



HYBRID UNIVERSITY: A CASE STUDY OF PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP IN TURKEY

HİBRİD ÜNİVERSİTE: TÜRKİYE'DE ÖZEL-KAMU İŞBİRLİĞİNE DAİR BİR ALAN ÇALIŞMASI

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ABSTRACT: This study is an attempt to explore the development of a new hybrid model of a both state-funded and private-supported higher education in Turkey. While there have been such kind of structures throughout the world for a long time, this kind of a university being public but at the same time being supported by a philanthropic non-profit organization is quite new in Turkey. This quality is argued to add significant advantages to those universities enabling them to utilize both the public and private models' benefits. However, there is not yet any specific legislation regulating this kind of models on a statutory basis. This paper, which puts forth the characteristics and advantages of this new hybrid model on the case of Abdullah GÜL University (AGU), will present the need for a legal basis on which this kind of hybrid models representing both public and private characteristics will be able to rise and flourish freely.

Keywords: public-private partnership, philanthropy, non-profit organizations, higher education, Hybrid University

ÖZ: Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de hem devlet tarafından finanse edilen ve hem de özel sektör tarafından desteklenen hibrid bir yüksek öğretim modelinin gelişimini anlamaya yönelik bir girişimdir. Her ne kadar bu tür yapılar dünyada uzun zamandan beri var olsalar da, bir üniversitenin devlet üniversitesi olup aynı zamanda kar amacı gütmeyen hayırsever örgütler tarafından desteklenmesi, Türkiye'de son derece yeni bir olgu. Bu niteliğin, bu üniversitelere hem kamu hem de özel vakıf üniversite modellerinin faydalarından yararlanma gibi önemli avantajlar sağlayacağı öne sürülmektedir. Ancak halı hazırda, bu tür yeni modelleri yasal bir zemin üzerinde yapılandırarak özel bir hukuki düzenleme bulunmamaktadır. Bu makale, Abdullah GÜL Üniversitesi (AGU) modelinden yola çıkarak bu yeni hibrid /karma modelin nitelik ve avantajlarını ortaya koyduktan sonra, hem kamu hem de özel nitelikler arz eden bu tür hibrid/karma modellerin ortaya çıkabilmesi ve özgürce gelişimi için yasal bir zemine ihtiyaç bulunduğunu öne sürecektir.

Anahtar sözcükler: kamu-özel işbirliği, hayırseverlik, kar amacı gütmeyen örgütler, yükseköğretim, Hibrid Üniversite

1. INTRODUCTION

Although the tradition of supporting state-funded universities by non-profit organizations (NPOs) is not new in the United States (Heller, 2006, p.12), it is quite a fresh development being experienced in Turkey. As the number of universities has almost tripled for the last ten years, from 60s to 170s, public universities in Turkey have significantly found themselves in a wild competitive environment, which they were not used to experience up until that time. Recruiting high-quality teaching staff was no longer as easy as it used to be, because private universities were offering much more than that of those offered by public universities. Under these circumstances, public universities turned their faces to philanthropic supports, in order to provide required capacity to compete with private universities. However, this development did not take place as an ordinary philanthropic support such as money transferring from donors to universities. Rather, it was not a typical fund-raising activity. It emerged as a novel partnership between the university and voluntary organizations, presenting a new hybrid model of higher education. In this model, supports provided by non-profit organizations to universities were not only financial, but at the same time, were strategic.

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This model is argued to surmount both the public and private universities for it does not only mitigate the shortfalls of both models but it also has the advantages of both systems at one hand. These state-funded and private-supported universities will be called here as “Hybrid Universities”. This paper analyses the characteristics and advantages of these hybrid universities vis-à-vis both the public and private universities in Turkey and suggests developing and popularizing this framework in Turkish higher education system.

