

A Comparison of Educational Systems of Turkey, Malta, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, Portugal, Finland, Greece, Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark*

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Managing people requires ongoing living in a harmony and to educate citizens who would support this status. It is not easy to continue the existence of management which can perform different cultures. The different management style is different educational systems. The management style also directly affects the country's educational philosophy. Countries have differences in respect to economic, social and educational boundaries. In addition, globalization affects countries' management styles. Thus, governments of different cultures and educational systems need to recognize their own education system to compete with the world. In this study, Malta, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, Portugal, Finland, Greece, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Turkey, of which the educational systems structuring, financing, training programs, the school principal to choose the format of formal education objectives, admission requirements and funding are compared. In this study, education and training related to different education system managers will be introduced, and it is intended to gain different perspectives.

Keywords: educational system, management, comparison, principal

Introduction

It is not possible to isolate a country's education system from its social, political, economic and cultural structure. Therefore, it is possible to say that countries' educational systems differentiate according to their economic and social conditions. In addition, coherence of the countries educational procedures, political understanding and legislation with the general educational principles are important for educational activities. Besides, holding instructional purposes with the scientific developments together is of great importance in terms of consistency in educational systems.

Similarly, educational management activities have far-reaching consequences throughout the societies, as it is a kind of global enterprise. Educational management systems include many issues, such as setting a suitable organizational structure, planning educational finance, curriculum creation, evaluation, training and employee appointment criteria. Surely, it is impossible to take these configurations regardless of the countries' political, economic and cultural characteristics. For example, political structure determines forms of educational organizations at the regional, local and school levels of the countries. Another example is that

*This paper was presented at XIV WCCES "Bordering, Re-Bordering and New Possibilities in Education and Society" İstanbul June 14-18, 2010.

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Belgium's federal management structure has led to the creation of three different Ministries of Education. Similarly, Finland education system has six ministries at six states, while some countries' education systems even have not any regional-level management structuring.

In this study, European Community countries' educational systems, which are at the highest levels of democratic and economic development, and Turkey educational system, which has tried to reach democratic and economic developmental achievements, are to be compared. After a review of the literature, this study showed that examined countries' educational systems are mostly different according to their economic, political and cultural characteristics.

Table 1 shows the differences of the educational structures among the examined countries, which are Malta, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, Portugal, Finland, Greece, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Turkey, at the central, regional, local and school levels of educational management systems. As Table 1 demonstrates, organizations and functioning of these structures and levels of participation at decision-making process are varying.

The name "national" is prominently labeled in Turkey's and Greece's Ministry of Educations. Besides, school-level of management in Turkish and Greek educational systems has least effect on the other countries' systems. On the other hand, the total quality management and performance evaluation studies directed by school principals and vice principals lead to participation of all educational staff in the management system at schools in Turkey. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say that the school-level decision-making participation has been implementing successfully in practice for years in Turkey. Moreover, the local authorities have almost no effect on educational management system which is highly centralized in Turkey.

Table 1

Educational Structures of the Countries at the Central, Regional, Local and School Levels

	Central level	Regional level	Local level	School level
Malta	Ministry of Education	Have education districts.	Local council has limited effect on educational management system.	School council (assigned chairman, school principal, three teachers and three parents).
Spain	Ministry of Education and Science	Autonomous communities have their additional rules along with the national standards. There is an agency to coordinate these communities.	No any municipal level administrative unit for educational activities. But education related duties, such as restoration of educational institutions are fulfilled.	Educational institutions have organizational, pedagogical and economic autonomy. School council, teachers' board and management team.
Ireland	Ministry of Education and Science	There is not any educational administrative unit at the regional level.	Dioceses affect educational administrative activities.	Administrative board (stakeholders, parents, teachers and priests).
Sweden ¹	Ministry of Education and Research	There is not any educational administrative unit at the regional level, but there is a central level management agent.	Municipalities have great autonomy related to educational activities. Municipality council assigns committees for educational management ² .	School principals manage schools through work plan with municipality ³ .

