**PUBLICATION PERFORMANCE OF ECONOMISTS AND
ECONOMICS DEPARTMENTS IN TURKEY (2006–2011):
AN UPDATE AND COMPARISON**

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to evaluate the publication performance of economics departments and economists in Turkey in the years 2006–2011, and then to compare the results of this study to those of the previous period (1999–2005) in order to gain an impression of long-term trends. The comparison produces several findings. First, the publication performance of Turkish economists and economics departments is improving. Second, even though there are new entries, seven research-based universities are among the top ten performers in both periods. Third, in the economist rankings, the dominance of three of these, Koç, Sabancı, and Bilkent, is apparent. Fourth, Turkish economists usually prefer to publish in Turkey-based journals, and publication in elite journals is limited to Koç, Sabancı, Bilkent, and Bilgi universities.

Keywords: rankings, economics departments, economists, Turkey

JEL Codes: A 11, A 20

1. Introduction

There has been a growing interest in work measuring the performance of economics departments and economists in recent years. During the last decade, a large number of studies in this field have appeared for different parts of the world. For example, Mixon and Upadhyaya (2001) ranked economics departments in the US South, Pomfret and Wang (2003) measured the research outputs of Australian universities' economics departments, and Kalaitzidakis et al. (1999a) ranked economics departments in Greece and Cyprus. Faria (2000) assessed the research performances of academic economists in Brazil, while Ben-David (2010), Coupe (2008), and Coupé and Walsh (2003) did the same for Israel, Ukraine, and Ireland respectively. Macri and Sinha (2006) ranked and compared the performances of economists and economics departments in Australia and New Zealand, and Lubrano et al. (2003) ranked economics departments in Europe and then compared them to Californian departments. Kalaitzidakis et al. (2003) ranked economics departments, both in Europe and worldwide, according to research published in the top 30 economics journals. Coupé (2003) also ranked economists and economics departments worldwide, while gender (Medoff and Skov, 1990), race (Agesa et al., 2002), and ideology (Lee, 2008) based rankings for economists and economics departments are also available in the literature.

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Performance studies in economics or other disciplines attract attention for several reasons. First of all, higher education is largely financed by public sources, so these studies are important not only for policy makers and academics but also for the general public, for the sake of accountability. Secondly, with the increasing role of private institutions in the higher education market, they also guide private bodies, for the same reason. Thirdly, with the flourishing numbers of higher education institutions, prospective students are having difficulty making their school choices, and performance studies may provide them with information to facilitate this.

Evaluating the publication performance of the economics departments and economists in Turkey for the 2006–2011 period, this study aims to meet the abovementioned needs of individuals and institutions, particularly, of course, in Turkey. Studies of the performance of economics departments and economists here are limited. The first such was carried out by Cokgezen (2006a) for the 1999–2003 period and then extended by the same author (Cokgezen, 2006b) to cover the period 1999–2005. The methodology for the present study is very similar to the latter, which thus allows comparison of the two sets of results to give us a picture of the long-term (1999–2011) trends for economics departments and economist performances and their publication patterns in this country.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the data sources and methodology employed in the measurement of performances of departments and individuals. In Section 3, the results are discussed. Section 4 summarizes the major findings of this study and compares the results with those of the earlier study for a long-time overview.

2. Data and Methodology

Researchers disseminate their scholarly output through publications in books, journal articles, and thesis form. Generally, any single piece of research in any one of these forms is considered a 'publication' and contributes to the researcher's performance and academic reputation. In the publication performance studies, however, 'publication' usually refers solely to journal articles. This is due to a lack of (1) data sources that provide easy access to the other forms of publications, and (2) widely accepted evaluation criteria for works other than articles. Hence, only journal articles are counted as 'publications' here also.

In this study, the *Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)* database was used to collect information on articles published between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2011. The *SSCI* is a multidisciplinary index of social sciences covering over 2474 journals across fifty social sciences disciplines, edited by the Institute of Scientific Information. The journals in the *SSCI* also provide the basis for the *Journal Citation Reports* from which the most known journal evaluation criterion, *impact factor*, is derived. All Turkey-addressed publications under the *SSCI Economics Journals* category for the years 2006 to 2011 are counted as outputs of Turkish¹ economists.