Numerous studies have been conducted to discover the potential benefits of public-private partnerships throughout the world (Buckingham, 2009). However, it is pointed out that there were currently very few theoretical works available to guide an investigation into the policy process involved in the formulation and implementation of public-private partnerships in higher education (Otterbourg, 1989). As for Turkey, it is hard to find any research examining the outcomes of such kind of relationship configured in providing higher education services in Turkey. In order to address this shortfall, this paper examines the experiences of AGU: a voluntary-supported public university in Kayseri. Findings, revealed from both qualitative and quantitative data, highlighted the benefits of this public-private partnership and it is concluded that while the model exhibits one of the peculiar examples of a very strong higher education framework, it needs urgent statutory legal basis in order to be able to develop and spread.

2. LİTERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Public-Private partnership

Uhlic (1997) defined a partnership as an arrangement between two or more parties that is based on satisfying identified mutual needs and characterized by its longevity, inclusiveness, and its cooperation. According to Rigden (1991) partnerships are simply a means by which two or more dissimilar parties join together to pursue the goals neither can achieve on their own otherwise. In public private partnership, cooperation is established between a public agency and a private organization through which the primary objective is providing quality service or product. Jezierski (1990) defined public-private partnership as a consortium providing flexible, voluntary, cooperative decision-making structures. Many scholars admitted that public-private partnerships have the inherit benefit of being cost-reducing solutions that maintain the same or better levels of quality and can aid in successfully leveraging limited resources to provide high-cost and high-need services (Noble, 1996, p.1).

The politics of delivering public services in collaboration with the private sector is spreading all around the globe. Engaging with the voluntary sector is seen as strengthening public services through the ability to provide services for parts of society that the state has found difficult to reach (Paton *et al.*, 2007). In this relationship both public and private organizations share responsibilities in providing services. Quasi-markets are the one among those kind of partnerships in which the service still funded by the state but the providers could be public, private and voluntary sector (Lewis, 2005). While this arrangement could be organized in many forms, in this paper, our focus will be on the partnership between the public and voluntary NPOs. NPOs are those self-governing bodies, which are independent of government, not profit distributing, and receive some of their income from voluntary donations (Kendall and Knapp, 1996). They are believed to be cost effective, flexible, innovative, localized and committed to the poor (Uphoff, 1995). They fill the gap created by a shrinking state by reaching out to those most vulnerable to market forces (Young and Powell, 2002). Most of them are composed of volunteers. Shin and Kleiner (2003) define a volunteer as any individual who offers him/herself to a service without an expectation of a monetary compensation. Volunteers' contributions to society are staggering (Stolinski *et al.*, 2004, p.1). Its annual value is estimated to be hundred billions of dollars (Independent Sector, 2001). This enormous numbers led scholars to find out what factors under which circumstances affect people's voluntary attitudes.

In search of improving the quality of their services, public organizations across the world are engaging with these non-profit and voluntary organizations (Anheier, 2006, p. 38). Particularly, the voluntary sector's capacity to engage with segments of society that the state cannot reach, argued to underpin much of these public-private partnerships improvement agenda (Paton *et al.*, 2007). The expertise that the private sector holds is another key driver for public sector engagement with voluntary organizations (Gazley and Brudney, 2007). Despite the arguments associated with the costs and benefits of public-private partnerships, research concludes that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages (Austin, 2003). It is argued that the public-private partnership containing voluntary sector increases efficiency, equity and responsiveness (Salamon, 1995). Some of the characteristics of a successful public private partnership are outlined by Waddock (1991) as: mutual trust, authorization, balanced power between the parties, clarity of objectives, and strong leadership.

2.2. Philanthropy in higher education

Philanthropy is argued to be different from conventional charity in its emphasis on dealing with causes rather than symptoms of social problems (Anheier and Leat, 2006, p.2). What is novel in new philanthropy is the direct relation of "giving" to "outcomes" and the direct involvement of givers in philanthropic action and policy communities (Ball and Junemann, 2011, p.648). This is a kind of creative philanthropy. Anheier and Leat (2006, p.4) meant by "creative philanthropy" the unique capacity of foundations to support innovative solutions to social problems, to promote innovation, and to help sustain change initiatives. Creative philanthropy is deemed as a very critical tool to be adapted in supporting higher education.

