



Review

Accommodation Problem of Higher Education Students from the Past to the Centenary of the Turkish Republic

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Abstract – Türkiye has gone through a significant expansion process in its higher education system, especially since the beginning of the 2000s. However, this expansion brought with itself the problem of student accommodation. This study examines the accommodation problem of Turkish higher education students who have to abandon their hometowns to live in cities where they get an education. The method used is document analysis including refereed journal and newspaper articles, national and international reports and statistics and various online sources. They referred to the proclamation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and covered the centenary of the Republic in 2023. Briefly, the key findings noted the inadequate bed capacities in university and state dormitories, dramatic increases in the cost of accommodation, and architecture and management problems in dormitories that negatively affect the service quality and the daily routines of students. For a more thorough analysis, a mixed-method study is suggested for future researchers.

Key words: higher education students, accommodation cost, dormitory capacities, dormitory management, centenary of the Turkish Republic

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Introduction

The Turkish Republic was founded on 29 October 1923 on six main principles. These principles are:

1. “Republicanism”, which sets the ground for democracy.
2. “Nationalism” as a way to unite everyone by citizenship to the Turkish state.

3. “Populism” prioritizing national sovereignty, welfare, and equality.
4. “Secularism”, which sets the order and rules in state and educational organizations based on reason and science
5. “Etatism”, which gives responsibility to the state to develop its individuals, take care of their education and health, and protect the freedom and security of the country.
6. “Reformism” adopting a contemporary and innovative understanding in organizing institutions.

These principles underline the importance of modernity, i.e., civilization in state, intellectual, and economic arena, as Atatürk defines. Higher education institutions (HEIs), with all their human resources including students, are the flagships of civilization and developmental centers that guide societies with knowledge production and dissemination. Hence, the real meaning of civilization requires the welfare state to take care of its human capital and provide them with the best opportunities possible so that they can compete in the international arena with their counterparts for the good of their nation as the Turkish Republic.

In all societies around the world, the demand for qualified human capital necessitates increasing the education level of populations. This increase typically leads to an expansion in the supply and demand for Higher Education (HE). As a result, some individuals wanting to attain better educational opportunities have to leave their hometowns and countries and move to the city of the HEI they will get their education in. In regions where this expansion is not planned thoroughly, there arises the accommodation problem. In the case of Türkiye, during the last ten years, the number of (formal) HE undergraduate students almost doubled; increasing from 1,351.283 registered students in 2013-14 (Council of Higher Education [CoHE], 2014) to 2,221.498 in 2022-23, which reached to 6,950.142 with vocational schools, distance, secondary and open education, and master’s and doctorate students (CoHE, 2023). Based on Eğitim-Bir-Sen (2022, p. 130)’s report, the number of students per dormitory increased from 345 in 2012-13 to 776 in 2021-22. Concurrently, the number of dormitories increased from 882 to 979 during the same period. However, even this was not capable of solving the accommodation problem of students due to a lower rate of supply across the demand for HE. Plus, despite increasing investment allowances and number of dormitories allocated for HE, annual average expenditure per student in tertiary education in Türkiye remained around 10.52\$ in 2016 compared with 15.56\$ of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) - average (OECD, 2019). This number did not change

much in 2022 but went even below with 9455\$ in Türkiye, being among the lowest among OECD countries, compared to the 17.559\$ OECD average (OECD, 2022, p. 5). The same report also indicates the share of research and development (R&D) in tertiary education being 19% in Türkiye and 29% on average across OECD countries. These measures are important as they show the value given to education as a share allocated from the state budget.

With the rapid increase in higher education (HE) in Türkiye—specifically, a growth rate of 31% (from 9% in 2000 to 40% in 2021) in educational attainment among 25-34-year-olds, surpassing the OECD average of 21% (OECD, 2022, p. 2)—there is an urgent need to enhance the capacity of the HE Credit and Hostels Institution (Yurt-Kur). This institution stands out as the most economical and safe residence option for students. The other options of staying in private dorms or rentals have become quite costly, especially in the recent years, with increasing prices in all expenditures that have not grown in parallel with individuals' incomes. In addition, in the 11th Development Plan of Türkiye (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 2019), “competitive production and efficiency” (e.g., human capital, R&D, and innovation), “quality human capital and a strong society” (e.g., education, health and youth), “habitable cities and sustainable environment” (e.g., housing and regional development), and “state of law, democratization and good governance” (e.g., civil society and security services) had also been noted among the requirements for the development of the country. The realization of these goals partially depends on the provision of the youth of the country with suitable educational opportunities and living conditions. These include safe and affordable accommodation of students that is aligned with their way of living, close enough to their institutions, contain social and sports facilities as well as proper nutrition alternatives and study areas. Accessibility to these opportunities can enable their academic, social and personal development and make them of use to their society once they graduate.

The issue of accommodation of HE students in Türkiye today relate to specific factors. One of these factors is the sensitivity towards “crowding” in the residential area that is affected by social and physical factors (Arlı, 2013; Kara, 2009) as well as cultural differences (Kaya & Weber, 2003). Another issue has been stated as “the difficulties of living away from their families” in terms of money and house management, relationships with people, insufficient nutrition, not getting academic support from familial members, and not having suitable study spaces in dorms (Arlı, 2013). Other concerns have been reported as “inadequate capacity of dormitories” (Eşidir, 2017; Kiraz, 2014), “increasing costs in housing” (Alagöz, 2023; Aydın, 2023; Kara et al., 2019; Öztürk, 2019), “architectural and managerial problems

in dormitories” (Aslanargun, 2014; İnceoğlu, 1995; Tanış, 2023), and issues such as “dorms being turned into quarantine places during the COVID-19 period”, students having had to” pay their rents and not having adequate technological equipment” in their houses during this period (Gezer et al., 2022).

