



Türkiye Academic Momentum Report 2026



210 Universities



84,033 Scientists

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This report has been developed under the framework of **AD Scientific Index** as part of its 2026 analytical reporting series on academic performance, institutional scale, and ranking dynamics across Brazil.

AD Scientific Index Ltd.
London, United Kingdom

Foreword

Academic systems today are no longer defined only by size, history, or institutional reputation. They are increasingly judged by how effectively they transform scientific capacity into measurable visibility, competitive positioning, and sustained academic progress. This report reflects the core philosophy of the AD Scientific Index: to move beyond static ranking tables and offer a more dynamic, data-driven understanding of higher education performance.

Türkiye represents one of the most substantial and complex higher education systems in its region. With a broad institutional base, a strong public-university backbone, a selective but increasingly visible private sector, and an emerging group of younger universities, the country offers a layered and evolving academic landscape. Yet scale alone does not automatically translate into elite global concentration. For this reason, Türkiye should be understood not only through how many universities it has, but through how effectively those universities convert presence into upper-tier international visibility and sustained ranking momentum.

This report has been prepared to examine that landscape from multiple angles. It looks beyond overall rank position and explores how competitiveness in Türkiye is distributed across institutional types, disciplinary fields, and recent ranking trajectories. In doing so, it highlights several key questions: Where are Türkiye's strongest academic anchors located? Which subjects produce the country's clearest areas of international visibility? How do public and private universities differ in structural role and performance? And which parts of the system are moving forward, remaining stable, or losing ground?

At AD Scientific Index, we believe that transparency, accessibility, inclusivity, and near real-time academic analysis are essential for understanding the future of higher education. Rankings are most useful not when they are treated as fixed outcomes, but when they are used as analytical tools to identify structural strengths, hidden imbalances, and strategic opportunities for improvement. In that sense, this report is not only a national ranking perspective. It is also a strategic interpretation of Türkiye's current academic position and its possible future direction.

The findings in this report suggest that Türkiye has already achieved meaningful institutional breadth and visible academic capacity. Its next challenge, however, is to deepen quality, strengthen elite conversion, widen subject-level excellence, and build more consistent upward momentum across a broader range of universities and disciplines. The institutions and fields that can combine scale, quality, and sustained progress are likely to define the next phase of Turkish academic competitiveness.

We hope this report will serve not only as a descriptive assessment, but also as a practical resource for university leaders, policymakers, researchers, and all stakeholders interested in the future of Turkish higher education.

Prof. Dr. Murat Alper

Founder, AD Scientific Index

Executive Summary

This report provides a strategic overview of the Turkish higher education landscape based on the AD Scientific Index 2026 and examines institutional rank position, funding-type differences, subject-level competitiveness, and recent ranking momentum. As a starting point, Türkiye presents a broad and differentiated academic system with **210 ranked universities, 84,033 scientists, 134 public universities, and 76 private universities**. Alongside this established institutional base, the country also has a visible group of **young universities (under 30 years)**, indicating ongoing system renewal and the emergence of newer competitive actors. In other words, Türkiye's higher education structure is shaped not by a single institutional model, but by the coexistence of a large public backbone, a smaller but important private sector, and a younger generation of universities that is gradually building national and international visibility.

Despite this broad institutional base, Türkiye's academic system does not yet translate scale into deep elite concentration at the highest global levels. No Turkish university appears in the Top 100, only **1 university** is placed in the Top 500, and **18 universities** are represented in the Top 1000, while the majority of institutions are concentrated in the **1001–5000** band. This means that Türkiye has already achieved substantial system breadth, but its upper-tier international visibility remains selective rather than widely distributed.

A central conclusion of the report is that Türkiye's academic structure is shaped more by **system breadth than by top-end global depth**. The national university base is substantial and diversified, but the country's strongest global representation remains concentrated in a relatively limited number of institutions. In the overall ranking, **Hacettepe University** holds the strongest world position in Türkiye, while **Koç University** stands as the country's best-performing private university. These institutions function as visible academic anchors, yet they also highlight how concentrated Türkiye's top-end visibility still is.

The report also shows that the Turkish system is structurally led by its **public universities**. Public institutions outperform private institutions in overall median world rank, with a median of **2,654** compared with **4,933** for private universities. Public universities also dominate the country's elite layer, accounting for the only Top 500 institution and **16 of the 18 Top 1000 universities**, while private universities contribute only **2 Top 1000** entries. This suggests that Türkiye's academic visibility remains anchored primarily in the public sector, even though private universities play an important role in selective areas of excellence.

Another major finding is that Türkiye's disciplinary structure is **uneven rather than uniform**. The strongest subject fields are not necessarily the largest or most internationally prominent by reputation. **Education** stands out as the country's most competitive field by conversion into upper-tier positions, followed by **Architecture and Design, Agriculture and Forestry, and Medical and Health Sciences**. By contrast, broader fields such as **Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Business and Management, and Law** do not convert their institutional presence into Top 500 representation as effectively. This shows that subject-level excellence in Türkiye is concentrated in a limited number of academic areas rather than evenly distributed across the system.

Funding type also shapes subject competitiveness in important ways. Public universities perform better in most fields and provide the broadest national academic base, especially in **Education, Agriculture and Forestry, Medical and Health Sciences, Engineering and Technology, and Natural Sciences**.

However, private universities are not absent from the competitive frontier. In selected fields such as **Law, Art and Humanities, and Social Sciences**, private institutions produce some of the strongest single-institution performances in the country. The national picture is therefore not one of simple public dominance in every domain, but of a broad public backbone combined with more selective private-sector pockets of strength.

The momentum analysis further reveals that Türkiye is **not moving uniformly across disciplines**. Some fields, especially **Education** and **Natural Sciences**, show positive or near-positive median movement, while others - most notably **Law, Others, Business and Management, History, Philosophy, Theology, and Economics and Econometrics** - display more negative momentum overall. This suggests that the Turkish higher education system should not be evaluated only through current position, but also through its direction of movement across fields. Progress is occurring, but it is selective and uneven.

Overall, the strategic message of the report is clear: Türkiye has a large and institutionally diverse academic system, supported by a strong public base, a selective private layer, and an emerging younger generation of universities. However, its strongest international visibility remains concentrated, its disciplinary profile is imbalanced, and its future competitiveness will depend less on expanding institutional count and more on improving elite conversion, deepening subject-level excellence, strengthening rank quality, and building more consistent upward momentum across a wider set of fields. The universities and subject areas that can combine breadth, quality, and sustained movement are likely to shape the next phase of Turkish academic competitiveness.

Key Messages / Big Picture

1. Türkiye has a broad university system, but elite global concentration remains limited.

With 210 ranked universities, Türkiye has a substantial academic base. However, the distribution across world-rank bands shows that the system is concentrated far more heavily in the middle tiers than at the top: there are no Top 100 institutions, only 1 Top 500 institution, and most universities fall in the 1001-5000 range. This means that Türkiye has institutional scale, but not yet deep concentration at the very highest levels of global academic competition.

2. Public universities are the main structural backbone of Turkish academic visibility.

The public sector clearly leads in overall competitiveness. Public universities not only account for the majority of institutions in the system, but also achieve a much stronger overall median world rank than private universities and dominate the national Top 1000 layer. In structural terms, Türkiye's current academic profile is built primarily on the strength of its public universities.

3. Private universities matter, but mainly through selective excellence rather than broad system leadership.

Private universities do not match the public sector in depth or overall rank distribution. Yet they remain strategically important because they contribute several highly visible institutions and perform strongly in selected fields. Their role in Türkiye is therefore not one of system-wide dominance, but of targeted competitiveness in particular niches.

4. Türkiye's strongest fields are concentrated in a limited set of disciplines.

The country's subject-level structure shows that excellence is not spread evenly. Education, Architecture and Design, Agriculture and Forestry, and Medical and Health Sciences emerge as the strongest fields by upper-tier conversion and visibility. These areas represent Türkiye's clearest academic strengths and provide some of its most competitive international subject-level positions.

5. Large subject presence does not always translate into strong upper-tier conversion.

Some fields with wide institutional coverage do not perform especially well in converting that coverage into Top 500 representation. This is particularly visible in Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Business and Management, and parts of Law. The broader implication is that subject expansion alone is not sufficient; the critical issue is how effectively that expansion is converted into stronger rank quality.

6. The Turkish system combines a broad public base with narrower private competitive pockets.

Across most subjects, public universities provide better median rank outcomes and broader national coverage. At the same time, private universities lead or compete strongly in a few selected areas, especially where a limited number of institutions achieve high visibility. This suggests that Türkiye's academic structure is not homogeneous, but layered: broad public capacity on one side, selective private excellence on the other.

7. The system is not moving in one direction; momentum is selective and field-dependent.

The ranking-momentum figures show that some subject areas are improving while others are losing ground. Education and Natural Sciences show the most favorable median momentum, whereas fields such as Law, Business and Management, and Economics and Econometrics display more negative patterns. This means that Türkiye's future academic position will be shaped not only by where it stands now, but by which subjects are gaining or losing competitiveness over time.

8. The main challenge for Türkiye is no longer scale alone, but quality conversion.

Türkiye already has a sizable institutional system. The more strategic issue is how to transform institutional breadth into stronger upper-tier global presence. That means increasing the number of universities in the Top 500 and Top 1000, improving subject-level elite density, and reducing the gap between broad participation and high-end performance.

9. Subject balance will be critical for long-term academic resilience.

A system that depends too heavily on a narrow set of stronger fields may gain visibility, but it may also remain structurally imbalanced. Türkiye's long-term competitiveness will depend on whether it can preserve strengths in Education, Architecture, Agriculture, and Medical fields while also improving weaker large-scale areas such as Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Business, and Law.

10. Türkiye's next phase of competitiveness will depend on depth, not just breadth.

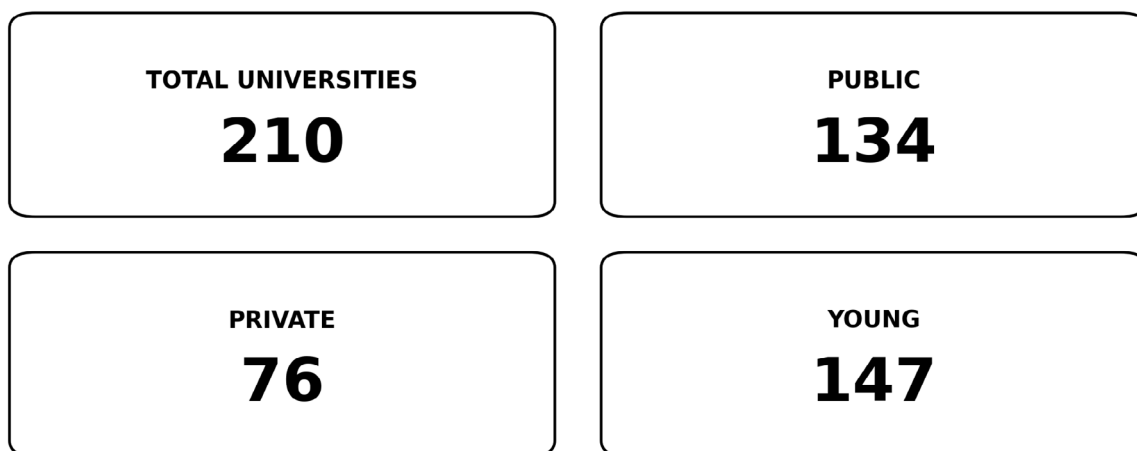
The strategic takeaway of this report is that the next step for Turkish higher education is not simply to add more ranked institutions. The more important goal is to build a system with deeper elite representation, stronger subject-level conversion, better balance across disciplines, and more stable positive momentum. The universities and subject areas that manage this transition most effectively will define the future direction of Türkiye's academic standing.

Türkiye's University Landscape

Türkiye's university landscape is large, diverse, and institutionally layered. The institutional profile overview provides a clearer picture of this structure: Türkiye has 210 universities in total, including 134 public universities and 76 private universities, while 147 institutions fall into the young-university category (under 30 years old). This composition shows that Türkiye's higher education system is substantial not only in size, but also in institutional variety. At the same time, the system is not organized around a single dominant model. Rather, it is built on a broad public-university foundation, complemented by a smaller but visible private-university sector, alongside a large and still-evolving cohort of younger institutions.

Türkiye Institutional Profile

University counts based on AD Scientific Index 2026 data



Note: "Young" refers to universities under 30 years old as of 2026 (founded in 1997 or later). The young category may overlap with the public/private categories, so it should not be added on top of the total.

This institutional profile is important for interpreting the ranking figures correctly. The public sector clearly provides the main structural backbone of the Turkish system, simply because it accounts for most universities in the country. The private sector, although smaller in number, remains an important part of the competitive landscape through a more selective group of prominent institutions. Meanwhile, the large number of young universities suggests that Türkiye's academic system is still in a phase of expansion and renewal. However, this demographic dynamism does not automatically translate into elite international visibility; rather, it indicates potential, institutional diversification, and a widening national academic base.

Figures 1 and 2 reinforce this interpretation by showing how Turkish universities are distributed across world rank, continent rank, and country rank. The relationship between country rank and world rank appears much more compressed at the national level than at the global level, which indicates that even relatively small differences in national ordering may correspond to much wider differences in international position. Similarly, the world-rank versus continent-rank figure shows that Türkiye has a recognizable institutional presence across a broad ranking range, but that this presence is spread unevenly rather than concentrated in a large elite cluster. In other words, Türkiye has significant academic scale, yet its strongest global visibility remains concentrated in a limited share of institutions.

Figure 1. World Rank vs Continent Rank Across Turkish Universities

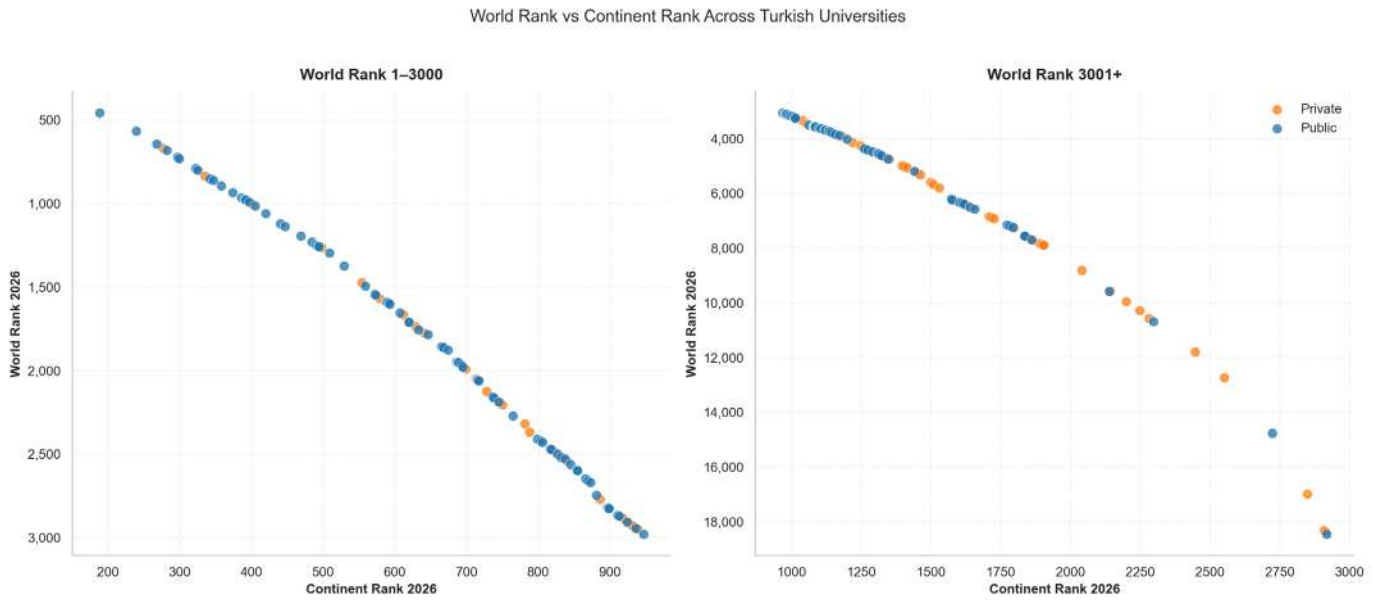


Figure 2. World Rank vs Country Rank Across Turkish Universities

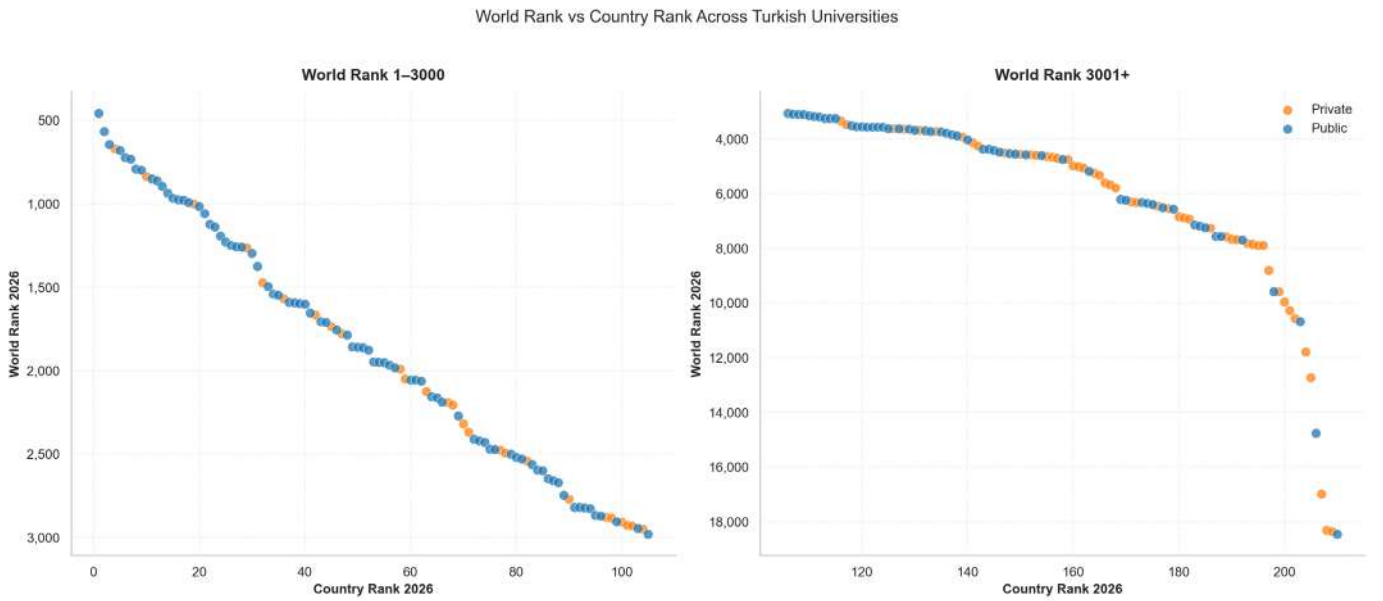


Table 1 makes this upper-tier concentration especially clear. Türkiye has only one university in the global Top 500, namely Hacettepe University. In the 501–800 band, the country is represented by 8 universities, including major public institutions such as Middle East Technical University, İstanbul Technical University, Ankara University, Ege University, Gazi University, İstanbul University, and Atatürk University, together with Koç University as the leading private institution in this range. In the 801–1000 band, the number increases slightly to 9 universities, including İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, Dokuz Eylül University, Marmara University, Erciyes University, Boğaziçi University, Çukurova University, İstanbul University-Cerrahpaşa, Karadeniz Teknik University, and Sağlık Bilimleri University. This pattern shows that Türkiye does possess a visible upper academic tier, but that this tier is still relatively narrow and is concentrated mainly between ranks 501 and 1000 rather than in the very top global segment.

Table 1. Türkiye Universities by World Rank Band (2026)

Türkiye Institutions by World Rank Band (2026)			
Rank Band	Institution Count	Institution Name	World Rank 2026
Top 500	1	Hacettepe University	458
501-800	8	Middle East Technical University	567
		İstanbul Technical University	645
		Koç University	672
		Ankara University	682
		Ege University	723
		Gazi University	732
		İstanbul University	791
		Atatürk University	800
801-1000	9	İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University	836
		Dokuz Eylül University	852
		Marmara University	862
		Erciyes University	895
		Bogazici University	936
		Çukurova University	966
		İstanbul University Cerrahpaşa	977
		Karadeniz Teknik University	978
		Sağlık Bilimleri University	992

Taken together, the figure, the table, and the ranking distributions suggest that Türkiye's university system should be understood as a layered and selective landscape. Its strength begins with scale: a large national system dominated numerically by public universities, supported by a smaller but strategically important private sector, and energized by a substantial group of young institutions. Yet the ranking evidence shows that broad institutional scale does not translate evenly into elite global performance. Instead, international visibility is concentrated in a relatively small upper group, while the majority of institutions remain distributed across the middle and lower parts of the ranking structure. Türkiye therefore stands out as a country with considerable academic breadth, meaningful internal diversity, and emerging renewal capacity, but still with a selective rather than deeply extensive top-tier global presence.

Institutional Scale and Rank Distribution Across Türkiye

Institutional scale in Türkiye is significant, but rank distribution shows that scale alone does not produce strong top-end concentration. The country includes 210 ranked universities, of which 134 are public and 76 are private. This already indicates a structurally asymmetric system: the Turkish higher education landscape is shaped primarily by a large public-sector base, while the private sector forms a smaller but still visible second layer. Yet the more important point is not only how many institutions exist, but where those institutions are positioned across the global ranking spectrum. The rank-band distribution shows that Türkiye's academic system is concentrated overwhelmingly in the middle tiers rather than in the global elite.

A first major finding is the near absence of Turkish universities from the very top of the global ranking ladder. The rank-band figure shows no Turkish university in the Top 100, only 1 institution in the 101-500 band, and 17 institutions in the 501-1000 band. By contrast, the largest concentration by far lies in the 1001-5000 range, where 142 universities are located. A further 40 universities fall into the 5001-10000 band, and 10 institutions are placed beyond 10000. This means that Türkiye's academic structure is broad but mid-tier heavy: it produces a large number of ranked institutions, but only a limited number currently reach the upper global layers.

The public-private breakdown adds a second layer of interpretation. In the 1001-5000 band, public universities account for 100 institutions, compared with 42 private universities. In the 5001-10000 range, the balance narrows somewhat, with 15 public and 25 private institutions. In the 10000+ band, the country has 3 public and 7 private universities. This pattern shows that public universities dominate the strongest part of Türkiye's ranked system, while private universities are proportionally more visible in the weaker lower-end bands. In structural terms, the public sector provides most of the country's competitive depth, whereas the private sector is more polarized: it contains some strong performers, but also a larger share of lower-ranked institutions.

This asymmetry becomes even clearer in the summary statistics by funding type. The median world rank for public universities is 2,654, while for private universities it is 4,933. The boxplot comparison reinforces the same conclusion: public universities are positioned more favorably overall, with a stronger central tendency and a more competitive rank distribution, whereas private universities show a weaker median and broader downward spread. This does not mean the private sector lacks value or visibility, but it does mean that system-level academic strength in Türkiye is still carried much more by the public university sector than by the private one.

The elite-rank counts confirm this concentration pattern at the top end. Public universities account for the country's only Top 500 institution and for 16 of the 18 Top 1000 universities, while private universities contribute 2 Top 1000 institutions and no Top 500 entry. These numbers are especially important because they show that Türkiye's limited top-end international visibility is not evenly distributed across institutional types. The upper global layer is overwhelmingly public. This gives Türkiye a clear structural profile: strong public leadership, selective private participation, and limited overall elite density.

A further structural insight comes from the founding-year and founding-decade figures. These charts show that Türkiye's university expansion has accelerated especially since the 1990s, and even more strongly in the 2000s and 2010s. Public universities remain more historically rooted across older decades, while private universities are concentrated much more heavily among newer institutions. This matters because it suggests that the current rank structure is shaped not only by institutional type, but also by institutional age. Older, more established public universities tend to anchor the upper national tier, while many newer private universities are still in earlier stages of competitive development. In this sense, Türkiye's rank distribution also reflects the historical layering of its higher education expansion.

Taken together, these patterns show that institutional scale in Türkiye should not be interpreted simply as a sign of global competitiveness. The country has a large and diverse ranked university system, but that system is concentrated mainly in the middle global tiers and led primarily by public institutions. Public universities dominate both the stronger median positions and the limited elite layer, while private universities contribute a smaller number of high-visibility institutions alongside a larger share of lower-ranked entries. The broader implication is clear: Türkiye has already achieved substantial institutional breadth, but its next challenge is to convert that breadth into stronger upper-tier presence and deeper international rank quality.

