
Recruitment Webpage				
		Career Opportunities	Career Opportunities	
		Employability	Internship	
		Internship		
Brochure		Career Opportunities	Career Center	
		Employability	Career Opportunities	
			Employability	
			Internship	
Implicit				
Main Webpage		Career Center	Career Center	Career Center
		Career Opportunities	Career Opportunities	Career Opportunities
		Internship	Internship	Internship
Instagram		Career Center	Career Center	Career Center
		Career Opportunities	Career Opportunities	Career Opportunities
		Employability	Employability	Internship
		Internship	Internship	
YouTube		Career Opportunities	Career Opportunities	Career Center
		Internship		Career Opportunities

4.4 IMAGE OF THE DESTINATION

After a detailed analysis of the content of websites and digital channels, I found that the features that those three universities are underlining as their explicit and implicit competitive advantages regarding the image of the destination can be classified into eleven categories as affordability, climate, culture, democracy, food, history, hospitality, living in İstanbul/Ankara, location, modernity, and multiculturality.

Sabancı University explicitly underlines only one of those eleven competitive advantages. The main location of the explicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding the image of the destination is the international student recruitment webpage. On the other hand, four of those eleven categories are presented by Sabancı University, implicitly. The main location of the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages of regarding the image of destination is the university's main webpage.

Koç University explicitly underlines eight of those eleven competitive advantages. The

main location of the explicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding the image of the destination is the international student recruitment webpage. On the other hand, five of those eleven categories are presented by Koç University, implicitly. The main location of the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding the image of the destination is the university's Instagram account.

Bilkent University explicitly underlines four of those eleven competitive advantages. The main location of the explicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding the image of the destination is the international student recruitment webpage. On the other hand, eight of those eleven categories are presented by Bilkent University, implicitly. The main locations of the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding the image of destination are the university's main webpage.

None of those three universities present all of those eleven competitive advantage categories explicitly or implicitly. In terms of explicit presentation of the competitive advantages, Sabancı University does not underline anything different than Koç University and Bilkent University. Koç University underlines affordability, which is not presented by Bilkent University, explicitly. On the other hand, Bilkent University underlines democracy and modernity, which are not presented by Koç University, explicitly.

In terms of implicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding the image of the destination, Sabancı University and Koç University do not underline anything different than Bilkent University. Koç University underlines climate, hospitality, location, and safety, which are not presented by Sabancı University. Bilkent University underlines history and location, which are not presented by Sabancı University and modernity, which is not presented by both Sabancı University and Koç University.

Table 4 Competitive advantages in terms of Image of the Destination and location of content

	Sabancı University	Koç University	Bilkent University
Explicit			
International Student Recruitment Webpage	Location	Affordability	Democracy
		Climate	History
		Food	Hospitality
		History	Living in Ankara
		Hospitality	Location
		Living in Istanbul	Modernity
		Location	Multiculturalism
		Multiculturalism	
Brochure		Multiculturalism	Food
			History
			Hospitality
			Location
			Living in Ankara
			Modernity
Implicit			
Main Webpage	Food	Location	Climate
	Living in Istanbul		Food
	Multiculturalism		History
			Living in Ankara
			Location
			Modernity
			Multiculturalism
Instagram	Climate	Climate	Climate
	Living in Istanbul	Food	Culture
		History	Food
		Living in Istanbul	Living in Ankara
		Location	
YouTube			

4.5 SOCIAL INTEGRATION

After a detailed analysis of the content of websites and digital channels, I found that the features that those three universities are underlining as their explicit and implicit competitive advantages regarding the social integration can be classified into nine categories as campus events, connection to the city, counseling service, disability services, extracurricular activities, health center, orientation, student clubs, and student mentors.

Sabancı University explicitly underlines two of those nine competitive advantages. The main location of the explicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding social integration is the international student recruitment webpage. On the other hand, eight of those nine categories are presented by Sabancı University, implicitly. The main location of the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages of social integration is the university's main webpage.

Koç University explicitly underlines seven of those nine competitive advantages. The main location of the explicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding social integration is the brochure. On the other hand, eight of those nine categories are presented by Koç University, implicitly. The main location of the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding social integration is the university's main webpage.

Bilkent University explicitly underlines four of those nine competitive advantages. The main location of the explicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding social integration is the international student recruitment webpage. On the other hand, eight of those nine categories are presented by Bilkent University, implicitly. The main location of the implicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding social integration is the university's main webpage.

In terms of explicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding social integration, Sabancı University does not offer anything different than Koç University and Bilkent University. Also, Bilkent University does not present anything different than Koç University. Koç University explicitly underlines campus events, counseling service, and health center different than Sabancı University and connection to the city, student clubs, and student mentors different than Sabancı University and Bilkent University.

In terms of implicit presentation of the competitive advantages regarding social integration, all three universities do not underline any different competitive advantage

regarding social integration than each other. They all underline the same competitive advantages.

Table 5 Competitive advantages in terms of Social Integration and location of content

	Sabancı University	Koç University	Bilkent University
Explicit			
International Student Recruitment	Extracurricular Activities	Campus Events	Counseling Service
Webpage	Student Clubs	Connection to the City	Extracurricular Activities
		Extracurricular Activities	Health Center
Brochure	Student Clubs	Campus Event	Campus Events
		Counseling Service	
		Extracurricular Activities	
		Health Center	
		Student Clubs	
		Student Mentors	
Implicit			
Main Webpage	Campus Events	Campus Events	Campus Events
	Counseling Service	Counseling Service	Counseling Service
	Disability Services	Disability Services	Disability Services
	Extracurricular Activities	Extracurricular Activities	Extracurricular Activities
	Health Center	Health Center	Health Center
	Orientation	Orientation	Orientation
	Student Clubs	Student Mentors	Student Clubs
	Student Mentors		
Instagram	Campus Events	Campus Events	Campus Events
	Extracurricular Activities	Extracurricular Activities	Extracurricular Activities
	Orientation	Orientation	Orientation
	Student Clubs	Student Clubs	Student Clubs
		Student Mentors	Student Mentors
Youtube	Campus Events	Campus Events	Campus Events
	Extracurricular Activities	Extracurricular Activities	Extracurricular Activities
	Orientation	Orientation	
	Student Clubs	Student Clubs	

5. EMPHASIZING THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

5.1 EXPLICIT COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

5.1.1 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT WEBPAGES

After a detailed analysis of the content of international student recruitment websites, the emphasizing level of the components is calculated by the percentage of the number of words that are used to present competitive advantages in the international student recruitment webpages of those three universities.

5.1.1.1 Emphasizing the Learning Environment Explicitly via International Student Recruitment Webpages

Sabancı University emphasizes the campus the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 33% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the learning environment are used for the campus presentation. The second most emphasized component of the learning environment is the library. 21% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the learning environment are used for the library presentation. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of the learning environment is the sports centers. 15% of the words presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the learning environment are used for the sports centers' presentation. Koç University emphasizes the research the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 38% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the learning environment are used for the presentation of research. The second most emphasized component of the learning environment is interdisciplinary education. 19% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the learning environment are used for the presentation of interdisciplinary education. Moreover, the third most emphasized component of the learning environment is the sports centers. 14% of the words presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the learning environment are used for the sports centers' presentation.

Bilkent University emphasizes the laboratories the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 35% of the words which are presented on the international student recruitment webpage to define the learning environment are used for the presentation of the laboratories. The second most emphasized components of the learning environment are the campus and library. 22% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the learning environment are used for the presentation of the campus and library. Moreover, the third most emphasized component of the learning environment is the dormitories. 9% of the words presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the learning environment are used for the dormitories' presentation.

The most emphasized components of the learning environment are different for those three universities. They emphasize different components the most as campus, research, and laboratories. The second most emphasized components are the same for Sabancı University and Bilkent University as the library. Koç University emphasizes interdisciplinary education as the second most emphasized component of the learning environment. The third most emphasized components of the learning environment are the same for Sabancı University and Bilkent University as the sports centers. Bilkent University emphasized dormitories as the third most emphasized component of the learning environment.