Within the scope of this background, this study aims to explore the most critical issues lying behind the accommodation problem of HE students who study in HEIs that are not in their hometowns in Türkiye. Along this line, the research questions are as follows: 1. *What are the main factors lying behind the accommodation problem of Turkish university students in Türkiye today?* 2. *What are the solutions for the accommodation problem of Turkish university students in Türkiye?*

In commemoration of the centenary of the Turkish Republic, the literature review section starts with the historical developments following the proclamation of the Republic in 1923 to the first dormitories built in 1950, the changing roles of the HE Credit and Hostels Institution from its establishment till our time, and the accommodation problem being brought to discussion in the Development Plans starting from 1963 to 2019. The next section makes some international comparisons about the accommodation problem and how different countries approach the issue. Then, the Methods part explains the steps of using a systematic review in the article. Next, the Findings were presented under some sub-titles formed scanning the literature. In the Discussion section, a critical eye has been cast on the topic of accommodation from the perspective of neoliberalism. The Conclusion part summarizes the findings of the study and states its significance. The article concludes with the author’s suggestions for addressing the accommodation problem of the university students in Türkiye.

Literature Review

From the Past to the Present: The First University in Türkiye, Higher Education Credit and Hostels Institution and Accommodation Policies in the Development Plans

After the Republic's proclamation in 1923, Türkiye undertook important initiatives, including the removal of Darülfünun as the Ottoman University in 1933 and the establishment of the first university, Istanbul University. Therefore, the first student dormitories in Türkiye can be regarded as the ones that belonged to Istanbul University. With the University Law that passed in 1946, universities were given general autonomy and regarded as legal entities. Subsequent regulations were introduced in 1961, 1971, and 1973, shaping the scope of their rights and responsibilities. These regulations reached their final form in 1981 with the

enactment of the HE Law and the establishment of the CoHE. The initial student housing facilities in Türkiye were brought under the jurisdiction and oversight of the Ministry of Education in 1949 through the implementation of Law No. 5375. Following this, the introduction of Law No. 5661 in 1950 extended permission to both private and non-private entities to establish dormitories, contingent upon inspection by the same Ministry (General Directorate of Credit and Hostels, n.d.). Despite the construction of private entities, motivated by neo-liberal influences to address the housing requirements of students, their accessibility is limited due to financial constraints.

Established in 1961, the HE Credit and Hostels Institution operates under the Constitutional provision that the state provides scholarships and necessary support for successful but economically deprived students to pursue the highest education degree. In 2018, the institution underwent a name change to HE Credit and Hostel Services. Governed by Law No. 351, this institution has been providing learning credits since 1962, supplementary credits since 1985, and scholarships since 2004 (General Directorate of Credit and Hostels, n.d.). In this capacity, the institution remains a crucial center for supporting students in terms of accommodation and finance.

Even though education policies have constituted an important place within the Development Plans, the accommodation problem has taken place only in some of the plans. In the recent years, rather than the problem taking place in Development Plans, it has been evaluated in yearly plans prepared to serve the implementation of the former. Namely, as the whole educational system was thought as the means to educate the human resources necessary for economic development, the 1st Five Year Development Plan (FYDP) (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 1963) was evaluated together with research and employment sectors. In the 2nd FYDP (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 1968), it was put forth that HE was something that the most skillful students could get by. However, it was also added that sufficient opportunities for scholarships and boarding could not be provided for those students despite having private dorms. In the 3rd FYDP (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 1973), the start of open university and associate degree program implementations were mentioned along with not being able to attain the previous aims of increasing the opportunities for credits, scholarships, and boarding. Hence, these aims were taken into the agenda again. In the 4th FYDP (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 1979), for the first time, it was mentioned under the section Youth Problems that one of the most important problems of the youth in HE was accommodation, which, as a service, was given by various state organizations and private

institutions, with significant difference in the amount of cost demanded. Hence, it was planned to increase the number and capacity of dorms. In the 5th FYDP (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 1985), accommodation was evaluated among other policies such as health and nutrition but not as a separate goal. In the 6th FYDP (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 1990), education was determined as the priority sector where it was targeted to give priority to the skillful but limited-income students in the provision of free boarding schools and scholarships, and to increase the capacity of state dorms. In the 7th FYDP (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 1996), regarding equality of opportunity, low-income students would be financially supported together with the help of the private sector, with no specific reference to accommodation. The 8th FYDP (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 2001), not specifying the housing issue for students, highlighted the centralized structure of the HE system, clarified the decision-making mechanisms for the new universities that would be built and some other structural problems. In the 9th FYDP (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 2007), improving the effectiveness of the education system and the efficient use of educational resources were underlined without mentioning student housing. In the 10th FYDP (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 2014), it was aimed to attain a competitive HE system with qualified human capital and a powerful society. Aligned with this goal, during the preparation period of the plan, the number of universities was increased from 93 to 170 in 2013 May, together with the quotas and enrollment rates. Although direct reference to accommodation problem was not made in this plan, with the increasing university and student numbers, the need for more dormitories was quite apparent. Finally, in the 11th FYDP (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 2019), there was no direct reference to the betterment of accommodation opportunities for Turkish students but international students (p. 131). In the Education part (pp. 126-127), it was stated that educational buildings would have to be designed in alignment with the technological and environmental developments considering safety, affordability, aesthetics, high standards, quality, and infrastructure.

Briefly, the Development Plans until the 8th, approached the student accommodation problem from the perspective of equality of opportunity. That was prioritized for low-income but skillful and successful students. However, with the mass expansion in HE, access to HE and accommodation has become the problem of all students rather than the low-income only and waiting to be resolved.