¹ There are four Educational Ministries, and two ministers in Sweden.

² All municipalities have to have a "school plan". Besides, financial, organizational, developmental, and evaluation, related aspects of the schools have to be cleared in these plans. Furthermore, strategies for goal achievements have to be stated in these plans.

³ School principals have to have "local work plan" in line with the "national and local school plans". Teaching methods, course contexts, organization related issues have to be involved in this plan. This plan has to be done in collaboration with teachers and the other educational staff. Teachers decide educational stuff at schools. Local work plan has to clarify activities to achieve central decisions.

(Table 1 continued)

Portugal	Ministry of Education	There are five directorates of regional education.	Municipality councils work as both advisory and coordination units.	Schools have autonomy for strategic, administrative, financial and organizational decision-making ⁴ .
Finland	Ministry of Education	Each state has its own Ministry of Education and Culture.	Most of the compulsory education institutions are administered by local level authorities and municipality committees.	Autonomy boundaries for the schools are decided by local level authorities.
Greek	Ministry of Education and Culture	There is not any educational administrative unit at the regional level.	Governors manage and coordinate schools.	Schools are administrated by school principals, vice school principals and teachers.
Belgium	Not any national level Ministry of Education	Each community has its own Ministry of Education for governance of educational institutions.	Public schools are governed by local authorities, and the others are administered by their own directories.	Schools are administrated by the school principals, who are assigned by the school boards.
Netherlands	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	There is a province level educational governance structure.	Province level educational units govern all managerial and financial matters.	Schools are administrated by school boards, who can assign school principals or vice school principals.
Denmark	Ministry of National Education	Ministry organize course plan frame.	Local authorities adapt the course plan frame to the local levels.	School principal, school board, teachers' board and students' board manage school in mutual understanding.
Turkey	Ministry of National Education	There is not any educational administrative unit at the regional level.	There are provincial and district national education directorates.	Schools are administrated by school principals.

Finance

Schools are financed by government in Malta, Ireland and Portugal. Regional authorities provide 83% of the total funding, while the government provides 12% and the local authorities provide 5% for the education system in Spain. Schools are funded by both municipalities and the government in Sweden. Besides, in 2002, 85.1% of the pupils attended the public primary and first stage of secondary schools, which were funded by public, while 14.9% of the pupils attended private schools, 85% of which were funded by the government in Denmark. Responsibility for funding of schools is shared by the state and local officials in Finland. In addition, proportion of government funding is 57% for primary and secondary education, while municipalities fund around 43%. Besides, 93.55% of the pupils attended public schools and 6.45% attended private school. Finally, 93.55% of the pupils attended public schools, while 6.45% enrolled at private schools in the academic year from 2002 to 2003.

Curriculum

There are differences in curriculum instruction and development among the countries' educational systems. While all countries' educational systems have the national core syllabus, schools, teachers and local authorities have autonomous for curriculum development in some nations. For instance, curriculum frame is constructed at the national level in Spain educational system. Moreover, schools and autonomy groups can add courses they need along with the national curriculum frame. Similarly, municipalities and schools have the right of decision-making about curriculum development and making school work plans in Swedish educational system. On the other hand, Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Religious Affairs have responsibilities for

⁴ School Board, Pedagogy Unit, and Management Unit are school level administrators in Portugal.

constructing curriculum and implementing regulations into the curriculum activities in Greece.

Employment of School Principal

All countries have different employment processes for hiring school principals. A person has to graduate from educational administration department of a university and has four-year vice school principal experience to apply for school principalship in Malta. Similarly, someone should have five-year teaching experience and school management education degree to apply for school principalship in Spain. Besides, schools can participate in decision-making process for hiring school principals in Spain. Teachers, school staff and educational authorities can participate to decision-making process commonly for recruiting school principals. Similarly, school principals are to be appointed by school management board in Portugal. A person should have five-year teaching experience and school management education degree to apply for school principalship in Portugal. Besides, having five-year teaching experience and degree of school management education are two prerequisites to apply for school principalship in Ireland. As the schools are managed democratically, a principal, school board, teachers’ board and students’ board manage the schools commonly in Denmark. In addition, the school board that is consisted of five to seven parents, two stakeholders and two senior teachers can control the schools in Denmark.