The increase in the number of students attending higher education reflected as a growing financial burden on the governments throughout the world. This development led governments stepping back from their commitment to fund all or most of the cost of higher education (Heller, 2006, p.92). Diversification of and market-oriented approaches to funding and larger private share of higher education costs were regarded as the changes that had been taken place in higher education worldwide (Woodhall, 1992). In light of the shrinking budgets, escalating costs and pressure for higher education, universities in various countries have recognized that public capacity is insufficient to provide the desired educational services unless private resources are provided. The number of public-private partnerships in the higher education appears to be growing due to the general pressure on school systems to improve performance. As Otterbourg (1986) contended, public-private partnerships in education came out for traditional approaches had not been capable of meeting community expectations for school improvement.

A global tendency towards the adoption of various cost-sharing models within higher education emerged (Johnstone and Marcucci, 2010). Many countries have adopted a cost-sharing model or have raised the level of tuition fees in order to meet the demand for higher education (Fengliang, 2012, p.193). Global financial crisis also urged many countries to reduce higher education funds. These negative developments called forth private voluntary contributions to universities.

Public-private partnership has been an educational buzzword since early 80s (Gothold, 1985). Since then it has become an important catch phrase in the educational literature (Sweet-Holp, 2001, p.2). It is considered critical for also meeting the targets of education for all (World Bank, 2003). With the realization that the private and public sectors do share common concerns about the quality of public education and that both sectors can benefit from each other's expertise, educational partnerships were established (Grigore, 2004, p.1). Among benefits of this kind of partnership to business are improved employee morale, improved public relations, increased understanding of public schools and exposure for their products or services (Niederhaus, 1991, p.22).

One of the initial contributions to higher education was John Harvard's donation of some money and his personal library to the College of Newton (Quincy, 1977, p.11). In Europe, wealthy individuals established endowments that supported the prominent universities of Paris, Cambridge, and Oxford (Schachner, 1962). Later, a tradition established which was spread among almost all higher education

institutions, in which universities called upon their alumni for continued support annually. These kinds of activities have become increasingly prevalent over the last decades (Wunnava and Lauze, 2001). Thus, foundations have never been more important than they are today (Anheier and Leat, 2006, p.8). Many of the universities around the world can stand on their own feet relying on exclusively on the basis of philanthropic supports by individuals, foundations, and companies.

In search of resources, schools are creating partnerships to include neighbouring businesses and voluntary organizations. Although fund-raising remains one of the most popular ways of reaching private support, various activities are included in private support for education such as gifts, donations, scholarships, partnerships, user-fees or service charges, voluntary labour and funds raised by students, teachers and parents (Pray, 1981; Brown, 1990). Establishing a separate structure mostly as a foundation is regarded essential not only to increase funds but also to improve the community spirit (Neill, 1983; Padover, 1993).

As the field of philanthropy in higher education grows, research into its effectiveness becomes even more critical. In comparison with many other research fields, the literature review on philanthropic fund-raising in higher education is argued to be limited and recent (Liu, 2006, p.125). Zhao (2001, p.428) argues that this fact represents a serious gap in the literature and understanding of issues and problems related to the increasing diversification of funding sources in higher education, thus hindering the innovation of effective policy alternatives to redress them.

3. AGU: A NOVEL MODEL OF PRIVATE-SUPPORTED PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

In the academic year of 2011-2012, it was figured out that more than 4 million students have been enrolled at Turkish Universities. Almost 900.000 of this number were new students. The increase in the number of students at universities appears to be tripled in the last fifteen years. However, in the same period, the increase in the number of teaching staff was far below this level (OSYM, 2013). This unbalance between the increase of student and teaching staff figures accompanied by uneven distribution of these staff and students among universities and regions, were regarded as the major problems in the Turkish higher education (SPO, 2013, p.211). The strategy of increasing the number of universities was a quick reaction by the governments to meet these challenges. Consequently, 50 new public universities and 36 private universities have been founded between 2006 and 2011 reaching at the total number of 165 in all (OECD, 2011, p.1). However, not only could this strategy, which aimed at meeting the challenges of higher education, not be able to provide remedies for the existing problems, but it also generated new challenges. As the share of private universities out of the total number of universities increased, a flow of high-quality teaching staff and high- quality students from public to private universities was experienced. This unprecedented development led public universities to develop their own solutions in order to preserve their positions in terms of staff and student quality.