Comparison of University Students' Accommodation Problem in Türkiye and Abroad Towards Finding Ways for Solution

In countries like the United States of America (USA), Germany and Australia, which are economically developed, students spare almost similar amounts of budget residing in university dormitories compared with houses in the city; however, students abroad may still prefer to reside in dorms due to the facilities offered in the campus and the higher quality of accommodation in dorms compared with those in Türkiye (Eşidir, 2017). Below can be found some statistics regarding student accommodation in the international context compared with those in Türkiye.

Table 1 International Comparisons of Student Accommodation (Eşidir, 2017; Savills, 2015)

	United Kingdom	Germany	France	Spain	Holland	USA	Australia	Türkiye
Enrolled HE student numbers	2,3	2,7	2,4	1,5	0,7	20,6	1,3	3,2
International student numbers (%)	388	301	295	75	87	886	348	40,5
International students	17	11	12	5	13	4	24	1
Bed capacity (thousand)	524	259	375	90	100	2400	90	810
National provision rate (%)	23	10	15	6	15	12	7	25

As can be viewed from Table 1, compared to other countries, Türkiye seems to provide a higher amount of accommodation including bed capacity. However, considering the increasing demand for HE throughout the years in Türkiye, the rates indicated for Türkiye are not high. Namely, students with (very) serious financial difficulties are comparatively high (30%) in Türkiye, also in Georgia, Iceland and Malta, as opposed to lower rates (19%) in others like Germany, Croatia, France and Sweden (Eurostudent 7, 2021). This differing rate among the stated countries is also related to the varying rates in purchasing power.

When Turkish university students' accommodation problem is compared with that of other countries, although in the USA and in England, student housing sector can be regarded as to have reached a point of saturation, especially in many big cities in Europe, the sector is still open to development with the private sector having a bigger say in owning and managing student houses (Savills, 2015), as opposed to the state control through HE Credit and Hostels Institution in Türkiye. Eşidir (2017, p.18) stated that it is a good option to invest in student houses in Europe by the private sector as it brings steady income and is affected less by financial fluctuations compared with investing in other real estate properties. He added that solution to the issue of university student accommodation is found by universities themselves

that inform students about their accommodation options through their websites and that accommodation problem is not something the state develops policies for but the universities.

Eurostudent 7 (2021), published a report reflecting student social and economic situation in 25 European countries including Türkiye for the 2018-21 period. Accordingly, students preferred the following accommodation options respectively, living with their parents or apart from their parents, alone, with their children and partners or other students in dormitories or in houses. In some countries like Ireland, Poland, France, Hungary, The Czech Republic and Germany, compared with other forms of housing, living with parents still constituted the highest proportion among others. This proportion decreased as the age of students increased. Then comes living with a partner or children, as was chosen by a quarter of students in Iceland, Lithuania, Austria, Estonia, Sweden, Norway and Finland. Students who chose to reside in a student accommodation with friends and other students constituted 17% across countries, which also decreased by age. In Türkiye, Netherlands and Sweden minimum 30% of students resided this way. In all countries included in the study, only 11% lived on their own. The above statistics for Türkiye coincides with that of Özer and Kurtaran (2009)'s, which was conducted with 425 students at İstanbul Bilgi University Youth Studies Center. The results indicated that the main expense in the budget of students was related to housing with 36,4%, This may explain why 30% of students preferred to stay with friends in the previous study, as an indication of this being a less costly option.

The study of Uğur (2020), which compared the living conditions of university students during 2010-2011 and 2019-2020, students preferred to live in student homes in both periods. The reason of this preference may be cost sharing among students who lived together in the same house, as student incomes in Türkiye are below the European average, indicted by Eurostudent 7 (2021). Based on the given data, across all countries, the median income of students is 861 purchasing power standard per month. Except for the countries of Switzerland, Estonia, Iceland, Norway, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Austria, Finland, Croatia, Malta, and Romania, which are above the international median, student income is below the international median in the rest of the countries including Türkiye.

Methods

This study, being a systematic review article, traced certain steps in data collection, the decision-making process regarding inclusion and exclusion criteria, and data analysis (Çınar, 2021). A systematic review has been described as a kind of scientific study that can powerfully put forth proofs by scanning the related topic based on detailed and objective

criteria and using the pre-determined inclusion and exclusion measures to evaluate the studies and research that have been conducted (Hatipoğlu, 2021). In addition, the reliability of the study has been maintained through certain criteria that are explained below.

To begin with, the main research problem was determined as the accommodation problem of university students in the 21st century. Then, two specific research questions were formed that queried the main factors lying behind the accommodation problem of Turkish university students in Türkiye today, and the solutions for the accommodation problem.

Next, the inclusion criteria were decided as the state sources and statistics that dated back to the proclamation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 as well as the expansion of the Turkish HES during the last decade (2013-23 period). The search sentence was determined as “accommodation/housing problem/issue of university students (in Türkiye)”. With this regard, Turkish data were compared with those of the OECD countries, of which Türkiye is a part. To detect the recent problems pertaining to the university students’ housing, the last five-year data were sought and cited more. However, as this study is also a historical analysis, at times historical comparisons of about twenty-year period were also cited to show the extent of improvement in the topic being sought. Peer-reviewed national and international journal articles and books that covered the given period and topic were included. In terms of choosing among the media sources such as newspaper reports or other online media sources such as the related websites, attention was paid not to cite biased information but facts that could be proved with the specific dates and notes about the given news. Although this study includes a historical analysis of the accommodation problem, that historical part was used only to indicate the developments that have taken place since those times. In other words, the present accommodation problem of university students was the main focus of analysis, which was compared and contrasted with the past decisions and directives that affected the course of the developments. Hence, overly outdated sources that explained the accommodation problem of university students in Türkiye or the accommodation problem in general in Türkiye, which includes the whole society, were excluded from the study.