The source of data is one of the major differences between the methodologies of the

¹ The term 'Turkish' in this paper applies to researchers affiliated to an institution in Turkey or Northern Cyprus.

previous (Cokgezen 2006b) study and this. In that study, the *Econlit* data base was used. Even though the larger coverage (more than 1000 journals) gives *Econlit* an output advantage over *SSCI* (310 journals in 2011), the lack of any evaluation criteria for the *Econlit* journals means that most of this output remains idle. *Econlit* was used in the previous study, because of the limited number of publications by Turkish economists providing an adequate data base. Thus also, despite the adequacies, Bauwens' (1998) criteria were used to evaluate these publications, in order to count as high an output as possible. The increasing number of high-impact journal publications since then, however, has enabled the use of the *SSCI* to access publications of Turkish economists in this study.

The second methodological difference between this and the earlier study lies in the type of institutions considered economics departments. When Turkey-addressed publications are searched, the results show publications that are listed at three different types of sources: a university in Turkey, a university in Northern Cyprus and a non-university, public or private institution in Turkey. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a self-declared state, only recognized by Turkey in the international arena, so the universities in this part of Cyprus show their addresses via Turkey. Beyond the political reasons, there are also close and varied ties between Turkish and Turkish Cypriot universities. Since their number² and contribution to the output was limited, they were ignored in the previous study. However, we are unable now to omit the noteworthy performance of the Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), and thus it is decided to include Turkish Cypriot universities in this study. For the same reason, the high performance of staff at the Central Bank of Turkey (CBT) led also to non-university institutions being taken into account.

Each publication recorded contributed to both the author's score and that of his/her institution. It should be mentioned that the term 'economics department' and 'economist' are used more loosely here than in the formal definitions of each university. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of 'economics', academics from other disciplines also contribute to the economics literature. Therefore, if any researcher from a related discipline has published an article indexed in the *SSCI Economics Journals*, s/he finds a place for her/himself in the economists ranking and contributes to the score of the institution to which s/he is affiliated, even if s/he is not a member of the 'Department of Economics' at her/his institution.

For a fair evaluation, one should consider quality differences between the journals. Therefore, at the second stage of analysis, quality differences are taken into account in order to evaluate the publication performances of the departments. The quality of a publication is related to the journal in which the article is published. There is, however, no single measure of weighting journals which economists agree upon, and so it was decided to use two of the three weighting measures that had been used in the previous study. Bauwens' (1998) measure is not used since it reflects journal evaluations from over ten years ago. Many new journals have been published in the field in the intervening period and the relative importance of some of the existing journals has changed considerably.

The first measure used for weighting journals employs *the impact factors* of economics journals listed in the *SSCI* between 2006 and 2011. *The impact factor* of a

² Officially, there are seven universities in Northern Cyprus.

journal shows the average number of current citations of articles published by a journal over the previous two years. This data is derived from Citation Indexes. A citation index is a measure of the frequency with which the ‘average article’ in a journal is cited in a particular year. The impact factor is characterized as a measure of a journal’s relative importance in the field as compared to that of other journals.

Despite its pervasiveness, *the impact factor* has drawn much criticism from researchers who claim that the journal evaluation criteria suffer from technical defects (Ramdsen, 2009) and editorial manipulation (Wilhite and Fong, 2012). This gave way to the development of alternative journal evaluation methods. One of these, developed by Kalaitzidakis, Mamuneas and Stegnos (2011), henceforth *KMS*, is used as the second measure for weighing journals in this study. This is the updated version of their previous study (Kalaitzidakis et. al, 2003) which was used before, in Çokgezen (2006a and 2006b). The methodologies of the two versions are more or less the same: we preferred the newer one in order to take into account the new journals that have proliferated in recent years. The *KMS* weighing scheme is based on the number of citations of articles published between 2003–2008 received in the preceding ten-year period, excluding self-citations and adjusted for impact and age and corrected for size of journal. From this, the authors derive an index for 209 journals, ranging from 100 (*American Economic Review*) to 0 (*Transformations in Business and Economics*).³

In both measures, *impact* and *KMS*, each publication contributes to both the economist's and her/his department's performance, according to the weighting used. In coauthored articles, the weighted value of an article is divided and distributed equally among the authors and their institutions.