Table 6 Emphasizing the Learning Environment Explicitly via International Student Recruitment Webpage

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Words	Percentage	Number of the Words	Percentage	Number of the Words	Percentage			
Campus	95	33%	Campus	149	13%	Campus	179	22%
Classrooms	7	2%	Faculty Members	127	11%	Classrooms	14	2%
Dormitories	19	7%	Interdisciplinary Education	213	19%	Dormitories	73	9%
Interdisciplinary Education	15	5%	Laboratories	42	4%	Faculty Members	13	2%
Laboratories	22	8%	Research	427	38%	Laboratories	295	35%
Library	61	21%	Sports Centers	155	14%	Library	184	22%
Research	22	8%	Student-Faculty Ratio	19	2%	Research	20	2%
Sports Centers	43	15%				Sports Centers	54	6%
Total	284		Total	1132		Total	832	

5.1.1.2 Emphasizing the Reputation of the Institution Explicitly via International Student Recruitment Webpage

Sabancı University emphasizes the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings the most in terms of the reputation of the institution presentation. 43% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the reputation of the institution are used for the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings presentation. The second most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is the Times Higher Education (THE) rankings. 36% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the reputation of the institution are used for the Times Higher Education (THE) rankings. Moreover, the third most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is the TÜBİTAK Entrepreneurial Innovative Universities Index. 20% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the reputation of the institution are used for the TÜBİTAK Entrepreneurial Innovative Universities Index.

Koç University emphasizes the memberships the most in terms of the reputation of the institution presentation. 42% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the reputation of the institution are used for the presentation of memberships. The second most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is accreditations. 24% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the reputation of the institution are used for the presentation of the accreditations. Moreover, the third most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings. 14% of the words presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the reputation of the institution are used for the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings.

Bilkent University emphasizes the Times Higher Education (THE) rankings the most in terms of the reputation of the institution presentation. 45% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the reputation of the institution are used for the presentation of Times Higher Education (THE) rankings. The second most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings. 43% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the reputation of the institution are used for the presentation of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is the Nature Index rankings. 11% of the words presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the reputation of the institution are used for the Nature Index rankings.

The most emphasized components of the reputation of the institution are different for those three universities. They emphasize different components the most as Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings, memberships, and Times Higher Education (THE) rankings. The second most emphasized components are different for those three universities. They emphasize different components as the second most emphasized component as Times Higher Education (THE) rankings, accreditations, and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings. The third most emphasized components are also different for those three universities. They emphasize different components as the third most emphasized component as the TÜBİTAK Entrepreneurial Innovative Universities Index, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings, and Nature Index rankings. Despite the differences among the ranking systems, we might say Sabancı University and Bilkent University emphasize the

universities' rankings as the most emphasized components of the universities.

Table 7 Emphasizing the Reputation of the Institution Explicitly via International Student Recruitment Webpage

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Words		Percentage	Number of the Words		Percentage	Number of the Words		Percentage
International Collaborations	3	1%	Accreditations	409	24%	Nature Index Rankings	422	11%
Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	134	43%	Financial Times Rankings	146	8%	Publications	24	1%
Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	111	36%	International Collaborations	14	1%	Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	1714	43%
TÜBİTAK Entrepreneurial and Innovative Universities Index	61	20%	Memberships	725	42%	Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	1782	45%
Technology Transfer			Patents	27	2%			
			Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	248	14%			
			Technology Transfer	27	2%			
			Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	139	8%			
Total	309		Total	1735		Total	3942	

5.1.1.3 Emphasizing the Opportunities for Graduates Explicitly via International Student Recruitment Webpage

Sabancı University emphasizes the career center the most in terms of the opportunities for graduates presentation. 48% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for the career center presentation. The second most emphasized component of the opportunities for graduates is career opportunities. 37% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for career opportunities. Moreover, the third most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is the internship. 11% of the words which are presented in the

international student recruitment webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for the internship.

Koç University emphasizes the career opportunities the most in terms of the opportunities for graduates presentation. 58% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for the career opportunities presentation. The second most emphasized component of the opportunities for graduates is the career center. 34% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for the career center. Moreover, the third most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is the internship. 8% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for the internship.

Bilkent University does not present any component of the opportunities for graduates in its international student recruitment webpage.

The most emphasized components of the opportunities for graduates are different for Sabancı University and Koç University. They emphasize different components the most as career centers and career opportunities. The second most emphasized components are different for those two universities. They emphasize different components as the second most emphasized components as career opportunities and career center. The third most emphasized components are the same for those two universities. They emphasize the same components as the third most emphasized component as internships.

Table 8 Emphasizing the Opportunities for Graduates Explicitly via International Student Recruitment Webpage

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
		Percentage			Percentage			Percentage
Number of the Words			Number of the Words			Number of the Words		
Career Center	244	48%	Career Center	131	34%			
Career Opportunities	190	37%	Career Opportunities	226	58%			
Employability	15	3%	Internship	30	8%			
Internship	58	11%						
Total	507		Total	387		Total		

5.1.1.4 Emphasizing the Image of the Destination Explicitly via International Student Recruitment Webpage

Sabancı University emphasizes only one component of the image of the destination in its international student recruitment webpage as the location.

Koç University emphasizes the living in Istanbul the most in terms of the image of the destination presentation. 56% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the image of the destination are used for the living in Istanbul presentation. The second most emphasized component of the image of the destination is history. 9% of the words which are presented on the international student recruitment webpage to define the image of the destination are used for history. Moreover, the third most emphasized components of the image of the destination are affordability and food. 8% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the image of the destination are used for the affordability and food.

Bilkent University emphasizes the living in Ankara the most in terms of the image of the destination presentation. 41% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the image of the destination are used for the living in Ankara presentation. The second most emphasized component of the image of the destination is history. 17% of the words which are presented on the international student recruitment webpage to define the image of the destination are used for history. Moreover, the third most emphasized component of the image of the destination is hospitality. 13% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment

webpage to define the image of the destination are used for the hospitality.

The most emphasized components of the image of the destination are the same for Koç University and Bilkent University. They emphasize the same components the most as living in Istanbul/Ankara. The second most emphasized components are also the same for those two universities. They emphasize the same components as the second most emphasized component as history. The third most emphasized components are different for those two universities. They emphasize different components as the third most emphasized component as affordability, food, and hospitality.

Table 9 Emphasizing the Image of the Destination Explicitly via International Student Recruitment Webpage

Sabancı University		Koç University		Bilkent University				
Number of the Words	Percentage	Number of the Words	Percentage	Number of the Words	Percentage			
Location	27	100%	Affordability	70	8%	Democracy	60	6%
			Climate	19	2%	History	178	17%
			Food	70	8%	Hospitality	137	13%
			History	75	9%	Living in Ankara	441	41%
			Hospitality	43	5%	Location	88	8%
			Living in Istanbul	472	56%	Modernity	60	6%
			Location	32	4%	Multiculturalit y	109	10%
			Multiculturalit y	62	7%			
Total	27		Total	843		Total	1073	

Despite the insignificant level of emphasis, some presentations of the components of the image of the destination are quite interesting. As an example, Bilkent University presents concepts like history, culture, geographical conditions, and population in one paragraph.

Turkey is a country of diverse cultures, beliefs, ideas, nature and history. This diversity is reflected in the landscape which is the life support and habitat for 70 million people. The Turkish landscape encompasses a vast variety of geographical zones. This landscape has the combined characteristics of three continents of the world: Europe, Africa and Asia. Between 2000 B.C. and A.D.1500, Anatolia was the center of world civilization manifested in the ruins and monuments which adorn today's landscape. Turkey is also known for an abundance and diversity of handicrafts, cuisine, music, customs and traditions due to its rich flora, fauna and regional differentiation as well as its imperial legacy.

Figure 1 - (*Bilkent University, 2020*)

Another interesting presentation of the components of the image of the destination can be illustrated as Koç University's presentation of the hospitality. The concept is explained with daily life experiences.

- **It's friendly**

Turks are known for their warmth and hospitality. You'll soon be drinking çay (tea) and playing tavla (backgammon) with the locals and being invited round for breakfast by your neighbours. Most Turks enjoy meeting foreign visitors and practising their English.

