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## Comparison of Adult Education Policies in Turkey and European Union

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### Abstract

The lifelong learning a reality by the European Commission defines lifelong learning as all learning activities undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective. The aim of this article is to review the effect of factors that cause globalisation on behalf of education and inter-cultural relations within the context adult education between Turkey and European Union Countries. In addition, the effects of globalization on adult education are considered through making conceptual analysis of the social change in educational concept.

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### 1. Introduction

Over the past decades, there have been important shifts in policies for adult education and lifelong learning in many countries around the world. Although lifelong learning duration was seen as a personal good and as an inherent aspect of democratic life in the past, it is increasingly understood in terms of the formation of human capital and as an investment in economic development. The trend towards a 'learning economy' can be discerned in many

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countries and is particularly prominent in the countries of the European Union. And it is also a central board in European policy on lifelong learning (Fredriksson, 2003; Biesta, 2006).

In fact, the strength of adult education is a wide range of domains in our life and takes place in variety of settings from the family up to the work place and places of worship to media (UNESCO, 1997). Adult education provides many opportunities for people to develop new interests, improve their confidence and well being, support their children's learning and interact positively with people come from disparate backgrounds. Furthermore, it offers personal choice, personal responsibility and personal improvement. Adult learning is the most diverse of the lifelong learning sectors, and national adult learning systems are complex and heterogeneous. The adult learning sector in Europe is vast, fragmented, diverse and different from one Member State to another. In this work a review in comparing the effect of factors in the context of adult education between Turkey and European Union Countries are evaluated.

## 2. Adult Education in Turkey

Turkey is a developing country which is strategically located at the gateway of the three continents; Europe, Asia and Africa and it is also a bridge and play an important role geographically, socially and culturally between the Europe and Asia. It has a land area of 780.580 km<sup>2</sup> with 72.5 million population and about half of the population is over the age of 28.8. There is still partial objection among some European countries against to full Turkish membership of the EU, however, she has been accepted as a "candidate state" to full membership in 10-11 December 1999 by the European Parliament after the Helsinki Submit (Duman, 2002).

Turkish education system is divided into formal and non-formal education and the main responsible body is the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). The main providers of adult education offered by the MoNE are Public Education Centres (PEC), and Vocational Training Centres (VTC). All these programmes are provided under the supervision of MoNE and their curriculum, acceptance requirements, standards, duration and certification, etc. are subject to the approval of the Ministry. Additionally, in recent years universities have started running lifelong learning centres that offer courses, vocational certificate programmes, and in-service training programmes. Each year, over 5 million people attend adult education activities in Turkey. According to Turkstat indicator (2008), there are about 14.000 educational personnel in public provision, and about 70.000 educational personnel in private adult education institutions in Turkey. The numbers of academicians who have academic credentials in adult education, unfortunately is not satisfactory. Therefore, professionalization of adult educators is still an important issue in Turkey (Unluhisarcikli, 2008; Miser, Ural & Unluhisarcikli, 2013).

Table 1. Participation in education and training by settlement place, sex, age group, education attained and labour status (Population age 18 and over) %

	Participation in formal education		Participation in non-formal education		Participation in formal or non-formal education		Participation in formal and non-formal education	
	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012
Total	5.8	8.3	13.9	15.4	17.1	20.4	2.6	3.3
Settlement Place								
Urban	7.2	10.1	15.0	17.8	19.1	23.9	3.1	4.0
Rural	2.6	4.1	11.2	10.1	12.5	12.6	1.3	1.6
Sex								
Male	7.2	9.8	17.3	17.5	21.4	23.7	3.2	3.6
Female	4.5	6.8	10.5	13.4	13.1	17.2	2.0	3.0
Age group								
18-24	24.5	33.9	26.0	26.7	39.7	46.6	10.7	14.1
25-34	5.5	9.6	18.0	20.9	21.1	26.9	2.4	3.5
35-54	0.8	2.0	11.6	14.4	12.0	15.6	0.4	0.8
55-64	0.1	0.2	4.4	5.4	4.4	5.6	-	0.0

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