Figure 3. Top 500 Institutions Presence in Türkiye: Overall and Subject-Wise

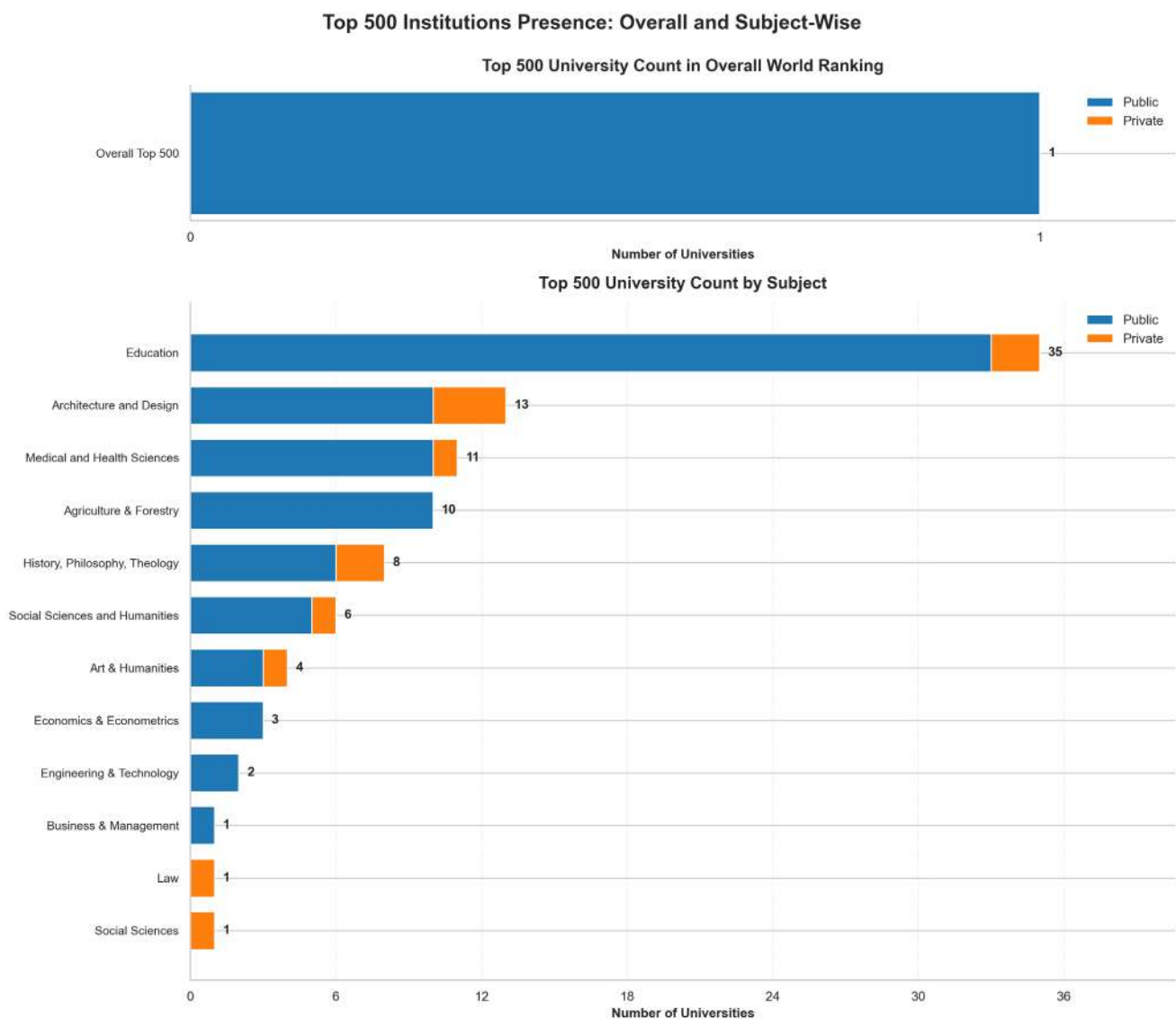


Figure 4. Top 1000 Institutions Presence in Türkiye: Overall and Subject-Wise

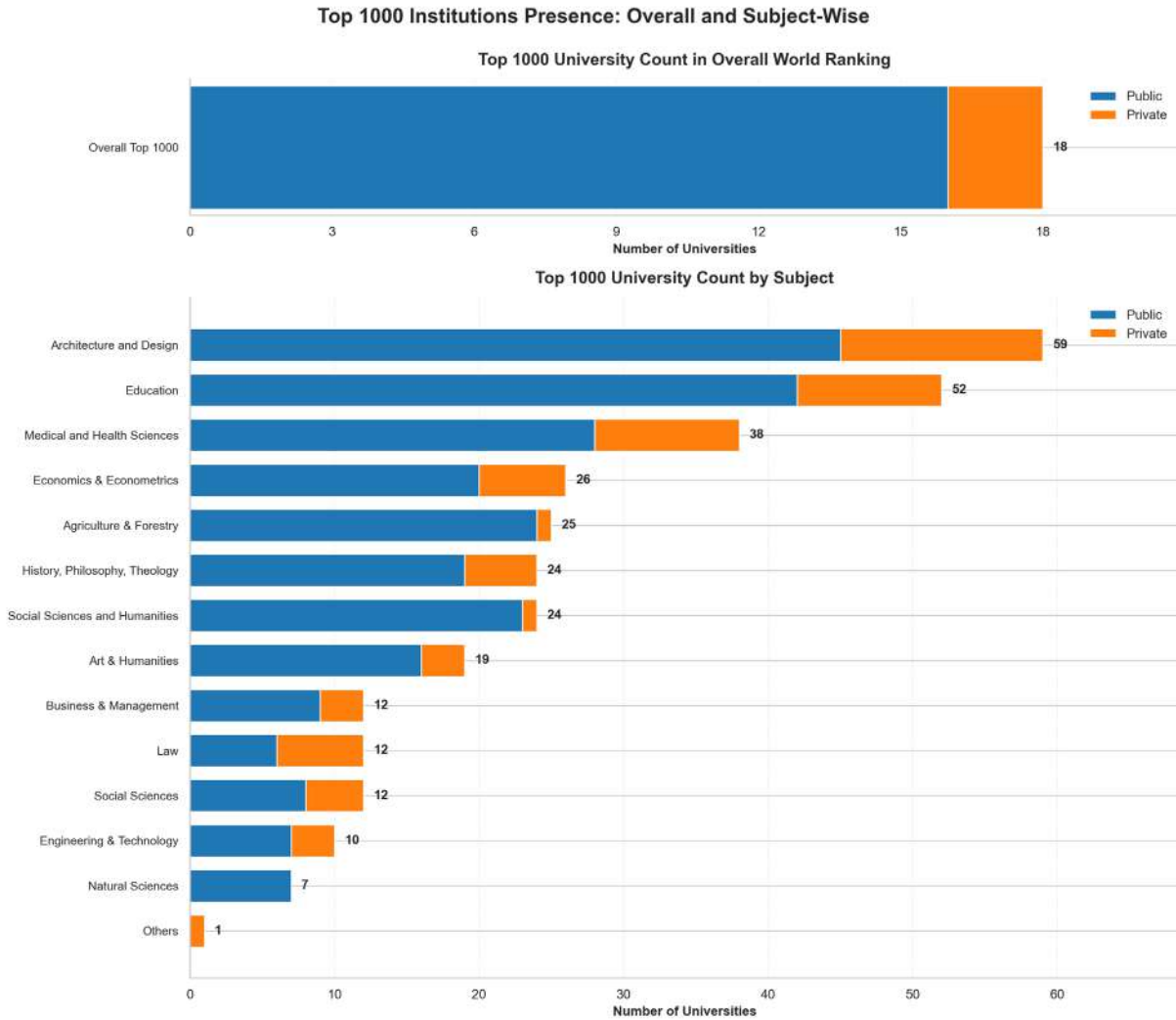
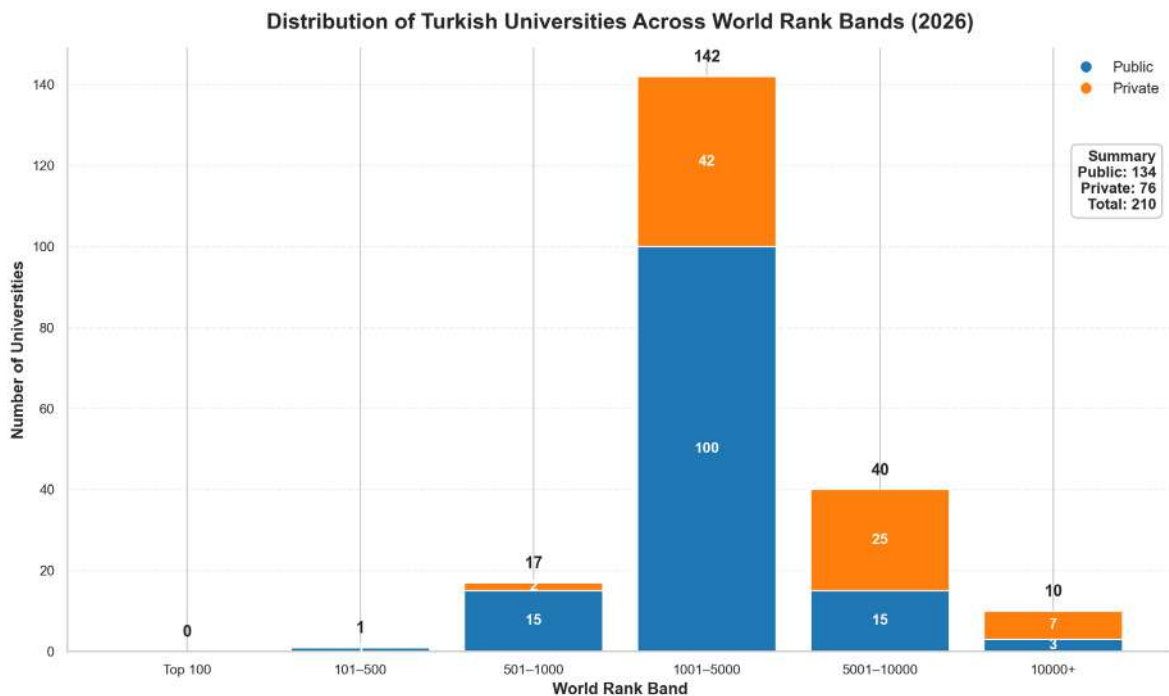


Figure 5. Distribution of Turkish Universities Across World Rank Bands (2026)



Leading Turkish Universities

The landscape of leading Turkish universities is concentrated within a relatively narrow upper tier, but that upper tier is not entirely homogeneous. It is shaped primarily by strong public universities, while a smaller number of private universities contribute visible but more selective excellence. This means that Türkiye's leading-institutions profile is not built through one institutional route alone. Rather, it emerges through the interaction of a broad public flagship layer and a narrower private high-performance segment.

A first major finding is that the national top tier is led by well-established public universities. In the overall Top 40 ranking, Hacettepe University holds the strongest world-rank position in Türkiye, followed by Middle East Technical University, İstanbul Technical University, Ege University, and Gazi University. Other major public institutions such as İstanbul University, Marmara University, Ankara University, Dokuz Eylül University, and Atatürk University also appear prominently. This pattern shows that the country's strongest overall academic visibility is anchored mainly in long-established public institutions with deeper historical roots, broader disciplinary coverage, and stronger system-wide depth.

At the same time, the upper tier is not exclusively public. The overall Top 40 also includes a number of private universities that play a strategically important role in Türkiye's academic frontier. Koç University stands out as the strongest private institution in the country, while İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, Sabancı University, Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University, and Başkent University also appear as visible upper-tier performers. Their presence is significant because it shows that private institutions can compete successfully at the national top end, even if they do not match the public sector in overall breadth or depth. In other words, Türkiye's academic leadership structure is public-dominant, but not public-exclusive.

The comparison between the Top 25 public and Top 25 private rankings makes this distinction clearer. The public top tier appears denser and more stable, with many institutions clustered within a relatively competitive rank range below the national leaders. By contrast, the private top tier is more polarized: it includes several highly competitive institutions near the top, but then extends more quickly into weaker positions. This suggests that the public sector generates a broader and more resilient upper-middle leadership layer, while the private sector contributes a smaller number of standout institutions rather than a deep competitive field.

Another important dimension is the role of young universities among the leading institutions. The young-university ranking shows that newer institutions are already entering the national visibility structure. Sağlık Bilimleri University, Necmettin Erbakan University, Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, and İstanbul Medeniyet University are among the most visible examples. This is noteworthy because it indicates that Türkiye's future leadership layer will not be shaped only by older flagship universities. A second generation of younger institutions is beginning to establish competitive positions, although most still remain some distance from the very top of the national hierarchy.

The slope chart comparing the Top 25 Turkish universities across 2025 and 2026 adds a further layer to the story. It shows that the national top tier is not static. Some of Türkiye's leading universities are improving, others are declining, and several are relatively stable. This matters because leadership should not be understood only as a snapshot of current position. It also depends on whether institutions are consolidating their place, moving upward, or gradually losing ground. In this sense, Türkiye's leading-university landscape is visible and relatively concentrated, but it is also dynamic rather than fixed.

Taken together, these patterns show that Türkiye's leading institutions form a concentrated but internally differentiated top tier. Public universities clearly dominate the national leadership structure and provide most of the country's visible academic anchors. Private universities contribute selective excellence through a smaller number of highly competitive institutions, while younger universities are beginning to enter the broader leadership conversation. The broader implication is that Türkiye's academic frontier already contains recognizable centers of strength, but its future shape will depend on whether this upper tier can deepen, stabilize, and widen beyond its current relatively narrow base.

Figure 6. Top 40 Turkish Universities by World Rank 2026

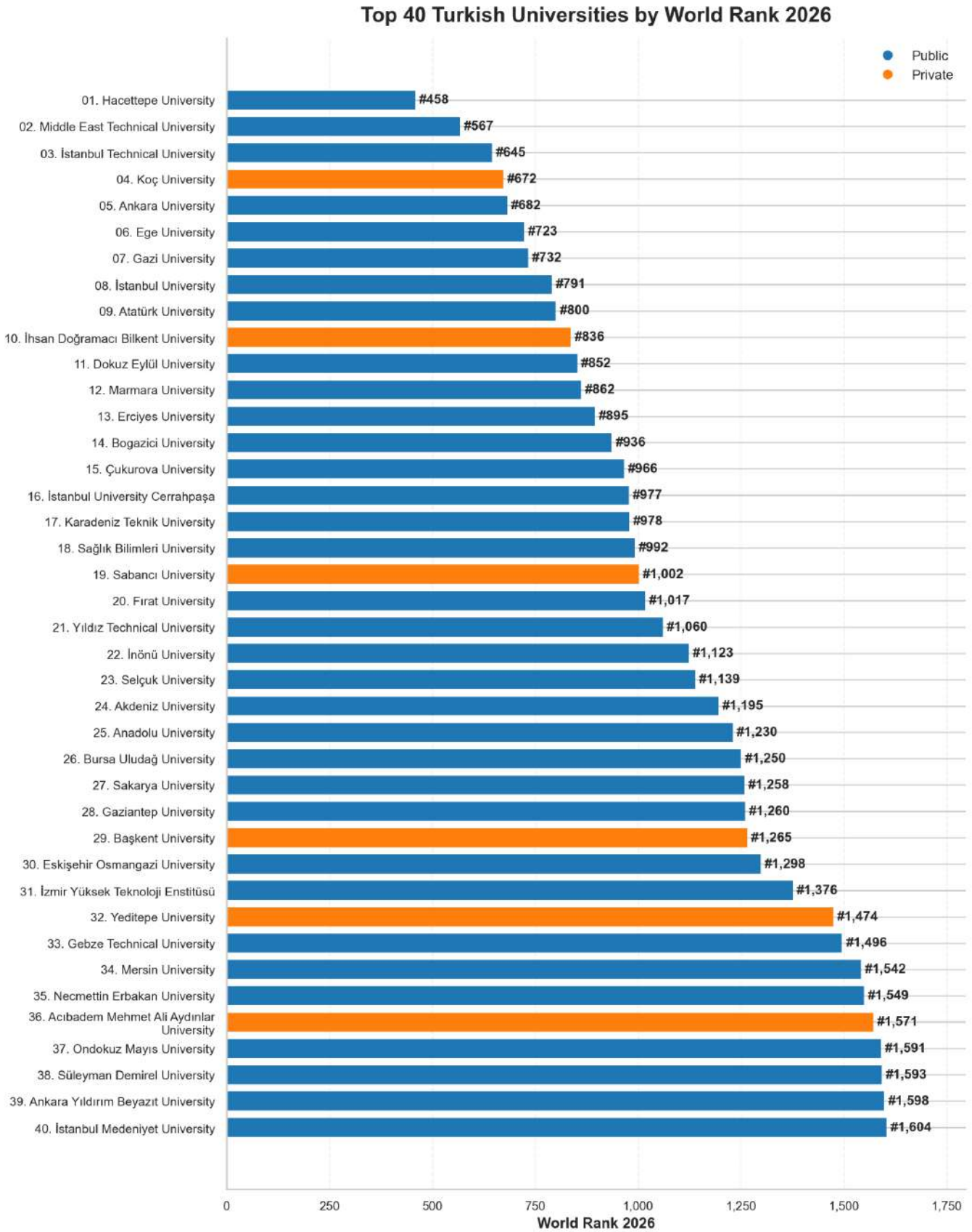


Figure 7. Top 25 Turkish Public Universities by World Rank 2026

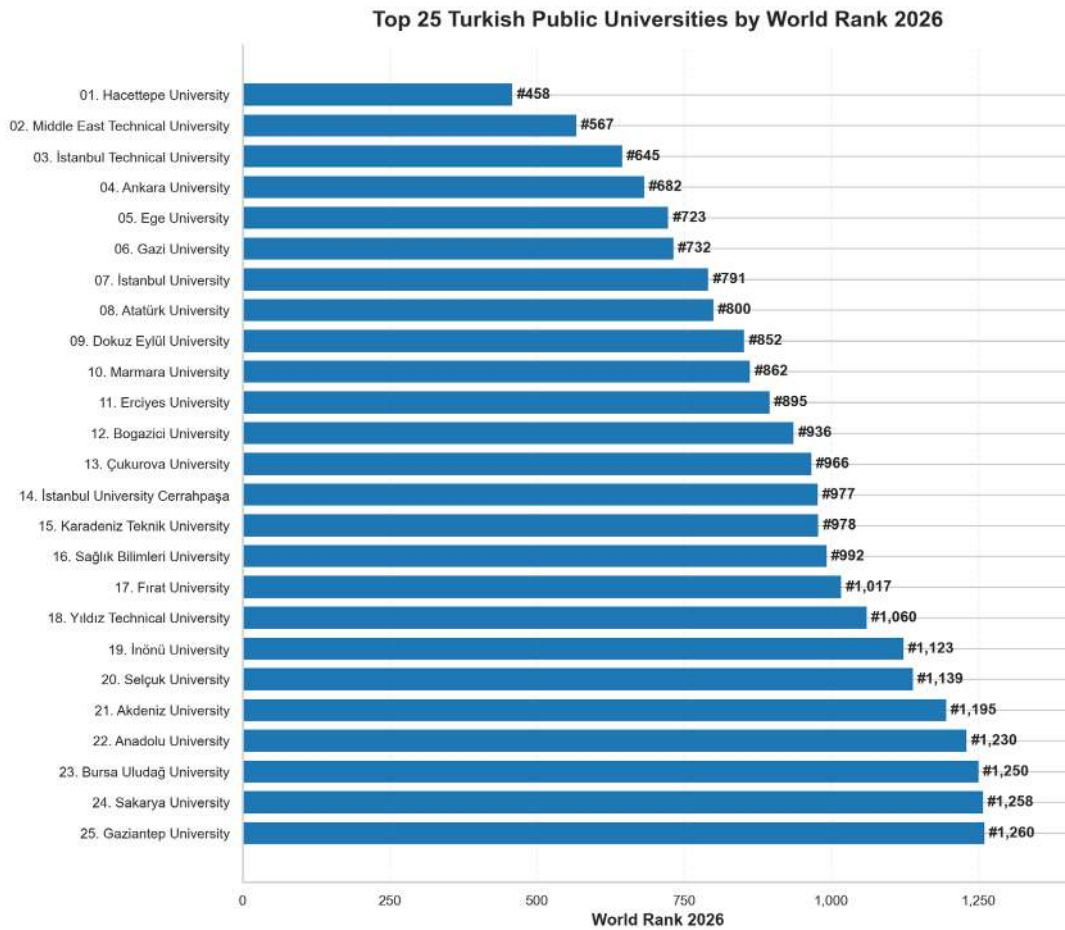
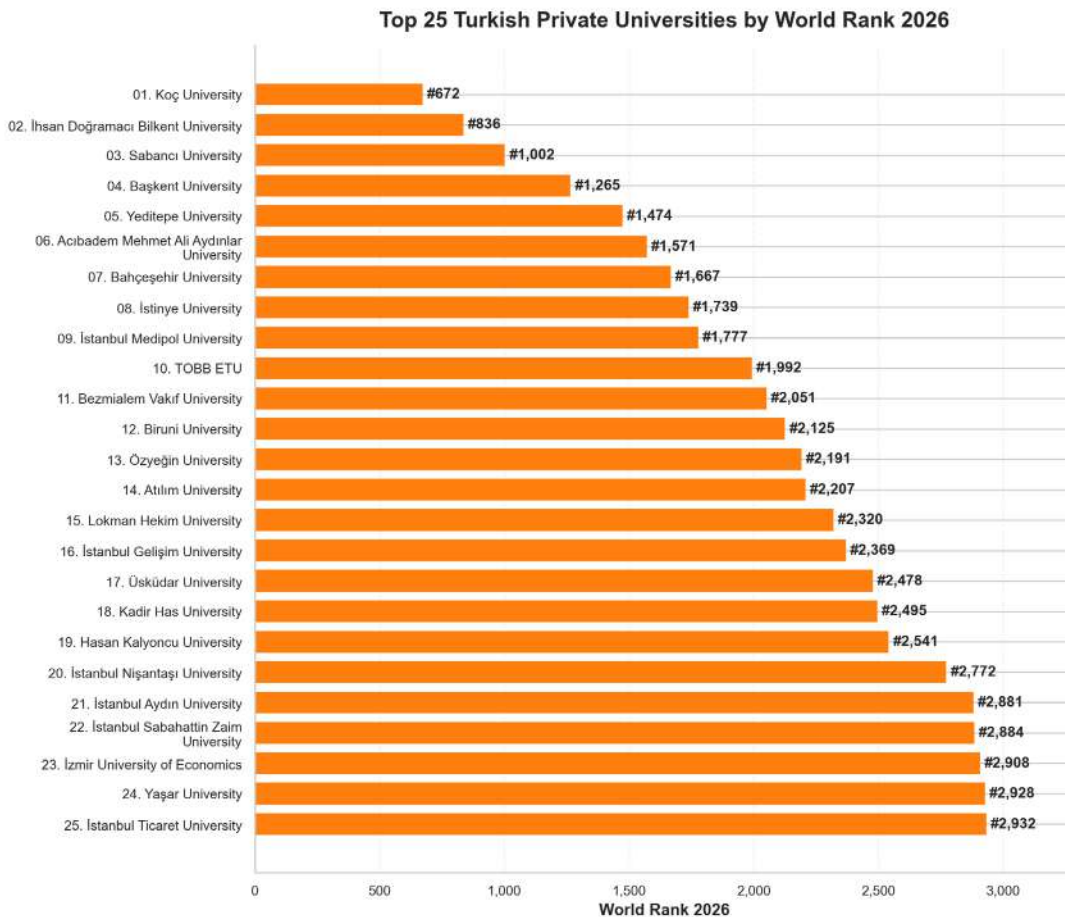


Figure 8. Top 25 Turkish Private Universities by World Rank 2026



Public vs Private Competitiveness

The competitive relationship between public and private universities in Türkiye is not balanced in overall system terms. The evidence shows that public universities form the country's main academic backbone, while private universities contribute more selectively through a narrower group of high-performing institutions. This means that the two sectors do not play the same role in the national higher education landscape. Public universities provide breadth, depth, and most of the country's upper-tier presence, whereas private universities are more visible through targeted excellence than through broad systemic strength.

A first and most direct indicator of this difference is the overall world-rank distribution. Public universities have a clearly stronger median world rank than private universities, with a median of 2,654 compared with 4,933 for the private sector. This gap is not marginal; it reflects a structurally different competitive position. The boxplot comparison reinforces the same pattern: the public sector is centered at a more favorable global position, while the private sector is shifted downward and shows weaker overall concentration. In simple terms, the typical public university in Türkiye is globally better positioned than the typical private university.

This structural advantage is also visible in elite-rank representation. Public universities account for Türkiye's only Top 500 institution and for 16 of the country's 18 Top 1000 universities. Private universities, by contrast, contribute only 2 Top 1000 institutions and no Top 500 entry. This is a particularly important result because it shows that the limited top-end international visibility of the Turkish system is overwhelmingly concentrated in the public sector. Private universities do appear in the national upper tier, but they do not yet form a broad elite layer of their own.

The band distribution by funding type adds further nuance. Public universities dominate the large 1001-5000 segment with 100 institutions, compared with 42 private universities. This means that the country's strongest middle-to-upper tier is carried mainly by the public system. In the weaker lower bands, however, private institutions become relatively more visible: in the 5001-10000 range, private universities outnumber public ones, and in the 10000+ group they also represent the larger share. This suggests that private higher education in Türkiye is more polarized than public higher education. It includes some nationally competitive institutions, but it also contains a larger proportion of weaker-ranked entries.

At the same time, it would be misleading to interpret the results as a story of public dominance in every respect. The Top 25 private-university ranking shows that Türkiye's private sector does include several highly visible institutions. Koç University, İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, and Sabancı University stand out most clearly, while institutions such as Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University, Başkent University, and others contribute additional visibility. These universities demonstrate that the private sector can produce strong competitive performers, especially when resources, selectivity, and strategic positioning are concentrated effectively. In this sense, the private sector is not absent from Türkiye's academic frontier; rather, it operates through selective excellence instead of broad-based dominance.

The subject-level comparison makes this distinction even sharper. In most major fields, public universities perform better in median subject rank and provide the country's broader academic base. This is especially clear in Education, Agriculture and Forestry, Medical and Health Sciences, Engineering and Technology, and Natural Sciences, where the public sector holds markedly stronger median positions. These fields represent the core of Türkiye's academic system, and in each of them the public sector remains the more competitive force overall.

However, private universities are more competitive in a few specific areas. The clearest example is Law, where the private-sector median rank is stronger than the public-sector median. In addition, some of the best single-institution performances in Art and Humanities and Social Sciences come from private universities, especially Koç University, while MEF University appears as a leading private institution in Law.

These cases are strategically important because they show that private universities can outperform the public sector in selected niches, even if they remain weaker at the overall system level.

Taken together, the public-private comparison reveals a layered national structure. Public universities are the main carriers of Türkiye's academic visibility, competitive depth, and limited elite representation. Private universities, by contrast, play a more specialized role: they strengthen the system through selective high-performance institutions and niche subject leadership, but they do not yet match the public sector in breadth or consistency. The broader implication is that Türkiye's academic competitiveness is not built on a dual system of equal pillars. It is built on a dominant public foundation, complemented by a smaller but strategically relevant private layer.