Figure 2 - (*Koç University, 2020*)

The presentation of the modernity by Bilkent University is also interesting. The presentation emphasizes the existence of modernity but also underlines the historical culture and traditions also exist.

The Republic was founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923 which marked the end of the long reign of the Ottoman Empire. Since then, Turkey has developed into a modern, democratic state, but at the same time, careful measures ensured that culture and traditions continue to live and evolve. Turkey is currently a candidate for membership of the European Union.

Figure 3 - (*Bilkent University, 2020*)

5.1.1.5 Emphasizing the Social Integration Explicitly via International Student Recruitment Webpage

Sabancı University emphasizes the student clubs the most in terms of the social integration presentation. 80% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define social integration are used for the student clubs presentation. The second most emphasized component of social integration is extracurricular activities. 20% of the words which are presented on the international student recruitment webpage to define social integration are used for the extracurricular activities. Sabancı University emphasizes only two components for social integration presentation. That is why there is not the third most component of social integration.

Koç University emphasizes the extracurricular activities the most in terms of the social integration presentation. 66% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define social integration are used for the extracurricular activities presentation. The second most emphasized component of social integration is the connection to the city. 32% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define social integration are used for the connection to the city. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of social integration is campus events. 3% of the words which are presented in the international student

recruitment webpage to define social are used for the campus events.

Bilkent University emphasizes the health center the most in terms of the social integration presentation. 46% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define social integration are used for the health center presentation. The second most emphasized component of social integration is extracurricular activities. 36% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define social integration are used for the extracurricular activities. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of social integration is the counseling service. 18% of the words which are presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define social integration are used for the counseling service.

The most emphasized components of social integration are different for those three universities. They emphasize different components the most as student clubs, extracurricular activities, and health center. The second most emphasized components are the same for Sabancı University and Bilkent University. They emphasize extracurricular activities as the second most emphasized component. Koç University emphasizes the connection to the city as the second most emphasized component of social integration. The third most emphasized components are also different for Koç University and Bilkent University. They emphasize different components as the third most emphasized component as campus events and counseling service.

Table 10 Emphasizing the Social Integration Explicitly via International Student Recruitment Webpage

Sabancı University			Koç University		Bilkent University			
		Percentage			Percentage			Percentage
Number of the Words			Number of the Words			Number of the Words		
Extracurricular Activities	87	20%	Campus Events	7	3%	Counseling Service	77	18%
Student Clubs	352	80%	Connection to the City	76	32%	Extracurricular Activities	157	36%
			Extracurricular Activities	158	66%	Health Center	197	46%
Total	439		Total	241		Total	431	

5.1.2 BROCHURE

After a detailed analysis of the content of brochures, the emphasizing level of the components is calculated by the percentage of the number of words that are used to present competitive advantages in the brochures of those three universities.

5.1.2.1 Emphasizing the Learning Environment Explicitly via Brochures

Sabancı University emphasizes interdisciplinary education the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 41% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the learning environment are used for the interdisciplinary education presentation. The second most emphasized components of the learning environment are the laboratories and sports centers. 17% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the learning environment are used for the laboratories and sports centers presentation. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of the learning environment is the dormitories. 12% of the words presented in the brochure to define the learning environment are used for the dormitories' presentation.

Koç University emphasizes research the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 52% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the learning environment are used for the research presentation. The second most emphasized component of the learning environment is the dormitories. 12% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the learning environment are used for the dormitories' presentation. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of the learning environment is the library. 11% of the words presented in the brochure to define the learning environment are used for the library's presentation.

Bilkent University emphasizes sports centers the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 31% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the learning environment are used for the sports centers. The second most emphasized component of the learning environment is the research. 17% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the learning environment are used for the research presentation. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of the learning environment is the campus. 15% of the words presented in the brochure to define the learning environment are used for the campus presentation.

The most emphasized components of the learning environment are different for those three universities. They emphasize different components the most as interdisciplinary education, research, and sports centers. The second most emphasized components are also different for those three universities. They emphasize laboratories and sports centers, dormitories, and research as the second most emphasized components. The third most emphasized components are also different for those three universities. They emphasize dormitories, library, and campus as the third most emphasized components.

Table 11 Emphasizing the Learning Environment Explicitly via Brochures

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Words		Percentage	Number of the Words		Percentage	Number of the Words		Percentage
Campus	2	5%	Campus	2	0,2%	Campus	49	15%
Dormitories	5	12%	Dormitories	136	12%	Dormitories	45	14%
Interdisciplinary Education	17	41%	Faculty Members	75	7%	Faculty Members	6	2%
Laboratories	7	17%	Interdisciplinary Education	107	9%	Laboratories	22	7%
Library	3	7%	Laboratories	9	1%	Library	41	13%
Sports Centers	7	17%	Library	132	11%	Research	55	17%
			Research	601	52%	Sports Centers	100	31%
			Sports Centers	57	5%			
			Student-Faculty Ratio	29	3%			
Total	41		Total	1148		Total	318	

5.1.2.2 Emphasizing the Reputation of the Institution Explicitly via Brochures

Sabancı University emphasizes Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings the most in terms of the reputation of the institution presentation. 44% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the reputation of the institution are used for the Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings presentation. The second most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings. 38% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the reputation of the institution are used for the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings presentation. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is international collaborations. 18% of the words presented in the brochure to define the

reputation of the institution are used for international collaborations.

Koç University emphasizes international collaborations the most in terms of the reputation of the institution presentation. 64% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the reputation of the institution are used for the international collaborations' presentation. The second most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is the accreditations. 15% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the reputation of the institution are used for the accreditations' presentation. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is faculty research awards. 9% of the words presented in the brochure to define the reputation of the institution are used for the faculty research awards.

Bilkent University emphasizes international collaborations the most in terms of the reputation of the institution presentation. 77% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the reputation of the institution are used for the international collaborations' presentation. The second most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is the Times Higher Education (THE). 23% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the reputation of the institution are used for the Times Higher Education (THE) rankings presentation. Bilkent University emphasizes only two components of reputation institution. That is why there is not the third most emphasized component.

The most emphasized components of the learning environment are the same for Koç University and Bilkent University. They emphasize international collaborations as the most emphasized component. The second most emphasized components are different for those three universities. They emphasize Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings, accreditations, and Times Higher Education (THE) rankings as the second most emphasized components. The third most emphasized components are also different for Sabancı University and Koç University. They emphasize international collaborations and faculty research awards as the third most emphasized components.

Table 12 Emphasizing the Reputation of the Institution Explicitly via Brochures

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Words		Percentage	Number of the Words		Percentage	Number of the Words		Percentage
International Collaborations	10	18%	Accreditations	79	15%	International Collaborations	17	77%
Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	21	38%	Faculty Research Awards	47	9%	Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	5	23%
Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	24	44%	Financial Times Rankings	17	3%			
			International Collaborations	343	64%			
			Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	17	3%			
			Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	37	7%			
Total	55		Total	540		Total	22	

5.1.2.3 Emphasizing Opportunities for Graduates Explicitly via Brochures

Sabancı University emphasizes career opportunities the most in terms of opportunities for graduates presentation. 65% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the opportunities for graduates are used for the career opportunities presentation. The second most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is employability. 35% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define opportunities for graduates are used for the employability presentation. Sabancı University emphasizes only two components of opportunities for graduates in its brochure. That is why there is not the third most emphasized component.

Koç University emphasizes the career center the most in terms of opportunities for graduates presentation. 57% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the opportunities for graduates are used for the career center presentation. The second most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is career opportunities. 27% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define opportunities for graduates are used for the career opportunities presentation. The third most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is employability. 11% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define opportunities for graduates are used for the employability presentation.

Bilkent University does not present any component of opportunities for graduates in its brochure.

The most emphasized components of opportunities for graduates are different for Sabancı University and Koç University. They emphasize career opportunities and career center as the most emphasized component. The second most emphasized components are also different for those two universities. They emphasize employability and career opportunities as the second most emphasized components.