Currently in Turkey, public universities are all free of charge for the students. Students do not have to pay anything to those universities. However, there are 66 private universities, where students do pay their tuition fees. Although there is not any proof that private universities are much more successful than public universities, it is evident that most of the students having a certain level of success prefer enrolling to those universities except some prominent public universities, which have proved their performances since decades. Private universities offer those successful students totally or partly free education. Nevertheless, those students, being under a certain income and success level have to join to the public universities.

However, it is not the case for academicians. Academicians have the opportunity to attend the universities whichever they want, whether public or private. In light of the fact that public universities pay less than those paid at private universities, it is understandable for the academicians to be willing to work at private universities. Nonetheless, this trend goes to a point where most of the high-quality academicians depart from public universities to join at private universities.

For the attitude of Turkish society is known to be conducive to philanthropy, this unfavourable development led many public universities in Turkey to turn their faces to philanthropic supports and creative public-private partnerships. Although there were some sort of philanthropic activities in Turkish universities before, it was never appeared as systematically as the case that has emerged for the last two years in AGU. One of the most influential factor underlying this development was obviously the close interest and support of Abdullah GÜL, president of Turkey. His rigorous encouragement led many of the prosperous businessman of the country into supporting AGU. In other words, this belated development of attracting philanthropic supports to universities first occurred systematically in AGU. Therefore, this development which could be regarded as substantially novel will be discussed here in depth.

AGU was founded in 2010 in Kayseri as a technical university, the medium instruction of which is English. Soon after this, a foundation namely “*The Foundation of Supporting Abdullah GUL University* (AGUF)” was appeared as the concerting efforts and money of 33-founder businessman. Initially, 15 million dollars were collected (AGUF, 2012). This financial capacity provided by AGUF enabled AGU to offer relatively high salaries to the teaching staff more than those paid at public and even many private universities. Not only can such high salaries provide a competitive advantage in recruiting high-quality staff, but it also enables AGU to attract high-quality students to the university as well as to support them.

In its vision statement it is declared that the utmost goal of the foundation is to take part in rising a generation which will lead world in a positive direction. This statement differs from similar organizations’ goals as to not focusing on merely the tools such as funding the projects or the buildings, but also focusing on the spirit of the higher education and its societal reflections. Some of the ongoing items of the missions are:

- To contribute to increasing quality of life,
- To support sustainable and environment-friendly economic development,
- To enable usage of knowledge for the general prosperity of the communities,
- To contribute to increase the quality of higher education in Turkey (AGUF, 2012).

As it is obvious from the above statements, this new partnership model attempts to address systemic problems in the educational and societal environment rather than providing mere buildings or physical equipment to the university. As Otterbourg (1986, p.3) suggests, not only does this creative partnership pay for lecturers / teaching staff or scholarships, but at the same time it stimulates and supports staff development, enrichment programs, basic skills projects and many other efforts. From this point of view, AGUF stands as an original and innovative NPO exerting for developing a public-private partnership prototype to be modelled by other universities throughout the country.

What AGUF tries to accomplish are as follows:

- Providing attractive living and working conditions for teaching staff that any other university cannot offer,
- Providing a desirable living and education quality for students,
- Developing the academic capacity of AGU constantly,
- Stimulating scientific and technologic innovations,
- Supporting the development of a socially and culturally rich campus,
- Supporting the development of an education environment which combines theory and practice,
- Supporting the creation of an academic atmosphere in which research, production and analysis of original knowledge is conducted,
- Strengthening the relationship between the university and the community,
- Supporting the development of a university which produces, practices, develops and renders knowledge to the service of the community,
- Supporting an academic approach that is susceptible to and responsible for the societal problems (AGUF, 2012).

