

## Chapter 8

# The Local Impact of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Educational Dissertations on Transnational Higher Education in Turkey

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Doctoral education, which is a crucial component of transnational higher education, should contribute to the development of national and international science. To get a better insight into the contributions of doctoral education to the literature, 266 dissertations completed in the fields of social sciences, humanities, and education at 12 Turkish state universities between 2014 and 2017 were analyzed with bibliometric analysis. The analysis indicated that the scientific articles generated from the dissertations and the citations to these articles were dominantly published and cited in national indexed journals, which means that the dissertations made more contributions to the national literature than international literature. It can be one of the indicators that display the impact of transnational higher education on these dissertations are quite limited in Turkey. Several suggestions were made for Turkish universities to make more contributions to transnational higher education through doctoral education.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In the modern world, one of the most significant roles of universities is to contribute to the generation of a knowledge-based economy and a welfare economy by looking for and developing answers to society's issues at the national and international levels. These answers should first deal with and come up with solutions and suggestions for society's issues at the national level. Academic systems and organizations as well as individuals can use the solutions and suggestions developed at the national level to cope with the global academic environment at the international level. Commercial gain, knowledge and language acquisition, curriculum enhancement with international materials, and many other reasons are the main motivations of universities for internationalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

At the international level, universities can find solutions and suggestions for the global challenges through transnational higher education. In transnational higher education, learners are awarded by the awarding institutions, which are based in different countries other than the learners' locations (UNESCO/ Council of Europe, 2001). In the literature, there are several terms such as cross-border, offshore, and borderless higher education to describe transnational higher education (Knight, 2016). Transnational higher education involves providers and programs crossing national borders. Providers take a variety of forms, with different ownership structures, objectives, strategies, disciplines, and types of students (Wilkins, 2018). Moreover, it can promote the intellectual enrichment of the universities of countries and provide a stimulus to their programs and research (Stella & Woodhouse, 2011). In this regard, it can play a significant role in knowledge transfer among higher education institutions around the world. Transnational higher education will be used throughout this paper (Huang, 2007) because it is an important part of internationalization.

Today, doctoral education must be a key element in the planning of science and technology and social policies for countries. Doctoral graduates, with their knowledge and skills, should help the economic growth and social well-being of their country at the national level and the global academic environment at the international level. Doctoral education is precisely the place to go beyond national boundaries and outside the academic world to explore how particular techniques help or hurt people outside national spheres. This means that research can no longer be thought of as being done only locally or at universities (Nerad, 2010). In this regard, doctoral education can be considered a crucial component of transnational higher education, which has evolved as a prominent type of internationalization at universities over the past two decades.

Doctoral dissertations constitute the most important product of doctoral education. They should identify and account for the challenges that people face in terms of social, cultural, and economic factors. They demonstrate their holders' knowledge, skills, and competency they have acquired in their doctoral training. Therefore, they are regarded as an "academic genre ladder" (Swales & Feak, 2000). Researchers should reflect on how they have developed their knowledge, skills, and competency in their study area, as well as solve problems in working and learning environments on their own or provide the most innovative ideas in these environments (European Qualification Framework [EQF], 2020; Turkish Qualification Framework [TQF], 2015) in their dissertations. Every country expects its researchers to introduce innovation to science in their dissertations. EQF is a common European reference framework whose purpose is to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems. So, this might be seen as an important part of transnational higher education in recent years since the credits and qualifications of higher education students can be carried out among countries by

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