Figure 9. Median University World Rank by Funding Type in Türkiye

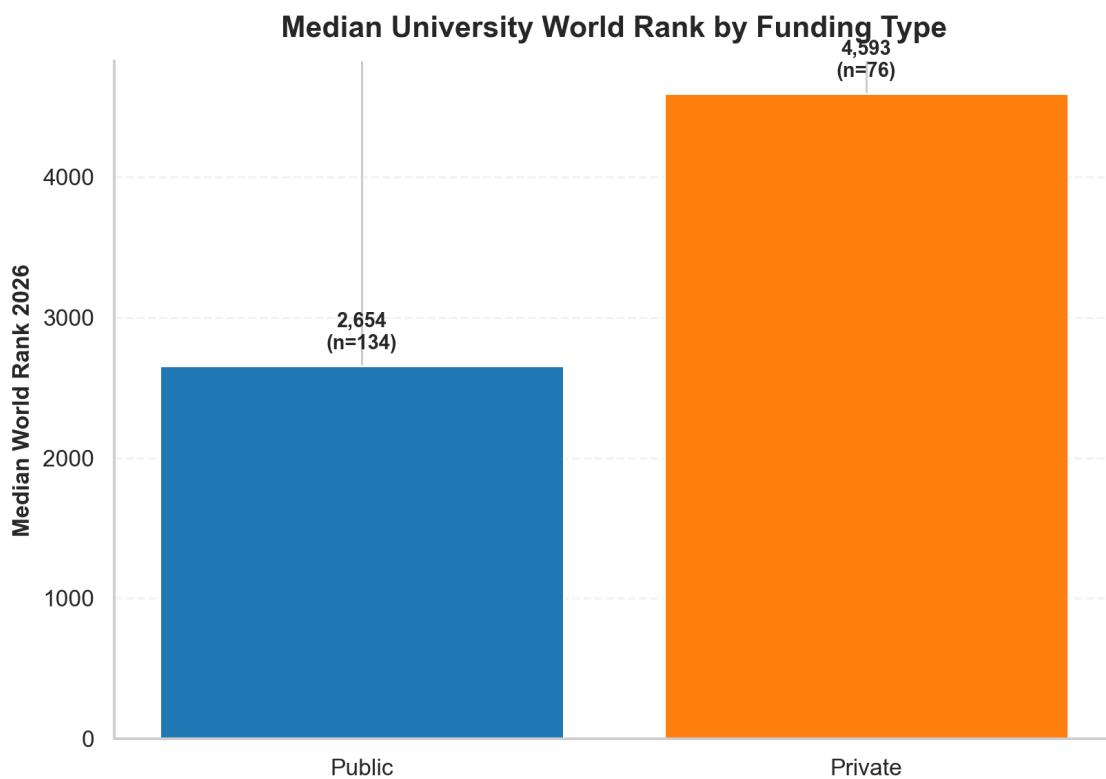


Figure 10. Distribution of University World Ranks by Funding Type in Türkiye

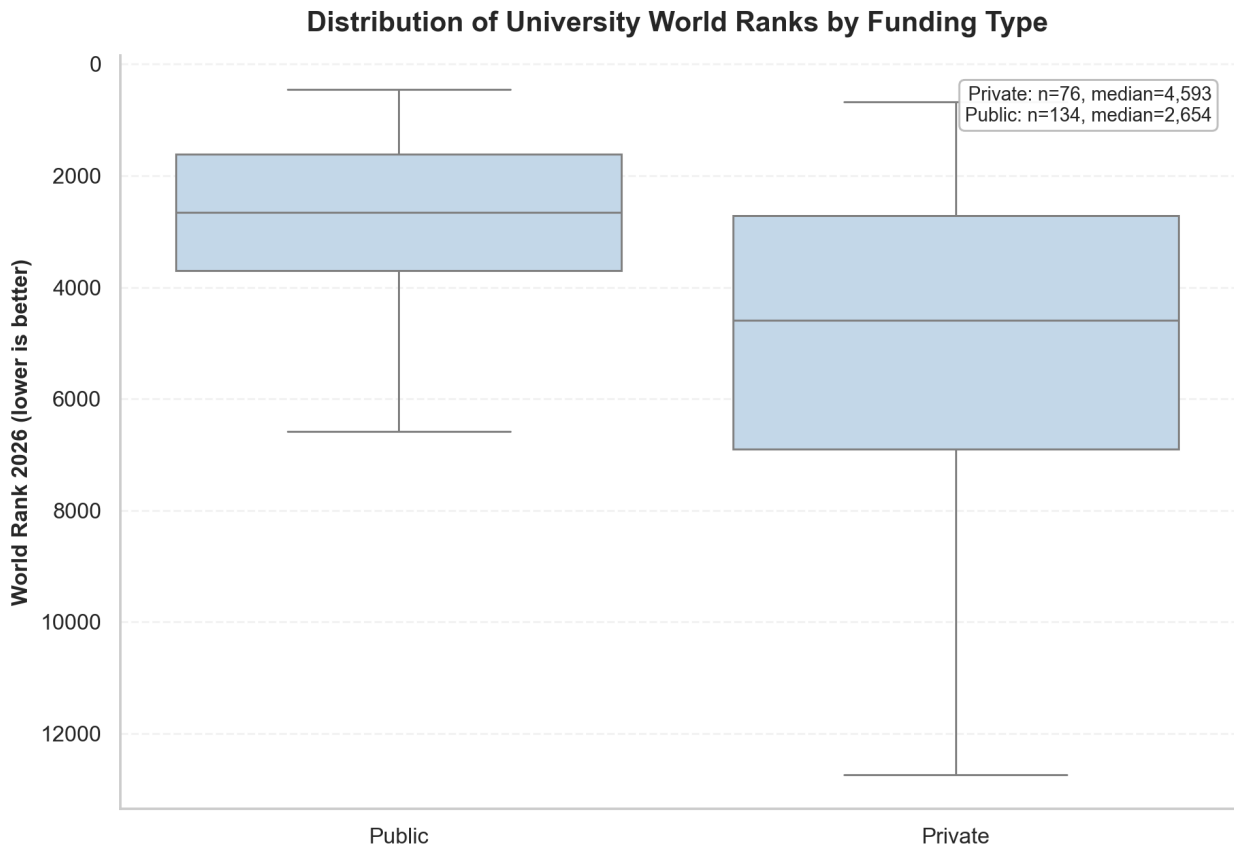
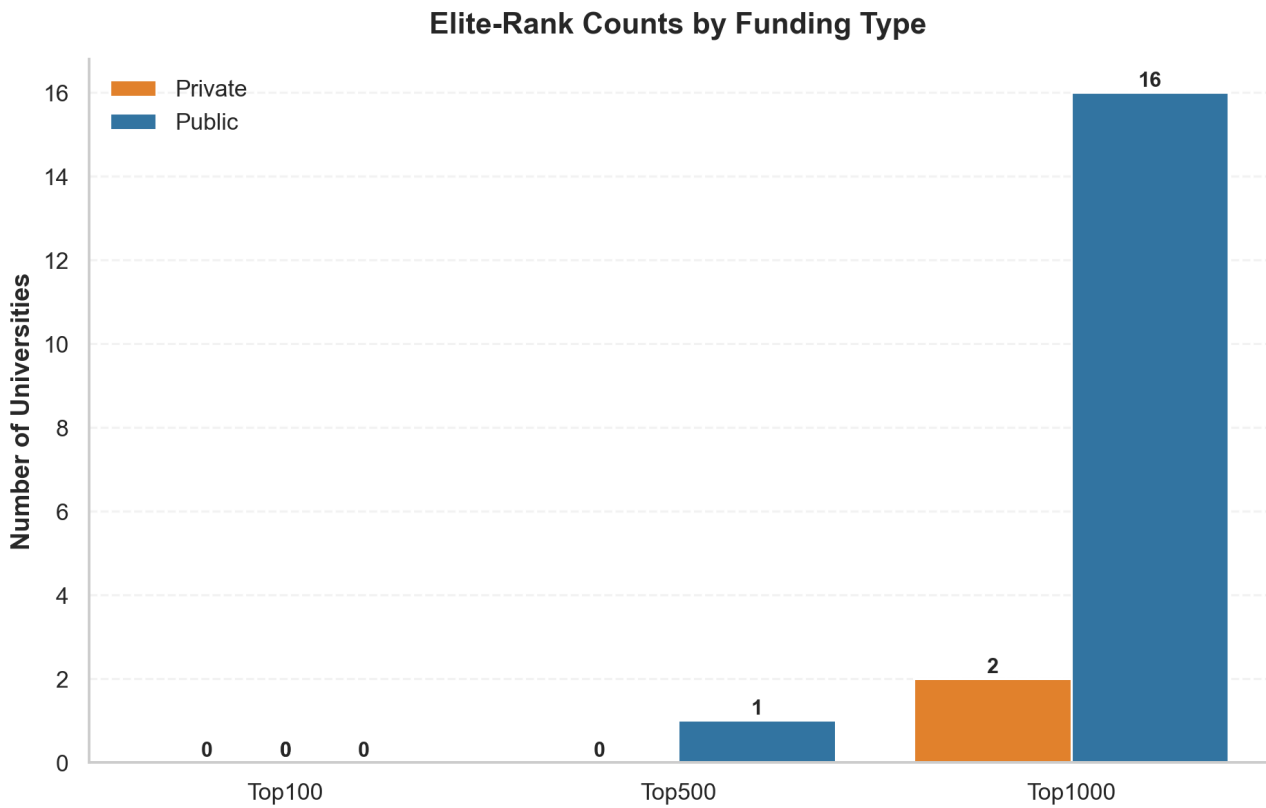


Figure 11. Elite-Rank Counts by Funding Type in Türkiye



Young Universities (Under 30 Years)

The young-university segment adds an important layer to the structure of Turkish higher education because it shows whether newer institutions are beginning to convert recent foundation into visible academic presence. In Türkiye, the under-30 group does not yet define the national top tier, but it is also far from marginal. The ranking of young universities shows that a number of newer institutions have already secured recognizable positions within the national landscape, which suggests that academic visibility in Türkiye is not shaped only by long-established legacy universities. A newer competitive layer is emerging, although it remains more selective and less deeply rooted than the country's older flagship institutions.

A first striking pattern is that the leading young universities are not evenly distributed across institutional types or missions. Sağlık Bilimleri University appears as the strongest institution in the under-30 category, followed by Necmettin Erbakan University and Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University. Other visible institutions in this group include Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, İstanbul Medeniyet University, and TOBB University of Economics and Technology. This ranking suggests that the most competitive young universities in Türkiye tend to emerge through relatively focused institutional profiles rather than through the broad, historically accumulated scale seen in older public universities. In other words, the young-university layer is visible, but it is driven more by selective institutional positioning than by long-established systemic depth.

Another important feature of the young-university landscape is its internal diversity. The leading institutions in this category do not all follow the same model. Some are public universities with relatively recent establishment dates and strong state-backed growth trajectories, while others are private or foundation universities with more focused academic strategies and stronger niche positioning. This means that the under-30 category is not simply a story of one sector outperforming the other. Rather, it reflects multiple emerging pathways through which newer Turkish universities are trying to build visibility: public expansion, health-oriented specialization, metropolitan positioning, and institutionally selective private development.

At the same time, the young-university ranking also makes the broader national hierarchy clearer by contrast. Even the strongest under-30 institutions generally remain outside the very top of Türkiye's overall academic structure. This is an important structural point. The younger segment contributes renewal and upward movement, but it has not yet displaced the country's older leading universities. Türkiye's academic frontier is still anchored primarily in long-established public institutions and a small number of mature private flagships. Young universities are entering the competitive landscape, but most are still in the process of building the depth, disciplinary spread, and international visibility needed to challenge the national top tier more consistently.

This finding has a broader strategic meaning. A strong young-university layer can serve as a signal of system renewal, because it shows whether academic competitiveness is being reproduced only through legacy institutions or whether new actors are also capable of entering the field. In Türkiye, the evidence points to cautious but meaningful renewal. The strongest younger universities already show that recent institutions can achieve visible rank positions, especially when they combine targeted focus, strong governance, and strategic institutional identity. Yet the overall picture also suggests that age, accumulated capacity, and historical prestige still matter greatly in determining who reaches the top.

Taken together, the under-30 figures show that Türkiye's younger universities are becoming an increasingly relevant part of the national academic system, but they do not yet form a fully mature second leadership tier. Their importance lies less in replacing the traditional top institutions and more in expanding the future pool of nationally competitive universities. The broader implication is that Türkiye's long-term academic trajectory will depend not only on preserving the strength of its established flagships, but also on whether its younger institutions can deepen their rank quality, widen their subject capacity, and convert emerging visibility into durable competitive status.

Figure 12. Top 25 Young (Under 30 Years) Universities in Türkiye by World Rank 2026

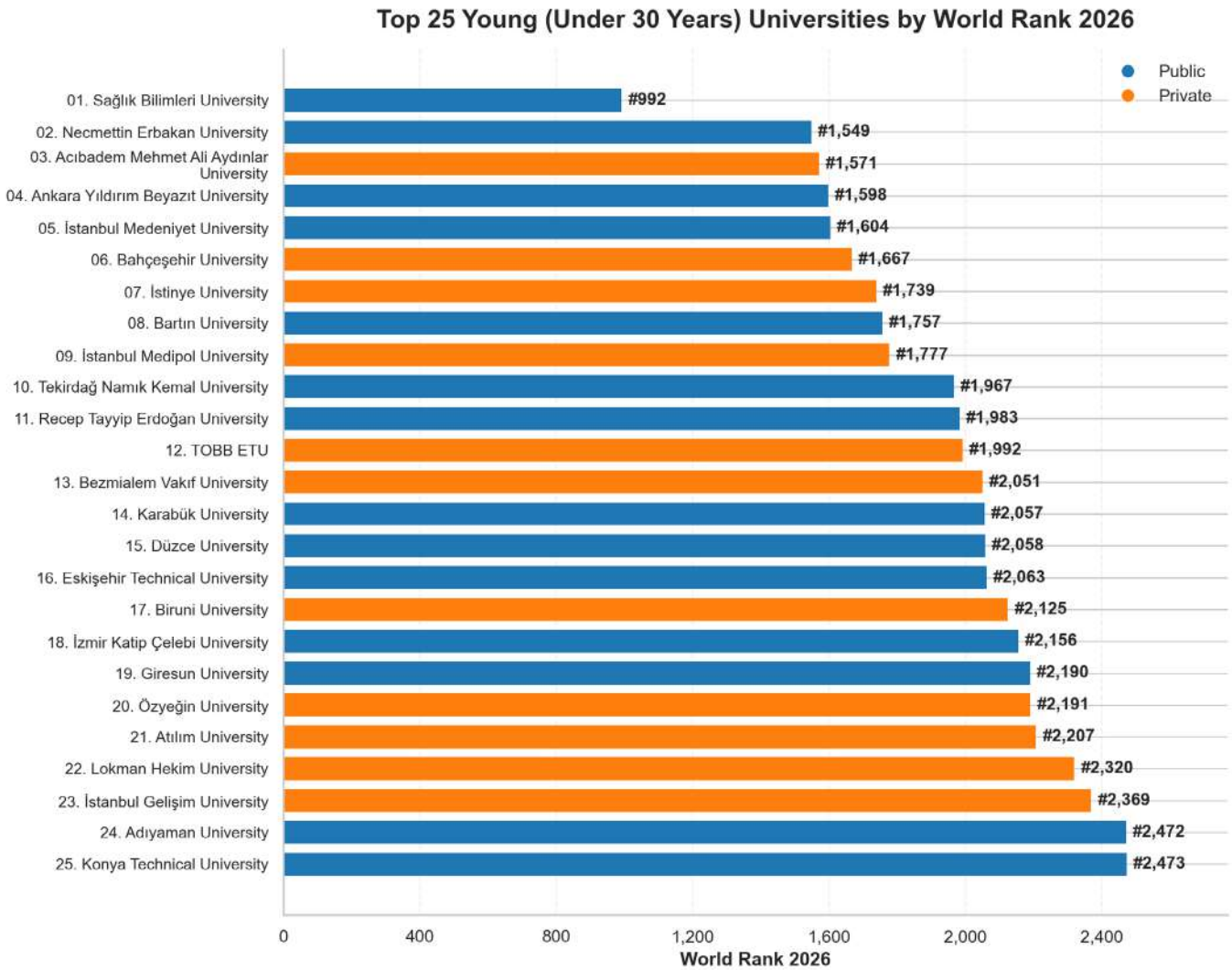


Figure 13. Founding Year vs World Rank 2026 Across Turkish Universities (Ranks under 10,000)

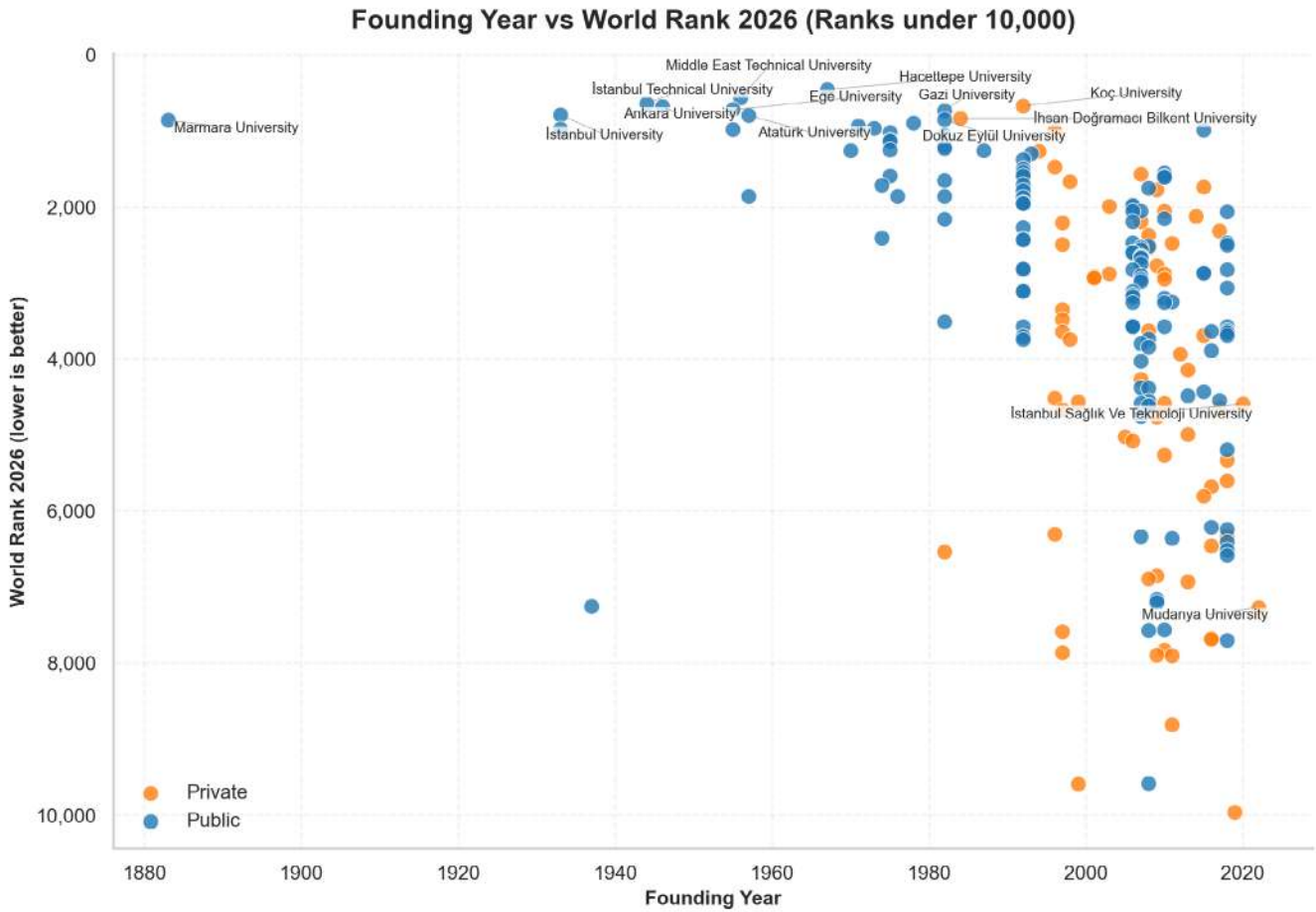
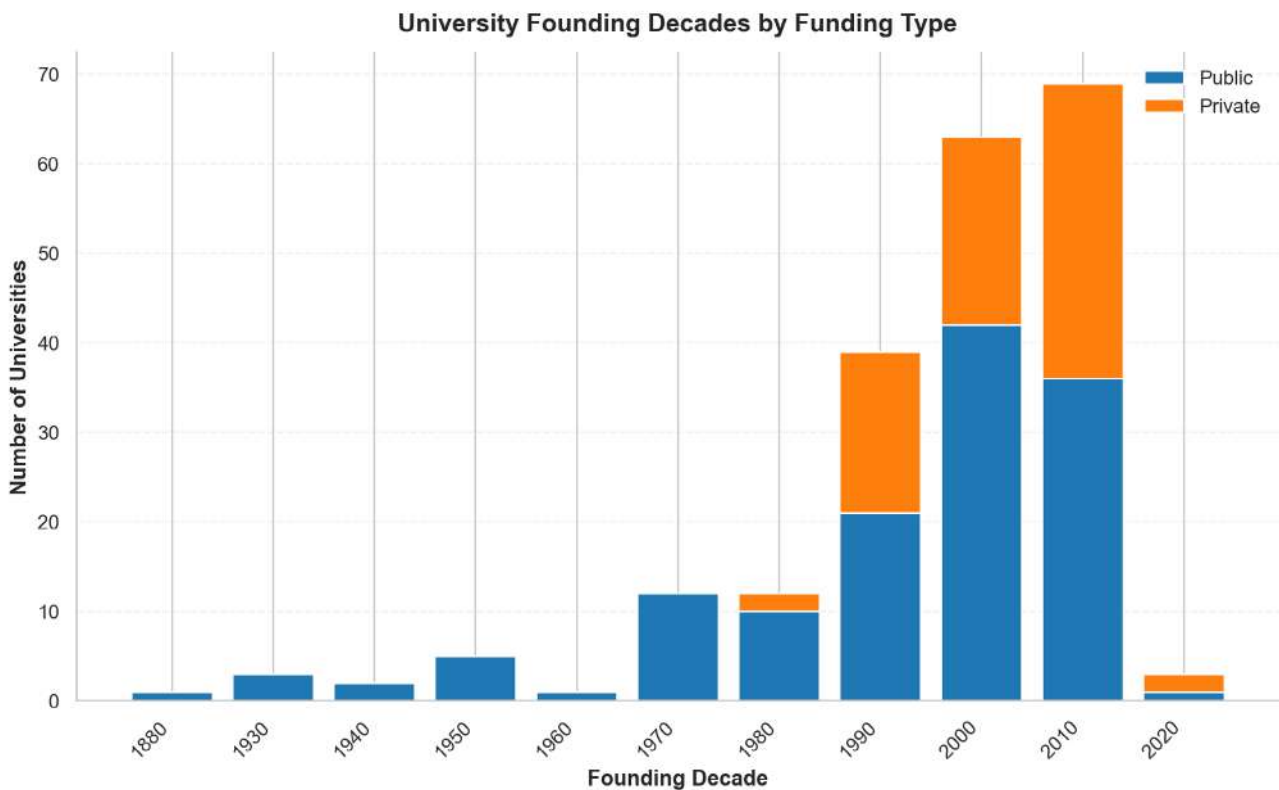


Figure 14. University Founding Decades by Funding Type in Türkiye



Ranking Momentum Across Turkish Universities (2025-2026)

Ranking momentum adds a dynamic dimension to the Turkish higher education landscape because it shows not only where universities currently stand, but also whether they are moving upward, remaining stable, or losing ground. In Türkiye, momentum is clearly uneven rather than system-wide. The national hierarchy is not fixed, yet it is also not being reshaped uniformly. Some universities are improving their positions, others are declining, and many remain relatively stable within the broader rank structure. This means that competitiveness in Türkiye should be read not only through current rank position, but also through the direction and consistency of recent movement.

A first important pattern appears in the slope-style comparison of the Top 25 Turkish universities across 2025 and 2026. The figure shows that the country's upper tier is active rather than static: leading institutions do not all move in the same direction, and the relative order within the national top group is subject to change. This matters because it suggests that elite position in Türkiye is not secured once and for all. Even among the strongest universities, rank advantage must be maintained through continued performance. In other words, the Turkish top tier is visible and concentrated, but it is also competitive internally.

The broader momentum picture becomes even more meaningful at the subject level. Here, the evidence shows that some academic fields are moving in a more favorable direction than others. Education stands out as one of the clearest positive cases, and Natural Sciences also shows relatively favorable median momentum. By contrast, fields such as Law, Others, Business and Management, History, Philosophy, Theology, and Economics and Econometrics display weaker or more negative overall movement. This confirms that Türkiye's academic system is not advancing evenly across the disciplinary spectrum. Progress is occurring, but it is concentrated in selected fields rather than broadly shared across all areas of academic activity.

This unevenness is strategically important because momentum and current position are not the same thing. A field or institution may still hold a relatively strong current rank while showing weaker recent movement, just as another may occupy a weaker current position but display improvement. For Türkiye, this means that the next phase of academic competitiveness will depend not only on preserving existing strongholds, but also on identifying which parts of the system are gaining strength and which are gradually losing relative ground. In practical terms, momentum helps distinguish between established strength, emerging strength, and fragile position.

Another important implication is that momentum helps reveal whether Türkiye's system is widening its competitive base or relying mainly on a limited number of historically strong institutions and subjects. The available figures suggest a mixed picture. There is clear evidence of movement and renewal, especially in selected fields and among certain institutions, but there is not yet a fully broad-based upward pattern across the whole system. This indicates that Türkiye's academic development is still somewhat selective and layered: some segments are advancing, while others are stagnating or slipping behind.

Taken together, the momentum analysis shows that Turkish higher education is in motion, but not in one common direction. The upper institutional tier remains competitive, subject-level trajectories differ substantially, and progress is concentrated in specific parts of the system rather than evenly distributed. The broader implication is that Türkiye's future academic standing will depend not only on its current rank positions, but on whether it can turn selective momentum into a more consistent and system-wide pattern of improvement. Sustained competitiveness will require not just isolated upward moves, but a deeper capacity to maintain positive movement across a wider institutional and disciplinary base.

The comparison of the 2025 and 2026 upper world-rank bands shows that Türkiye's Top 1000 institutional layer remained broadly stable in overall size, but experienced limited internal reshuffling rather than strong upward expansion. Hacettepe University remained the country's only Top 500 institution in both years.

The number of institutions in the 501–800 band declined from 9 to 8, while the 801–1000 band expanded from 7 to 9. This change was driven by two developments: Karadeniz Teknik University entered the Top 1000 in 2026, and Dokuz Eylül University moved downward from the 501–800 band to the 801–1000 band. Importantly, no Turkish institution exited the Top 1000, which indicates continuity in Türkiye’s upper academic layer. However, the absence of any institution moving upward into a stronger band suggests that recent academic momentum at the top has remained more defensive than transformative. Overall, the data point to structural stability, modest internal movement, and limited upward band advancement in Türkiye’s highest-ranked university group.

Table 2. Comparison of Turkish Institutions in the Top 1000 World Rank Bands (2025 vs 2026)

Rank Band	2025 Count	2025 Institutions	2026 Count	2026 Institutions	Key Change
1–500	1	Hacettepe University (433)	1	Hacettepe University (458)	No change in count; Hacettepe remained Türkiye’s only Top 500 institution.
501–800	9	Middle East Technical University (550); İstanbul Technical University (668); Koç University (671); Ankara University (685); Ege University (699); Gazi University (747); Dokuz Eylül University (765); Atatürk University (789); İstanbul University (796)	8	Middle East Technical University (567); İstanbul Technical University (645); Koç University (672); Ankara University (682); Ege University (723); Gazi University (732); İstanbul University (791); Atatürk University (800)	The band decreased from 9 to 8 institutions because Dokuz Eylül University moved down to the 801–1000 band.
801–1000	7	Marmara University (841); Erciyes University (846); İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University (864); İstanbul University Cerrahpaşa (923); Sağlık Bilimleri University (935); Boğaziçi University (954); Çukurova University (988)	9	İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University (836); Dokuz Eylül University (852); Marmara University (862); Erciyes University (895); Boğaziçi University (936); Çukurova University (966); İstanbul University Cerrahpaşa (977); Karadeniz Teknik University (978); Sağlık Bilimleri University (992)	The band increased from 7 to 9 institutions due to the addition of Karadeniz Teknik University and the downward shift of Dokuz Eylül University from the 501–800 band.

Table 3. Entry, Exit, and Movement Analysis of Turkish Institutions Across Upper World Rank Bands (2025–2026)

Category	Institution	2025 Rank / Band	2026 Rank / Band	Interpretation
Entered Top 1000	Karadeniz Teknik University	1003 / Outside Top 1000	978 / 801–1000	Entered the Top 1000 in 2026.
Exited Top 1000	None	—	—	No Turkish institution dropped out of the Top 1000.
Moved Down a Band	Dokuz Eylül University	765 / 501–800	852 / 801–1000	Remained in the Top 1000, but fell into a lower sub-band.
Moved Up a Band	None	—	—	No institution moved upward into a stronger band.

Table 4. Selected Same-Band Improvers and Decliners (2025–2026)

Institution	2025 Rank	2026 Rank	Rank Change*	Comment
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University	864	836	+28	Strongest same-band improvement among upper-band institutions.
İstanbul Technical University	668	645	+23	Improved while remaining in the 501–800 band.
Çukurova University	988	966	+22	Improved within the 801–1000 band.
Boğaziçi University	954	936	+18	Strengthened its position within the 801–1000 band.
Gazi University	747	732	+15	Recorded moderate improvement within the 501–800 band.
Sağlık Bilimleri University	935	992	-57	Largest same-band decline among upper-band institutions.
İstanbul University Cerrahpaşa	923	977	-54	Declined but remained within the Top 1000.
Erciyes University	846	895	-49	Weakened within the 801–1000 band.
Hacettepe University	433	458	-25	Remained in the Top 500 despite a lower rank position.
Ege University	699	723	-24	Declined slightly but stayed in the 501–800 band.