As in the case of similar studies, the methodology used in this paper has several shortcomings:

- articles written by Turkish economists not listed in the *SSCI Economics Journals* list are not included,⁴
- academic outputs other than original articles, like books, book reviews etc., are not included,
- intra-journal qualities are ignored (all articles in any single journal are treated equally),
- length differences among articles are ignored,
- publications between 2006 and 2011 are favored,
- relatively large departments are favored in department rankings,⁵
- the two weighting schemes used each have their own, specific shortcomings.

Performance evaluations should, therefore, be interpreted within these limitations.

3. Results

Our search in the *SSCI Economics Journals* category gave a total of 920 article records from 123 Turkey-addressed institutions. The overwhelming majority of these

³ Full list available at Kalaitzidakis et al. (2010).

⁴ In order to provide a more complete view, it should be interesting to analyze also results of other selected journals included in other prestigious indexes like SCOPUS of Elsevier.

⁵ See Subsection 3.1.

institutions were universities. Researchers from various governmental bodies (like the Central Bank of Turkey, regulatory authorities, ministries, etc.) and from private companies also contributed to this output. The number 920 may seem quite modest for a country like Turkey, which had 127 universities in 2011, with thousands of staff. However, compared to the 374 Turkey-addressed articles in *SSCI Economics Journals* during the 1999–2005 period, this represents a noteworthy increase.

The contribution of institutions and economists to this performance and distribution of the 920 articles by journals are as follows.

3.1 Performance of institutions

Unlike the previous period, almost all of the universities in Turkey contributed to the output, notwithstanding their very uneven performance. While some long-standing economics departments with about a hundred staff made only minor contributions, some relatively new departments with limited staff showed outstanding performance. In some universities, the burden is shouldered by a limited number of authors, sometimes by only one, while in others it is spread more widely. Some non-academic institutions, particularly the Central Bank, performed better than many university economics departments.

Table 1. Quality-based performances of economics departments in Turkey

	1999-2005				2006-2011			
	Institution	Impact score	Institution	KMS score	Institution	Impact score	Institution	KMS score
1	Bilkent	38.30	Koç	532.13	Koc	45.36	Koc	261.81
2	Koç	20.29	Bilkent	516.70	Bilkent	39.55	Bilkent	169.76
3	Sabancı	6.97	Sabancı	248.64	ODTÜ	38.57	Sabancı	151.9
4	ODTÜ	6.94	ODTÜ	39.47	Doğu Akdeniz	23.03	Bilgi	145.3
5	Ankara	5.65	Başkent	18.88	Bogazici	21.58	ODTÜ	89.71
6	Boğaziçi	4.27	Bilgi	18.88	Sabancı	19.98	Bogazici	58.64
7	Bilgi	2.59	Ankara	18.37	Hacettepe	18.87	Cent Bank	35.36
8	Balıkesir	2.34	Boğaziçi	17.38	Bilgi	17.32	Hacettepe	29.48
9	İTÜ	2.23	İTÜ	9.04	İTÜ	16.52	Ankara	21.73
10	Celal Bayar	1.76	Celal Bayar	8.90	Ankara	13.99	TOBB	18.37

Table 1 shows the ten best performing institutions based on the two evaluation measures for the 1999–2005 and 2006–2011 periods. The 1999–2005 rankings are taken from the previous study for comparison. It is obvious that a fair comparison should be based on per staff scores, meaning department score should be divided by the number of staff. Determination of this denominator is a problematic issue, for several reasons: (1)

some institutions do not have a formal economics department; (2) for some universities, records of staff numbers are unavailable, even on their official websites; and (3) in all institutions, people from other departments, like agriculture, sociology, and engineering, also contributed to the performance of the institution. Therefore, this calculation was not performed, so these rankings favor larger institutions.