Table 13 Emphasizing the Opportunities for Graduates Explicitly via Brochures

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Words		Percentage	Number of the Words		Percentage	Number of the Words		Percentage
Career Opportunities	11	65%	Career Center	62	57%			
Employability	6	35%	Career Opportunities	29	27%			
			Employability	12	11%			
			Internship	6	6%			
Total	17		Total	109		Total		

5.1.2.4 Emphasizing Image of the Destination Explicitly via Brochures

Sabancı does not present any component of the image of the destination in its brochure.

Koç University emphasizes the only multiculturalism in terms of the image of destination presentation.

Bilkent University emphasizes living in Ankara the most in terms of the image of destination presentation. 73% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the image of destination are used for the living in Ankara presentation. The second most emphasized components of the image of the destination are food, history, and hospitality. 7% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the image of destination are used for the food, history, and hospitality presentation. The third most emphasized component of the image of the destination is modernity. 3% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define the image of the destination are used for the modernity presentation.

The most emphasized components of opportunities for graduates are different for Koç University and Sabancı University. They emphasize multiculturalism and living in Ankara as the most emphasized component.

Table 14 Emphasizing the Image of the Destination Explicitly via Brochures

Sabancı University		Koç University		Bilkent University			
Number of the Words	Percentage	Number of the Words	Percentage	Number of the Words	Percentage		
		Multiculturalism	33	100%	Food	14	7%
					History	14	7%
					Hospitality	14	7%
					Location	5	3%
					Living in Ankara	145	73%
					Modernity	7	4%
Total		Total	33		Total	199	

5.1.2.5 Emphasizing Social Integration Explicitly via Brochures

Sabancı University presents only student clubs component in terms of social integration presentation.

Koç University emphasizes extracurricular activities the most in terms of social integration presentation. 57% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define social integration are used for extracurricular activities presentation. The second most emphasized component of social integration is student clubs. 11% of the words which are presented in the brochure to define social integration are used for student clubs' presentation. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of social integration is campus events. 9% of the words presented in the brochure to define social integration are used for the campus events.

Bilkent University presents only campus events component in terms of social integration presentation.

The most emphasized components of the learning environment are different for those three universities. They emphasize student clubs, extracurricular activities, and campus events as the most emphasized component.

Table 15 Emphasizing the Social Integration Explicitly via Brochures

Sabancı University		Koç University		Bilkent University				
Number of the Words	Percentage	Number of the Words	Percentage	Number of the Words	Percentage			
Student Clubs	7	100%	Campus Event	59	9%	Campus Events	157	100%
			Counseling Service	51	8%			
			Extracurricular Activities	367	57%			
			Health Center	50	8%			
			Student Clubs	70	11%			
			Student Mentors	44	7%			
Total	7		Total	641		Total	157	

5.2 IMPLICIT COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

5.2.1 UNIVERSITY MAIN WEBPAGES

After a detailed analysis of the content of university main websites, the emphasizing level of the components is calculated by the percentage of the number of words that are used to present competitive advantages in the university webpages of those three universities.

5.2.1.1 Emphasizing the Learning Environment Implicitly via University Main Webpage

Sabancı University emphasizes research the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 92% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define the learning environment are used for research presentation. The second most emphasized component of the learning environment is faculty members. 2% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define the learning environment are used for faculty member presentation. Furthermore, the third most emphasized components of the learning environment are the campus, dormitories, and interdisciplinary education. 1% of the words presented in the university main webpage to

define the learning environment are used for the campus, dormitories, interdisciplinary education, and library presentation.

Koç University emphasizes research the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 37% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define the learning environment are used for research presentation. The second most emphasized component of the learning environment is the library. 23% of the words which are presented on the university main webpage to define the learning environment are used for library presentation. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of the learning environment is laboratories. 15% of the words presented in the university main webpage to define the learning environment are used for laboratories' presentation.

Bilkent University emphasizes the library the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 34% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define the learning environment are used for library presentation. The second most emphasized component of the learning environment is sports centers. 33% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define the learning environment are used for sports center presentation. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of the learning environment is research. 15% of the words presented in the university main webpage to define the learning environment are used for research presentation.

The most emphasized components of the learning environment are the same for Sabancı University and Koç University. They emphasize research as the most emphasized component of the learning environment. The second most emphasized components of the learning environment are different for those three universities. They emphasize faculty members, library, and sports center as the second most emphasized component of the learning environment. The third most emphasized components of the learning environment are different for those three universities. They emphasize faculty members, library, and sports center as the second most emphasized component of learning environment campus, dormitories, interdisciplinary education and library; laboratories; and research.

are used for international collaborations.

Bilkent University emphasizes publications the most in terms of the reputation of the institution presentation. 97% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define the reputation of the institution are used for the presentation of publications. The second most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is faculty research awards. 2% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define the reputation of the institution are used for the presentation of faculty research awards. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is Times Higher Education (THE) rankings. 0,5% of the words presented in the international student recruitment webpage to define the reputation of the institution are used for Times Higher Education (THE) rankings.

The most emphasized components of the reputation of the institution are the same for Sabancı University and Bilkent University. They emphasize publications as the most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution. The second most emphasized components are also the same for Sabancı University and Bilkent University. They emphasize faculty research awards as the second most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution. The third most emphasized components are different for those three universities. They emphasize different components as the third most emphasized component as Sakıp Sabancı International Research Awards, international collaborations, and Times Higher Education (THE) rankings.

Table 17 Emphasizing the Reputation of the Institution Implicitly via University Main Webpage

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Words	Percentage		Number of the Words	Percentage		Number of the Words	Percentage	
Faculty Research Awards	6771	4%	Faculty Research Awards	2615	33%	Accreditatfons	191	0,04%
Financial Times Rankings	221	0,1%	International Collaborations	1435	18%	Faculty Research Awards	6906	2%
International Collaborations	613	0,3%	Patents	437	6%	International Collaborations	725	0,2%
Patents	534	0,3%	Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science	2255	29%	Memberships	126	0,03%
Publications	175965	94%	Technology Transfer	1145	15%	Nature Index Rankings	422	0,1%
Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	342	0,2%				Patents	274	0,06%
Sakıp Sabancı International Research Awards	2205	1%				Publications	414539	97%
Technology Transfer	654	0,3%				Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	1710	0,4%
Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	699	0,4%				Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	1951	0,5%
TÜBİTAK Entrepreneurial and Innovative Universities Index	61	0,03%						
Total	188065		Total	7887		Total	426844	

5.2.1.3 Emphasizing the Opportunities for Graduates Implicitly via University Main Webpage

Sabancı University emphasizes the career center the most in terms of the opportunities for graduates presentation. 60% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for the career center presentation. The second most emphasized component of the opportunities for graduates is career opportunities. 25% of the words which are presented the university main webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for career opportunities. Moreover, the third most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is the internship. 15% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for the internship.

Koç University emphasizes the career center the most in terms of the opportunities for graduates presentation. 47% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for the career center presentation. The second most emphasized component of the opportunities for graduates is career opportunities. 43% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for career opportunities. Moreover, the third most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is the internship. 10% of the words which are presented the university main webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for the internship.

Bilkent University emphasizes the career center the most in terms of the opportunities for graduates presentation. 50% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for the career center presentation. The second most emphasized component of the opportunities for graduates is career opportunities. 41% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for career opportunities. Moreover, the third most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is the internship. 9% of the words which are presented the university main webpage to define opportunities for graduates are used for the internship.

The most, the second most, and the third most emphasized components of the opportunities for graduates are the same for those three universities as the career center, career opportunities, and internship.

Table 18 Emphasizing the Opportunities for Graduates Implicitly via University Main Webpage

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Words	Percentage		Number of the Words	Percentage		Number of the Words	Percentage	
Career Center	244	60%	Career Center	760	47%	Career Center	898	50%
Career Opportunities	104	25%	Career Opportunities	692	43%	Career Opportunities	746	41%
Internship	61	15%	Internship	162	10%	Internship	166	9%
Total	409		Total	1614		Total	1810	

5.2.1.4 Emphasizing the Image of the Destination Implicitly via University Main Webpage

Sabancı University emphasizes the living in Istanbul the most in terms of the image of the destination presentation. 74% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define image of the destination are used for the living in Istanbul presentation. The second most emphasized component of the image of the destination is the multiculturalism. 23% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define image of the destination are used for the multiculturalism. Moreover, the third most emphasized component of image of the destination is food. 3% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define image of the destination are used for food.