In Turkey, school principals are to be appointed by the Ministry of National Education. A person should have at least two-year school management experience for applying school principalship in Turkey. This period differs from two to four years. When compared to the other countries, ignorance of educational management degree is a main drawback for appointing school principals in Turkish educational management system.

Pre-school Education

Enrollment

While it is not compulsory, children attendance rate of pre-school education is high in European countries.

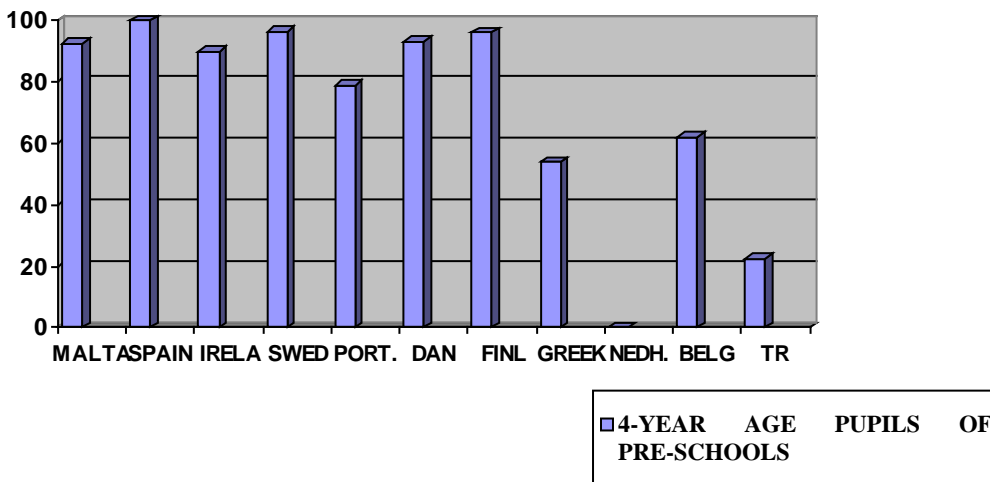


Figure 1. Percentages of aged four pupil enrolment to pre-school education.

All of the four-year old children attend nursery schools in Spain, while 96.4% enroll these schools in Sweden and 92.6% attend the schools in Malta. Besides, 93% of the four-year old children attend nursery schools in Denmark and 96% enroll the schools in Finland. In addition, 90% of the four-year old children attend nursery schools in Ireland and 78.7% enroll the schools in Portugal. On the other hand, 62% of the

four-year old children attend nursery schools in Belgium, while 22.36% enroll these schools in Turkey. Finally, the Netherlands has not pre-school level in the education system. When it is compared, Turkey has the least rate of pre-school enrollment among the other European countries.

Goals

The current educational systems are constructed around the goals of developing children with cognitive, emotional, social and physical aspects. Goals of pre-school education prioritize the children who grow up in under developed regions in Turkey and Portugal. On the other hand, “public interest” is considered in Ireland pre-school education goals. Besides, goals of pre-school education tend to protect equal opportunities in education in Finland. In addition, giving children sense of independence and regard is stressed in Spain and Malta pre-school education goals. While pre-school education objectives categorized as cognitive, social, moral and physical developments in Malta and Belgium, religious development is considered in Malta and Greece. Furthermore, compatible, balanced, self-confident, fit, esthetic and multidimensional developments are emphasized in Greece goals of pre-school education system (see Table 2).