Figure 15. Slope Chart: Top 25 Turkish Universities (2025 vs 2026)

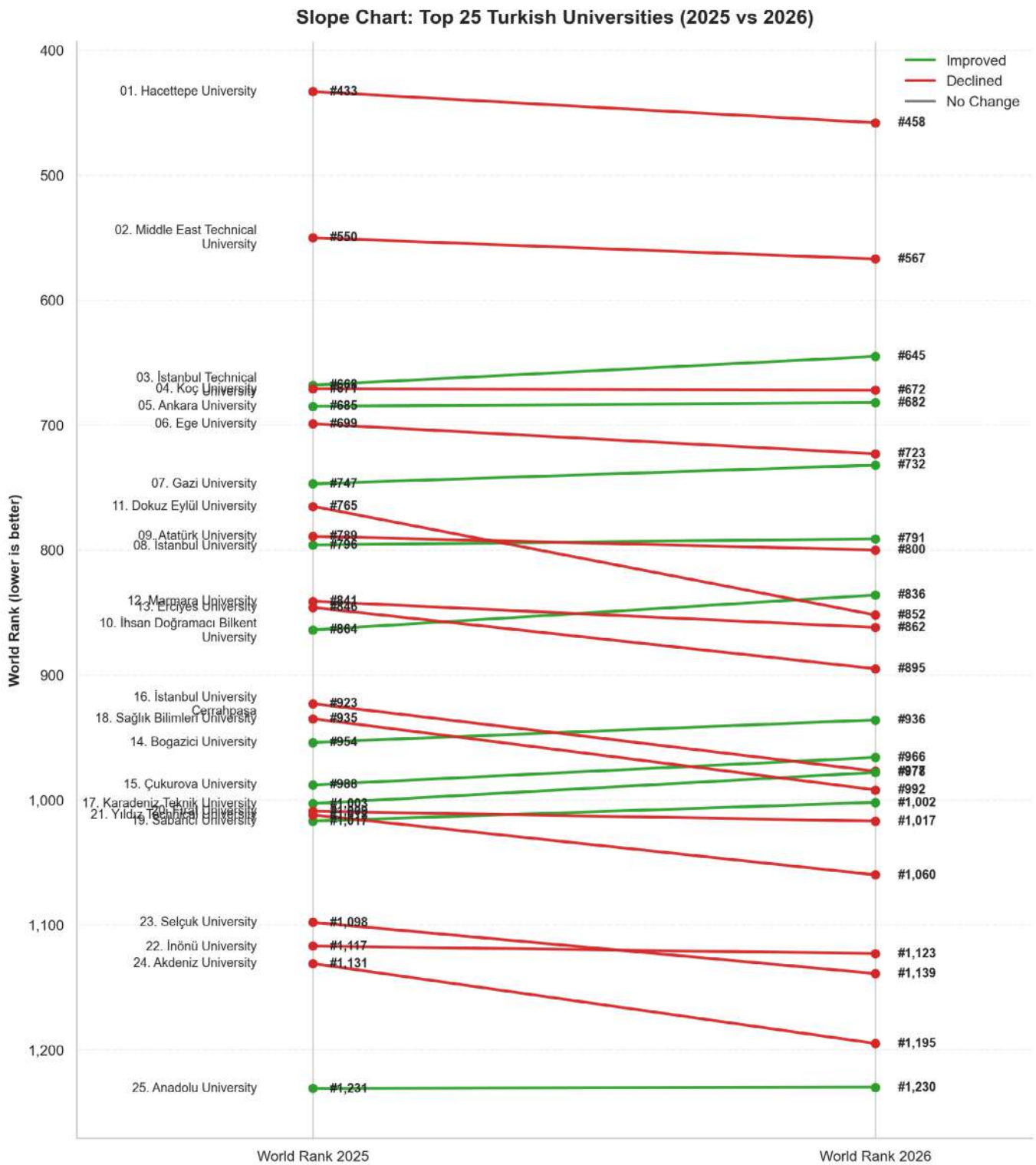


Figure 16. Largest Ranking Improvers and Decliners in Türkiye

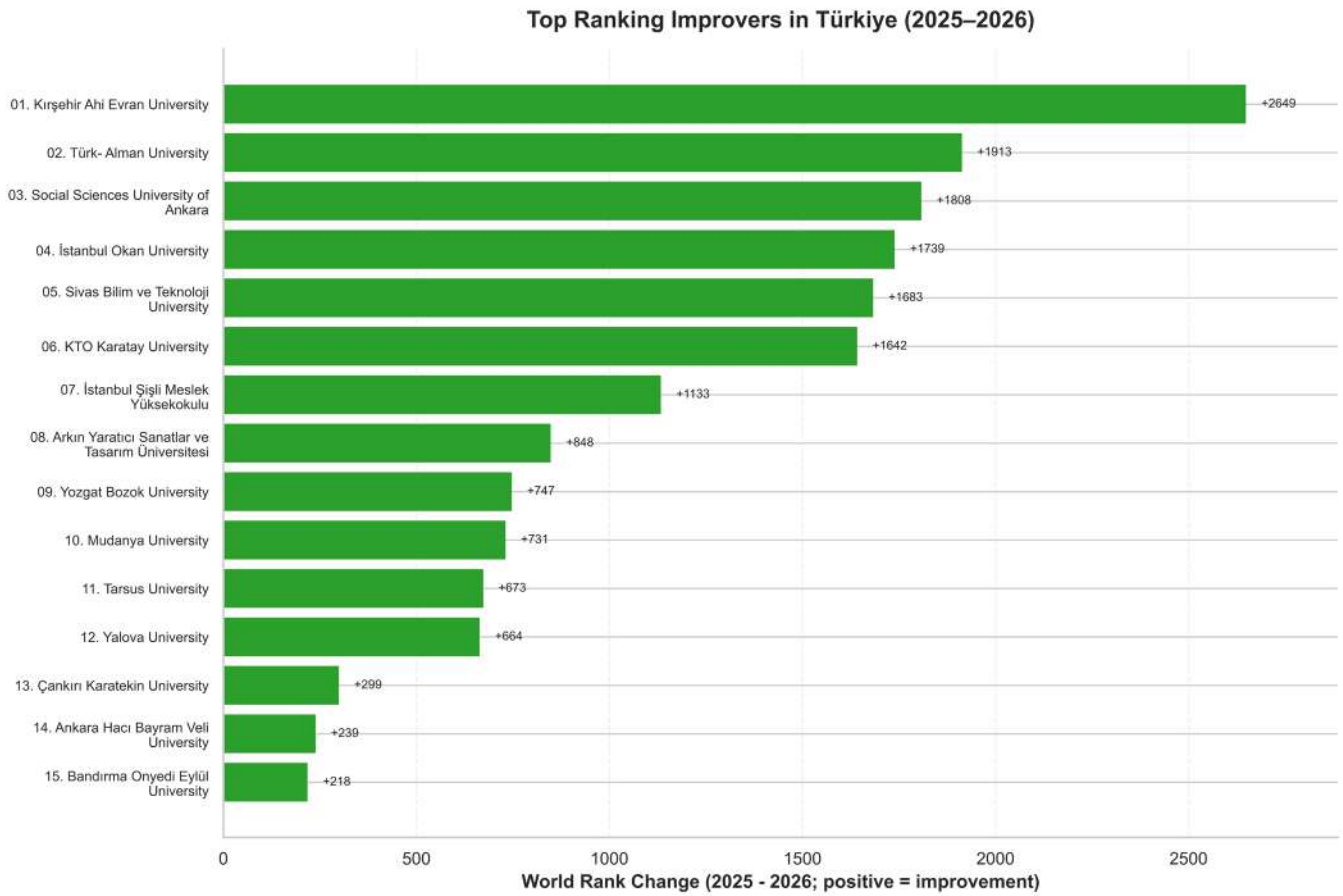


Figure 17. Institution Momentum Quadrant: Türkiye 2025-2026

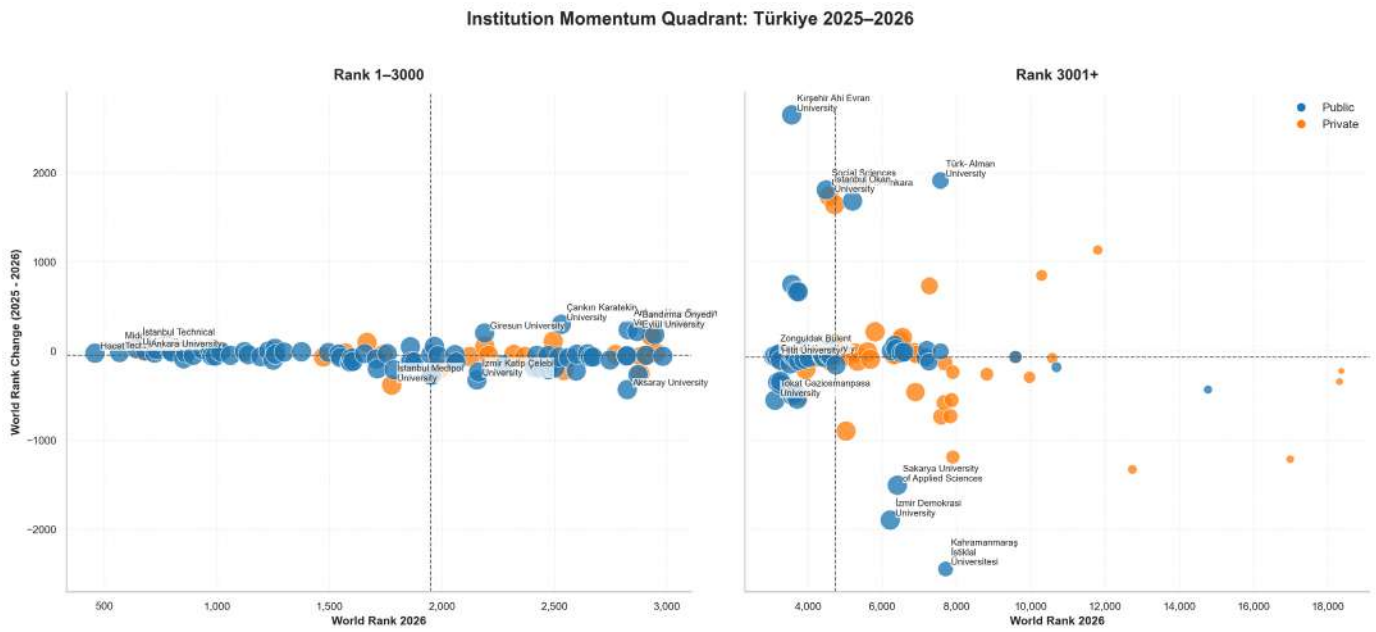
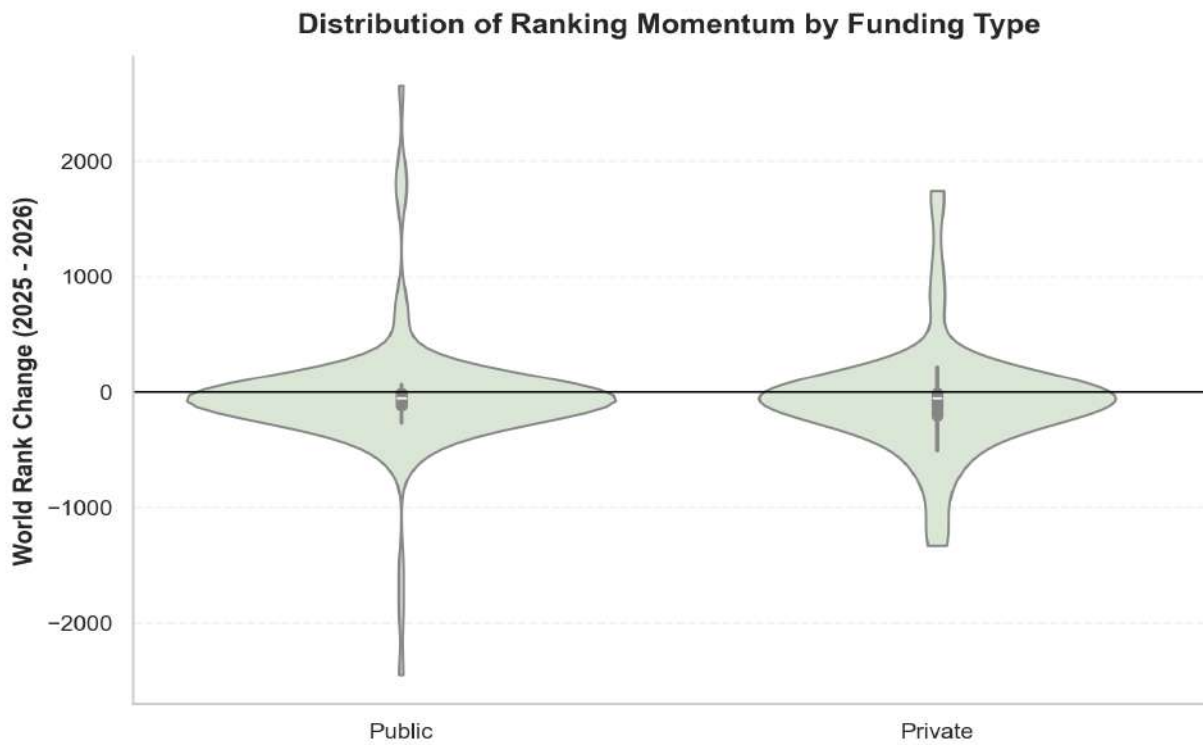


Figure 18. Distribution of Ranking Momentum by Funding Type in Türkiye



Subject Rankings Across Türkiye

Türkiye's subject structure is broad, but it is not evenly competitive. The country has visible representation across a wide range of academic fields, yet the strength of that representation varies sharply from one discipline to another. Some subjects combine relatively strong rank quality with better upper-tier conversion, while others have a broader institutional base but weaker top-end visibility. For this reason, subject performance in Türkiye should be interpreted not through a single hierarchy, but through the interaction of best rank position, Top 500 conversion, and the broader distribution of institutions across fields.

A first major pattern is that Türkiye's strongest subjects are not necessarily the ones that appear largest or most globally dominant by reputation. Education stands out as the clearest area of subject strength. It combines the country's strongest subject-level rank quality with the highest Top 500 conversion rate, which is around 19.6%. This is a highly important result because it shows that Education is not simply present in the system; it is one of the few fields where Türkiye converts institutional presence into upper-tier global visibility with notable effectiveness. In structural terms, Education functions as one of the country's strongest academic pillars.

A second strong group includes Architecture and Design, Agriculture and Forestry, and Medical and Health Sciences. Architecture and Design records a Top 500 conversion rate of about 8.4%, while Agriculture and Forestry reaches approximately 7.6%, and Medical and Health Sciences around 6.0%. These are substantial rates in the Turkish context and indicate that subject-level excellence is concentrated especially in a limited set of fields that combine either applied strength, professional specialization, or historically established academic capacity. Together with Education, these subjects form the clearest zone of higher-performing academic visibility in the Turkish system.

By contrast, several broader or strategically important fields show weaker upper-tier conversion. Law remains comparatively modest at around 0.9%, Business and Management at approximately 0.6%, and Social Sciences at about 0.5%. Most strikingly, Natural Sciences shows no Top 500 conversion in the figure set, despite being one of the fields that might normally be expected to contribute strongly to international academic visibility. This is one of the report's most important structural findings: larger or more internationally prominent-looking fields do not automatically produce stronger elite representation. In Türkiye, some narrower or more focused fields convert more effectively than broader fields with larger symbolic weight.

This unevenness means that Türkiye's subject competitiveness should not be described as system-wide excellence across all disciplines. Rather, it is a pattern of selective concentration. A few fields perform relatively strongly and generate much of the country's visible subject-level success, while others remain weaker in top-end depth even when they are institutionally widespread. This pattern is analytically important because it shows that the country's academic profile is not flat. Türkiye does not occupy the same competitive position across all knowledge domains; it has clear strongholds and equally clear weaker areas.

Another important point is that subject strength in Türkiye appears to reflect both historical accumulation and field-specific institutional strategy. The stronger-performing subjects are not random. Education, Architecture and Design, Agriculture and Forestry, and Medical and Health Sciences are all areas where Turkish universities have relatively recognizable academic traditions, professional relevance, or institutional specialization. By contrast, weaker-converting fields may suffer from a gap between broad participation and top-end output quality. In this sense, the subject profile of Türkiye is not only a ranking issue; it also reflects deeper differences in how academic capacity is distributed and sustained across disciplines.

Taken together, the subject-ranking figures show that Türkiye's disciplinary structure is broad but internally uneven. The country's strongest visibility is concentrated in a relatively limited number of fields, especially Education, Architecture and Design, Agriculture and Forestry, and Medical and Health Sciences. Meanwhile, broader fields such as Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Business and Management, and Law do not yet convert their scale into strong upper-tier representation as effectively. The broader implication is clear: Türkiye's future subject competitiveness will depend not only on maintaining strength in its current leading fields, but also on improving conversion quality in the larger domains where institutional presence already exists but elite international visibility remains comparatively weak.