Koç University emphasizes only one component of the image of the destination in the university main webpage as the location.

Bilkent University emphasizes the living in Ankara the most in terms of the image of the destination presentation. 47% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define image of the destination are used for the living in Ankara presentation. The second most emphasized component of the image of the destination is the history. 28% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define image of the destination are used for the history. Moreover, the third most emphasized components of image of the destination are location and modernity. 7% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define image of the destination are used for location and modernity.

The most emphasized components of the image of the destination are the same for Sabancı University and Bilkent University. They emphasize the same components the most as living in Istanbul/Ankara. The second most emphasized components are different for those two universities. They emphasize multiculturalism and history as the second most emphasized components of image of the destination. The third most emphasized components are also different for those two universities. They emphasize different components as the third most emphasized components as food, and location and modernity.

Table 19 Emphasizing the Image of the Destination Implicitly via University Main Webpage

Sabancı University		Koç University		Bilkent University				
Number of the Words	Percentage	Number of the Words	Percentage	Number of the Words	Percentage			
Food	7	3%	Location	38	100%	Climate	40	5%
Living in Istanbul	176	74%				Food	31	4%
Multiculturalism	55	23%				History	231	28%
						Living in Ankara	391	47%
						Location	55	7%
						Modernity	60	7%
						Multiculturalism	30	4%
Total	238		Total	38		Total	838	

5.2.1.5 Emphasizing the Social Integration Implicitly via University Main Webpage

Sabancı University emphasizes the extracurricular activities the most in terms of the social integration presentation. 92% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define social integration are used for the extracurricular activities presentation. The second most emphasized components of social integration are campus events and student clubs. 2% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define social integration are used for the campus events and student clubs. The third most emphasized components of social integration are counseling service, disability services, and health center. 1% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define social integration are used for counseling service, disability services, and health center.

Koç University emphasizes the extracurricular activities the most in terms of the social integration presentation. 75% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define social integration are used for the extracurricular activities' presentation. The second most emphasized component of social integration is counseling service. 10% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define social integration are used for counseling service. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of social integration is orientation. 9% of the words which are presented in

the university main webpage to define the image of the destination are used for the orientation.

Bilkent University emphasizes the extracurricular activities the most in terms of the social integration presentation. 48% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define social integration are used for the extracurricular activities' presentation. The second most emphasized component of social integration is student clubs. 25% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define social integration are used for student clubs. Furthermore, the third most emphasized component of social integration is campus events. 20% of the words which are presented in the university main webpage to define the image of the destination are used for campus events.

The most emphasized components of social integration are the same for those three universities. They emphasize extracurricular activities as the most emphasized component of social integration. The second most emphasized components are the same for Sabancı University and Bilkent University. They emphasize student clubs as the second most emphasized component. Koç University emphasizes counseling service as the second most emphasized component of social integration. The third most emphasized components are different for those three universities. They emphasize different components as the third most emphasized component as counseling service, disability services, and health center; orientation; and campus events.

Table 20 Emphasizing the Social Integration Implicitly via University Main Webpage

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Words	Percentage		Number of the Words	Percentage		Number of the Words	Percentage	
Campus Events	357	2%	Campus Events	158	2%	Campus Events	2769	20%
Counseling Service	166	1%	Counseling Service	851	10%	Counseling Service	166	1%
Disability Services	198	1%	Disability Services	97	1%	Disability Services	390	3%
Extracurricular Activities	16074	92%	Extracurricular Activities	6692	75%	Extracurricular Activities	6526	48%
Health Center	234	1%	Health Center	94	1%	Health Center	187	1%
Orientation	99	0,6%	Orientation	820	9%	Orientation	185	1%
Student Clubs	344	2%	Student Mentors	228	3%	Student Clubs	3447	25%
Student Mentors	52	0,3%						
Total	17524		Total	8940		Total	13670	

5.2.2 INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS

After a detailed analysis of the content of the Instagram accounts, the emphasizing level of the components is calculated by the percentage of the number of posts that are related to the presentation of competitive advantages in the Instagram accounts of those three universities. Sabancı University and Koç University presents specific Instagram accounts for international students. That's why those specific Instagram accounts for international students are considered for the analysis. On the other hand, Bilkent University doesn't have a specific Instagram account for international students; however, it leads international students to the main Instagram account of the university. That's why Bilkent University's main Instagram account is considered for the analysis. Also, for all three universities' Instagram accounts, the posts between 01 April 2015 and 01 April 2020 are considered for the analysis.

5.2.2.1 Emphasizing the Learning Environment Implicitly via Instagram Accounts

Sabancı University emphasizes the campus the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 61% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present learning environment are related to the campus. The second most

emphasized component of the learning environment is the library. 13% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present learning environment are related to the library. The third most emphasized component of the learning environment is research. 9% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present learning environment are related to research.

Koç University emphasizes the campus the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 27% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present learning environment are related to the campus. The second most emphasized component of the learning environment is research. 23% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present learning environment are related to research. The third most emphasized component of the learning environment is laboratories. 20% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present learning environment are related to laboratories.

Bilkent University emphasizes the campus the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 77% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present learning environment are related to the campus. The second most emphasized component of the learning environment is faculty members. 9% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present learning environment are related to faculty members. The third most emphasized components of the learning environment are library and research. 4% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present learning environment are related to library and research.

The most emphasized components of the learning environment are the same for those three universities as the campus. The second most emphasized components are different for those three universities. They emphasize library, research, and faculty members as the second most emphasized components. The third most emphasized components are also different for those three universities. They emphasize research, laboratories, and library and research as the third most emphasized components.

Table 21 Emphasizing the Learning Environment Implicitly via Instagram Accounts

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Posts	Percentage		Number of the Posts	Percentage		Number of the Posts	Percentage	
Campus	102	61%	Campus	54	27%	Campus	212	77%
Classrooms	3	2%	Classrooms	6	3%	Classrooms	4	1%
Dormitories	3	2%	Dormitories	3	2%	Dormitories	2	1%
Faculty Members	11	7%	Faculty Members	37	19%	Faculty Members	26	9%
Interdisciplinary Education	1	1%	Interdisciplinary Education	1	1%	Laboratories	6	2%
Laboratories	7	4%	Laboratories	40	20%	Library	11	4%
Library	22	13%	Library	8	4%	Research	11	4%
Research	15	9%	Research	46	23%	Sports Centers	2	1%
Sports Centers	2	1%	Sports Centers	4	2%			
Student-Faculty Ratio	1	1%						
Total	167		Total	199		Total	274	

5.2.2.2 Emphasizing the Reputation of the Institution Implicitly via Instagram Accounts

Sabancı University emphasizes Times Higher Education (THE) rankings the most in terms of the reputation of the institution presentation. 41% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the reputation of the institution are related to the Times Higher Education (THE) rankings. The second most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is international collaborations. 20% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the reputation of the institution are related to international collaborations. The third most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is Financial Times rankings. 13% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the reputation of the institution are related to Financial Times rankings.

Koç University emphasizes the memberships the most in terms of the reputation of the institution presentation. 29% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the reputation of the institution are related to the memberships. The second most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is faculty research awards. 22% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the

university to present the reputation of the institution are related to faculty research awards. The third most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is international collaborations. 21% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the reputation of the institution are related to international collaborations.

Bilkent University emphasizes the faculty research awards the most in terms of the reputation of the institution presentation. 67% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the reputation of the institution are related to the faculty research awards. The second most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is international collaborations. 15% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the reputation of the institution are related to international collaborations. The third most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is publications. 9% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the reputation of the institution are related to publications.

The most emphasized components of the learning environment are different for those three universities. They emphasize Times Higher Education (THE) rankings, memberships, and faculty research awards as the most emphasized components. The second most emphasized components are the same for Sabancı and Bilkent Universities. They emphasize international collaborations as the second most emphasized components. The third most emphasized components are different for those three universities. They emphasize Financial Times rankings, international collaborations, and publications as the third most emphasized components.