For the 2006–2011 period, two major findings are quite apparent. First, Koç and Bilkent universities are at the top of the list for both the *impact* and the *KMS* measures. Second, seven institutions (Bilkent, Koç, Sabancı, ODTU, Ankara, Boğaziçi, and Bilgi) are ranked in the top ten for both of the listings, although the orders change. Hence, we can clearly state that our institutional rankings provide a good approximation for at least these institutions. Another interesting finding of the ranking is the performance of the CBT. By publishing 54 articles in 17 *SSCI* Economics Journals, CBT staff outperformed those of many universities and took seventh place in one of the rankings. Another noteworthy performer is TOBB University, the youngest university in the list. Even though it was only established in 2003, by finding a place in the top ten, TOBB sent positive signals regarding its future research potential.

Comparison of the two sets of rankings indicates several points. First, the seven universities that feature in both rankings for the latter period do so also for the former. This result may be interpreted as a performance-based indicator of the research tradition at these universities, at least so far as economics goes. Second, private universities are represented heavily in all rankings as compared to their number as a proportion of the total universities in Turkey. The number of private universities in all rankings ranges from four to six in each top-ten list, while the proportion of private universities was 34 percent in 2005 and 39 percent in 2011. Moreover, if per capita calculations were possible we would have seen even more private universities in the list, since public university faculties are larger than those of private universities. Third, the mean value of the *impact scores* is much higher, while the standard deviation of the *KMS scores* in the second period is much lower than in the first. Considering that the *KMS* measure gives much higher weights in absolute terms to higher quality journals than does the *impact* factor, this suggests that institutions and economists in Turkey are not only putting more effort into publishing more in *SSCI* Economics journals, but also in high quality journals generally.

3.2 Performance of economists

The top ten performing Turkish economists for the 2006–2011 period are listed in Table 3, together with those from the previous, 1999–2005 list. Current rankings indicate the following results. First, showing an outstanding performance, Remzi Sanver of Bilgi University took the top spot in both rankings. Through this performance, Mr. Sanver contributed about 65 percent of his institution's total by the *KMS* score and 50 percent by the *impact*. Second, rankings show a dominance of private universities, particularly Koç, Sabancı, and Bilkent. In the *impact* factor ranking, academics from eight different universities found a place while only people from Koç, Sabancı, and Bilkent universities are listed in the *KMS* ranking. The difference reflects quality differences in preferred publication outlets.⁶

⁶ See section 3.3

Table 2. Top ten economists

1999-2005						
Rank	Name	Impact Score in 2005	Affiliation	Name	KMS Score in 2005	Affiliation
1	Tayfun Sönmez	7.01	Koç	Tayfun Sönmez	307.64	Koç
2	Mehmet Baç	5.35	Sabancı	Özgür Kıbrıs	106.03	Sabancı
3	Murat Usman	3.16	Koç	Mehmet Baç	91.98	Sabancı
4	Utku Ünver	2.77	Koç	Utku Ünver	80.27	Koç
5	Hakan Berument	2.49	Bilkent	Semih Koray	74.84	Bilkent
6	Ivan Pastine	2.35	Bilkent	Farhad Husseinov	72.13	Bilkent
7	Osman Zaim	2.35	Bilkent	Hakan Orbay	50.02	Sabancı
8	Semih Koray	2.33	Bilkent	Ahmet Alkan	47.12	Sabancı
9	Kamil Yılmaz	2.33	Koç	Ivan Pastine	40.23	Bilkent
10	Özgür Kıbrıs	2.20	Sabancı	İnsan Tunalı	36.52	Koç