The collected data were subjected to the document analysis method, which is described as a technique to collect data towards a certain aim by finding and reading resources, taking notes about, and eventually evaluating them (Karasar, 2016, p. 230). To ensure reliability, Ravitch and Carl (2019) provide some criteria, the first of which is "credibility." Credibility was ensured by collecting data from various sources such as state sources and statistics,

researcher studies published in reliable peer-reviewed journals, as well as books and newspaper reports and other online sources. The second criterion, "transferability," was maintained by giving satisfactory contextual information and framework so that future researchers may find it easy to make connections with the topic. The third criterion, "dependability," was facilitated by choosing the method of the study as a review since it allowed for a historical analysis to be made about the topic aligned with the research questions. Finally, "confirmability" was ensured by conducting objective analyses using the cited sources, from which another researcher could derive similar results.

Findings

This section aims to answer the research questions of the study under five sub-topics. To this end, the first research question is "*What are the main factors lying behind the accommodation problem of Turkish university students in Türkiye today?*". The second research question is "*What are the solutions for the accommodation problem of Turkish university students in Türkiye?*"

Present Problems about Accommodation of Higher Education Students in Türkiye

The increasing demand for HE worldwide has shown itself in Türkiye as well. From the establishment of Istanbul University in 1933 until 1980, a steady growth has been observed in the number of the universities that reached to 19. In 1992, 24 more universities were established, marking a turning point in the growth of university numbers (Günay & Günay, 2011). Therefore, one can discuss a considerable expansion in Turkish higher education, reaching 208 universities in 2023 (CoHE, 2022). The expansion in HE in Türkiye brought with it the issue of accommodation, which has been more dominantly observed in larger cities. In this study, this issue is examined in three areas: the cost of accommodation, the capacity of dormitories as well as architectural problems in dormitories and their management.

Inadequate Capacity of Dormitories

Although the problem of accommodation capacity in dorms has increased in recent years, it has been an issue for many years and was discussed in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (2011) 4th union as well. During this session, parliamentarians Aylin Nazlıaka (p. 159) and Candan Yüceer (p. 176) proposed written parliamentary questions regarding dormitory problems of university students. The then parliamentarian Kamer Genç (Turkish Grand National Assembly, 2011) highlighted the dormitory problem of university students as:

Although thousands of dormitories are empty today, tens of thousands of university students have been left on the streets.... Many people call us every day; they freeze their university registration as they cannot find a bed in dormitories.... I hope our parliament can find a solution to this problem (p. 194).

As indicated by the Eğitim-Sen Report (Körfez Gazete Haber, 2022), while there were 191 state dormitories in 2002, this number reached 773 in 2020, not increasing in parallel with the rising number of students. The same source adds that during the same period, the number of private dorms doubled, reaching from 2,210 to 4,406, comprising associations (2,894), foundation dorms (416), personal dorms (368), commercial dorms (666), and university dorms. When the number of students per state dormitory was 345 in the 2012-13 academic year, this figure increased to 776 by the 2021-22 period (Yurdakul & Şahin-Demir, 2022) (Figure 1).

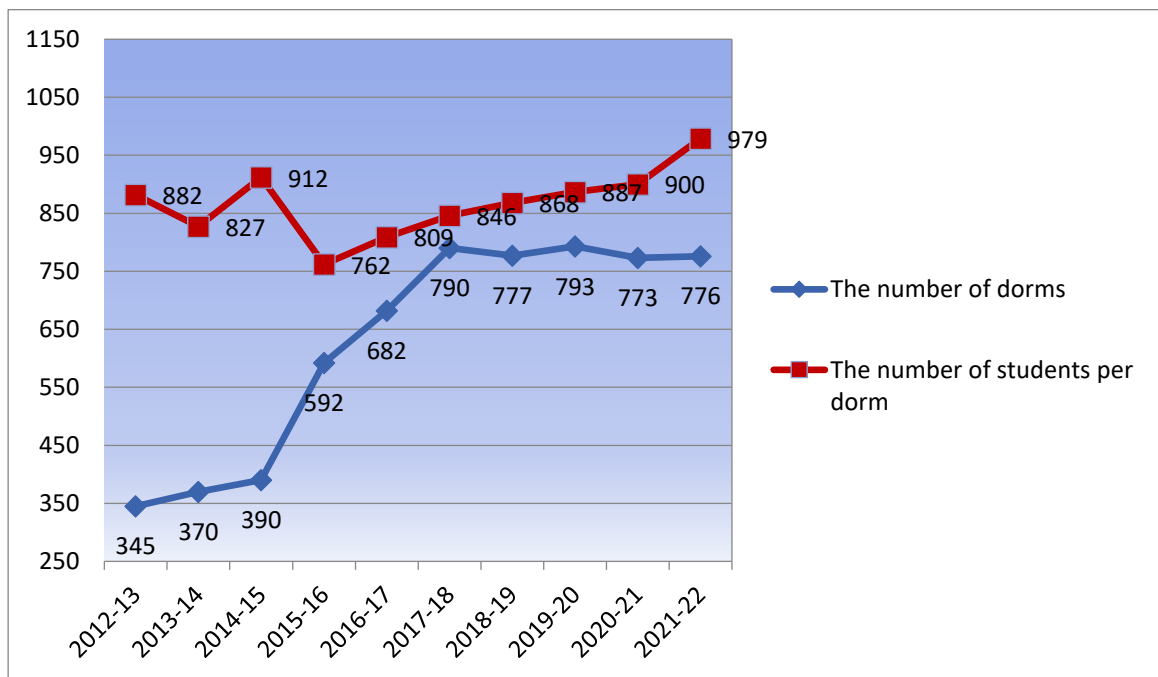


Figure 1 The changes in dorm capacities from 2012-13 to 2021-22 Academic Year (Yurdakul & Şahin-Demir, 2022)

The HES in Türkiye has undergone significant expansion over the years. Having a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in every city, when all components of the HES are planned accordingly, would naturally bring about an equivalent level of quality and meet the needs of students. However, this expansion neither contributed to academic quality and

efficiency in the HES (Armağan, 2014; Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2019) nor enabled an adequate capacity for state dormitory beds (Figure 2).