Table 2

Goals of Pre-school Education

	Pre-school education goals
Turkey	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To develop children with cognitive, emotional, social and physical aspects. 2. To prepare children to compulsory education. 3. To provide good growing environment for children who grow up in under developed regions. 4. To teach children speaking Turkish correctly.
Denmark	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To games and education are combined at these schools. 2. To children learn alphabet and rhyme, sing songs and play games. 3. To giving children ideas about compulsory, education is aimed in these schools.
Belgium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To prepare children for society and compulsory education. 2. To develop children with cognitive, emotional, social and physical aspects.
Netherlands	Pre-school education regulation was repealed in August 1985.
Greece	To help compatible, balanced, self-confident, fit, esthetic and multidimensional developments for children.
Finland	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To prepare children to compulsory education. 2. To enhance educational conditions of country. 3. To keep equality of opportunities in education.

Compulsory Education

Enrollment

Entering age for primary education changes five to seven years old in the examined countries (see Figure 2). The Netherlands and Malta primary education systems have the least starting points with the five years old pupils, while Sweden, Spain, Finland, Belgium and Turkey primary education systems have higher entering age levels with the seven years old. On the other hand, six years pupils can enter primary schools with their parents' demands in Sweden. In addition, six year-old students enroll the compulsory education in Spain, Ireland, Greece and Portugal.

Goals

Goals of Malta compulsory education system emphasize “communication and information technologies with religious education”, while “foreign language” is considered in goals of Portugal and Malta compulsory education systems. Besides, goals of Greece compulsory education system tend to develop moral, religious,

national, humanistic and esthetic values. In addition, goals of Finland compulsory education system aim to educate responsible, independent, creative, social and peaceable citizens. Finally, “public interest” and “educating good citizens” are emphasized in goals of Turkish, Irish and Swedish compulsory education systems. Only in the goals of Sweden compulsory education system emphasize “gaining democratic values and family collaboration” for the students. Besides, “national values” are regarded in the goals of Portugal and Turkey compulsory education systems (see Table 3).

Duration

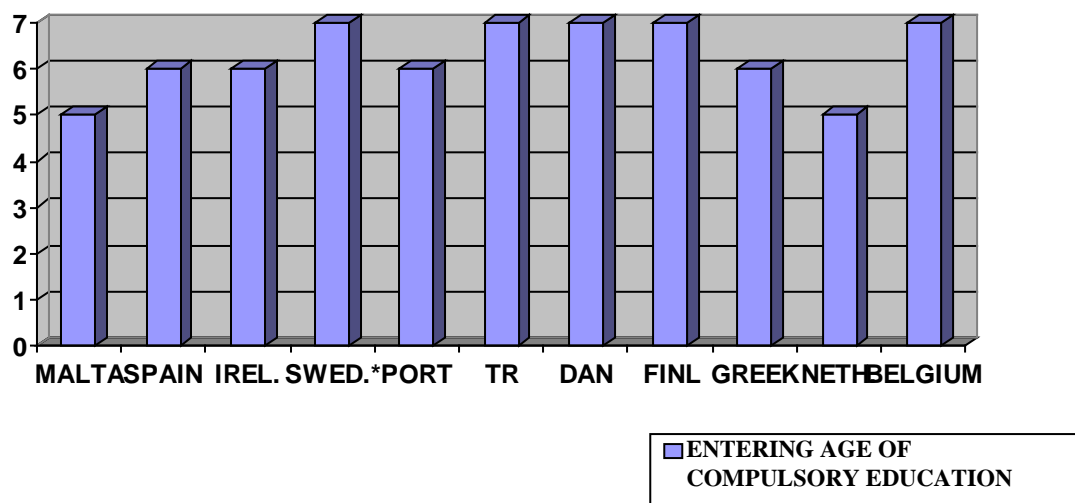


Figure 2. Ages of entering compulsory education.