Figure 19. Top 500 Conversion Rate by Subject in Türkiye

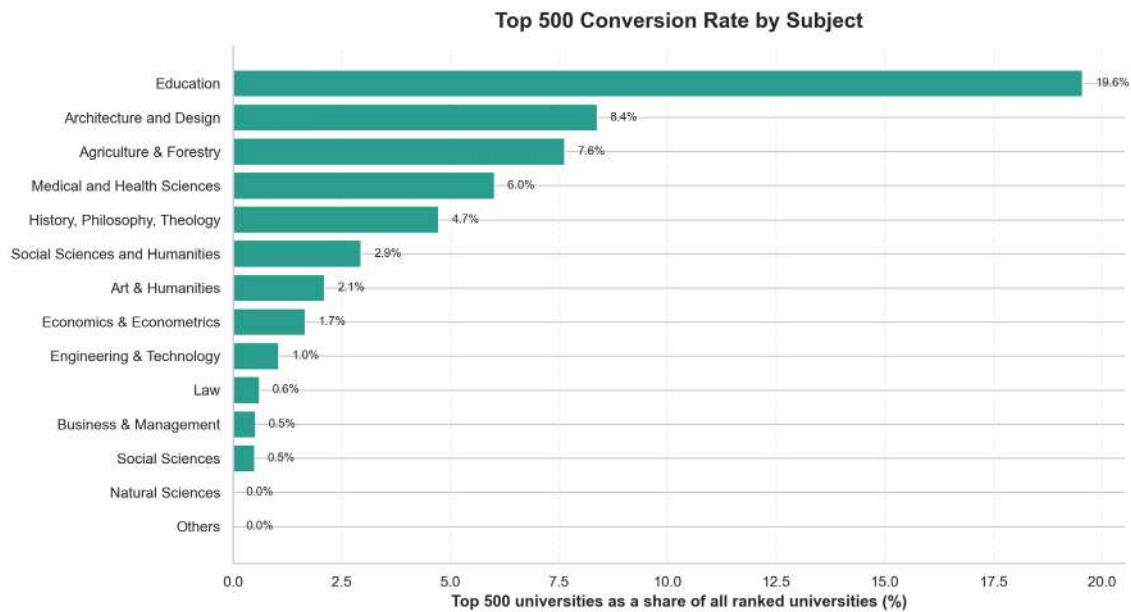


Figure 20. Best University by Subject in Türkiye

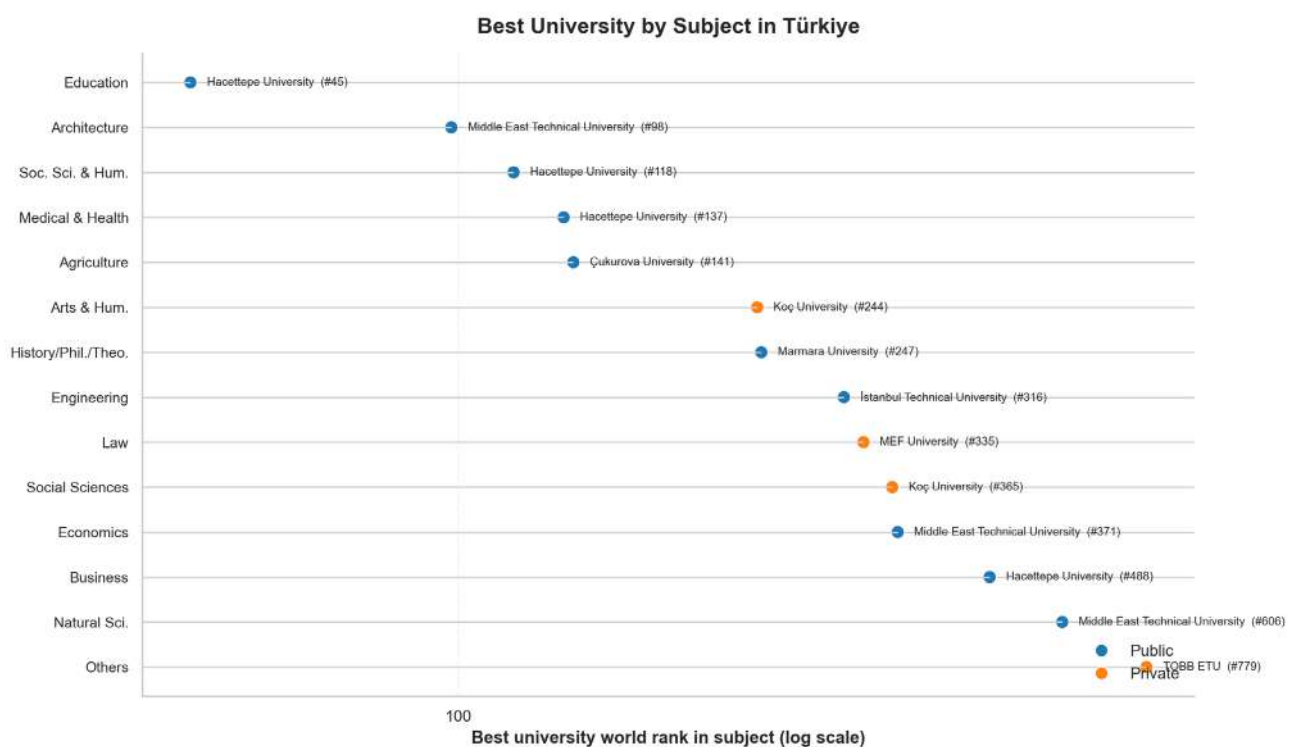


Figure 21. Distribution of University World Ranks Across Subjects in Türkiye

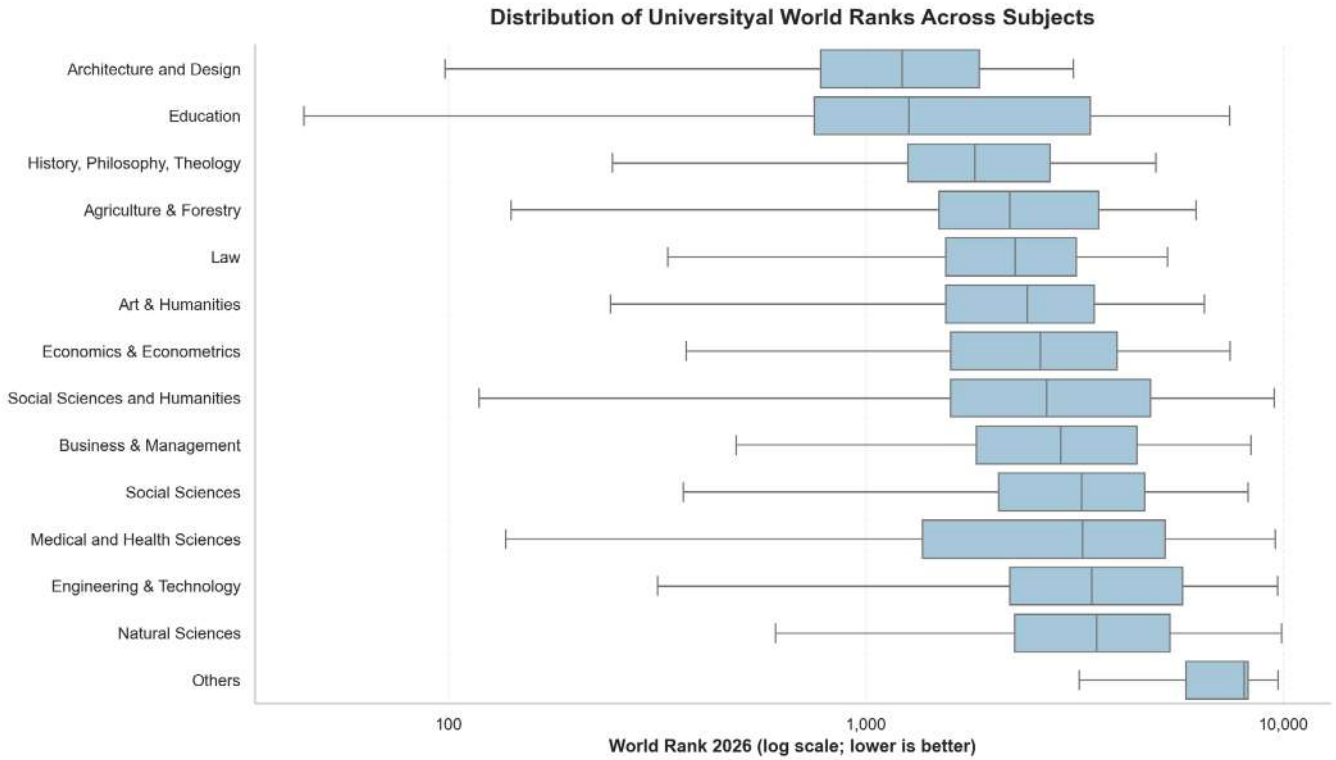


Figure 22. Best-vs-Median Performance Map Across Subjects in Türkiye

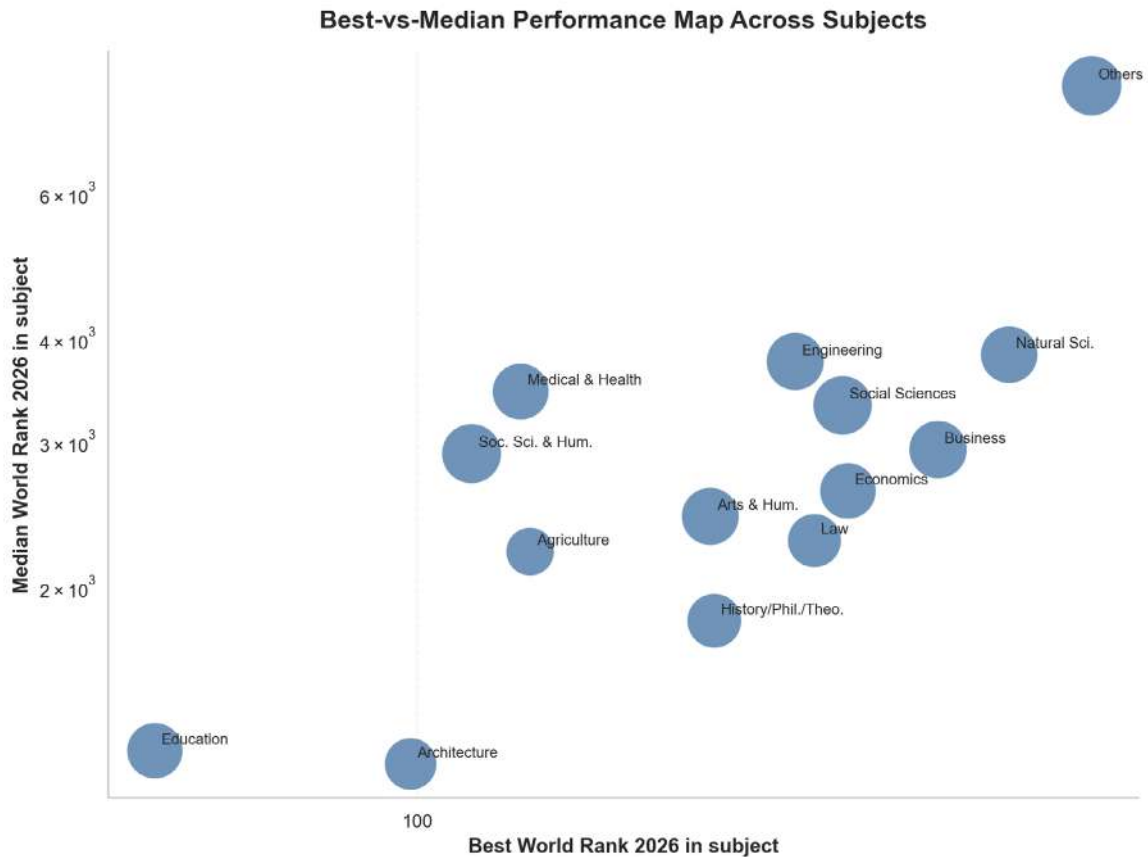


Figure 23. Median Continent-vs-World Position by Subject in Türkiye

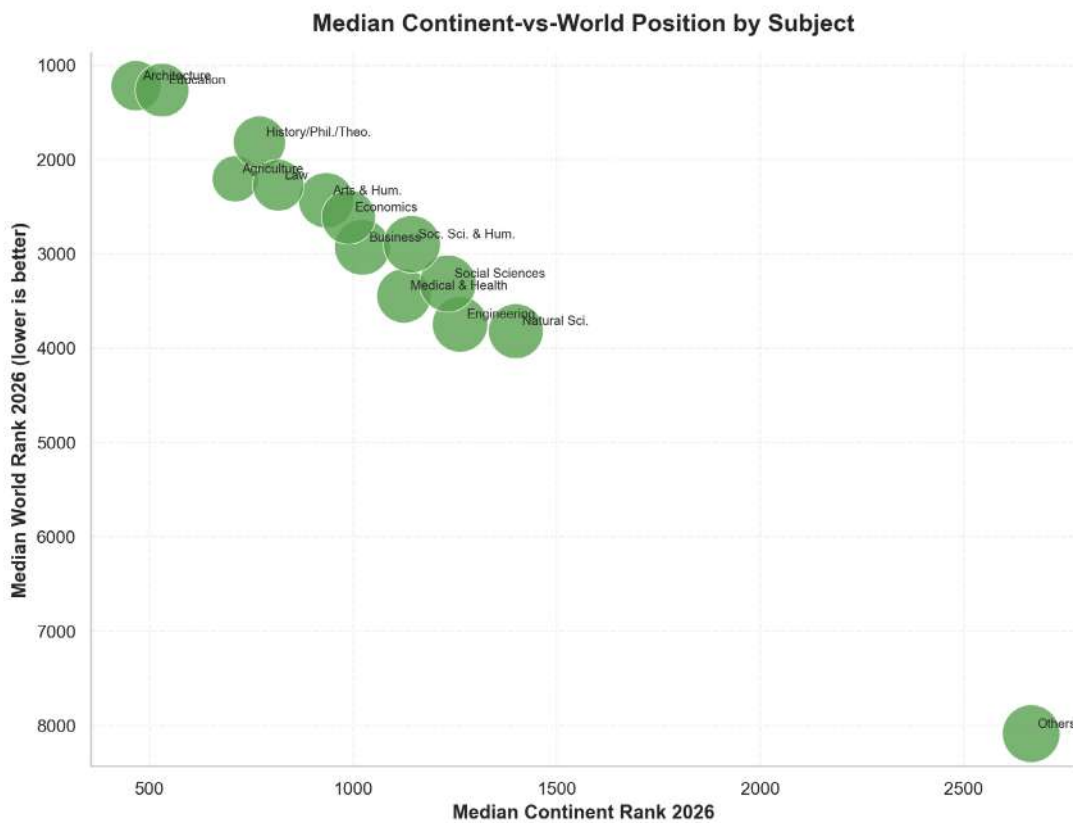


Figure 24. Subject Strength Spread Across Turkish Universities

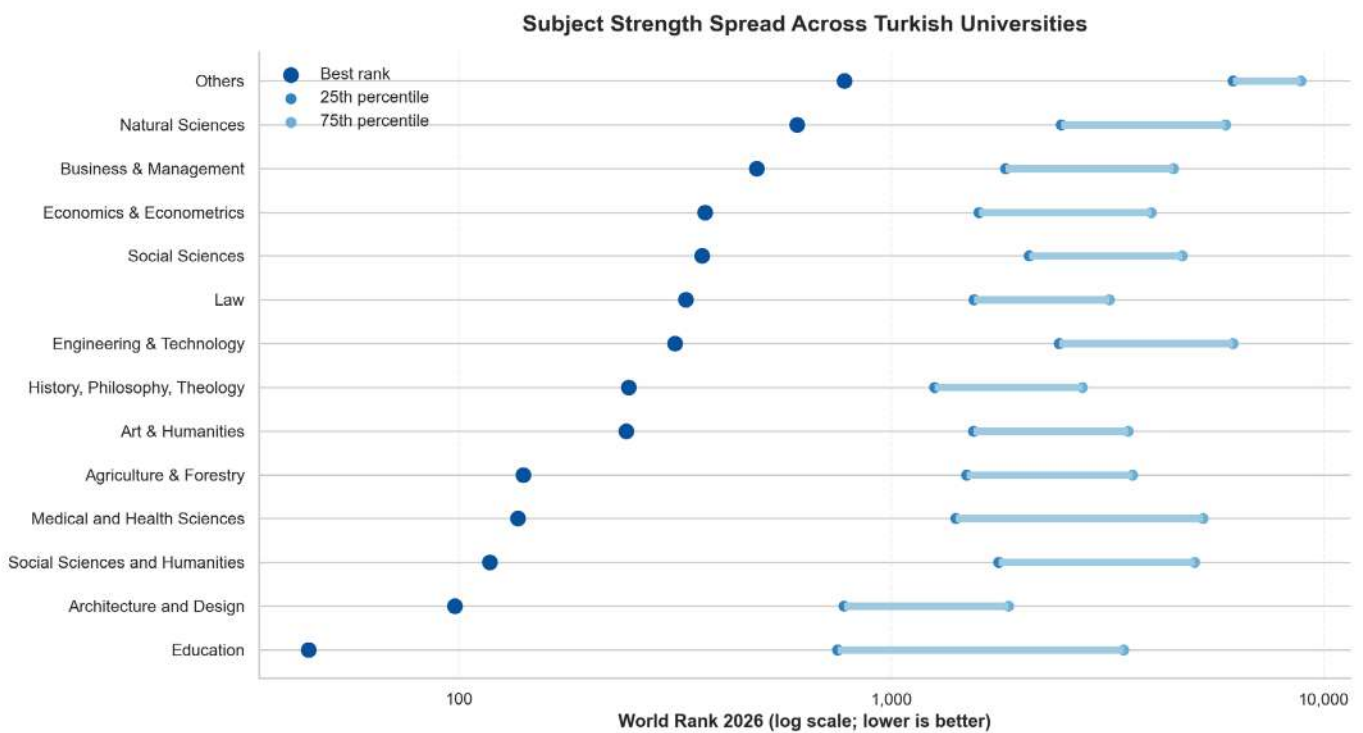


Figure 25. Top 15 Turkish Universities in Agriculture & Forestry

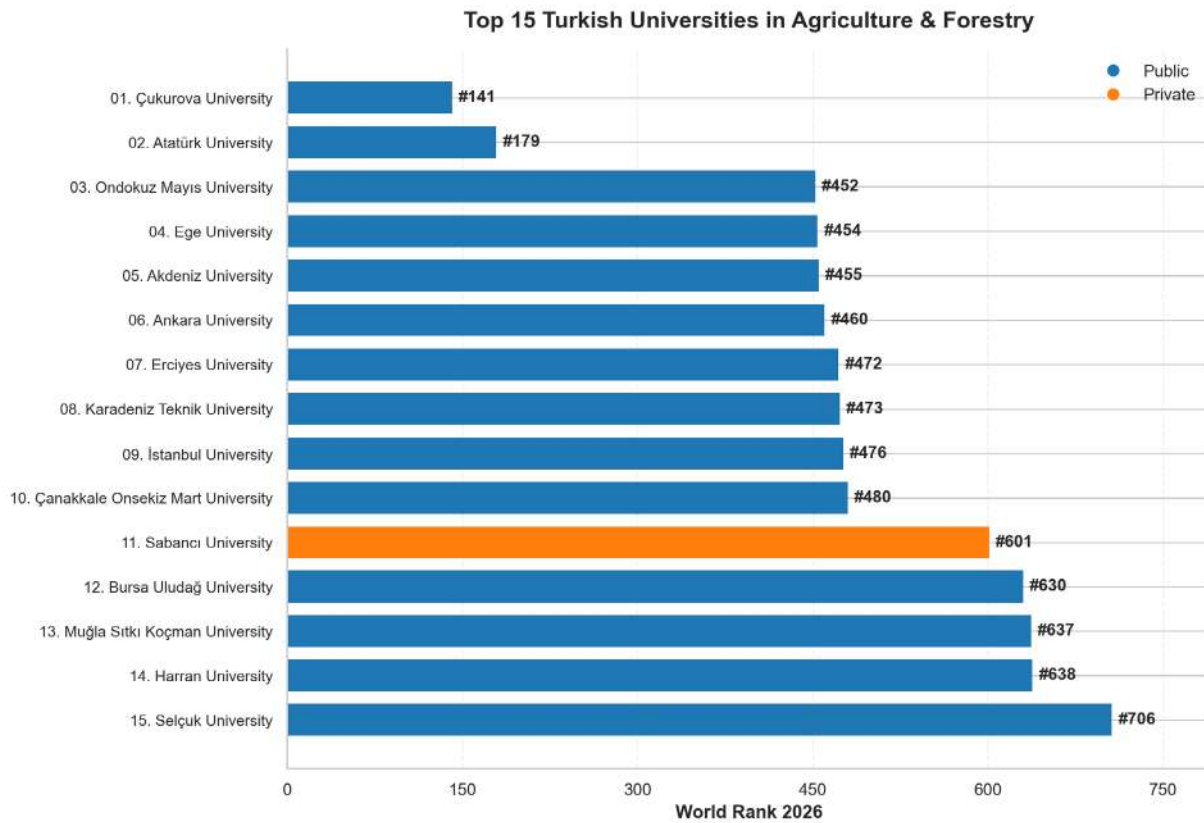


Figure 26. Top Ranking Improvers in Agriculture & Forestry in Türkiye (2025-2026)

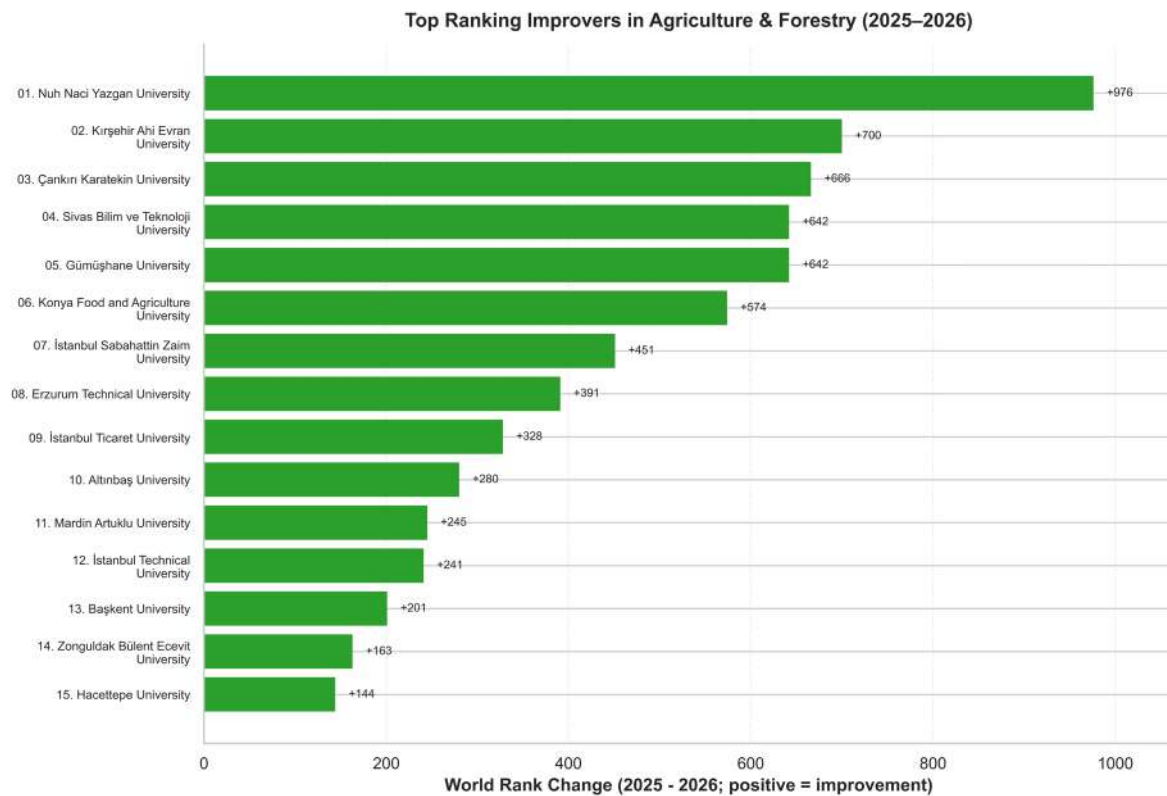


Figure 27. Top 15 Turkish Universities in Architecture and Design

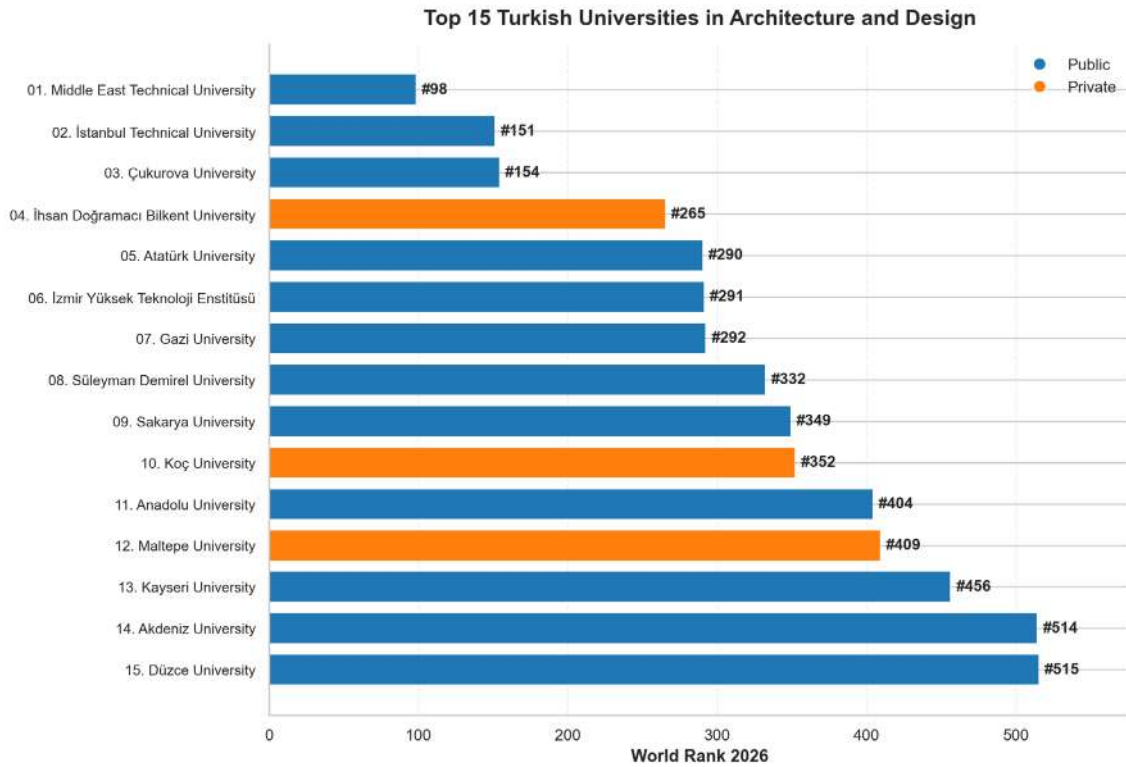


Figure 28. Top Ranking Improvers in Architecture and Design in Türkiye (2025-2026)

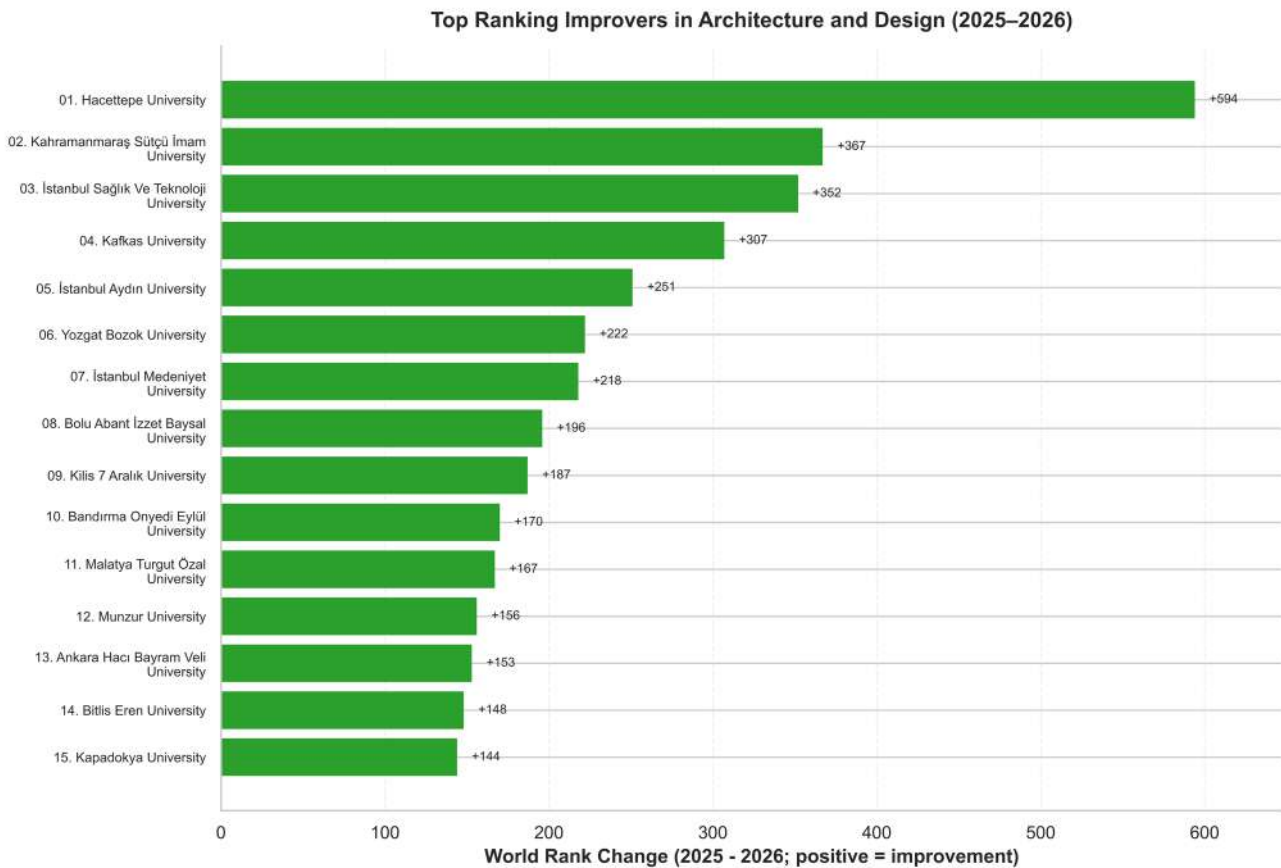


Figure 29. Top 15 Turkish Universities in Business & Management

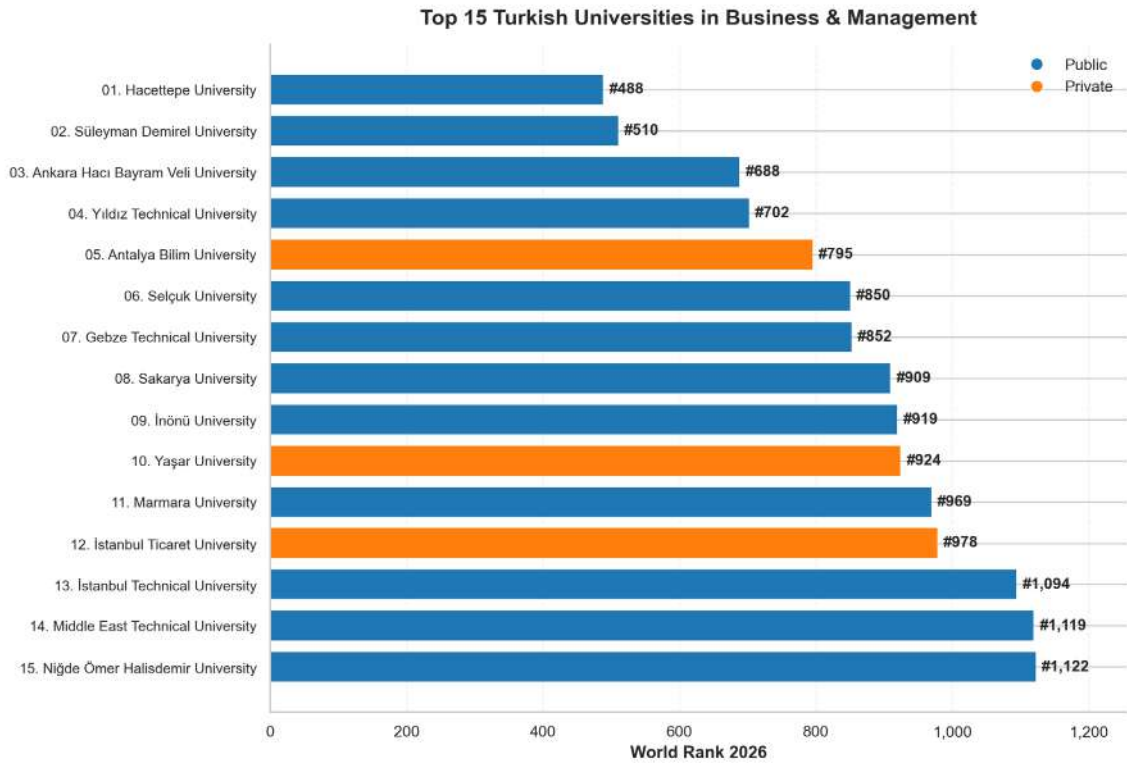


Figure 30. Top Ranking Improvers in Business & Management in Türkiye (2025-2026)

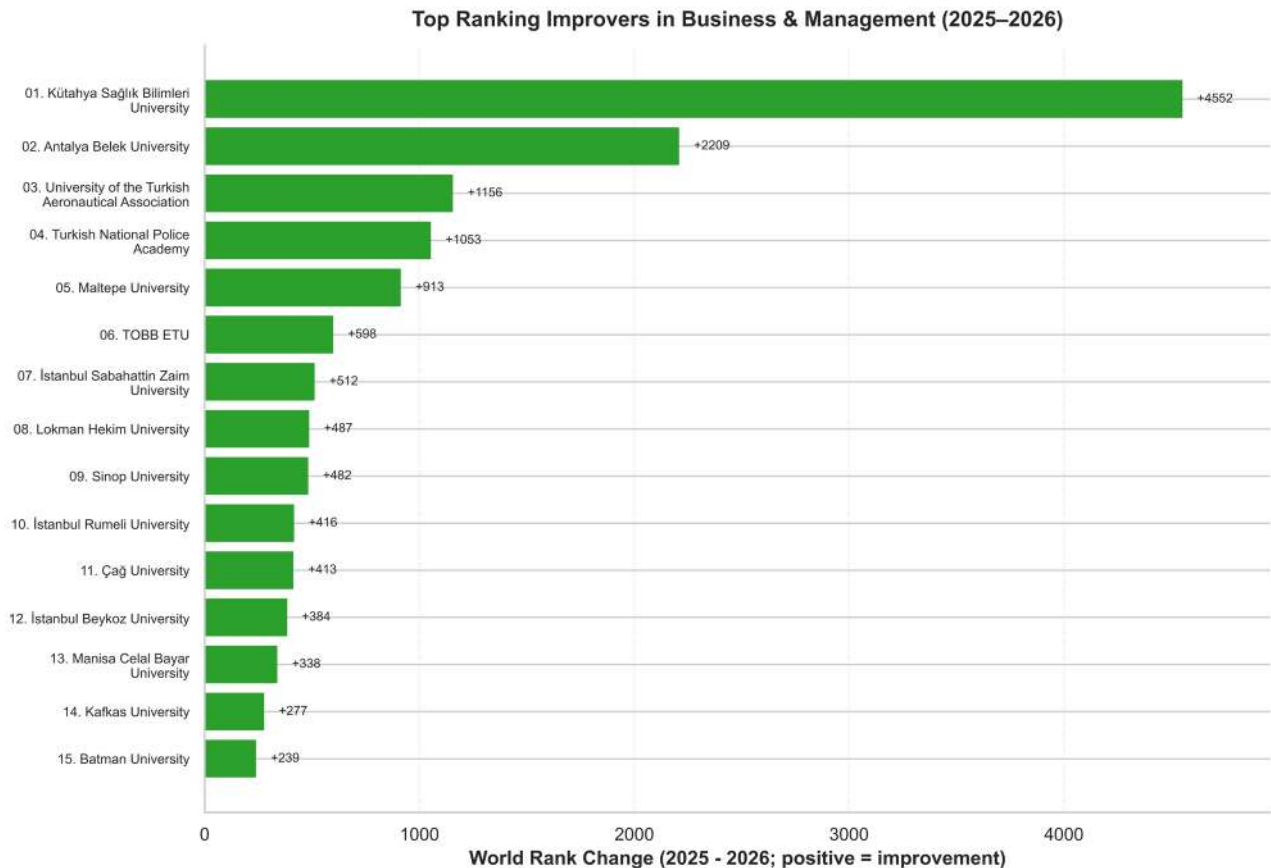


Figure 31. Top 15 Turkish Universities in Economics & Econometrics

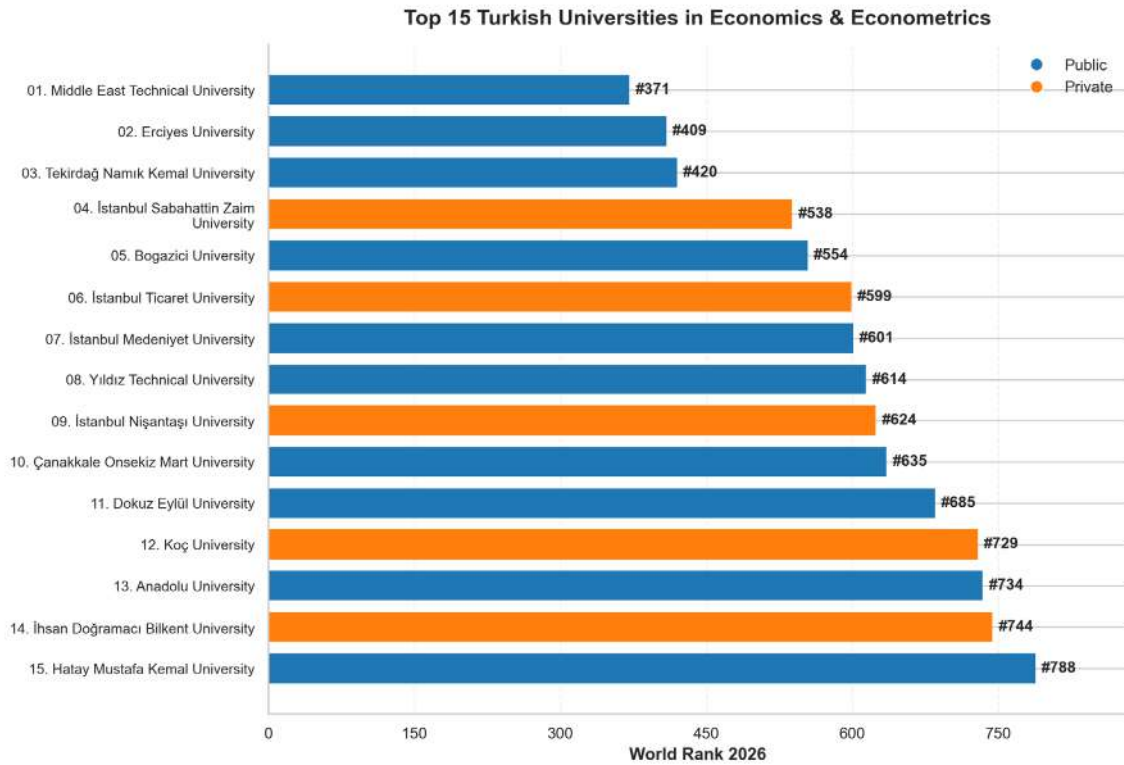


Figure 32. Top Ranking Improvers in Economics & Econometrics in Türkiye (2025-2026)