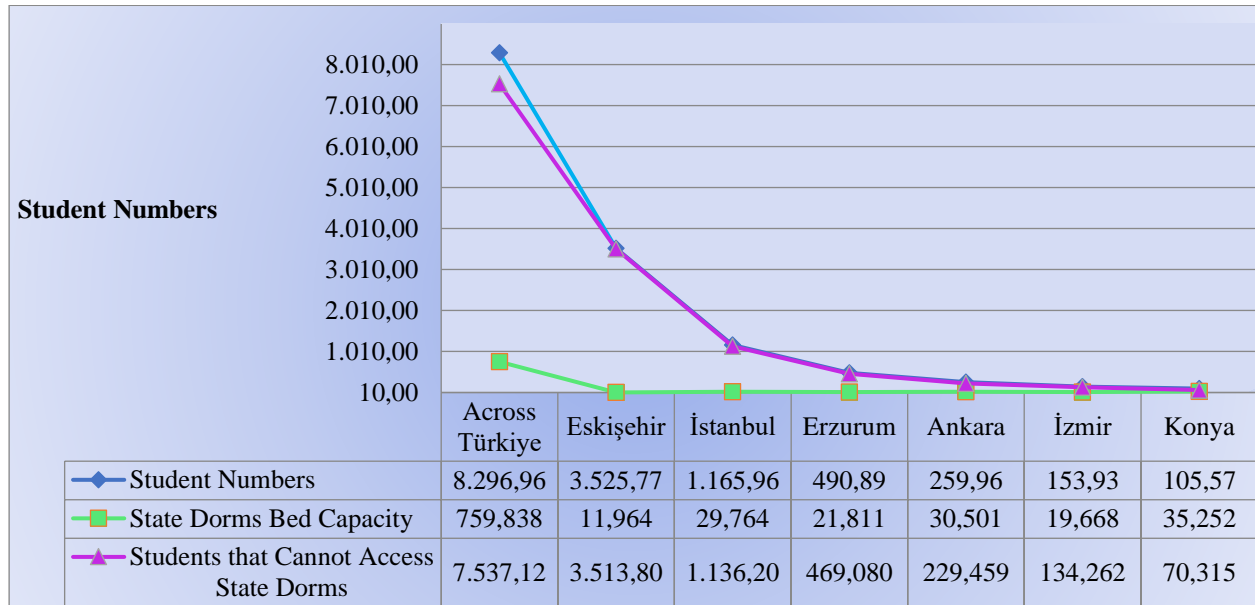


Figure 2 The Number of Students in Higher Education vs. The Bed Capacity in State Dormitories (2021-22) (MoNE, 2022; Data Source, 2022)

As Figure 2 suggests, in the 2021-22 academic year, the number of dormitories increased to 776 with 759,838 beds as of June (MoNE, 2022). During the same period, Eskişehir had the highest student population with 3,525,767, but only 11,964 beds were allocated in state dormitories (MoNE, 2022; Veri Kaynağı, 2022). This was followed by İstanbul, Erzurum, Ankara, İzmir, and Konya. Although more than half of the students studied in Eskişehir, İstanbul, and Erzurum, bed capacities were among the lowest compared to student numbers. Accordingly, 90.84% of students across Türkiye, 99.66% in Eskişehir, 97.45% in Erzurum, 88.27% in Ankara, 87.22% in İzmir, and 66.61% in Konya could not access state dormitories in the 2021-22 academic year. This serves as a recent proof of the unplanned expansion in the Turkish HE system that associates expansion only with new university openings, irrespective of investing in the necessary infrastructure, including student accommodation.

Turning to the current scenario, in the academic year 2022-2023, over half of university students have chosen to reside in the Anatolian (2,731,121) and Marmara (1,915,782) regions (CoHE, 2023). The Minister of Youth and Sports, Osman Aşkın Bak, announced plans for the 2023-24 academic year, stating that the HE Credit and Hostels Institution dormitories will

offer services with a capacity of 950,000 beds. The aim is to place students in the nearest dormitory possible, with a priority focus on those affected by the February 2023 earthquake (Sarıgöl Gündem, 2023). However, given the current student enrollment of 6,950,142 (CoHE, 2023), the state's provision of 950,000 dormitory beds falls short, covering only about 13.6% of the demand. Private dorms may not be financially accessible to many students, may not meet nutritional standards, and could be located far from campus. Consequently, a significant number of students opt for university and state dorms, offering time and cost savings, but unfortunately, these options are still insufficient in number. Thus, there is a pressing need to expand dormitory bed capacities in cities with a high density of students.

One of the challenges is the limited time that elapses between the announcement of YKS exam results and students securing accommodation before the start of the fall term, which has consistently been a brief period. For example, in the 2023-24 academic year, exam results were announced on August 19, 2023, and classes are scheduled to commence around the end of August or early September. Consequently, students are left with only about 10-15 days to find a place to live. Applications for state dorms began on August 29, 2023, and will conclude on September 2, 2023, lasting for only a 4-day period. This implies that by the time students learn the results of their dormitory applications, it may already be too late as their classes would have started. This excessively limited timeframe does not facilitate students in finding suitable accommodation. There is a need for reconsideration of the timing of university exams and their announcements.