4. METHOD

The objectives of this study are twofold: The first one is to find out the strengths and weaknesses of both public and private universities as compared to each other. The second one is to figure out to what extent AGU-AGUF partnership model fills the gaps of those challenges exist in Turkish higher education.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect qualitative data. This method is considered as an appropriate way of finding out what the perspectives of people are as well as for collecting information (Woods, 1986, p.62; Bailey, 1987). In the first stage, we interviewed 50 academicians who also had various managerial posts at different four universities (i.e. two public and two private), in order to assess the advantages and disadvantages that the universities experience. Respondents were questioned about the strengths and weaknesses of the universities and what kind of a public-private partnership model would contribute to the development of Turkish higher education.

In the second part of the research, we conducted 20 interviews with the managers of AGU and executives and members of AGUF regarding the missions and activities of the foundation. Besides, quantitative data were obtained from interviews *via* a questionnaire of 16 items developed in the form of a five point Likert scale. In this part, to what extent the partnership model developed by AGU and AGUF corresponds with the strengths of both public and private universities is examined.

5. FINDINGS

Both the strengths and weaknesses of the public and private universities that were identified through the data we obtained from face-to-face interviews are as follows:

Table 1: Strengths and Weaknesses of Public and Private Universities.

Public	
Strengths	Job security for teaching staff A guaranteed amount of fixed fee for teaching staff Being free for all the students Constant and regular revenue Ability to provide timely required buildings and instruments Having adequate statutory legal basis
Weaknesses	Inadequate financial capacity relying heavily on public funding Strict governmental controlling on spending and investments Difficulties in launching change initiatives freely Political influences and pressures To be totally bound to exhaustive legislation Lack of performance-based payment for teaching staff Lack of the ability to attract and recruit high-quality teaching staff Lack of capacity in the selection and enrolment of students Lack of capacity to offer extra benefits for attracting quality students Rigidity in the determination of curriculum Lacking competitive strategies Little attention to outcomes Lack of transparency
Private	
Strengths	Having the ability to offer high payments to high-quality teaching staff Having the ability to attract high-quality students

Flexible working schedules
 High level of transparency
 Flexible spending and investment options
 Having managerial and financial autonomy
 Performance based payments to teaching staff
 Being free from bureaucratic formalities
 To pursuit competitive strategies
 Having various financing strategy options
 Responsiveness to needs of society and economy

Weaknesses

Being paid education
 Being profit oriented rather than academic oriented
 Unaffordable high tuitions for average income students
 Lack of job security for teaching staff
 Elusiveness in promotion and rewards
 Gaps in the legislation regarding procedures
 Institutionalization problems

After determining the strengths and weaknesses of these universities, we imagined a university model combining the strengths of both public and private universities (Table-2). Then, we asked to the managers of AGU and members of the foundation to what extent AGU-AGUF model represents these features *via* a questionnaire consisted of 16 items developed as a five point Likert scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree). In this phase, totally 20 interviews were conducted.

Table 2: A New Model Combining the Strengths of Public and Private Universities.

	New Model	Mean	SD
Features	Job security for teaching staff	4,15	1,089
	A guaranteed amount of fixed fee for teaching staff	4,30	1,080
	Being free for all the students	4,65	,933
	Constant and regular revenue	4,00	,973
	Ability to provide timely required buildings and instruments	3,80	,695
	Having the ability to offer high payments for quality teaching staff	4,60	,502
	Having the ability to attract quality students	4,25	,966
	Flexible working schedules	3,90	,788
	High level of transparency	3,80	1,005
	Flexible spending and investment options	3,40	1,046
	Having managerial and financial autonomy	2,25	1,069
	Performance based payments to teaching staff	3,95	,759
	Being free from bureaucratic formalities	2,75	1,019
	To pursuit competitive strategies	4,25	,716
	Having various financing strategy options	4,05	1,050
	Responsiveness to the needs of the society and economy	4,10	,967
	Having adequate statutory legal basis	2,30	1,080

Respondents pointed out that most of the features of the strengths of public and private universities could generally easily be observed on the model developed by the cooperation of AGU and AGUF. On one side, it owns the common strengths of public universities being a public university. On the other side, it also acquires the features of private universities owing to the ability of partnership with AGUF. With the support of AGUF, AGU now offers the teaching staff a performance-based payment nearby a fixed amount of salary. This feature attracts high-quality

teaching staff to the university. At the same time, AGU offers all the students who enrols in the university a considerable amount of scholarship, one term studying abroad, free student hall during education and job assurance to those who graduate successfully (AGUF, 2012). This makes the university significantly a desirable place to study.