Table 22 Emphasizing the Reputation of the Institution Implicitly via Instagram Accounts

Sabancı University				Koç University				Bilkent University			
Number of the Posts		Percentage		Number of the Posts		Percentage		Number of the Posts		Percentage	
Accreditations		1	2%	Accreditations		4	3%	Accreditations		1	2%
Faculty Research Awards	4	9%	Faculty Research Awards		29	22%	Faculty Research Awards		31	67%	
Financial Times Rankings	6	13%	Financial Times Rankings		3	2%	International Collaborations		7	15%	
International Collaborations		9	20%	International Collaborations		27	21%	Memberships		1	2%
Memberships		1	2%	Memberships		38	29%	Patent		2	4%
Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings		4	9%	Patent		2	2%	Publications		4	9%
Sakıp Sabancı International Research Awards	2	4%	Publications		13	10%					
Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	19	41%	Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings		2	2%					
				Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science		1	1%				
				Technology Transfer		5	4%				
				Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings		6	5%				
Total	46			Total	130			Total	46		

5.2.2.3 Emphasizing the Opportunities for Graduates Implicitly via Instagram Accounts

Sabancı University emphasizes career opportunities the most in terms of the opportunities for graduates presentation. 50% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present opportunities for graduates are related to career opportunities. The second most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is employability. 21% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present opportunities for graduates are related to employability. The third most emphasized components of the opportunities for graduates are career center and internship. 14% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present opportunities for graduates are related to the career center and internships.

Koç University emphasizes career opportunities the most in terms of the opportunities for graduates presentation. 85% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present opportunities for graduates are related to career opportunities. The second most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is the career center. 11% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present opportunities for graduates are related to the career center. The third most emphasized component of the opportunities for graduates is the internship. 4% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present opportunities for graduates are related to the internship.

Bilkent University emphasizes career opportunities the most in terms of the opportunities for graduates presentation. 90% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present opportunities for graduates are related to career opportunities. The second most emphasized components of opportunities for graduates are career center and internship. 5% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present opportunities for graduates are related to career center and internship.

The most emphasized components of the learning environment are the same for those three universities. They emphasize career opportunities as the most emphasized components. The second most emphasized components are the same for Koç University and Bilkent University. They emphasize the career center as the second most emphasized component. The third most emphasized components are different for Sabancı University and Koç University. They emphasize internship as the third most emphasized components.

Table 23 Emphasizing the Opportunities for Graduates Implicitly via Instagram Accounts

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Posts	Percentage		Number of the Posts	Percentage		Number of the Posts	Percentage	
Career Center	2	14%	Career Center	3	11%	Career Center	1	5%
Career Opportunities	7	50%	Career Opportunities	23	85%	Career Opportunities	19	90%
Employability	3	21%	Internship	1	4%	Internship	1	5%
Internship	2	14%						
Total	14		Total	27		Total	21	

5.2.2.4 Emphasizing the Image of the Destination Implicitly via Instagram Accounts

Sabancı University emphasizes climate the most in terms of the image of the destination presentation. 77% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the image of the destination are related to climate. The second most emphasized component of the image of the destination is living in Istanbul. 23% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the image of the destination are related to living in Istanbul. Sabancı University presents only two components of the image of the destination. That's why there isn't a third most component of the image of the destination for Sabancı University.

Koç University emphasizes living in Istanbul the most in terms of the image of the destination presentation. 54% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the image of the destination are related to living in Istanbul. The second most emphasized component of the image of the destination is climate. 28% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the image of the destination are related to climate. The third most emphasized component of the image of the destination is food. 10% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the image of the destination are related to food.

Bilkent University emphasizes climate the most in terms of the image of the destination presentation. 64% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the image of the destination are related to climate. The second most emphasized component of the image of the destination is culture. 18% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the image of the

destination are related to culture. The third most emphasized components of the image of the destination are food and living in Ankara. 9% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present the image of the destination are related to food and living in Ankara.

The most emphasized components of the image of the destination are the same for Sabancı University and Bilkent University. They emphasize climate as the most emphasized components. The second most emphasized components are different for those universities. They emphasize living in Istanbul, climate, and culture as the second most emphasized component. The third most emphasized components are the same for Koç University and Bilkent University. They emphasize food as the third most emphasized components.

Table 24 Emphasizing the Image of the Destination Implicitly via Instagram Accounts

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Posts	Percentage		Number of the Posts	Percentage		Number of the Posts	Percentage	
Climate	10	77%	Climate	11	28%	Climate	7	64%
Living in Istanbul	3	23%	Food	4	10%	Culture	2	18%
			History	2	5%	Food	1	9%
			Living in Istanbul	21	54%	Living in Ankara	1	9%
			Location	1	3%			
Total	13		Total	39		Total	11	

Components of the image of the destinations might be difficult to identify especially in the channels like Instagram accounts. One of the interesting presentation of the climate as a part of the image of the destination, Bilkent University posted a nice image of the flowers from the campus with #BilkentteYaz which means summer in Bilkent.



Figure 4 - (Bilkent University, 2018)

Another interesting presentation of image of the destination can be illustrated as follows. Koç Universtiy posted an image of one of the most important ancient cities of Turkey Cappadocia with several hashtags as #history, #arthistory, #archeology, #anatolia etc.



Figure 5 - (Koç University, 2018)

5.2.2.5 Emphasizing the Social Integration via Instagram Accounts

Sabancı University emphasizes campus events the most in terms of the social integration presentation. 63% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the

university to present social integration are related to campus events. The second most emphasized component of social integration is extracurricular activities. 19% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present social integration are related to extracurricular activities. The third most emphasized component of social integration is student clubs. 12% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present social integration are related to student clubs.

Koç University emphasizes extracurricular activities the most in terms of the social integration presentation. 38% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present social integration are related to extracurricular activities. The second most emphasized component of social integration is campus events. 33% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present social integration are related to campus events. The third most emphasized component of social integration is student clubs. 24% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present social integration are related to student clubs.

Bilkent University emphasizes campus events the most in terms of the social integration presentation. 63% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present social integration are related to campus events. The second most emphasized component of social integration is student clubs. 15% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present social integration are related to student clubs. The third most emphasized component of social integration is extracurricular activities. 13% of the posts which are published in the Instagram account of the university to present social integration are related to extracurricular activities.

The most emphasized components of social integration are the same for Sabancı University and Bilkent University. They emphasize campus events as the most emphasized components. The second most emphasized components are different for those universities. They emphasize extracurricular activities, campus events, and student clubs as the second most emphasized component. The third most emphasized components are the same for Bilkent University and Koç University. They emphasize student clubs as the third most emphasized components.

Table 25 Emphasizing the Social Integration Implicitly via Instagram Accounts

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Posts	Percentage		Number of the Posts	Percentage		Number of the Posts	Percentage	
Campus Events	117	63%	Campus Events	58	33%	Campus Events	95	63%
Extracurricular Activities	36	19%	Extracurricular Activities	67	38%	Extracurricular Activities	20	13%
Orientation	10	5%	Orientation	7	4%	Orientation	5	3%
Student Clubs	23	12%	Student Clubs	42	24%	Student Clubs	22	15%
			Student Mentors	1	1%	Student Mentors	9	6%
Total	186		Total	175		Total	151	

5.2.3 YouTube CHANNELS

After a detailed analysis of the content of the YouTube channels, the emphasizing level of the components is calculated by the percentage of the number of minutes that are related to the presentation of competitive advantages in the YouTube channels of those three universities. For all three universities' YouTube channels, the videos between 01 April 2015 and 01 April 2020 are considered for the analysis.

5.2.3.1 Emphasizing the Learning Environment Implicitly via YouTube Channels

Sabancı University emphasizes the faculty members the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 95% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present learning environment are related to the faculty members. The second most emphasized component of the learning environment is research. 3% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present learning environment are related to the research. The third most emphasized component of the learning environment is the campus. 2% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present learning environment are related to campus.