Cost of Accommodation

Beyond the geographical aspect of accommodation, financial concerns loom large for both students and their parents. On June 7, 2022, Turkish parliamentarian Ali Haydar Hakverdi submitted a written inquiry to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, delving into the accommodation challenges faced by university students (Hakverdi, 2022). The inquiry briefly outlined the predicament of students who, during the 2021-22 academic year, found themselves compelled to seek lodging away from their families. Their preference was state dorms, and failing that, they resorted to private dorms or high-rent houses, putting a strain on their budgets. Hakverdi underscored the fact that lower-income students often had to interrupt their education even before it began. Urgent measures were urged to prevent the recurrence of these challenges.

Coming to 2023 fall semester, more than 898.000 students will start HE in Türkiye for the first time soon, filling 923,411 seats and making the capacity full at 99,8%, excluding over-34 women, earthquake survivors, and relatives of martyrs and war veterans (VOA, 2023). To start with a preferred accommodation for students due to its comparable affordability, HE Credit and Hostels Institution's (state) dorm prices, excluding the ones in Northern Cyprus, ranged from 275-450 ₺ in 2021-22, 500-800 ₺ in 2022-23, which will be around 345-570 ₺ in 2023-24, plus 855-1365 ₺ deposit (Başarı Sıralamaları, n.d.). Private dorms, on the other hand, with around 85-105% increase in prices compared to the previous year, charge annually 20.000-320.000 ₺ as of July 2023, indicating the average of 21 cities (Alagöz, 2023). As for the rentals, according to the data of an online real estate analysis platform, endeksa.com, they showed a 152% increase in 2021, and 233% increase since 2019 (Yurttan Sesler, 2022). The same platform states that as of June 2023, average rents in Muğla increased by 73% and reached 14,937 ₺; in Antalya by 310% with 10,397 ₺, and in İstanbul by 16% amounting to 8,107 ₺. İstanbul is currently the most expensive city in Türkiye (Aydın, 2023). According to Bahçeşehir University Economic and Societal Research Center (BETAM)'s Outlook of Rental Housing Market, average annual increase rate in rents in İstanbul was 109.5% in June 2023, with average rental house square meter price being 161 ₺ (Sözcü, 2023). In İstanbul, one has to pay from around 15.000- 60.000 ₺ for a 2+1, 30-40-year-old apartment building as of the summer of 2023 (Hepsiemlak, 2023).

İskan Aydeniz, an education coach residing in Diyarbakır, highlighted a significant concern regarding the rising costs in the country (Tanış, 2023). According to Aydeniz, this is the first time since 2003 that he has observed parents expressing such worry about sending their children to big cities:

The problem is not only foundation (non-profit private) universities losing their appeal but the opinions of parents whose children have been ranked in the top 5-7000 in the university entrance examination. They are worried; they ask: 'How are we going to afford to look after them by letting them go to big cities?'. For instance, the parent of a student who wants to study medicine with 7000th rank says on behalf of the child: 'I don't want to send him to İstanbul, Ankara or İzmir but want him to stay in Dicle and study here.'

The President of Parent Association, Ömer Yılmaz said the economic crises affected students' basic needs radically. He added that as their accommodation and nutrition needs are not met, last year around 110.000 students could not get enrolled to their university even

though they had been successful in the entrance examination (Tanış, 2023). Therefore, he underlined the need for the provision of accommodation first, and then, nutrition needs of students immediately.

The Vice President of the Republican People's Party, Ahmet Akın pointed out the difficulty for a university student to pay the rents and high dormitory costs. He informed that as a panacea, some of their municipalities will provide students with accommodation in suitable sites. These will be public housing or youth hostels. Students will also be getting financial aid from volunteering companies and individuals with the mediation of their municipality in this 2023-24 academic year (Evrensel, 2023).

Given the increases in all kinds of accommodation, the purchasing power and the rising inflation rates have not suggested desirable trends. Specifically, based on the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İş), poverty threshold in July 2023 rose to 37,974 ₺ and hunger threshold (a four-member family starvation limit) to 11,658 ₺, exceeding the minimum wage of 11,402 ₺ (Duvar English, 2023). For 2021, the inflation rate was suggested as 82.81% annually by the independent Inflation Research Group, ENAGroup (ENAG, 2022), which rose to 128.05% as of August 2023 (ENAG, 2023). The above explained disproportion between rising accommodation costs, inflation rates and diminishing income power highlight the belated call made to the state authorities to do their best to accommodate all university students with a reasonable cost and in the shortest time possible so that they can continue with their education under humane conditions.

Architectural and Managerial Issues in Dormitories

Another issue in dormitories has been identified to stem from their architecture. According to Akpınar (2014), this problem is rooted in the lack of a homely atmosphere, with a disregard for the spiritual and social aspects of human beings. Specifically, 64% of students expressed a preference to stay alone or with another student in a room, but not with more than eight students in total. Additionally, most students preferred to study in their own rooms rather than a common study area. Students were dissatisfied with not being able to invite guests to their rooms, along with concerns about tall dormitory buildings, overcrowded floors, and rooms lacking essential facilities such as a shower and a toilet (İnceoğlu, 1995). Arlı (2013) also highlighted the inadequacy of study spaces in a study conducted among students.

Residential students have reported another set of issues in both private and state dormitories, primarily related to dorm management. These encompass a range of concerns,

from undesirable hygiene conditions in food preparation areas to the uncleanliness of shared spaces such as bathrooms, toilets, cafeterias, and study rooms. Issues also extend to entry-exit hours, crowded spaces, and difficulties in personal relationships with roommates (Aslanargun, 2014; İkiz, 2008). Unhealthy nutrition emerged as a particular concern in the dormitory environment (Arlı, 2013). Additional problems include the absence of hot water, power outlets, or earthquake-resistant architecture in old state dorms, along with incidents of theft (Ekşisözlük, 2006). Some students have likened state dorms to prisons, expressing discontent with the insufficient availability of dorms and beds, a sentiment echoed in writings from 2017 and 2018 (Ekşisözlük, 2017).