Table 3

Goals of Compulsory Education

	Compulsory education goals
Turkey	1. To develop basic information, abilities, behaviors and habits of children for being good citizens; 2. Moreover, To develop students' national morality; 3. To train children according to their interests and abilities, prepare them for upper education.
Denmark	1. To develop students' knowledge, skills, studying methods and forms of expressions, collaboration with parents; Thus, students' personality may be developed in multi-directional manner; 2. To provide convenient conditions for students to develop students' understanding, thinking and learning motivation to do activities confidently; 3. To teach students Danish culture and contribute their understanding to be tolerant against other cultures. Prepare students for public decision-making, joint responsibility, rights and responsibilities in a society in which freedom and public administration. Therefore, education and day life at schools should be based on freedom of mind, equality and democracy.
Belgium	1. To raise self-reliant children with strong character; 2. To make children gain skills and habits required in the process of socialization; 3. To prepare students for democratic culture contributing their civic consciousness, and understanding of multi cultural values; 4. To train individuals in their professional life. Educate self-confident children who contribute changes in society.
Netherlands	1. To educate respectful students for different ideologic and social values; 2. To contribute students' cognitive, emotional and psiko-motor development during the basic education.
Greece	1. To primary education aims students' multidirectional mental and physical development; 2. To teach students to have self-actualization. Teach ethical, religious, national, humane, aesthetic and social values to the student.
Finland	1. To teach children to carry sense of responsibility, independence, creativity, peaceful relations with people and be compatible with the Finnish society; 2. To set good relationship between school and parents.

Kinds of Schools

Duration of the schools is changed between eight and eleven years (see Figure 3). In almost all countries, Malta has the highest compulsory educational attainment levels (11 years), while Turkey has the least with the eight years primary education period. Schools types are different from public schools, to private schools, schools under the government supervision and independent private schools (see Figure 4).

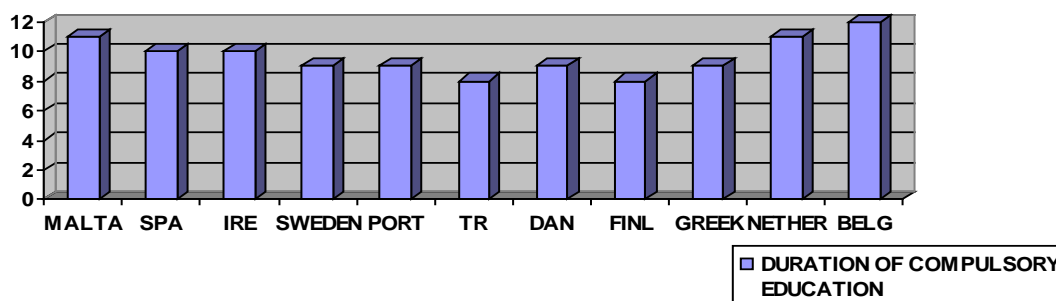


Figure 3. Duration of compulsory education.

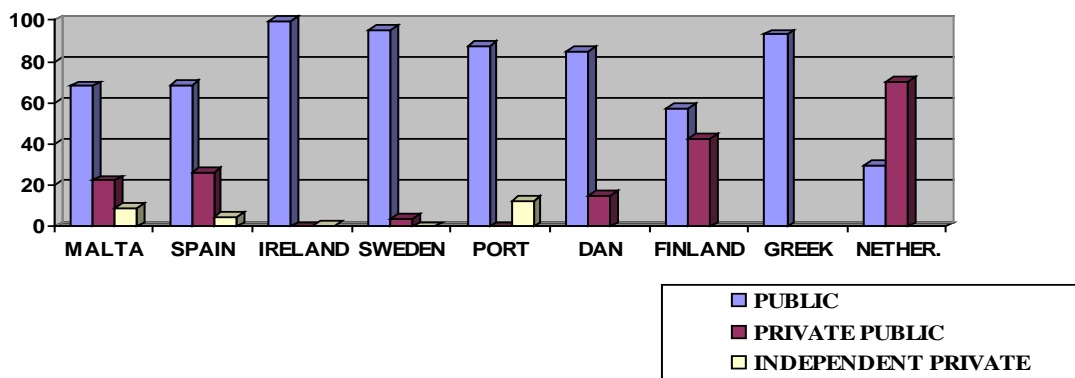


Figure 4. Rate of the schools according to the being public, private and independent.