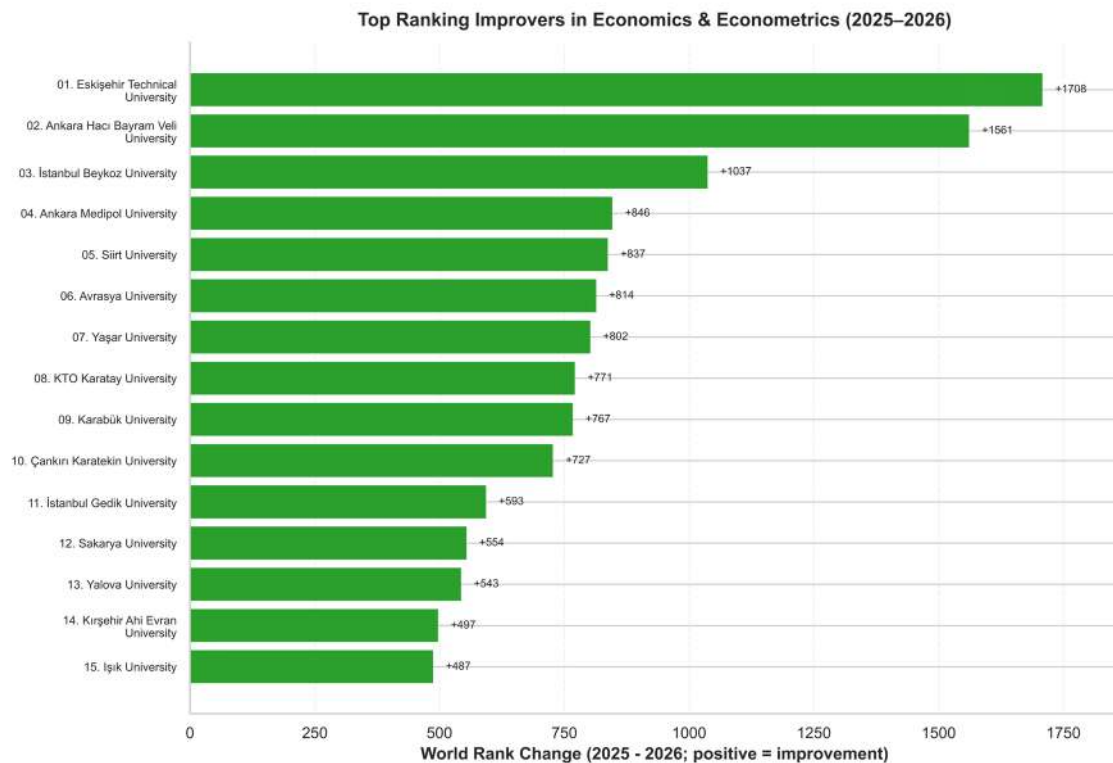


Figure 33. Top 15 Turkish Universities in Education

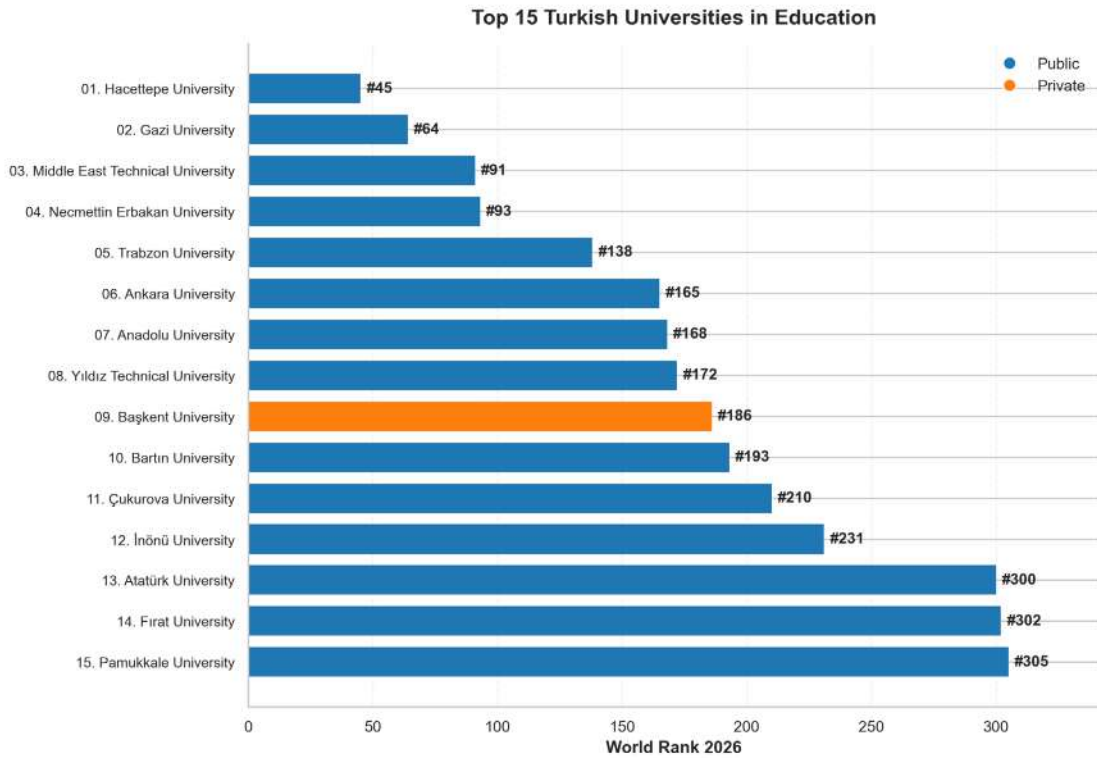


Figure 34. Top Ranking Improvers in Education in Türkiye (2025-2026)

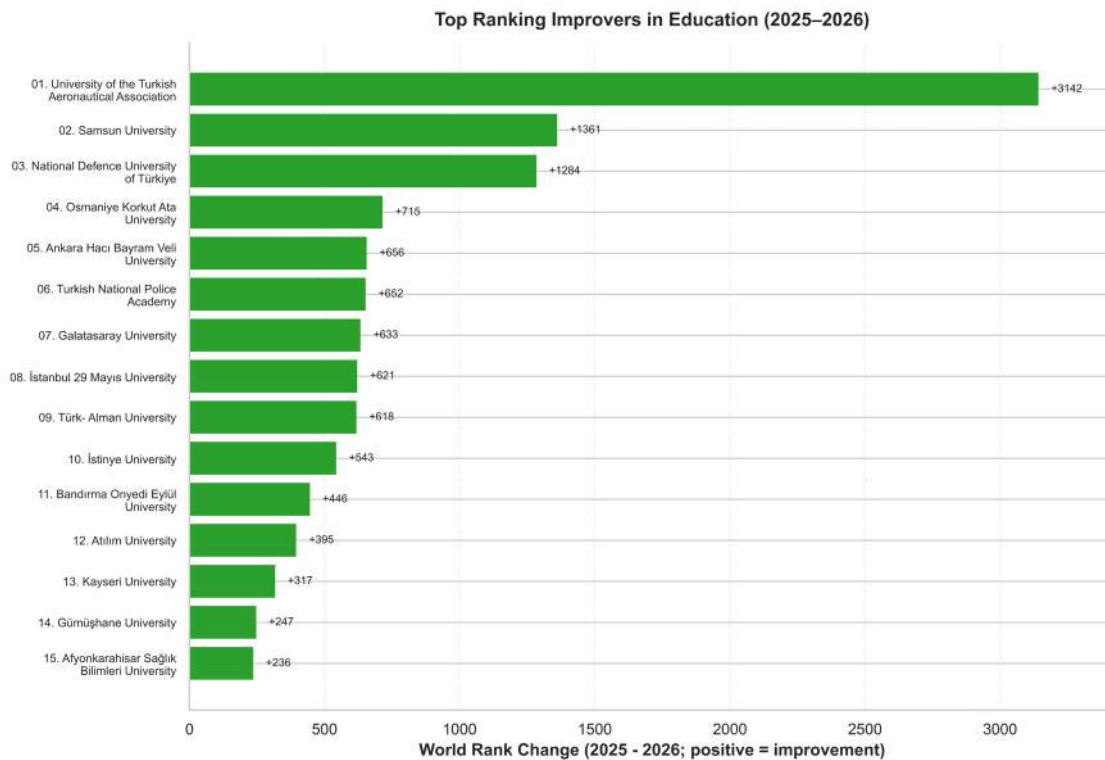


Figure 35. Top 15 Turkish Universities in Engineering & Technology

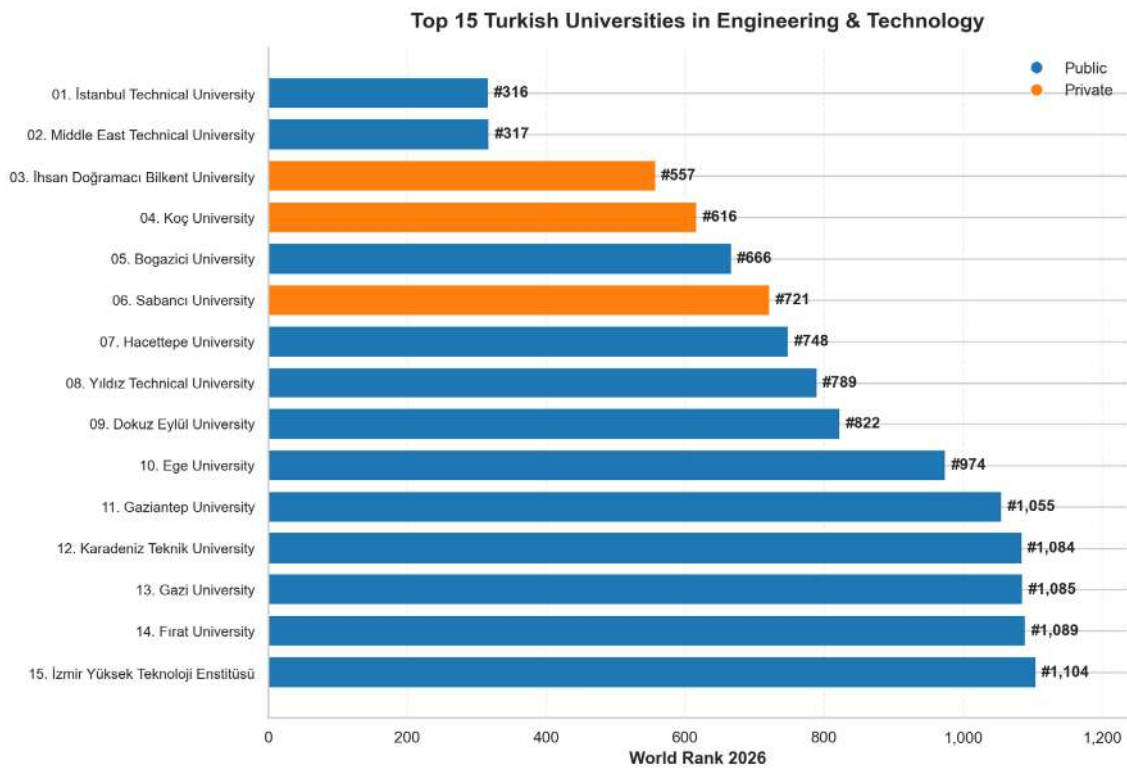


Figure 36. Top Ranking Improvers in Engineering & Technology in Türkiye (2025-2026)

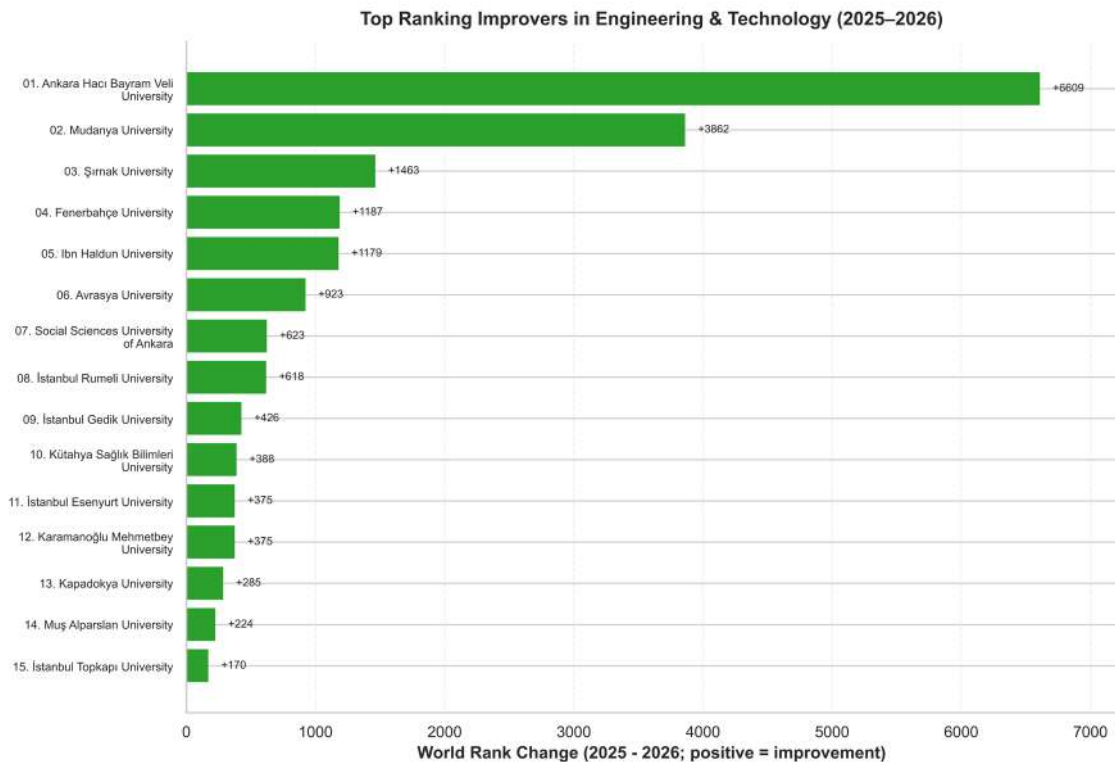


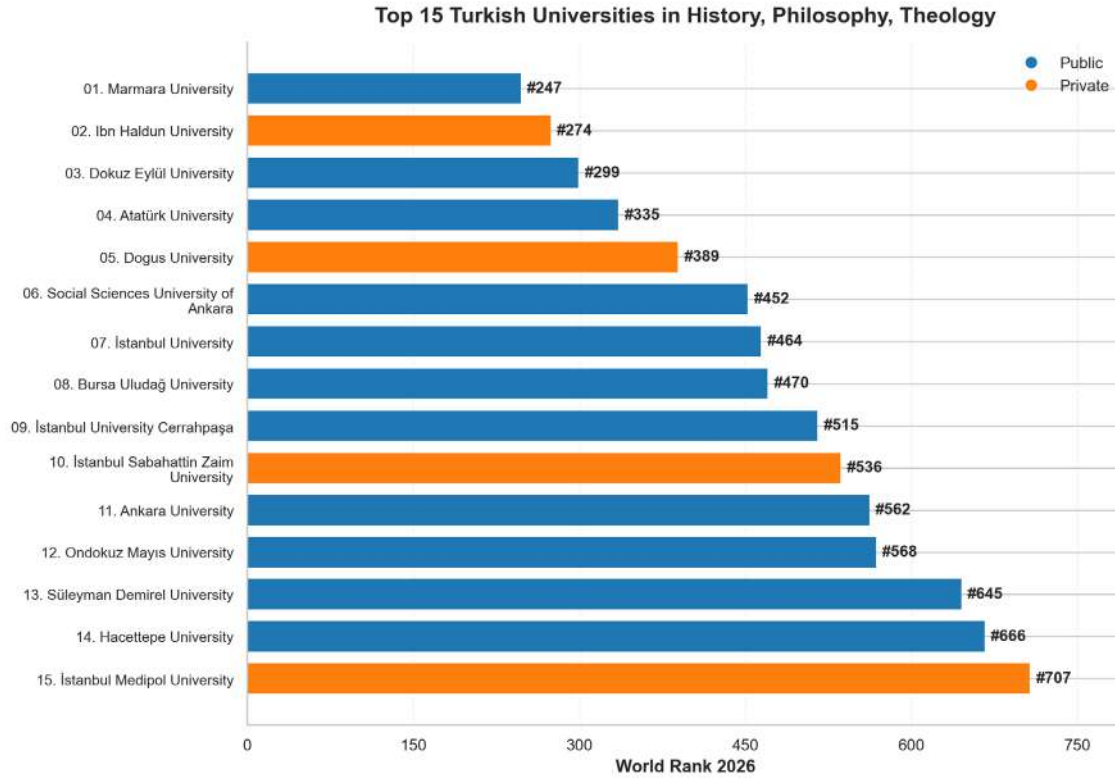
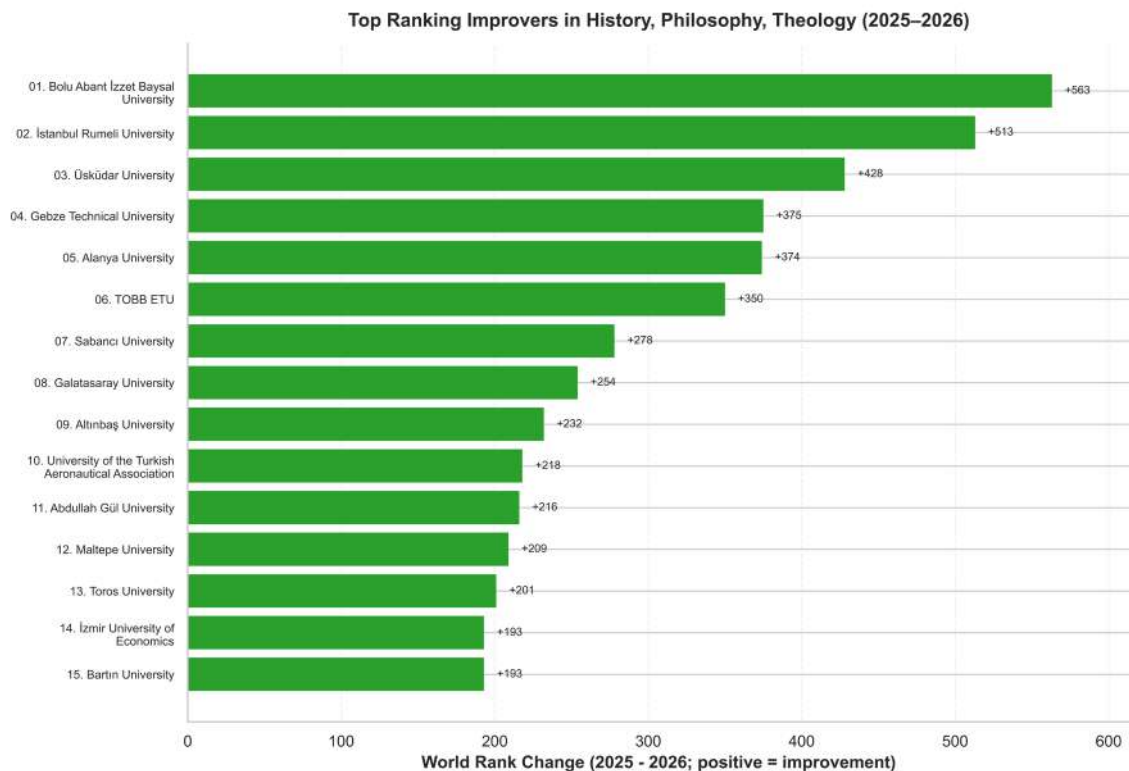
Figure 37. Top 15 Turkish Universities in History, Philosophy, Theology**Figure 38. Top Ranking Improvers in History, Philosophy, Theology in Türkiye (2025-2026)**

Figure 39. Top 15 Turkish Universities in Law

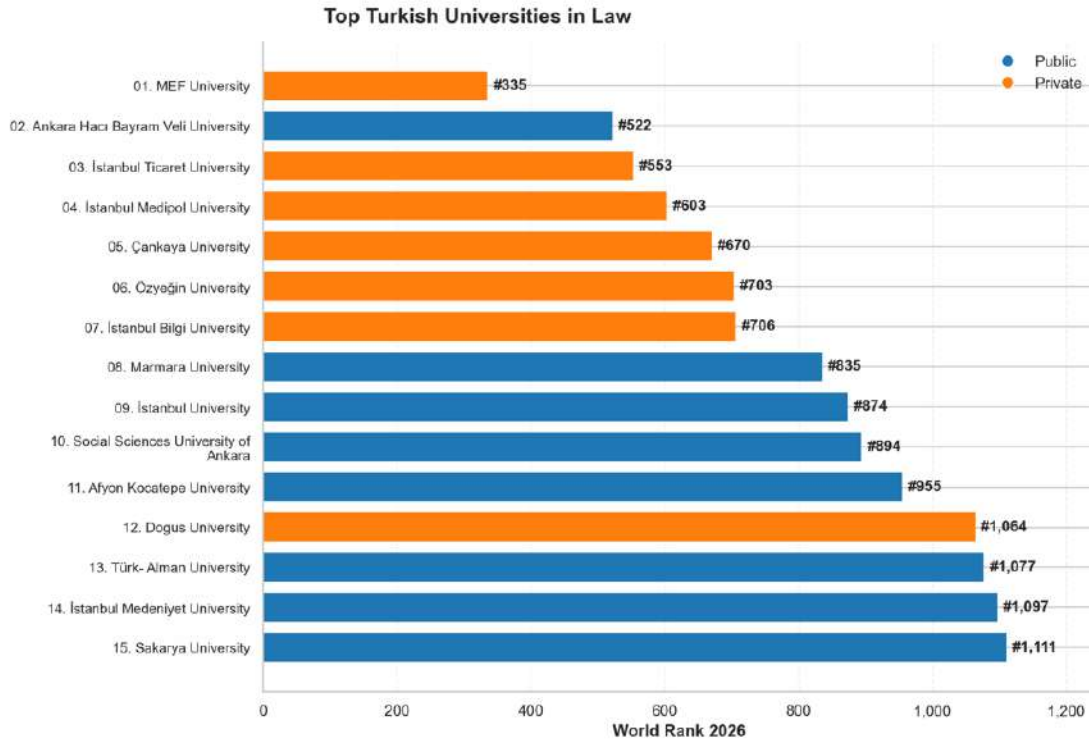


Figure 40. Top Ranking Improvers in Law in Türkiye (2025-2026)

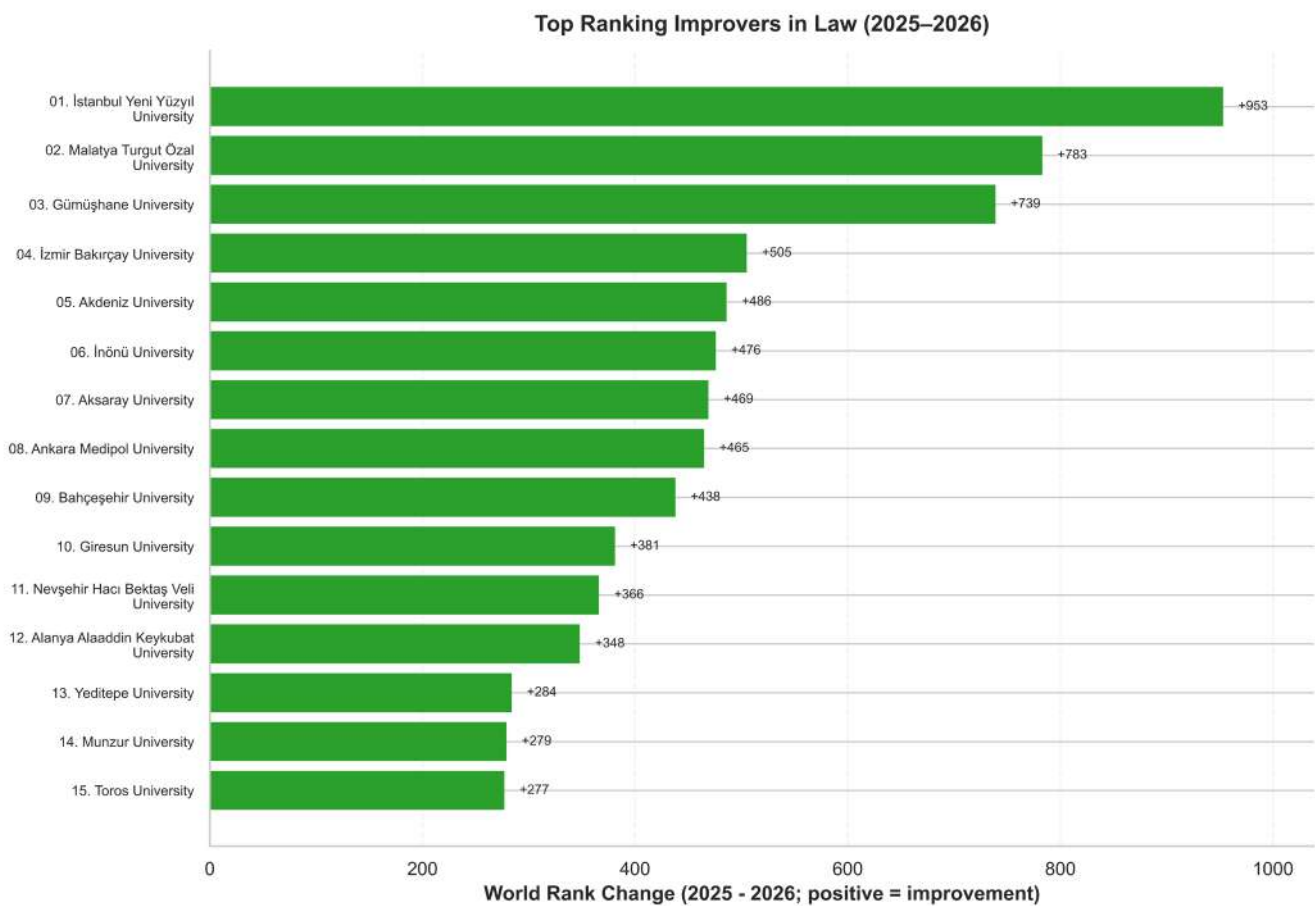


Figure 41. Top 15 Turkish Universities in Natural Sciences

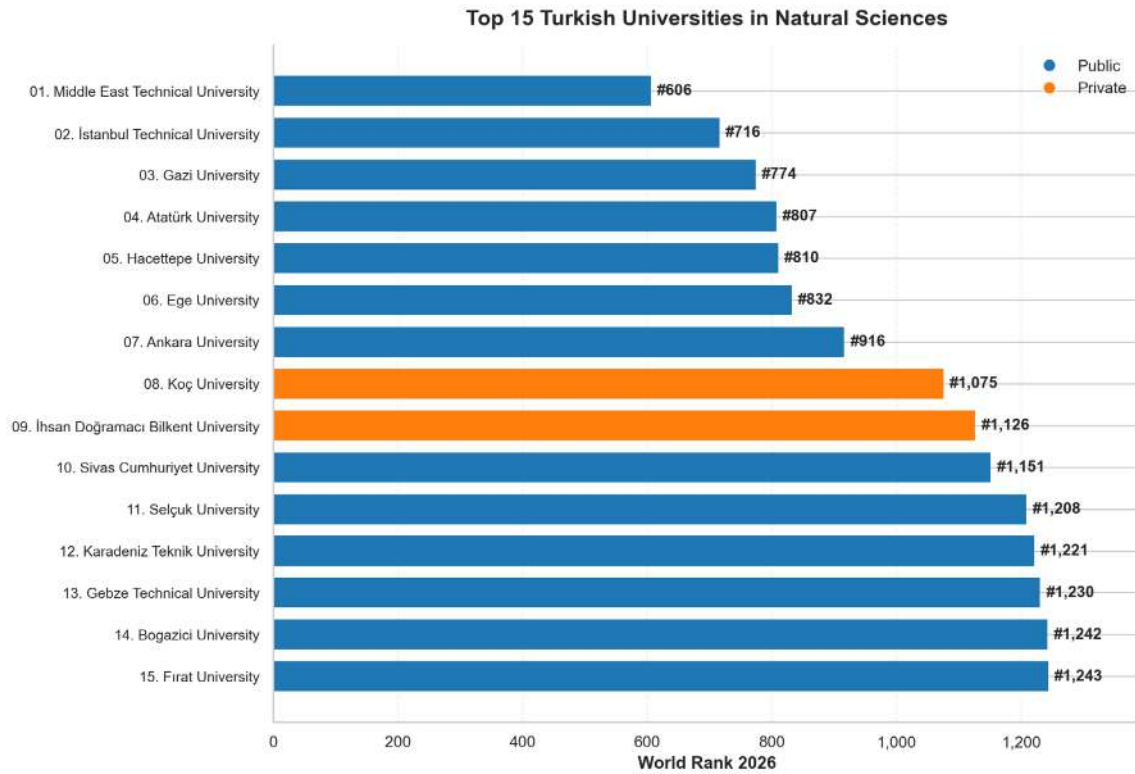


Figure 42. Top Ranking Improvers in Natural Sciences in Türkiye (2025-2026)