Suggestions for Solution

This section aims to answer the second research question of “What are the solutions for the accommodation problem of Turkish university students in Türkiye?” Building upon the sources discussed in the preceding sections that highlight the various facets of the accommodation problem, this section puts forth suggestions for solutions and policies based on an extensive review of literature sources.

A circular letter addressing “Security and Housing Precautions at Universities” had been sent to municipalities (NTV, 2022). In response to the high cost of accommodation for students, the circular proposed measures to prevent extreme increases in rentals and dormitories. Moreover, low-income students were slated to receive support through scholarships and accommodation facilitated by non-governmental organizations and state institutions. To address the issue of inadequate capacity in dormitories, the circular highlighted plans to conduct needs analyses related to students' cities and counties, with a commitment to subsequently increase capacity. Arslan (2021) further suggests that for students studying in suburban university campuses who do not prefer dormitory accommodation, tiny houses can be considered as an alternative due to their easy manageability and suitability for a single person. However, the affordability of tiny houses for students remains uncertain.

In relation to the architectural and managerial challenges within dormitories, a study conducted by Kara et al. (2019) unveiled that 45.3% of students expressed a sense of solitude in state dorms, while 30.1% reported a similar feeling in private dormitories. The authors suggested that this might be correlated with the restricted choices available to students in state dorms when selecting roommates and determining the number of students per room. They underscored the potential psychological risks arising from feelings of isolation and health

concerns. Despite these issues, the authors concluded that the sole advantage of state dorms lies in their financial affordability. To address these challenges, they proposed the early allocation of a counselor instructor to students upon university registration, with additional support from the social services center. Furthermore, the authors advocated for the idea of initially placing students with similar characteristics, determined through tests administered by the Credit and Hostels Institution (i.e., being from the same city and department), in shared rooms to facilitate their adjustment to university life. They also recommended the design of dormitories resembling houses to foster a more comforting atmosphere for students.

Discussion

This review study investigated the fundamental challenges surrounding the accommodation problem for university students in Türkiye, spanning historical developments to the present day. It also explored the proposed solutions documented in the literature. Furthermore, the article concludes with recommendations formulated by the author.

Commemorating the centenary of the Turkish Republic in October 2023, it remains lamentable that the issue of housing for university students persists. Despite the constitutional assurance of the fundamental right to housing, the state has grappled with meeting the escalating housing demands of students, particularly in the context of the expanding higher education sector in Türkiye over the past two decades. A case in point is elucidated by Kiraz (2014) in his study, where, in Tokat, the availability of state dormitories with a capacity of 3000-5000 proved insufficient for the accommodation needs of the 20 thousand students. Consequently, those unable to secure a spot in state dormitories were compelled to seek housing in private residences, thereby imposing financial burdens on them.

According to Öztürk (2019), the planning of cities under the umbrella of overconsumption has led to a distinct positioning of universities. The concept of "one university in every city," viewed as one of the neoliberal policies aimed at urban development (Erilli, 2018), is perpetuated through the prioritization of spatial consumption over student welfare. The framework of neoliberal urbanity has provided an avenue to channel products created for capital disposal (Harvey, 2016) through students, who become instrumental in the credit mechanisms integral to the consumption system. With contemporary production centers concentrating in Far Eastern cities, the Western cities, traditionally synonymous with production hubs, have witnessed a dilution of this characteristic. Consequently, this shift has

relinquished primary housing rights in university cities to the purview of private capital, aligning with neoliberal policies (Kazgan, 2009).

The standard of student housing plays a pivotal role in influencing their academic success and social and personal development (Arlı, 2013). Therefore, the state's crucial role in providing essential housing opportunities cannot be overstated. Such initiatives would particularly benefit middle-income families, potentially motivating them to support and facilitate their children's education in cities beyond their residence.

Conclusions

This study sought to scrutinize the growing accommodation challenges encountered by higher education students. Employing document analysis as the principal method, a range of sources, including state statistics from websites, peer-reviewed journal articles, newspaper reports, and national and international reports, were consulted. The investigation spans from the inception of the Turkish Republic to the present day. The culmination of this analysis has resulted in the formulation of specific suggestions to address the identified issues.

The primary and frequently noted concern regarding the accommodation of higher education students revolves around the insufficient availability of state dormitory beds compared to the growing demand in higher education. This challenge has persisted since the establishment of the first university, Istanbul University, in 1933. The second concern centers around the surging cost of accommodation, driven by the general uptick in various expenses over recent years in Türkiye. This issue has been further compounded by the adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, casting a negative impact globally. The third identified problem stems from architectural inadequacies in dormitories, demanding reconstruction or reorganization to cultivate a homelier environment that caters to students' physical needs during their residency. Lastly, managerial shortcomings have impacted the quality of stay in dormitories, including constraints on entry-exit times, hygiene issues in common areas and food services, and the need for regulation of behavioral problems among students.