Compulsory education systems include primary education and lower secondary level of education in the examined countries. In addition, duration of the primary education changes by countries. Duration of the primary school system is five years in Turkey, eight years in the Netherlands and six years in the other examined countries. Finally, duration of lower secondary education differs five to three years.

As it is shown in Figure 5, six to eight grades are involved in compulsory education system, namely upper primary education. Even though lower secondary education system includes schools for only girls or only boys, Malta has a coed primary education system. In addition, religious education is elective in the examined countries, while it is compulsory in Malta and Ireland.

Graduation

Graduation criteria for compulsory education are demonstrated in Table 4.

Upper Secondary Education

Enrollment

Upper secondary education differs according to the school programs and school types, and these diversity affect education period in the countries. Figure 6 indicates the starting and completing age for upper secondary education and Figure 7 shows pupil enrollment percentages of upper secondary education, after the compulsory education.

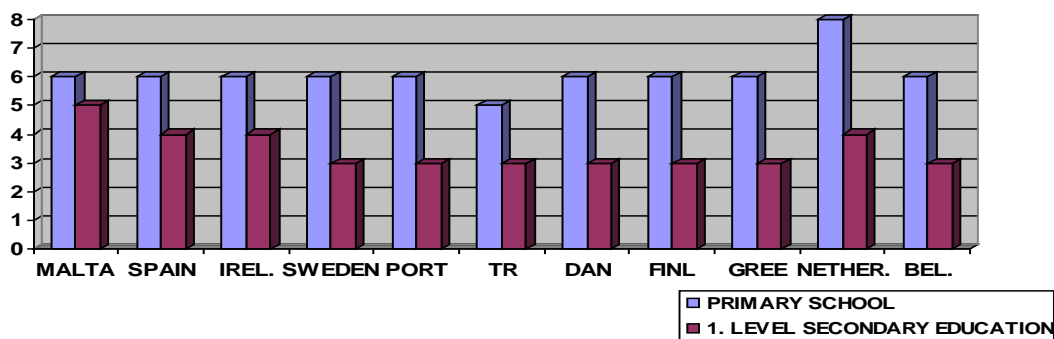


Figure 5. Primary and lower secondary education under the compulsory education.

Table 4

Graduation of Compulsory Education

	Malta	Spain	Ireland	Sweden	Turkey
Graduation criteria for compulsory education	There is a secondary education certificate exam. Degree is given by grades.	Course grades are based on graduation. Students who have high scores are given “diploma”, while others get “school leaving certificate”.	Junior certificate exam.	Eligibility for the national exam is given to the schools. Teacher assessment is important for graduation.	Course grades are based on graduation.
	Denmark	Finland	Greek	Nederland	Belgium
	Primary school gives proficiency, and students should pass final exam.	Students have the chance for registering any schools they want. Passing skill exam is necessary for some vocational schools entrance.	Certificate (Apolytio Gymnasiou)	Central exam, school recommendation and parent requisition.	Teacher assessment and students’ preference.