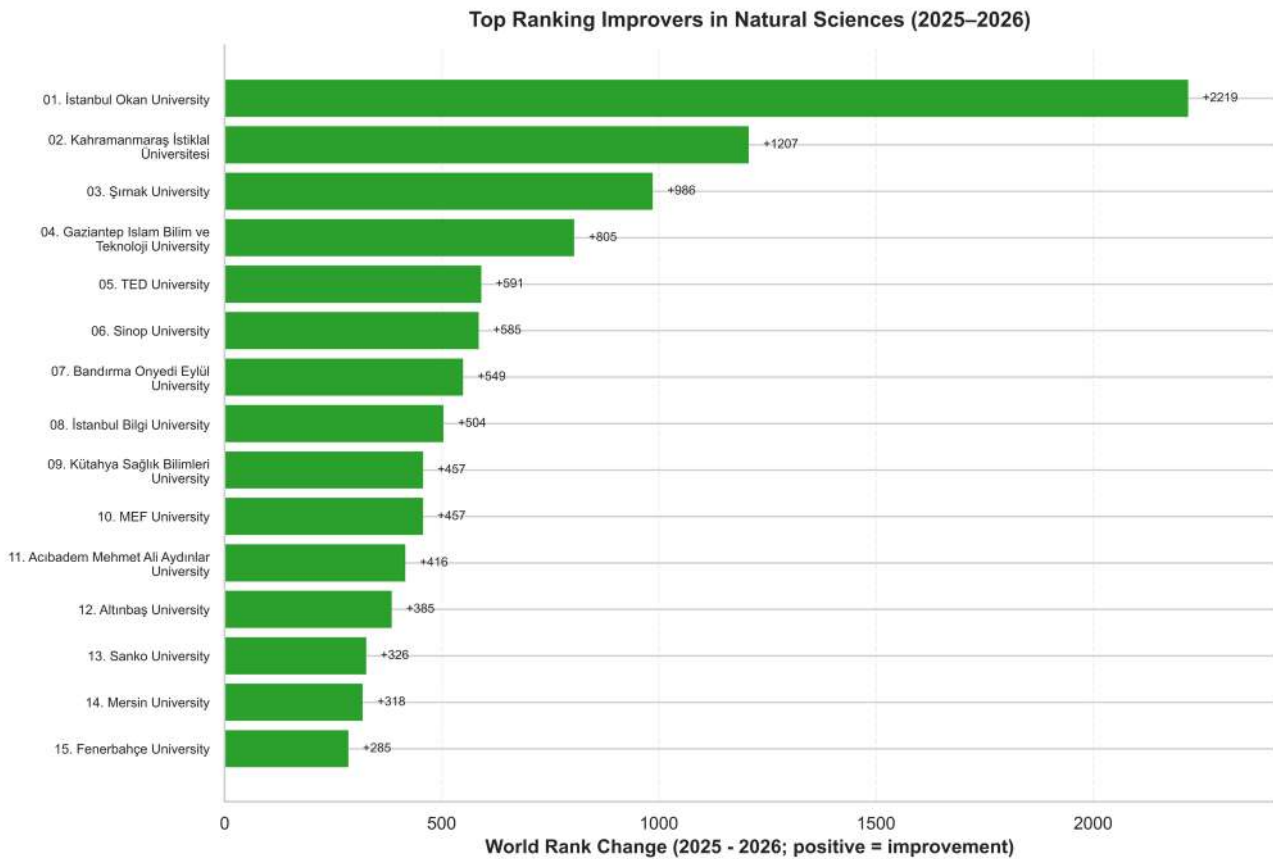


Figure 43. Top 15 Turkish Universities in Medical and Health Sciences

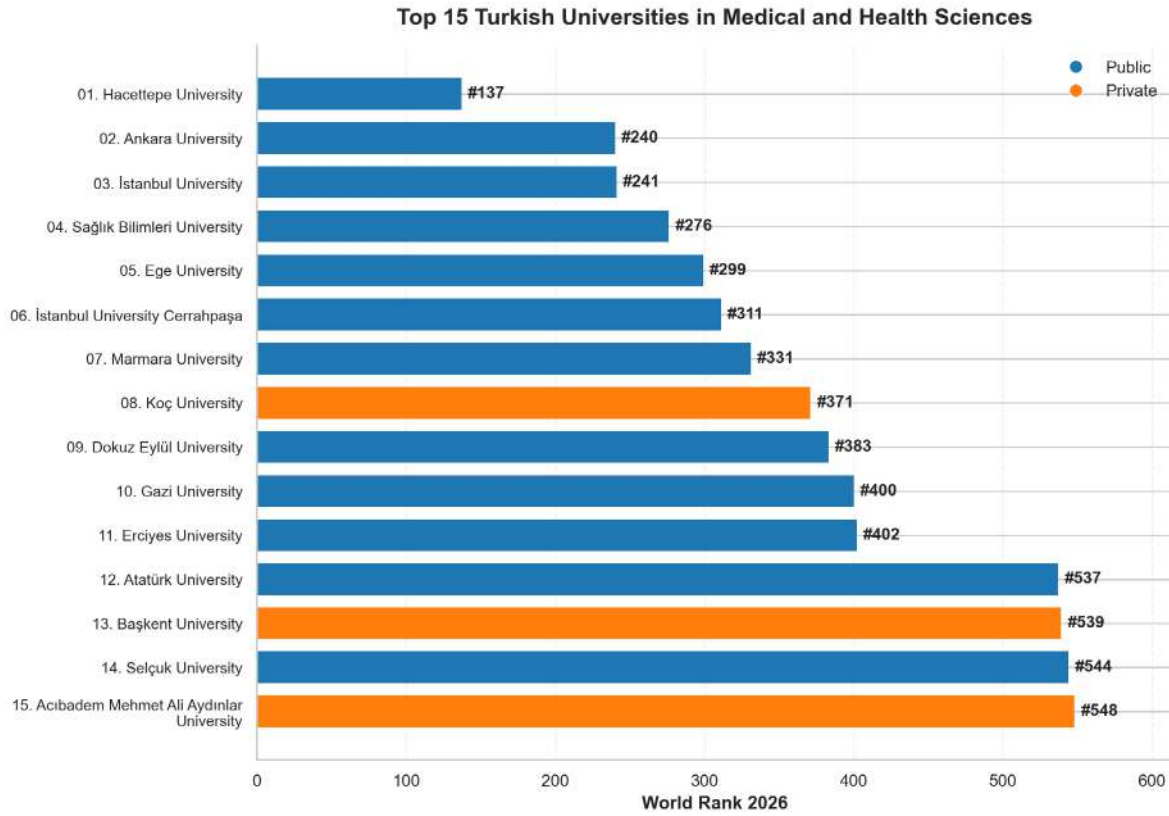


Figure 44. Top Ranking Improvers in Medical and Health Sciences in Türkiye (2025-2026)

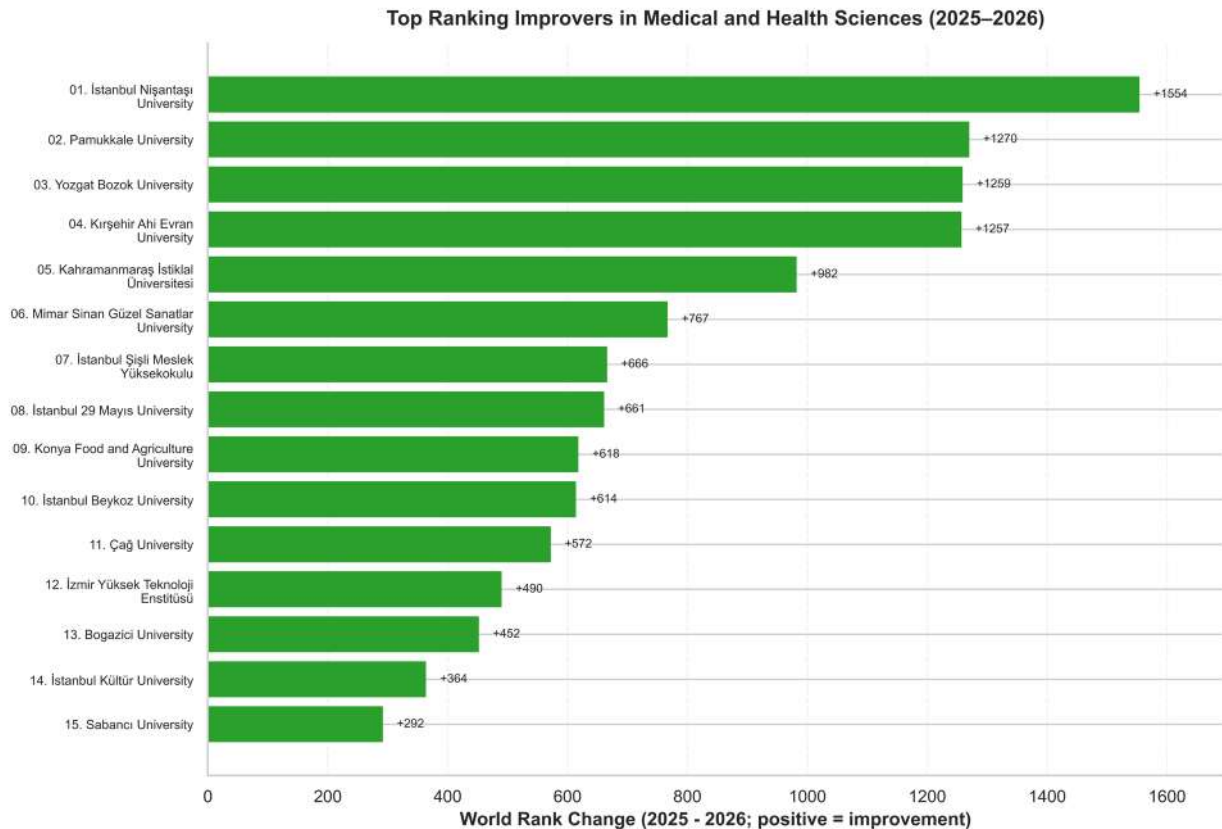


Figure 45. Top 15 Turkish Universities in Social Sciences

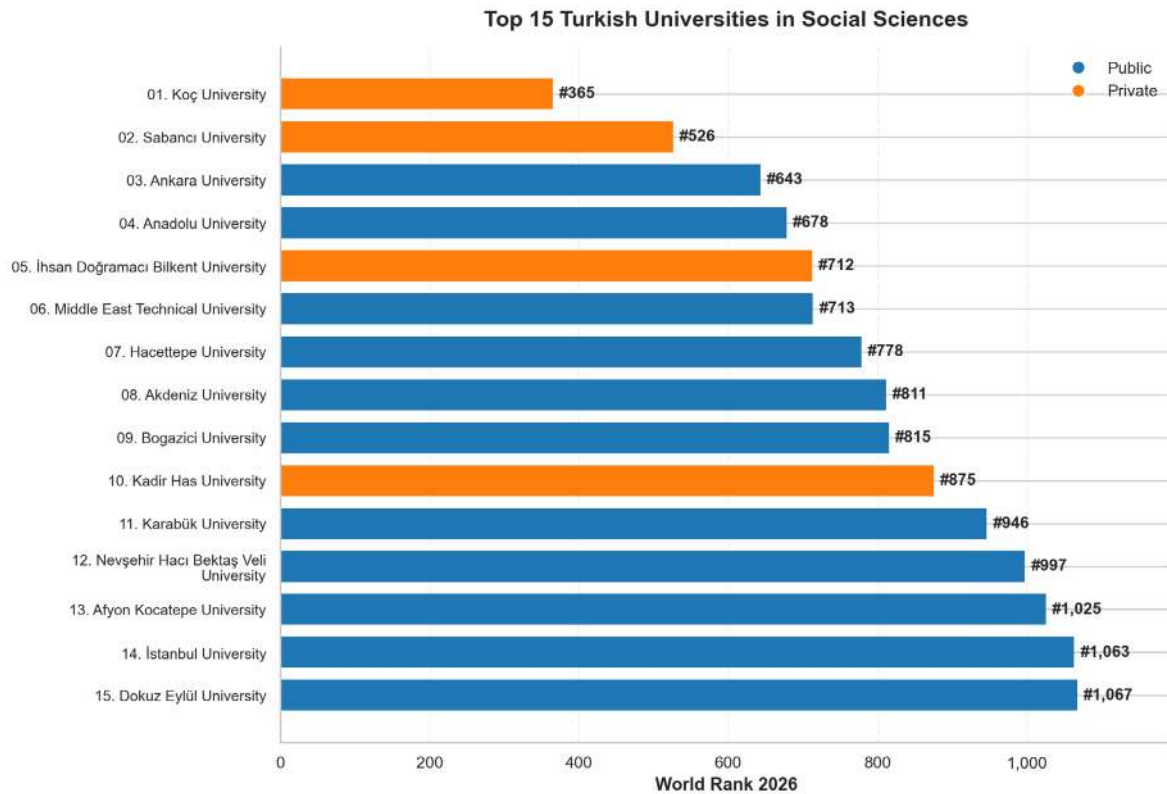


Figure 46. Top Ranking Improvers in Social Sciences in Türkiye (2025-2026)

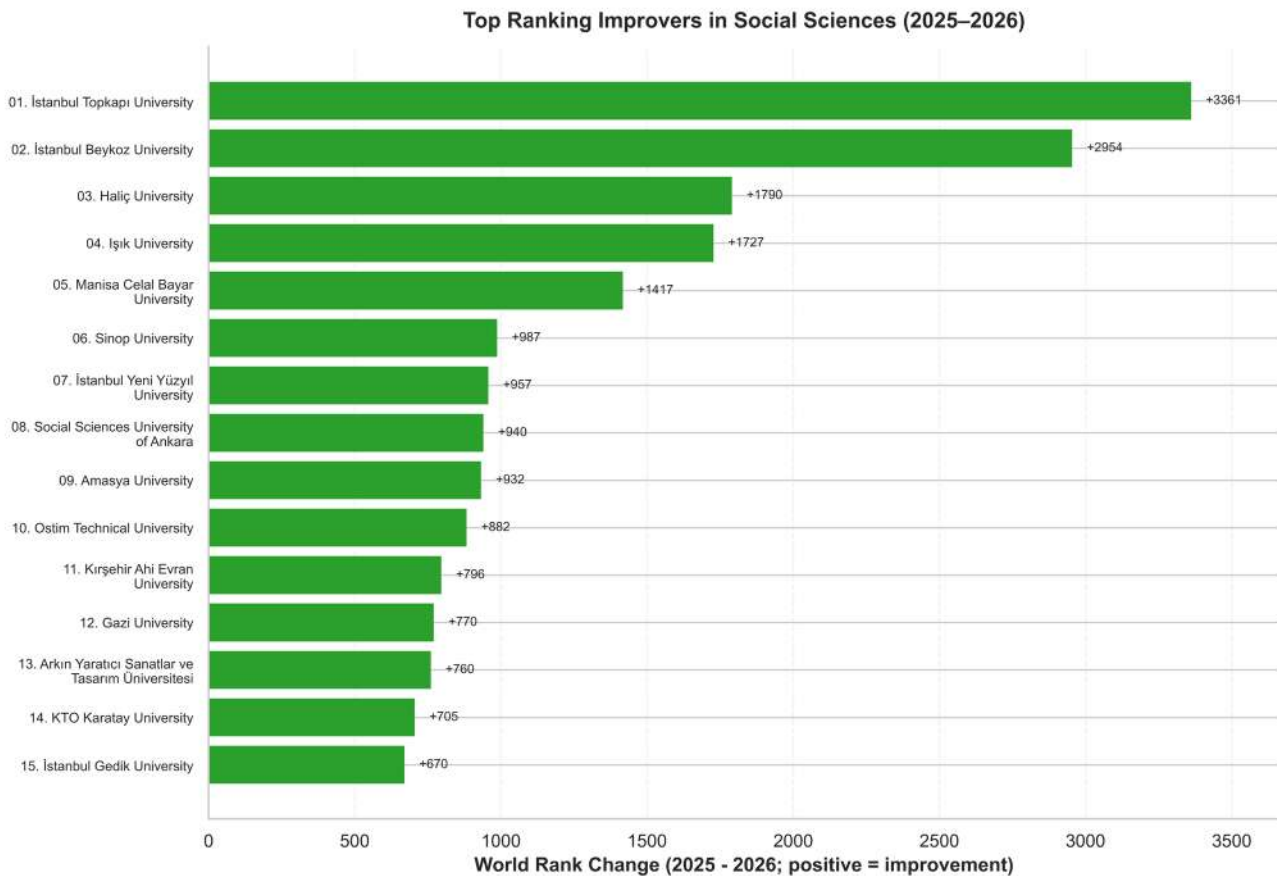


Figure 47. Top 15 Turkish Universities in Social Sciences and Humanities

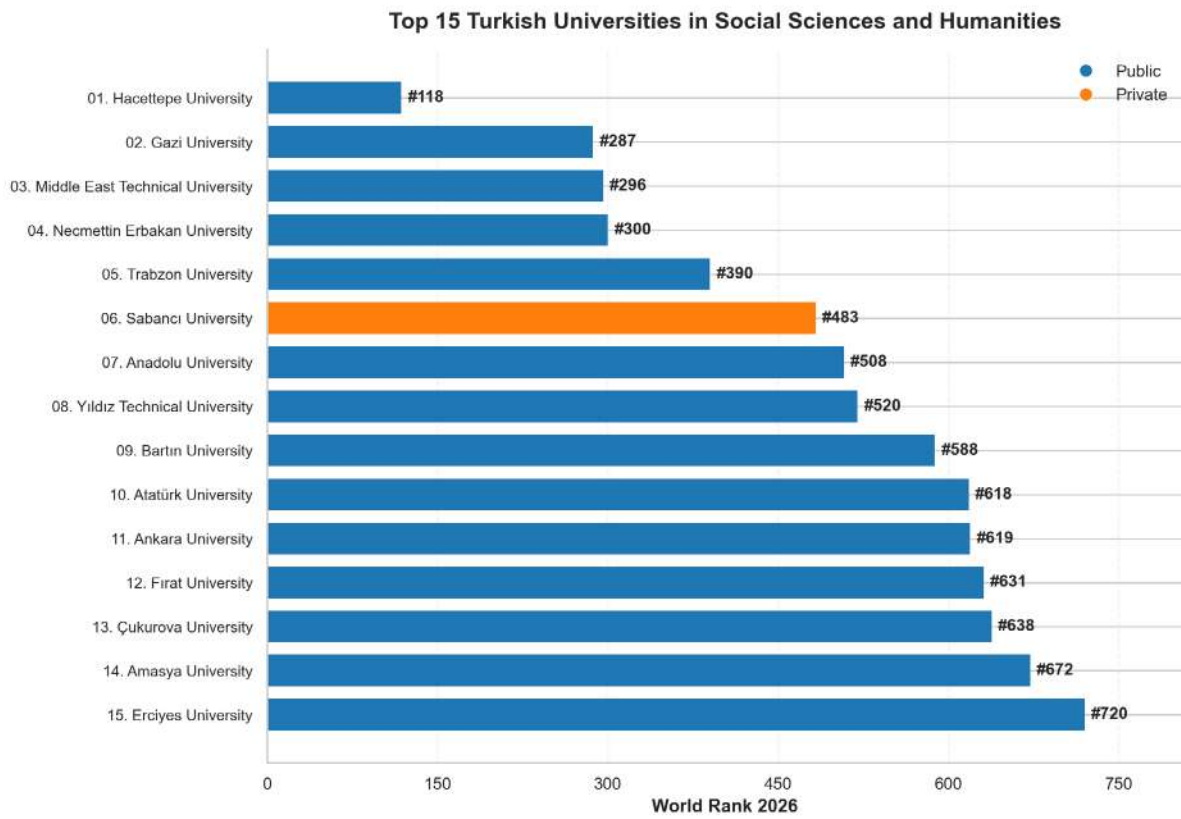
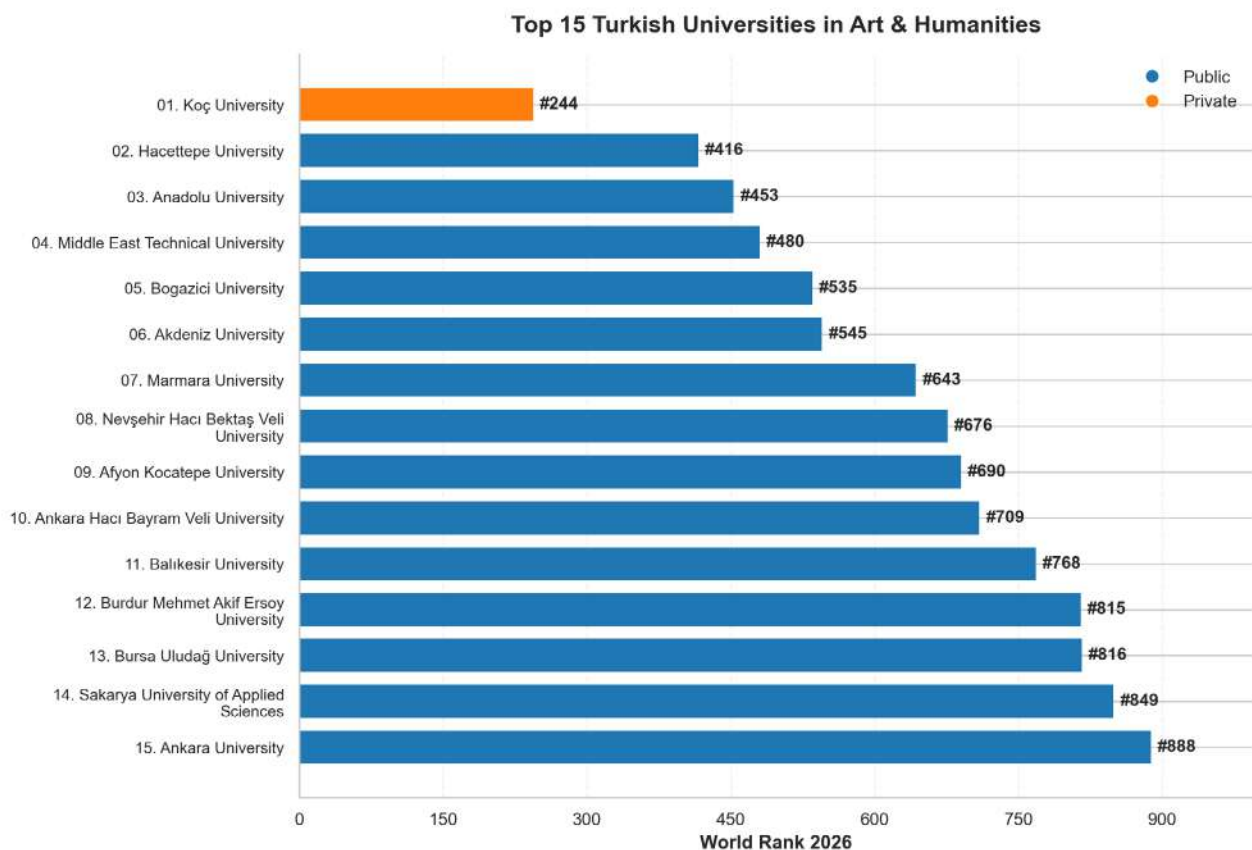


Figure 48. Top 15 Turkish Universities in Art & Humanities



Elite Concentration by Subject

Elite concentration in Türkiye is best understood as the extent to which the country's strongest academic visibility is clustered within a limited number of disciplines rather than distributed evenly across the full university system. Although Türkiye has ranked presence across many fields, upper-tier international performance is not broad-based. Instead, the country's strongest subject-level competitiveness is concentrated in a relatively narrow set of academic areas, while several larger or more widely represented fields show much weaker top-end conversion. In this sense, Türkiye's disciplinary profile is not simply diverse; it is also selective in where real elite visibility emerges.

A first and most striking feature of this concentration is the dominance of a few higher-performing fields. Education stands out as the clearest example of elite subject concentration, with by far the strongest Top 500 conversion in the Turkish system. It is followed by Architecture and Design, Agriculture and Forestry, and Medical and Health Sciences, all of which show meaningfully stronger upper-tier conversion than the rest of the disciplinary landscape. These subjects do not merely perform slightly better than others; they represent the most visible part of Türkiye's subject-level academic frontier. This means that a substantial share of the country's strongest international disciplinary presence is carried by a relatively limited academic cluster.

By contrast, some of the largest or most symbolically important fields appear much less competitive at the elite level. Natural Sciences, despite its central importance in global academic systems, shows no Top 500 conversion in the figure set. Social Sciences, Business and Management, and Law also remain weak in upper-tier conversion relative to the stronger subject group. This is an important structural finding because it shows that elite concentration in Türkiye does not occur where participation is necessarily widest or where a field may appear most globally prominent in abstract terms. Instead, the country's elite subject visibility is concentrated in selected domains that convert institutional capacity more effectively into high-ranking international presence.

A second important dimension of elite concentration is that subject leadership is often anchored in a limited number of institutions. The strongest subject-level positions in Türkiye are not spread broadly across dozens of universities. They are often carried by a relatively small group of nationally leading institutions, some of them public and some selectively private. In most fields, the public sector provides the broader competitive base, but in certain areas such as Art and Humanities, Law, and Social Sciences, a small number of private universities achieve some of the strongest individual subject positions. This means that elite concentration in Türkiye is not only disciplinary; it is also institutional. A narrow set of universities often carries a disproportionate share of the country's strongest subject-level visibility.

This concentration pattern has two contrasting implications. On the one hand, it gives Türkiye identifiable areas of academic strength and recognizable disciplines in which it performs comparatively well. That is a strategic advantage because it provides clear foundations for international visibility and subject-specific positioning. On the other hand, strong concentration also signals vulnerability. When upper-tier performance depends heavily on a limited number of fields and institutions, the overall system becomes less balanced and less resilient. A country may achieve visible success in a few disciplines while still remaining structurally weak across much of the broader academic spectrum.

Another notable point is that elite concentration in Türkiye reflects a gap between broad subject participation and high-end competitive conversion. Many fields clearly exist at scale within the national university system, but only some convert that scale into global upper-tier representation. This suggests that the key issue is not simply whether Türkiye is active in a given discipline, but whether that activity is producing the kind of concentrated quality needed to compete internationally at the highest levels. In other words, the problem in weaker fields is not always absence, but insufficient conversion from presence into elite performance.

Taken together, the evidence shows that elite subject competitiveness in Türkiye remains concentrated in a relatively small number of disciplines and institutions. Education, Architecture and Design, Agriculture and Forestry, and Medical and Health Sciences form the clearest core of subject-level strength, while several broader fields remain weaker in top-end conversion. The broader implication is clear: Türkiye's academic system has recognizable islands of excellence, but its long-term competitiveness will depend on whether it can widen elite depth beyond this narrow cluster and build stronger upper-tier representation across a more balanced range of disciplines.