The system of public universities in Turkey cannot easily respond to the needs of society and the economy because of its rigid and centralized structure. A decentralized structure and greater autonomy is regarded as a key factor for universities to enable them to fulfil their missions and to provide a high-quality education that can respond to the needs of the society. Autonomy comes along with accountability for the appropriate use of resources, open and transparent decision making processes, and attention to the desired outcomes for the university, students and the public (World Bank, 2007, p.9). Flexible working schedules, high level of transparency, flexible spending and investment options and having managerial and financial autonomy are those qualities, which public universities need to acquire in order to operate in flexibility and to be responsive to the ever-changing needs of the society. With the increased flexibility, school managers can rely on their judgment when making decisions and implementing creative initiatives. However, at the same time, they are also obliged to ensure accountability and must base decisions on law and/or regulations (O’Looney, 1992, p. 15).

However, as can be seen on the table, “*managerial and financial autonomy*” (Mean=2.25, SD=1.06) and “*being free from bureaucratic formalities*” (Mean=2.75, SD=1.01) were pointed out as the weakest characteristics of the model by the respondents. The other item marked by the participants as not strong as other features was “*Having adequate statutory legal basis*” (Mean=2.30, SD=1.08). Though AGU is a public university relying mostly on the statutory regulations the new hybrid model developed by the partnership with AGUF is stated to lack adequate statutory basis. The participants told that they initiated some sort of amendments in the legislation in order to provide required legal basis for their activities and development of the new model. They exemplified the amendment made in the 56th section of the Higher Education Law of 2547 in order to enable those foundations which are established for supporting a public university to be exempt from some sort of taxes (Official Journal, 2012). However, they argued that there still exists room for improvement on this way.

6. CONCLUSION

Day by day, public organizations across the world more fully engage with the private partnerships in order to provide quality and efficiency in the services they deliver. This is also the case for higher education. Universities try to multiply their financial resources by establishing partnerships with the NPOs. Although this improvement has been taken place in various countries since long time, it is a quite new development for Turkish higher education. Rather, the structure of higher education system in Turkey is organized in ways that limit its ability to attract systematic philanthropic donations and other supports. The biggest share of university revenue comes from public funding. Although some individual donations exist, there had not been any systematic public-private partnership, which could create a new breath in the Turkish higher education, until the AGU was founded.

However, as the number of universities has been tripled for the last two decades, a severe competition has come out among those universities such as attracting high-quality teaching staff and high-quality-students. Public universities appear to fall behind in this competition for their rigid bureaucratic structure and limited funding resources. This challenge has led public universities to search new ways of funding in order to adapt competitive advantages.

AGU is one of those public universities developed an original public-private partnership model. A considerably strong foundation was established to support the university not only for providing scholarships, but also for developing a systematic philanthropic framework, which takes part in almost all the stages from determining strategies to fulfilling the goals and missions, which will carry the university to the future.

In sum, findings revealed that most of the strengths of both public and private universities were combined in the AGU-AGUF partnership model. However, in terms of autonomy and flexibility, the model did not appear at the point where it should be in order to reach its goals effectively. Lack of adequate statutory legal basis was also specified as a weak point of the model by the respondents.

These findings reveal that in order to improve the quality and efficiency in the Turkish higher education and to be able to respond to the needs of the society, a high priority has to be given for designing an appropriate public/private partnership model exhibiting both public and private universities' strengths in the same breath. Being the first initiative in developing such kind of a public-private partnership model in the Turkish higher education, AGU-AGUF hybrid model is considered to be very valuable.