Koç University emphasizes the faculty members the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. 69% of the videos which are published in the YouTube channel

of the university to present learning environment are related to the faculty members. The second most emphasized component of the learning environment is research. 28% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present learning environment are related to the research. The third most emphasized components of the learning environment are campus and laboratories. 1% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present learning environment are related to campus and laboratories.

Bilkent University emphasizes the faculty members the most in terms of the learning environment presentation. Approximately 100% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present learning environment are related to the faculty members. The other components are presented with very few moments, and the percentage of those components cannot provide significant information to rank the emphasizing level.

The most emphasized components of the learning environment are the same for all of those three universities. They emphasize faculty members as the most emphasized components. The second and third most emphasized components are the same for Sabancı University and Koç University. They emphasize research as the second and campus as the third most emphasized component of the learning environment.

Table 26 Emphasizing the Learning Environment Implicitly via YouTube Channels

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Minutes	Percentage		Number of the Minutes	Percentage		Number of the Minutes	Percentage	
Campus	00:37:53	2%	Campus	0:27:15	1%	Campus	0:06:38	0,02%
Domitories	00:01:36	0,07%	Faculty Members	24:14:44	69%	Classrooms	0:01:01	0,004%
Faculty Members	13:15:22	95%	Laboratories	0:28:24	1%	Faculty Members	448:00:43	100%
Interdisciplinary Education	00:15:54	0,7%	Research	9:48:47	28%	Library	0:01:10	0,004%
Laboratories	00:10:40	0,5%						
Research	01:02:08	3%						
Total	15:23:33		Total	34:59:10		Total	448:09:32	

5.2.3.2 Emphasizing the Reputation of the Institution Implicitly via YouTube Channels

Sabancı University emphasizes the Sakıp Sabancı International Research Awards the most in terms of the reputation of the institution presentation. 98% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present the reputation of the institution are related to the Sakıp Sabancı International Research Awards. The second most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is technology transfer. 2% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present the reputation of the institution are related to the technology transfer. The third most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is international collaborations. 0,7% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present the reputation of the institution are related to international collaborations.

Koç University emphasizes the Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science the most in terms of the reputation of the institution presentation. 96% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present the reputation of the institution are related to the Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science. The second most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution is technology transfer. 4% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present the reputation of the institution are related to the technology transfer. Koç University presents only two components of the reputation of the institution on its YouTube channel. That's why there isn't a third most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution.

Bilkent University does not emphasize any components of the reputation of the institution in its YouTube channel. That's why there isn't a most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution.

The most and the second most emphasized components of the reputation of the institution are the same for Sabancı University and Koç University. They emphasize the Sakıp Sabancı International Research Awards/Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science as the most and technology transfer as the second most emphasized components.

Table 27 Emphasizing the Reputation of the Institution Implicitly via YouTube Channels

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Minutes		Percentage	Number of the Minutes		Percentage	Number of the Minutes		Percentage
International Collaborations	00:02:01	0,7%	Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science	2:14:39	96%			
Sakıp Sabancı International Research Awards	04:42:32	98%	Technology Transfer	0:05:53	4%			
Technology Transfer	00:04:24	2%						
Total	04:48:57		Total	2:20:32		Total	0:00:00	

5.2.3.3 Emphasizing the Opportunities for Graduates Implicitly via YouTube Channels

Sabancı University emphasizes the career opportunities the most in terms of the opportunities for graduates presentation. 93% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present opportunities for graduates are related to career opportunities. The second most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is the internship. 7% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present opportunities for graduates are related to the internship. Sabancı University presents only two components of opportunities for graduates in its YouTube channel. That's why there isn't a third most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution.

Koç University emphasizes career opportunities as the only component for opportunities for graduates presentation. That's why there isn't a second and third most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates.

Bilkent University emphasizes the career opportunities the most in terms of the opportunities for graduates presentation. 98% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present opportunities for graduates are related to career opportunities. The second most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is the career center. 2% of the videos which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present opportunities for graduates are related to the career center. Bilkent University presents only two components of opportunities for graduates

in its YouTube channel. That's why there isn't a third most emphasized component of the reputation of the institution.

The most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is the same for all of those three universities. They emphasize career opportunities as the most emphasized component. The second most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is different for Sabancı University and Bilkent University. They emphasize internship and career center as the second most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates.

Table 28 Emphasizing the Opportunities for Graduates Implicitly via YouTube Channels

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Minutes		Percentage	Number of the Minutes		Percentage	Number of the Minutes		Percentage
Career Opportunities	00:31:03	93%	Career Opportunities	4:37:25	100%	Career Center	0:00:43	2%
Internship	00:02:15	7%				Career Opportunities	0:41:05	98%
Total	00:33:18		Total	4:37:25		Total	0:41:48	

5.2.3.4 Emphasizing the Image of the Destination Implicitly via YouTube Channels

None of those three universities emphasize any components of the image of the destination in their YouTube channel. That's why there isn't a most emphasized component of the image of the destination.

5.2.3.5 Emphasizing the Social Integration Implicitly via YouTube Channels

Sabancı University emphasizes extracurricular activities the most in terms of the social integration presentation. 75% of the videos, which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present social integration, are related to the extracurricular activities. The second most emphasized component of social integration is campus events. 24% of the videos, which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present social integration, are related to the campus events. The third most emphasized component of social integration is student clubs. 1% of the videos, which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present social integration, are related to the student clubs.

Koç University emphasizes extracurricular activities the most in terms of the social

integration presentation. 82% of the videos which are published in the YouTube channel of the university to present social integration are related to the extracurricular activities. The second most emphasized component of social integration is campus events. 24% of the videos, which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present social integration, are related to the campus events. The third most emphasized component of social integration is orientation. 1% of the videos which are published in the YouTube channel of the university to present social integration are related to the orientation.

Bilkent University emphasizes campus events the most in terms of the social integration presentation. 79% of the videos, which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present social integration, are related to the campus events. The second most emphasized component of social integration is extracurricular activities. 21% of the videos, which are published on the YouTube channel of the university to present social integration, are related to the extracurricular activities. Bilkent University presents only two components of social integration in its YouTube channel. That's why there isn't a third most emphasized component of social integration.

The most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is the same for Sabancı University and Koç University. They emphasize extracurricular activities as the most emphasized component. The second most emphasized component of opportunities for graduates is also the same for Sabancı University and Koç University. They emphasize campus events as the second most emphasized component of social integration.

Table 29 Emphasizing the Social Integration Implicitly via YouTube Channels

Sabancı University			Koç University			Bilkent University		
Number of the Minutes	Percentage		Number of the Minutes	Percentage		Number of the Minutes	Percentage	
Campus Events	21:04:25	24%	Campus Events	4:21:52	16%	Campus Events	6:33:08	79%
Extracurricular Activities	67:20:54	75%	Extracurricular Activities	21:54:04	82%	Extracurricular Activities	1:43:10	21%
Orientation	00:03:19	0,06%	Orientation	0:20:32	1%			
Student Clubs	00:56:53	1%	Student Clubs	0:14:21	0,9%			
Total	89:25:31		Total	26:50:49		Total	8:16:18	

CONCLUSION

The research shows that all of the five fundamental components of positioning strategies as the learning environment, the reputation of the institution, opportunities for graduates, the image of the destination and social integration are used by Sabancı University, Koç University and Bilkent University as their positioning strategies in their marketing content. Besides, the research also shows that there is no other component that is used by those universities, which is not suggested by the literature. On the other hand, the competitive advantages that are presented by those universities under the five main components are slightly different from each other. However, in order to understand do those three higher education institutions mainly underline the same or similar characteristics as their competitive advantages, we need to consider the level of emphasis of those characteristics on the universities' marketing content for each component.