2006-2011					
Name	Impact Score in 2011	Affiliation	Name	KMS Score in 2011	Affiliation
Remzi Sanver	8.44	Bilgi	Remzi Sanver	94.93	Bilgi
Ugur Soytaş	7.60	ODTU	Ozgur Yilmaz	69.67	Koc
Ramazan Sari	6.66	ODTU	Mehmet Bac	35.32	Sabancı
Cengiz Kahraman	6.35	ITU	Refet Gurkaynak	31.09	Bilkent
Salih Katircioglu	5.97	Doğu Akdeniz	Selva Demiralp	31.07	Koc
Bora Aktan	5.00	Yasar	Taner Yigit	23.18	Bilkent
Mete Feridun	4.91	Doğu Akdeniz	Abdurrahman Aydemir	16.62	Sabancı
Refet Gurkaynak	4.78	Bilkent	Utku Unver	20.39	Koc
Mehmet Bac	4.56	Sabancı	Mehmet Barlo	17.59	Sabancı
Cem Demiroglu	4.21	Koc	Kamil Yılmaz	12.48	Koc

Evaluation of the two period rankings together shows that, although losing some ground, the dominance of the three private universities (Koç, Sabancı, and Bilkent) in individual performances is continuing, especially in high quality publications. As with the institutional performances, these results show that the staff of these three universities are highly motivated to publish in high quality journals, while members of the other institutions are also increasingly eager to find themselves a place in these outlets.

Beside institutional motivations, the individual characteristics of the listed economists may explain their high academic performances. The main common feature of these economists is their education. Most of them hold a PhD from a Western country, particularly the US. Being trained in competitive academic environments in which publication performance is the basic source of promotion and tenure might be expected to have influenced these economists' performances.

3.3 Publication patterns of Turkish economists

The ten *SSCI Economics Journals* most preferred by individual Turkish economists in the 2006–2011 period are listed in Table 3. A total of 427 out of 920 articles (about 46 percent) during the five years were published in these ten journals.

Table 3. Economists' most preferred journals in 2006-2011 period	
Journal	Number of articles
IKTISAT ISLETME VE FINANS	141
APPLIED ECONOMICS	69
APPLIED ECONOMICS LETTERS	45
EMERGING MARKETS FINANCE AND TRADE	40
ECONOMIC MODELLING	35
ECONOMICS LETTERS	22
ACTUAL PROBLEMS OF ECONOMICS	22
DEFENCE AND PEACE ECONOMICS	18
JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT	18
ENERGY ECONOMICS	17
Total	427

The list shows that the journal *İktisat, İşletme ve Finance (IIF)* is the most preferred publication outlet, with 141 publications by Turkish economists. *IIF* is the only Turkey-based journal listed among the *SSCI Economics Journals*. Previous studies in this realm (Coupe, 2002, Lubrano et. al., 2003) indicate that economists in other countries are also inclined to prefer outlets published in their countries or regions. The previous study in Turkey showed similar patterns, too. Hence, *IIF*'s approximately 15 percent share of total publications for the 2006–2011 period is in conformity with other studies and not surprising. The most distinguishing feature of *IIF* is its acceptance of publications in

Turkish too. The comfort for Turkish economists of expressing themselves in their native language rather than in English, the lingua franca of the academic world, may explain why *IIF* is their most preferred journal.

IIF is followed by *Applied Economics*, *Applied Economic Letters*, and *Emerging Markets Finance and Trade*. The high publication frequency of the first two journals may explain their position in the lists. These three journals together with *Defence and Peace Economics* were again, as in the previous study, among the top ten most preferred journals of Turkish economists.

In this study, the performance of Turkish economists in the top economics journals is also evaluated. Determination of the 'top' journals is a problematic issue since there is no single, authoritative list. To deal with this, the top ten journals in two well-known, recent journal-ranking studies (Ritzberger, 2008; Kalaitzidakis et. al, 2011) are assumed to represent the 'top' journals, the combined lists comprising a total of 13 journals. Listed as the top journals in Ritzberger's ranking are *Econometrica*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *Review of Economic Studies*, *Journal of Political Economy*, *Journal of Finance*, *Journal of Monetary Economics*, *American Economic Review*, *Journal of Economic Theory*, *Journal of Econometrics*, and *Games and Economic Behavior*. In Kalaitzidakis et. al (2011), *American Economic Review*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *Journal of Political Economy*, *Econometrica*, *Review of Economic Studies*, *Journal of Monetary Economics*, *Review of Economics and Statistics*, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *Journal of Economic Theory* and *Economic Journal* are ranked thus.⁷