It is hoped that this initial research attempt will make a sensation for similar studies, which would provide the universities effective clues for developing new public-private partnership models.

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Extended Abstract

Bu çalışma, Türkiye’de hem devlet tarafından finanse edilen ve hem de özel sektör tarafından desteklenen hibrid bir yüksek öğretim modelinin gelişimini anlamaya yönelik bir girişimdir. Her ne kadar bu tür yapılar dünyada uzun zamandan beri var olsalar da, bir üniversitenin devlet üniversitesi olup aynı zamanda kar amacı gütmeyen hayırsever örgütler tarafından desteklenmesi, Türkiye’de son derece yeni bir olgudur. Bu niteliğin, bu üniversitelere hem devlet hem de özel (Bu çalışmada vakıf üniversiteleri özel üniversite olarak anılacaktır) üniversite modellerinin faydalarından birlikte yararlanma gibi önemli avantajlar sağlayacağı öne sürülmektedir. Ancak halihazırda, bu tür yeni modelleri yasal bir zemin üzerinde yapılandıracak özel bir hukuki düzenleme bulunmamaktadır. Bu makale, Abdullah GÜL Üniversitesi (AGU) modelinden yola çıkarak bu yeni hibrid modelin nitelik ve avantajlarını ortaya koyduktan sonra, hem kamu hem de özel nitelikler arz eden bu tür hibrid modellerin ortaya çıkabilmesi ve özgürce gelişebilmesi için yasal bir zemine ihtiyaç bulunduğunu öne sürecektir. Yükseköğretimde giderek artan maliyetler, rekabet ve yüksek kalite beklentisi, üniversiteleri farklı finans seçenekleri arama yoluna itmektedir. Bu seçeneklerden en çok tercih edilenlerden bir tanesi de özel sektör işbirliği veya hayırsever desteklerine başvurulmasıdır. Bu konuda başta ABD olmak üzere pek çok ülkede, özel sektör işbirlikleri, hayırsever desteklerine başvurma ve mezun katkılarında yararlanma uygulamaları uzun yıllardan beri yürütülmektedir. Türkiye’de, her ne kadar vakıf üniversiteleri bulunsun ve bu kurumlar bütünüyle özel sektör tarafından finanse edilse de, sistematik bir model dahilinde devlet üniversitelerin özel sektör/hayırseverler tarafından desteklenmesi uygulamasına yakın zaman dek rastlamak mümkün değildi. Hayırsever destekleri, bir takım binaların/laboratuvarların/tesislerin yapılması ve buralara isim verilmesi şeklinde tezahür etmekteydi. Bir devlet üniversitesinin vizyon belirlemeden, nitelikli hocaların teminine ve desteklenmesine, üniversitenin tanıtımına, başarılı öğrencilerin üniversiteye kazandırılmasına kadar bütün yükünü belirli bir model çerçevesinde paylaşan bir özel-kamu işbirliği ilk defa, Abdullah GÜL Üniversitesinin kurulması ile hayat buldu. Abdullah GÜL Üniversitesi, hedeflerinin gerçekleştirilmesinde kendisine destek olmak üzere Türkiye’nin en önde gelen işadamlarına yükseköğretime model teşkil edebilecek güçlü bir vakıf kurdurmayı başardı. Malvarlığı 20 milyon \$’ın üzerinde bulunan bu vakıf, sadece binaların yapılmasında değil, kampüs alanının mimari ve mühendislik projelerin hazırlanmasında, yurtdışından nitelikli hocaların teminine, mevcut akademisyen kadrosunun belirli bir şablon çerçevesinde teşvik edilmesine ve ödüllendirilmesine, ülkenin en başarılı öğrencilerinin bu üniversiteye kazandırılmasına, bu maksatla yapılacak tüm tanıtım faaliyetlerinin yürütümüne kadar muhtelif pek çok alanda inisiyatif üstlenmiş ve benzerine rastlanılmadık bir şekilde güçlü bir ortaklık ve işbirliği modeli geliştirmiş görülmektedir. Hatta ve hatta bu okuldan mezun olacak öğrencilerin bir dönem yurtdışında okutulması ve mezuniyet sonrası iş garantisi de söz konusu bu modelin içinde yer alan çarpıcı uygulamalardandır. Bu çalışmada, Abdullah GÜL Üniversitesi ile Abdullah GÜL Üniversitesini destekleme vakfı tarafından ortaya konulan bu son derece özgün kamu-özel ortaklık modelini incelemenin ötesinde, bu modelin devlet üniversiteleri ve özel(vakıf) üniversitelerinin ayrı ayrı sahip oldukları avantaj/dezavantajları hangi ölçüde bünyesinde barındırdığı da araştırılmaktadır. Bunun için öncelikle devlet ve özel üniversitelerin yöneticileriyle yapılan birebir röportajlar aracılığı ile, mevcut modellerin (devlet/özel) avantaj/dezavantajları belirlenmeye çalışılmış, sonrasında ise Abdullah GÜL Üniversitesi ve Abdullah GÜL Üniversitesini Destekleme Vakfı yöneticileriyle yapılan röportaj ve likert ölçeğine göre hazırlanmış bir soru formu aracılığıyla bu yeni modelin taşıdığı özellikler belirlenmeğe çalışılmıştır. Elde edilen verilere göre bu yeni hibrid modelin, bir yandan devlet üniversitesi olması nedeniyle devlet üniversitelerinin sahip olduğu çalışanlara iş güvencesi, öğrenciler için ücretsiz öğrenim imkanı, sürekli gelir gibi avantajları kullandığı, öte yandan ise destekleme vakfı aracılığıyla özel üniversitelerin sahip oldukları çalışanları performansına göre ücretlendirme, daha rahat yatırım ve harcama imkanları gibi esnek uygulamaları hayata geçirme imkan ve kapasitesine sahip olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Ancak tüm bu avantajlarına rağmen katılımcılar, yeterince idari ve finansal bağımsızlığın bulunmamasını ve bürokratik formaliteleri, modelin en zayıf noktaları olarak işaret etmişlerdir. Her ne kadar vakıf desteği vasıtasıyla özel sektör benzeri bir takım esnekleri bulunsun da, bu modelin kendine has bir yasal altyapısının bulunmaması ve