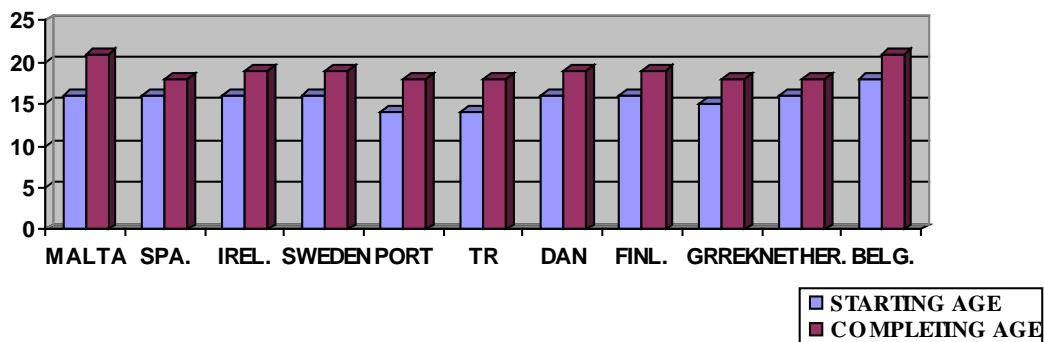


Figure 6. Starting and completing age for upper secondary education.

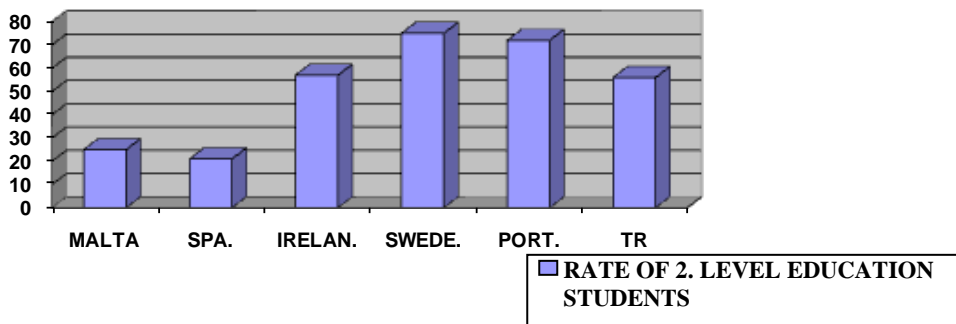


Figure 7. Pupil enrolment percentages of upper secondary education, after the compulsory education.

Admission Criteria

Admission criteria are changed according to the school types in the countries. For instance, admission requirements depend on the particular type of school concerned in Turkey. Besides, general and vocational secondary education schools offer their students direct enrolment. Furthermore, some privileged schools which are generally categorized as Anatolian schools accept their students via centrally organized examination in Turkey. On the other hand, pupils accept to the upper secondary education schools via graduation degree in Malta. Similarly, grade point average is asked for secondary education enrollment in Sweden. However, upper secondary education schools offer their students direct enrolment in Ireland.

Goals

Upper secondary education schools aim to develop students with general culture and prepare them for upper education level in all countries, except for Sweden. While “social issues” are emphasized the goals of upper secondary education in Spain and Turkey, “information technologies” are highlighted in the goals of the education in Malta. Besides, “general culture” is stressed in the goals of upper secondary education in Spain and Portugal. On the other hand, goals of Swedish upper secondary education system have not any national level objective (see Table 5).

Table 5

Goals of Upper Secondary Education

	Secondary education goals
Turkey	1. To make students gain awareness for solving personal and social issues and make them support economic and cultural developments; 2. To prepare students for both tertiary education and vocational education contributing their needs and concerns.
Denmark	1. To education emphasizes good manners, personal development and maturation; 2. To secondary education orients to both labor market and higher education.
Belgium	Secondary education stresses higher education, academic and vocational training.
Netherlands	——
Greece	Second education emphasizes understanding of the society, choosing the right academic career, supporting economic and cultural development.
Finland	——

Finance

While poor students are privileged from payment, pupils have to pay symbolic fee for upper secondary education in Portugal. While upper secondary education is free for all students, pupils have to buy course books in Malta, Ireland, Spain and Turkey. Besides, students do not have to pay fee for education and meal while they have to buy course books in these countries. Governments pay education grant and loan for the students in these countries. Besides, there are three types of secondary education foundations in Sweden. While pupils have to pay fee for education at independent schools, they do not have to pay it at municipality schools.