Table 30 The Most Emphasized Competitive Advantages

Sabancı University					
	Learning Environment	Reputation of the Institution	Opportunities for Graduates	Image of the Destination	Social Integration
International Student Recruitment Webpage	Campus	Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings	Career Center	Location	Student Clubs
Brochure	Interdisciplinary Education	Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	Career Opportunities	N/A	Student Clubs
Main Webpage	Research	Publications	Career Center	Living in Istanbul	Extracurricular Activities
Instagram	Campus	Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	Career Opportunities	Climate	Campus Events
YouTube	Faculty Members	Sakıp Sabancı International Research Awards	Career Opportunities	N/A	Extracurricular Activities
Koç University					
	Learning Environment	Reputation of the Institution	Opportunities for Graduates	Image of the Destination	Social Integration
International Student Recruitment Webpage	Research	Memberships	Career Opportunities	Living in Istanbul	Extracurricular Activities
Brochure	Research	International Collaborations	Career Center	Multiculturalism	Extracurricular Activities
Main Webpage	Research	Faculty Research Awards	Career Center	Location	Extracurricular Activities
Instagram	Campus	Memberships	Career Opportunities	Living in Istanbul	Extracurricular Activities
YouTube	Faculty Members	Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science	Career Opportunities	N/A	Extracurricular Activities
Bilkent University					
	Learning Environment	Reputation of the Institution	Opportunities for Graduates	Image of the Destination	Social Integration
International Student Recruitment Webpage	Laboratories	Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings	N/A	Living in Ankara	Health Center
Brochure	Sports Center	International Collaborations	N/A	Living in Ankara	Campus Events
Main Webpage	Library	Publications	Career Center	Living in Ankara	Extracurricular Activities
Instagram	Campus	Faculty Research Awards	Career Opportunities	Climate	Campus Events
YouTube	Faculty Members	N/A	Career Opportunities	N/A	Campus Events

In terms of learning environment, international student recruitment webpages and brochures of those three universities emphasize different competitive advantages. On the other hand, Sabancı University and Koç University emphasize the same component as research on their main webpages. Also, all of those three universities emphasize the same competitive advantages on their Instagram accounts and YouTube channels as their campuses and faculty members. The research shows that in terms of learning environment, Sabancı University and Koç University emphasize the same components in three out of five channels. Besides, those three universities emphasize the same components of the learning environment in two channels. As a result of the research, it

might be said that those three universities emphasize similar components of the learning environment as their competitive advantages. The research also shows the differences in the emphasized components of the learning environment in different channels for universities. Sabancı University emphasizes four different components of the learning environment on five channels. Koç University emphasizes three different components of the learning environment in five channels. Moreover, Bilkent University emphasizes five different components of the learning environment on five channels.

In terms of the reputation of the institution, international student recruitment webpages of those three universities emphasize different competitive advantages from each other. Besides, Koç University and Bilkent University emphasize the same component as international collaborations on their brochures. Also, Sabancı University and Bilkent University emphasize the same component as publications on their main webpages. On their Instagram channels, those three universities emphasize different components of the reputation of their institutions. On the other hand, Sabancı University and Koç University emphasize the same component on their YouTube channels. In contrast, Bilkent University does not emphasize any component of the reputation of the institution on its YouTube channel. The research shows that in terms of the reputation of the institution, Sabancı University and Koç University emphasize the same component only in one out of five channels. On the other hand, Sabancı University and Bilkent University emphasize the same component of the reputation of the institution only in one out of five channels. Also, Koç University and Sabancı University emphasize the same component of the reputation of the institution only in one out of five channels. As a result of the research, it might be said that those three universities emphasize different components of the reputation of the institution as their competitive advantages. The research also shows the differences in the emphasized components of the reputation of the institution in different channels for universities. Sabancı University emphasizes four different components of the reputation of the institution in five channels. Koç University emphasizes five different components of the reputation of the institution in five channels. Moreover, Bilkent University emphasizes four different components of the reputation of the institution in five channels.

In terms of the opportunities for graduates, international student recruitment webpages and brochures of Sabancı University and Koç University emphasize different competitive

advantages from each other while Bilkent University does not present any components of opportunities for graduates in its international student recruitment webpage and brochure. Besides, those three universities emphasize the same components as the career center and career opportunities on their main webpages, Instagram accounts, and YouTube channels. The research shows that in terms of opportunities for graduates, those three universities emphasize the same components in three out of five channels. As a result of the research, it might be said that those three universities emphasize the similar components of opportunities for graduates as their competitive advantages. The research also shows the differences in the emphasized components of opportunities for graduates in different channels for universities. Those universities emphasize two different components of opportunities for graduates in five channels.

In terms of the image of the destination, international student recruitment webpages of Koç University and Bilkent University emphasize the same component as living in Istanbul/Ankara. On the other hand, again, Koç University and Bilkent University emphasize different components on their brochures while Sabancı University does not emphasize any component of the image of the destination on its brochure. Besides, Sabancı University and Bilkent University emphasize the same component as living in Istanbul/Ankara on their main webpages and Instagram accounts. In addition, those three universities do not emphasize any component of the image of the destination on their YouTube channels. The research shows that in terms of the image of the destination Sabancı University and Koç University do not emphasize any similar components in five channels. On the other hand, Sabancı University and Bilkent University emphasize the same component of the image of the destination in two out of five channels. Besides, Koç University and Bilkent University emphasize the same component of the image of the destination only in one out of five channels. As a result of the research, it might be said that those three universities emphasize different components of the social integration as their competitive advantages. The research also shows the differences in the emphasized components of the image of the destination in different channels for universities. Sabancı University emphasizes three different components of social integration in five channels. Koç University emphasizes three components of image of the destination in five channels. Moreover, Bilkent University emphasizes two different components of the image of the destination in five channels.

In terms of the social integration, international student recruitment webpages and brochures of those three universities emphasize different components. On the other hand, those three universities emphasize the same component as extracurricular activities on their main webpages. Besides, Sabancı University and Bilkent University emphasize the same component as campus events on their Instagram channels. Also, Sabancı University and Koç University emphasize the same components on their YouTube channels as extracurricular activities. The research shows that in terms of social integration, Sabancı University and Koç University emphasize two similar components in five channels. On the other hand, Sabancı University and Bilkent University emphasize the same component of social integration in two out of five channels. Besides, Koç University and Bilkent University emphasize the same component of social integration only in one out of five channels. As a result of the research, it might be said that those three universities emphasize different components of social integration as their competitive advantages. The research also shows the differences in the emphasized components of social integration of the institution in different channels for universities. Sabancı University emphasizes three different components of social integration in five channels. Koç University emphasizes the same component of social integration in five channels. Moreover, Bilkent University emphasizes two different components of social integration in five channels.

The research on the level of emphasis of the presented competitive advantages show that, despite the market orientation on the components as the image of the destination and the social integration, significant level of product orientation is also carried by the top three foundation higher education institutions of Turkey. The competitive advantages that are presented under the components of the learning environment, reputation of the institution and opportunities for graduates are product oriented. As the literature suggests, higher education marketing strategies cannot fully focus on public demand and ignore the product; however, the level of the product orientation is beyond the market orientation for those three universities. This condition brings the difficulties to fulfill the existing conditions of higher education marketing which is defined as a buyer's market and requires significant level of market orientation.

Also, the research shows that, the respond of those universities to different stages of the students as the customers is also lack behind the requirements of the unique relationship

between universities and students as the customers. Positioning strategies and the emphasizing level of those components show that, those three universities do not present their responses to the different stages of the students as the customers. The competitive advantages that those universities present very few details about how they respond to those different stages of the students as the customers.

Internationalization of universities and globalization on higher education create external forces in higher education as massification, expansion and diversification, growth of heterogeneity, and the growth of competition. In order to survive in such a competitive environment under those forces, marketing activities require significant level of market orientation and compatible positioning strategies to that orientation. However, the study shows that the top three foundation higher education institution of Turkey have not adopted the required level of market orientation and compatible positioning strategies that distinguish them from their competitors yet. In order to survive in such a market, they need to increase the level of market orientation and re-define their positioning strategies to present distinguished competitive advantages accordingly. Increasing the level of emphasize on components as opportunities for graduates, image of the destination and social integration might increase the level of market orientation on their marketing activities. Also, in order to distinguish from other universities, they might concentrate on emphasizing the unique points of the universities and avoid re-production of the same or similar messages. The study concentrates on the top three foundation higher education institutions of Turkey; however, since they are operating in the same markets, obliged to the same regulatory higher institutions and share the significant number of the components of the competitive advantages, the results of the research and the suggestion are also applicable for the rest of the foundation universities of Turkey.

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