diğer devlet üniversitelerinin tabi olduğu yasal düzenlemelere tabi olması nedeniyle, bir takım bürokratik formalitelerle uğraşmak zorunda kalındığı ve bu durumun verimliliği azalttığı anlaşılmıştır. Bu sıkıntıları aşmak üzere, üniversite ve vakıf yöneticileri bu yeni modelle ilgili yasal altyapıyı sağlamaya yönelik Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu ve yasama organı nezdinde girişimlerinin olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Özetle, yükseköğretimde dünyada yaşanan gelişmelere paralel olarak Türkiye’de de, devlet-özel sektör işbirliğine yönelik farklı modellerin gelişimine imkan sağlayacak yasal altyapının temin edilmesi gerektiği, bu noktada Abdullah GÜL Üniversitesi örneğinin, ciddi bir model olarak ele alınıp geliştirilebileceği, bu sayede hem devlet üniversitelerinin giderek artan rekabet ortamında ayakta durup gelişim gösterebilmelerinin önünün açılacağı ve hem de toplum-üniversite kaynaşmasına katkıda bulunulabileceği anlaşılmıştır. Sayıları iki yüze yaklaşan Türkiye’deki üniversitelerin kalite çıtalarının yükseltilmesi, iyi işleyen bir rekabet ortamının varlığı ile mümkündür. Bu rekabet ortamında devlet üniversitelerinin, güçlü özel üniversitelerle rekabet edebilmesinin yollarından bir tanesinin de sistematik olarak özel sektör/hayırsever desteğinin sağlanması olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu nedenle bu makalenin, Türkiye’deki yükseköğretim sisteminin gelişimine ve yükseköğretimde devlet-özel işbirliği konulu literatüre katkıda bulunarak bundan sonraki çalışmalara ışık tutması beklenmektedir.

Citation Information

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