Graduation

Students gain the “leaving certificate” after the secondary education in Ireland, which is essential for university or job entrance. While there is not any “final exam”, municipalities organize exams for raising grades in Sweden. There is “Matriculation Certificate Exam” in Malta. On the other hand, there is not any “final exam” in Spain, Portugal and Turkey upper secondary education.

Higher Education

Goals

There is not any tertiary education national level objective in Ireland. Universities have to have strategic

plans involving their objectives and three-year development plans, in which “developing solutions for national and world wide issues” are aimed in Portugal and Turkey. On the other hand, using information technologies to compete with global economic conditions is purposed in these plans in Malta. While universities highlight scientific research and instruction, technical schools emphasize “practice” in their strategic plans in Finland. Unlike other countries, communicating with people who work other areas is stressed in tertiary education plans in Sweden. As a result, providing proper conditions for scientific researchers and education for the students is the main mission of the universities in the all countries (see Table 6).

Table 6

Goals of Tertiary Education

	Tertiary education goals
Turkey	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To educate students for labor markets depending on the scientific and social needs of the society; 2. To provide scientific education for different grades; 3. To conduct studies to solve scientific, technical and cultural problems; 4. To conduct studies to solve national problems and contribute the society collaboration with the government; 5. To publish results of the scientific studies; 6. To spread scientific data to the society to contribute social development.
Denmark	—
Belgium	Providing theoretical and practical education, develop and spread science in the society.
Netherlands	—
Greece	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To take measures for effective use of qualified and scientific human capacity in Greece; 2. To providing theoretical and practical education for students to enhance their scientific, technical and artistic knowledge, and develop their vocational skills; 3. To develop students' knowledge, skills and power to contribute economic, social and cultural development of the country within a democratic view; 4. As stated in the constitution, to provide free education opportunities for students.
Finland	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The basic mission of universities is to conduct research and provide education that is based on research; 2. The basic principle of university education is providing conditions for free and autonomous studying; 3. Students are trained by predominantly application in the vocational high schools.

Admission Criteria

Admission criteria changes according to the countries. For example, Matriculation Certificate which is given at the end of the secondary education is required to enter universities in Malta. Similarly, students are accepted by universities according to their graduation exam scores in Ireland. However, students are accepted by means of university entrance exam in Spain. In addition, students should have secondary education certificate and be successful in university entrance exam in Portugal. Besides, secondary school graduation point is asked for university entrance in Denmark. Universities select students by holding their entrance exams including two levels in Finland. But students, who want to enter university exam, have to have baccalaureate in Finland. Students, who have high-school certificate, are received by direct enrolment to the universities in the Netherlands.

Finance

Students have to pay for tertiary education in Turkey, while it is free in Malta and Ireland. Amount of the university fees changes according to the students' socio-economic conditions and type of educational programs in the countries. For instance, while tertiary education is free, students have to pay fee for Student Union in Sweden.

Conclusions

There are differences and similarities between Turkish and European Community countries' educational systems according to their economic, political and cultural characteristics. While Finland, Belgium and

Netherlands have decentralized educational management systems, both Turkish and Greek Ministries of Education are centralized pro-naming “national”. Besides, schools are financed by government in Malta, Ireland and Portugal, while responsibility for funding them is shared by the states and local officials in Sweden, Spain and Finland. Frame of curriculum and activities are constructed at the national level in both Turkey and Greece, while municipalities, schools and autonomy groups participate to curriculum development process in Spain and Swedish. The rate of pre-school enrollment is higher in Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Malta, and Portugal while Turkey has the least rate of pre-school enrollment. The Netherlands and Malta primary education systems have the least starting points. On the other hand, primary education systems in Sweden, Spain, Finland, Belgium and Turkey have higher entering age levels. As the primary education, upper secondary education system differs according to the school programs and school types among the countries. Thus, this diversity affects education period of the upper secondary education in the countries.

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