Table.4 Publications in elite journals in 2006-2011 period

Journal	Name	Institution	Year
<i>Journal of Economic Theory</i>	Özgür Yılmaz	Koç	2011
	Mehmet Barlo	Sabancı	2009
	Utku Ünver	Koç	2006
	Tayfun Sönmez	Koç	2006
<i>Review of Economics and Statistics</i>	Abdurrahman Aydemir	Sabancı	2009
	Refet Gürkaynak	Bilkent	2011
<i>Journal of Monetary Economics</i>	Refet Gürkaynak	Bilkent	2007
<i>Games and Economic Behavior</i>	Remzi Sanver	Bilgi	2009
	Özgür Yılmaz	Koç	2009
	Özgür Yılmaz	Koç	2010
	Özgür Kıbrıs and İpek Gürsel Tapki	Sabancı	2010
<i>Economic Journal</i>	Remzi Sanver	Bilgi	2007
	Kamil Yılmaz	Koç	2009

In the 2006–2011 period, 13 records were found in five of the abovementioned 13 top

⁷ Listed here in order according to their six-year ranking geometric means.

journals (Table 4). These publications were the products of ten economists from four different private universities, namely Koç, Sabancı, Bilkent, and Bilgi. These results show that, in Turkey, only members of these four universities have been able to publish in the leading economics journals, which is very similar to the result of the previous study. The only difference is the inclusion of Bilgi University in this list, due to the performance of Remzi Sanver. The performance of these ten economists in prestigious journals also largely explains their universities' positions in the *Departments Rankings* (Section 3.1).

4. Conclusion

The primary aim of this article has been to evaluate the publication performance of economics departments' and economists in Turkey during the years 2006–2011. Secondly, the results of this study have been compared to the previous period (1999–2005) results in order to acquire an impression of long term trends.

The first conclusion drawn from the study relates to an increasing number of publications. The number of articles published in *SSCI Economics Journals* in the 2006–2011 period was more than double that of the previous period. This is partly attributable to the inclusion in *SSCI* of *IIF*, a Turkey-based economics journal publishing articles in both Turkish and English. The increasing awareness and acceptance of international standards for recruitment and promotion by an increasing number of institutions may be another explanatory factor for the higher publication rate.

Regarding institutional rankings, the study shows several major findings. First of all, seven universities being ranked in the top-ten for both periods and measures indicates that a performance-based research tradition has been established in these universities. A close examination of recruitment, promotion, and remuneration policies of these universities may guide policymakers or other university administrations that aim to develop institutional performances. Second, in both periods, private universities are overrepresented even though our calculation method favors state universities with their larger economics departments. This result can be attributable to the higher motivation of the administrations of these universities to adopt and practice performance-based evaluation policies.

In the individual economist ranking, the major finding is the dominance of Bilkent, Koç, and Sabancı university staff, in both periods. These three universities are well-funded, research-oriented private universities following highly selective recruitment policies. Despite the three universities' dominance, the 2006–2011 period also featured entries from other universities, particularly that of Remzi Sanver of Bilgi University, in the top position. This may be interpreted as signal of approaching competition from other universities. A history of Western, particularly American, education is a common characteristic of the listed economists, which can be considered one of the explanatory factors for their performances.

There has been no major change in publication patterns of Turkish economists over the 13-year period covered by this and the previous study insofar as there is a preference for publication in Turkey-based journals, that is, those accepting articles in the authors' native language. Five journals – *Applied Economics*, *Applied Economic Letters*, *Emerging Markets Finance and Trade*, and *Defence and Peace Economics* – find a place among the ten most preferred journals for Turkish economists in both periods. Regarding

publications in elite journals, the dominance of Bilkent, Koç, and Sabancı university staff continued in 2006–2011, the only exception being Remzi Sanver of Bilgi University.

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