As we approach the centenary of the Turkish Republic, set to be celebrated on October 29, 2023, the recognition of the significance of human capital alongside physical capital has been aptly acknowledged by our state, as articulated in recent Development Plans. This understanding has translated into a significant expansion within the Turkish higher education system. This expansion underscores the heightened role of higher education in shaping qualified human capital, fostering critical consciousness in economic expansion, contributing

to democratization, and disseminating cultural values to society and future generations. As the realm of higher education undergoes significant expansion, the demand for accommodation has concurrently surged, driven by students parting ways with their families to reside in cities where their universities are located. A majority of these students find themselves compelled to opt for university or state dormitories, influenced by factors ranging from logistics to financial constraints. In the spirit of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk entrusting the future of the country to its youth, both private and state authorities bear the responsibility to address the pressing issue of student accommodation. In the 21st century, with students needing to compete and collaborate globally using cutting-edge technology, imperative foundational issues such as education, nutrition, and accommodation must be promptly resolved. Additionally, it is imperative to chart new objectives that can position Türkiye for a robust and impactful future.

Recommendations

The following are policy suggestions for stakeholders who may serve as policymakers within the higher education (HE) system. These include university presidencies, the Council of Higher Education (CoHE), and other state authorities involved in budget allocation and decisions concerning student accommodation. Private foundations are also encouraged to collaborate with the state in addressing this issue, offering support through funds, human resources, or equipment they can provide.

The most striking issue about the HE accommodation problem in Türkiye has been detected as the “insufficient capacity of the existing state dormitories” and “the high cost of accommodation” in rentals and private dorms. To increase the existing capacity in state dorms, the budget allocated from the Central Management Budget for HE can be increased and a specific policy to limit excessive increases in rents for students can be implemented. In addition, state and private sectors can cooperate to speed up the process of building more dorms. Universities can also get into contact with private sector for financial support as well as provision of accommodation in their own capacity. In this sense, to incentivize investments in the establishment of student houses, the private sector could be offered encouragement and incentives. Additionally, the state and volunteering private sector companies, offering accommodation scholarships to low-income students can be an option. Along with these, if dorms are built in the campus by providing various facilities ranging from sports to music and socializing, students will not be exposed to the traffic every day, save time, energy, and spare more time for studying and being with their friends in a safe area, enjoying the campus

atmosphere. Considering the importance of human capital, also highlighted in the 10th Development Plan, successful students can be given more opportunities for accommodation as they have more potential to be of use to the development of the country.

As for "issues related to the physical spaces in dorms", these challenges can be addressed through architectural adjustments, the use of attractive colors, and furniture designed to resonate with the preferences of the youth. Unused spaces in and around dormitory buildings can be repurposed to create quiet areas, such as self-study rooms, and small to medium-sized halls where students can gather, chat, and share meals, fostering a sense of community. Organizing social activity days, including events like film screenings and dance gatherings, can mitigate feelings of isolation, allowing students to enjoy themselves and form meaningful connections. By implementing such activities and introducing changes to the physical structure, dormitories can be transformed into more inviting spaces where students feel a sense of belonging and create cherished memories that will impact their lives for years to come. Additionally, providing more than one type of dormitory (with costs varying based on the amenities offered) allows students the flexibility to choose accommodations that suit their preferences. Furthermore, it is essential to plan accommodation alternatives specifically tailored to the needs of master's, doctorate, and international students by identifying the areas with the highest demand.

Addressing "dormitory management-related issues," including unclean common areas such as bathrooms and kitchens, unhygienic food services, overly restrictive entry and exit times, and an excessive number of students in dormitories, requires proactive measures by the management offices of individual dorms. Possible actions could involve seeking the opinions of residing students through questionnaires to understand both their satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The crucial aspect lies not merely in conducting these assessments but in earnestly aiming to resolve issues by actively following up on the outcomes of the questionnaires. Lastly, empowering students with more influence over the environments they inhabit is considered instrumental in enhancing overall quality and satisfaction levels.

For academics and prospective researchers interested in exploring the same or similar topics, it is recommended to consider conducting a mixed-method study. This approach can help mitigate the limitations associated with each individual method, providing a more comprehensive understanding. Another suggestion is to undertake a comparative study, examining accommodation issues experienced by students in other countries. Such a comparative analysis could offer insights that may be adapted to enhance our own system.

Ideally, planning a collaborative project involving state institutions, non-governmental organizations, universities, and private sector companies could be an effective strategy for actively addressing and solving housing problems faced by university students.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest

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It is a single-author study the processes of which have been carried out by the corresponding author.

Research involving Human Participants and/or Animals

This study, being a review, does not require Ethics Committee Permission.

Geçmişten Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin 100. Yılına, Yükseköğretim Öğrencilerinin Barınma Sorunu

Özet:

Türkiye, yükseköğretim sisteminde, özellikle 2000'lerden sonra, kayda değer bir genişleme sürecinden geçmiştir. Ancak bu genişleme, öğrencilerin barınma sorununu da beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu çalışma, eğitim aldıkları şehirlerde yaşamak üzere memleketlerini terk etmek zorunda kalan Türk yükseköğretim öğrencilerinin barınma sorununun incelenmesine odaklanmıştır. Doküman analizi olan yöntem, hakemli dergi ve gazete makalelerini, ulusal ve uluslararası rapor ve istatistikleri ve çeşitli çevrimiçi kaynakları içermektedir. Bunlar, 1923'de Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin ilanından, 2023'te Cumhuriyet'in 100. yıl dönümüne kadar olan süreyi kapsamıştır. Temel bulgular kısaca, üniversite ve devlet yurtlarındaki yetersiz yatak kapasitesine, barınma maliyetindeki çarpıcı artışlara ve yurtlardaki servisin kalitesini ve öğrencilerin günlük rutinlerini olumsuz etkileyen yurt mimarisi ve yönetsel sorunlara işaret etmiştir. Daha kapsamlı bir analiz için, ilerideki araştırmacılara, karma metotla yapacakları bir çalışma önerilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: yükseköğretim öğrencileri, barınma maliyeti, yurt kapasiteleri, yurt yönetimi, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin 100. Yılı

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