Figure 49. Elite Density by Subject in Türkiye: Top 100, Top 500, and Top 1000 Counts

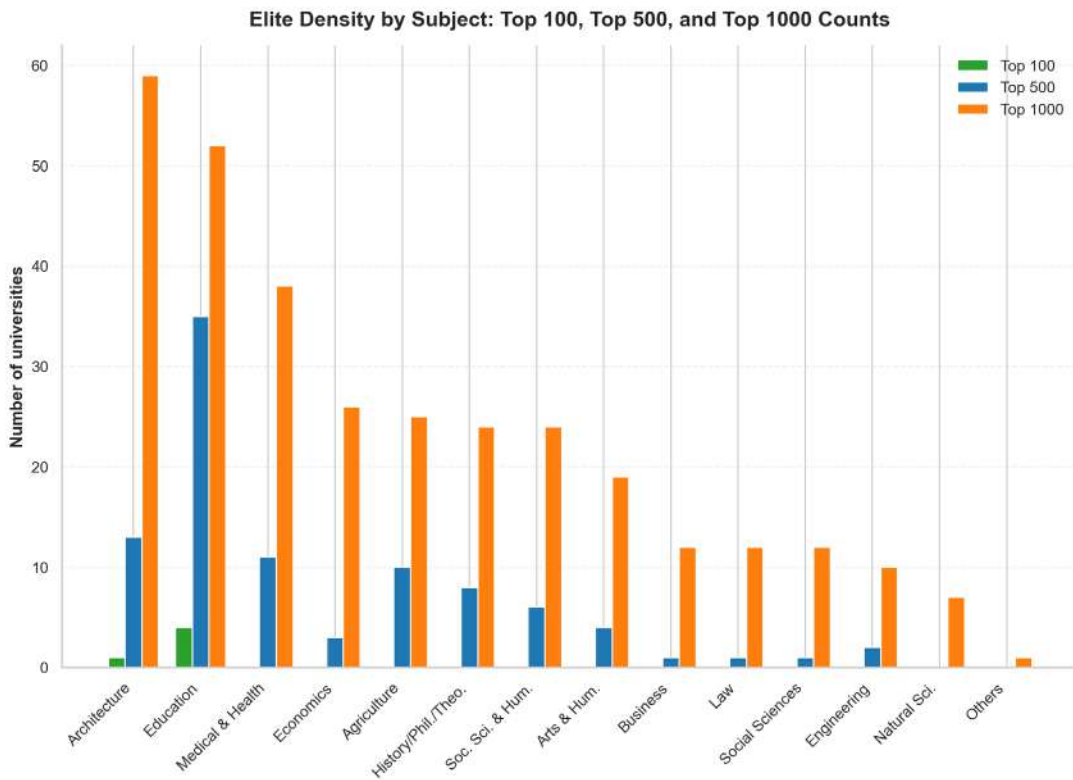


Figure 50. Strategic Subject Positioning Map Across Türkiye

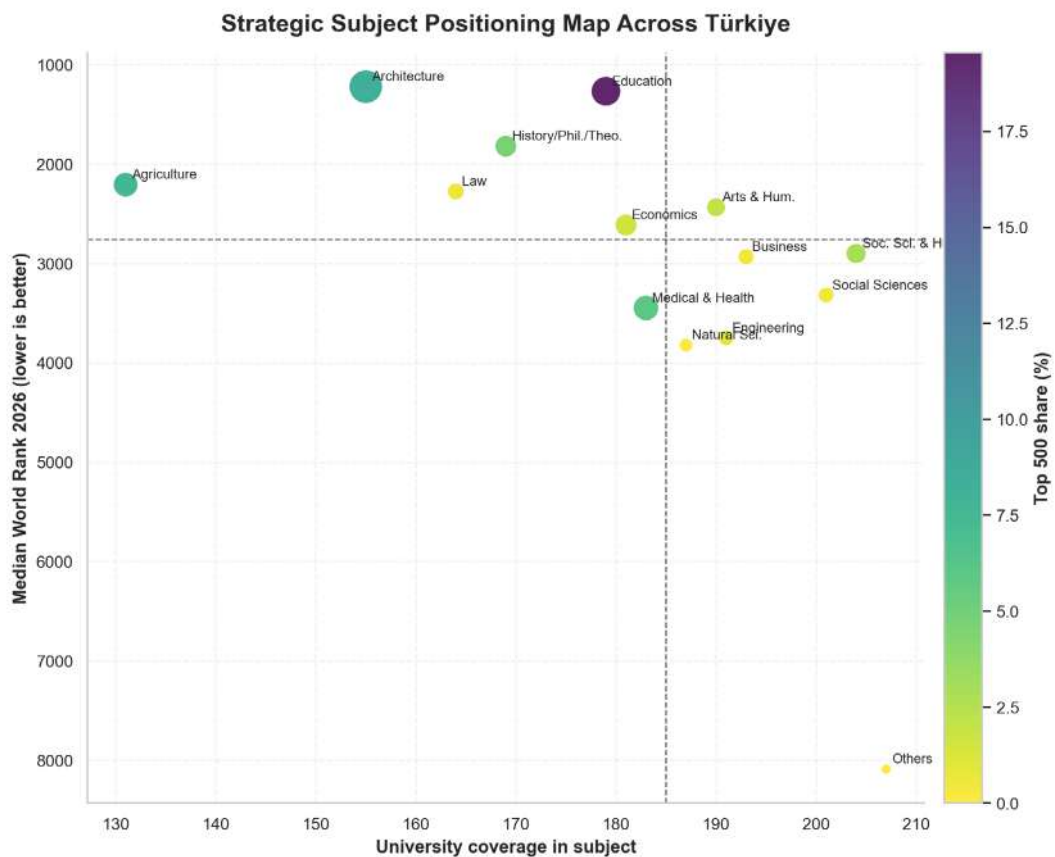


Figure 51. Subject-Level Rank-Band Structure Across Turkish Universities

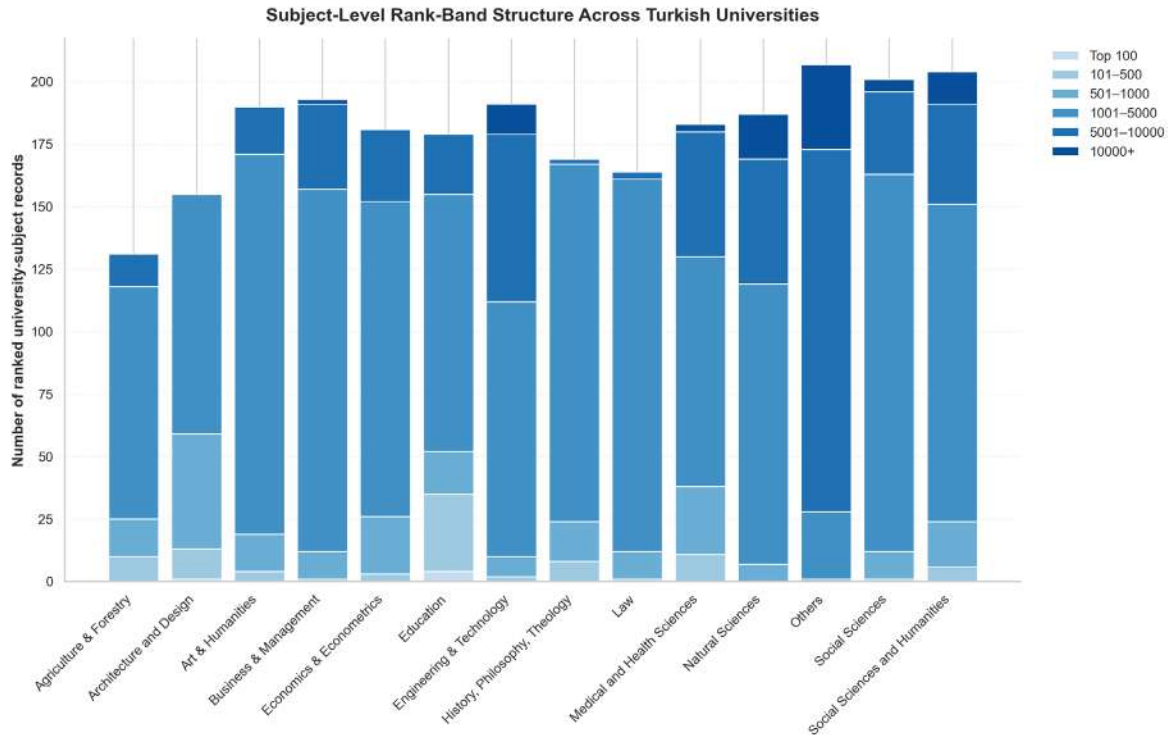


Figure 52. Top 1000 Density by Subject in Türkiye

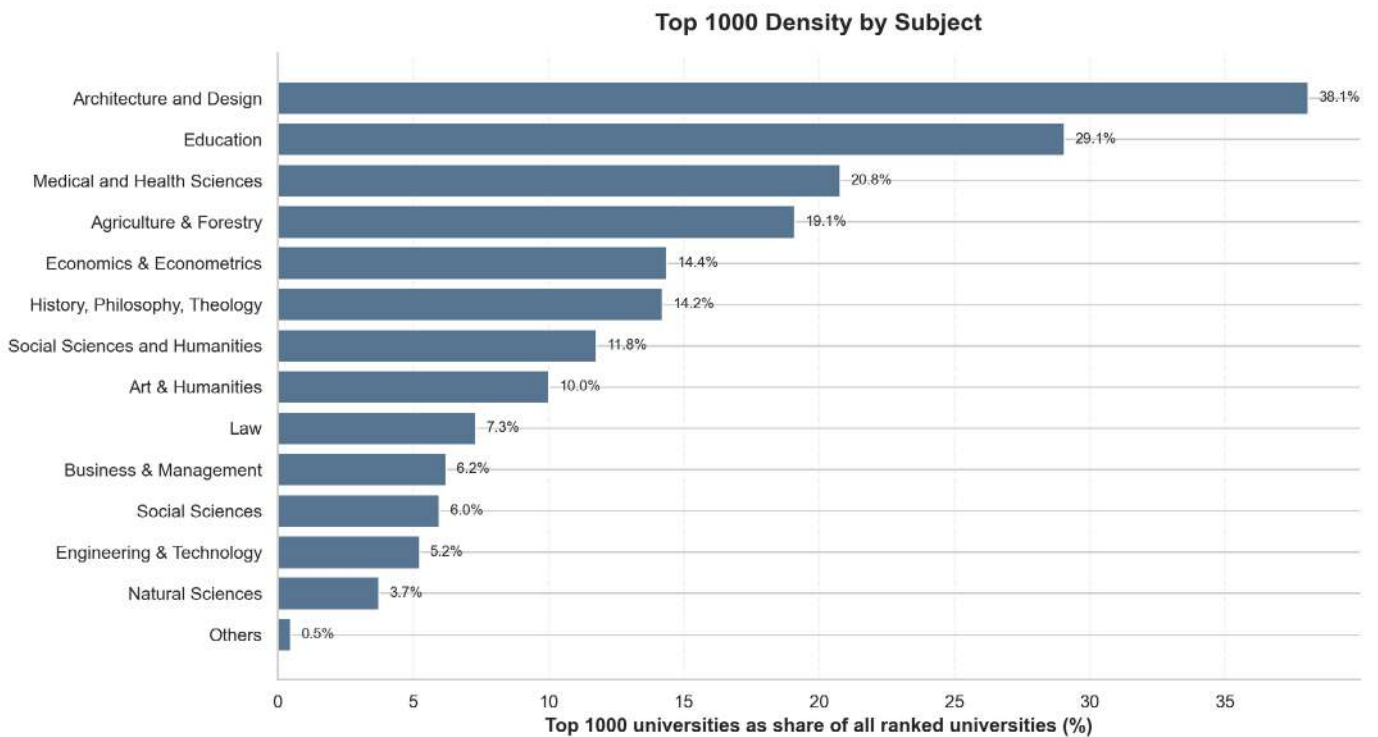
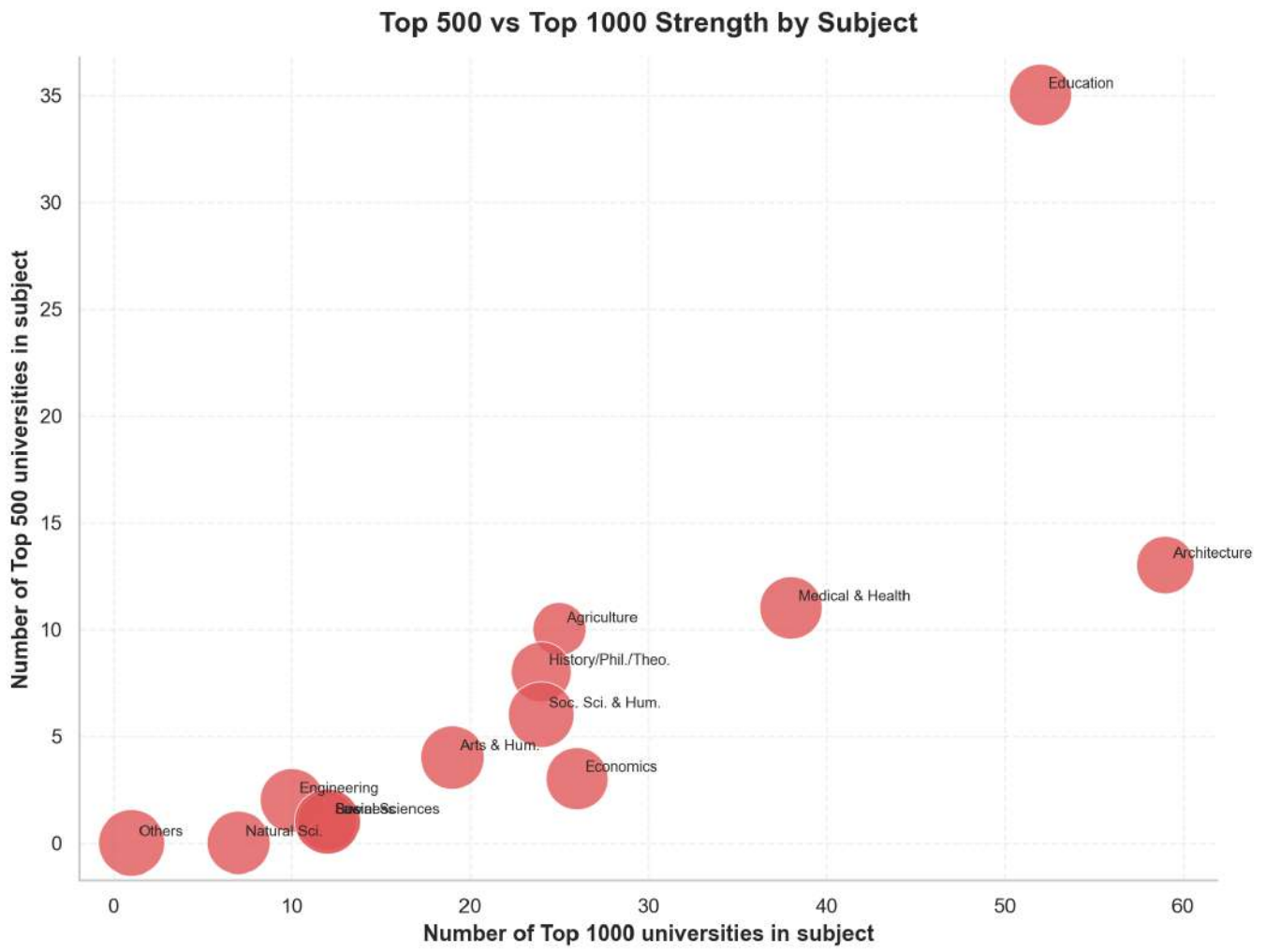


Figure 53. Top 500 vs Top 1000 Strength by Subject in Türkiye



Funding-Type Structural Patterns

Funding type is one of the clearest structural dividing lines in the Turkish higher education system because it shapes not only overall rank performance, but also the distribution of strength across disciplines. The evidence shows that public and private universities in Türkiye do not simply occupy different institutional categories; they follow different competitive logics. Public universities form the broad academic core of the system and dominate most areas of national rank strength, while private universities contribute more selectively through narrower but sometimes highly visible subject-level advantages. In this sense, funding type is not a secondary characteristic of the system. It is one of the main organizing principles of how academic competitiveness is distributed in Türkiye.

A first major pattern is the overall structural advantage of public universities. Across the national system, public institutions have a markedly stronger median world rank than private universities, and they dominate the country's Top 1000 representation. This broader pattern continues at the subject level as well. In most major disciplines, the median subject rank of public universities is clearly better than that of private universities. This means that the public sector does not simply carry the country's overall academic visibility; it also provides the widest and most stable disciplinary base of competitiveness.

This is especially visible in fields such as Education, Agriculture and Forestry, Medical and Health Sciences, Engineering and Technology, and Natural Sciences. In each of these subjects, public universities outperform private universities in median rank position, often by a substantial margin. The result is structurally important because these are not peripheral disciplines. They include several of the main academic areas through which countries typically build international visibility, national research capacity, and professional training strength. In Türkiye, the public sector remains the main institutional vehicle through which this broad subject-level competitiveness is sustained.

At the same time, the funding-type pattern is not one of total public dominance across every field. Some subjects show a more mixed or even reversed structure. Law is the clearest example, where private universities achieve a stronger median subject rank than public universities. This suggests that in some narrower or more strategically targeted fields, private institutions can convert focused resources, selective recruitment, and institutional specialization into a genuine competitive advantage. In other words, while the public sector dominates the broad system, the private sector can still outperform it in selected academic niches.

The best-performing institutions by subject reinforce this layered picture. In many disciplines, the strongest national subject leader is a public university, reflecting the wider structural advantage of the public system. Yet there are important exceptions. In Art and Humanities, Koç University emerges as a leading institution; in Social Sciences, Koç University again holds a highly visible position; and in Law, MEF University appears as a standout private-sector performer. These cases are analytically important because they show that private-sector relevance in Türkiye is not mainly about broad numerical presence. It is about concentrated excellence in fields where targeted institutional strategy can outweigh overall system size.

A broader reading of the evidence therefore suggests that public and private universities play complementary rather than symmetrical roles. Public universities provide the country's principal academic infrastructure: they dominate the stronger middle-to-upper rank bands, lead in most subject medians, and carry almost all of the limited elite national presence. Private universities, by contrast, operate through a more selective model. They are generally weaker at the aggregate system level, but they create important pockets of high performance in carefully positioned institutions and subjects. This makes Türkiye's funding-type structure layered rather than flat: one sector offers breadth and continuity, the other targeted excellence and differentiation.

This division also has strategic implications for how the Turkish system should be interpreted. A system dominated by public-sector strength may appear more stable, because its leading capacity is distributed across a larger institutional base. But a system that also includes competitive private actors can gain flexibility, specialization, and innovation in selected areas. In Türkiye, the challenge is not to choose between these two models. It is to understand how they interact. The public sector remains indispensable to national academic standing, but the private sector adds strategic value where it can build distinctive subject-level leadership.

Taken together, the funding-type evidence shows that Türkiye's academic structure is built on a strong public foundation, but not on a public monopoly of excellence. Public universities dominate the broader competitive landscape and sustain most of the country's visible academic depth. Private universities, although weaker in aggregate terms, contribute meaningful niche strengths in areas such as Law, Art and Humanities, and Social Sciences. The broader implication is that Türkiye's long-term competitiveness will depend not only on preserving the strength of its public backbone, but also on using private-sector selectivity more strategically in fields where differentiated excellence can be expanded.

Figure 54. Subject Coverage Across Turkish Universities, by Funding Type

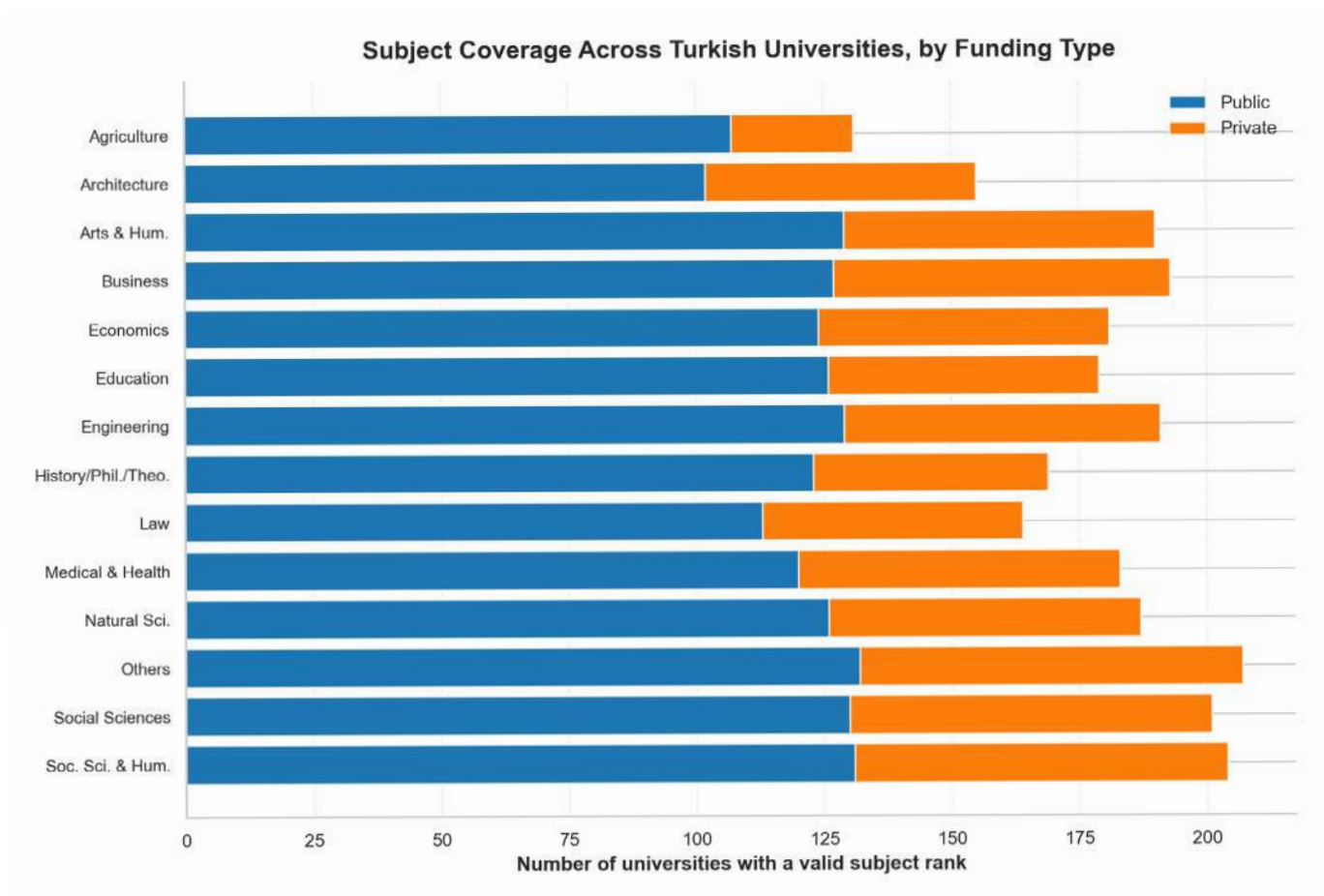


Figure 55. Leadership Concentration Ladder by Subject in Türkiye

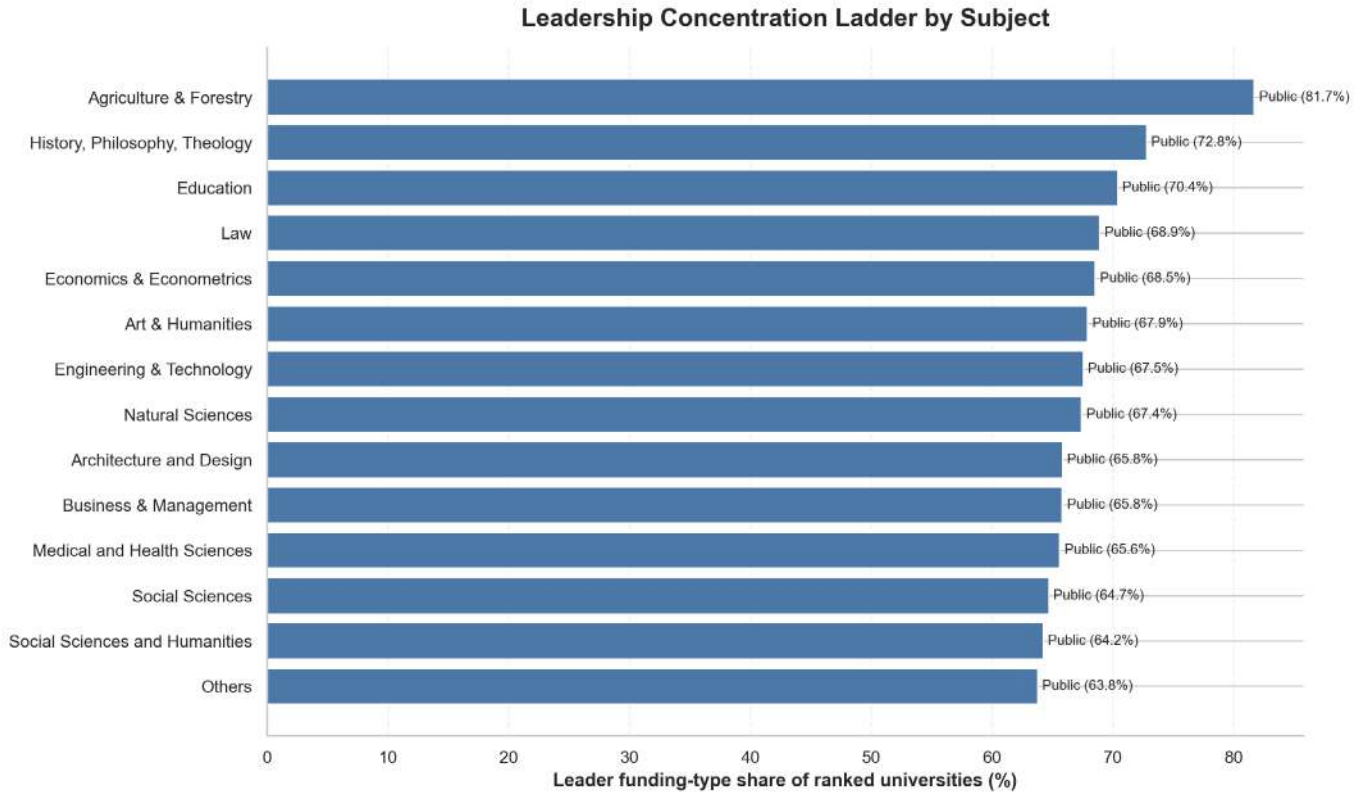


Figure 56. Median Subject Rank by Funding Type in Türkiye

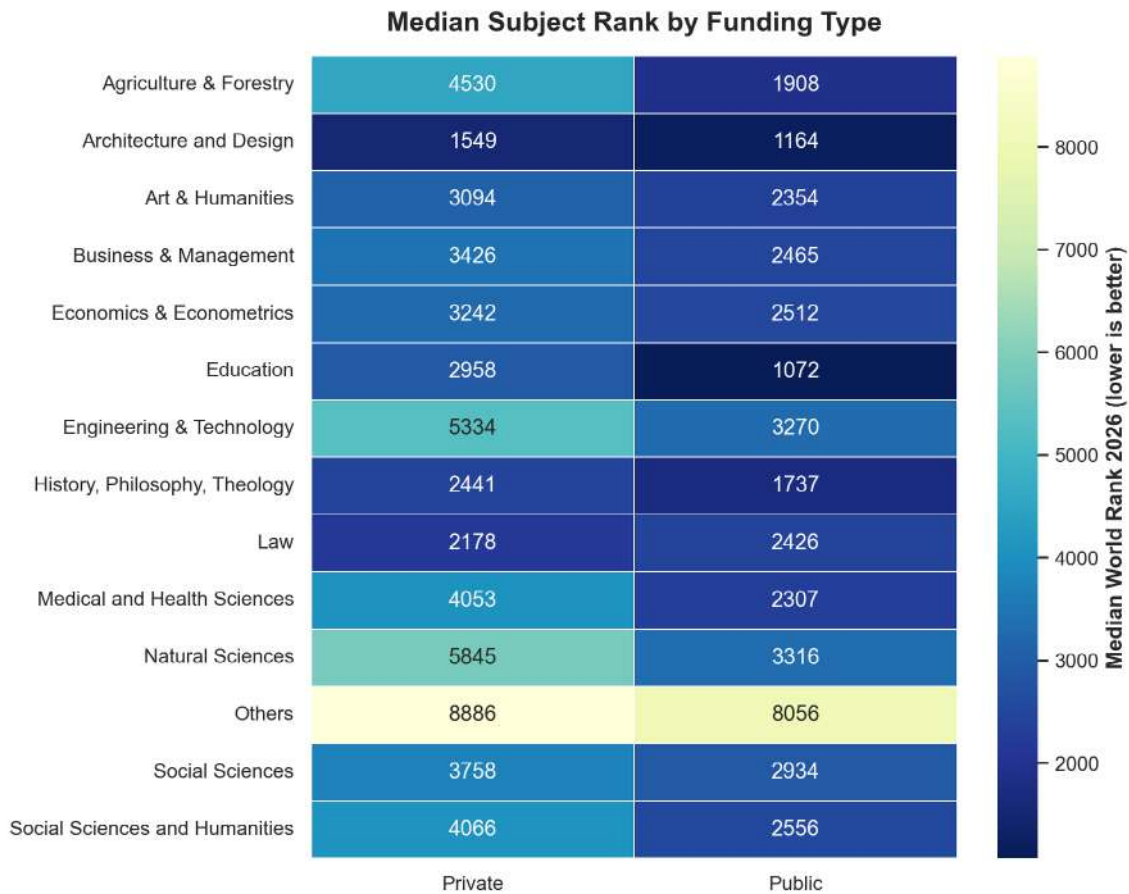


Figure 57. Top 1000 Share by Subject and Funding Type in Türkiye

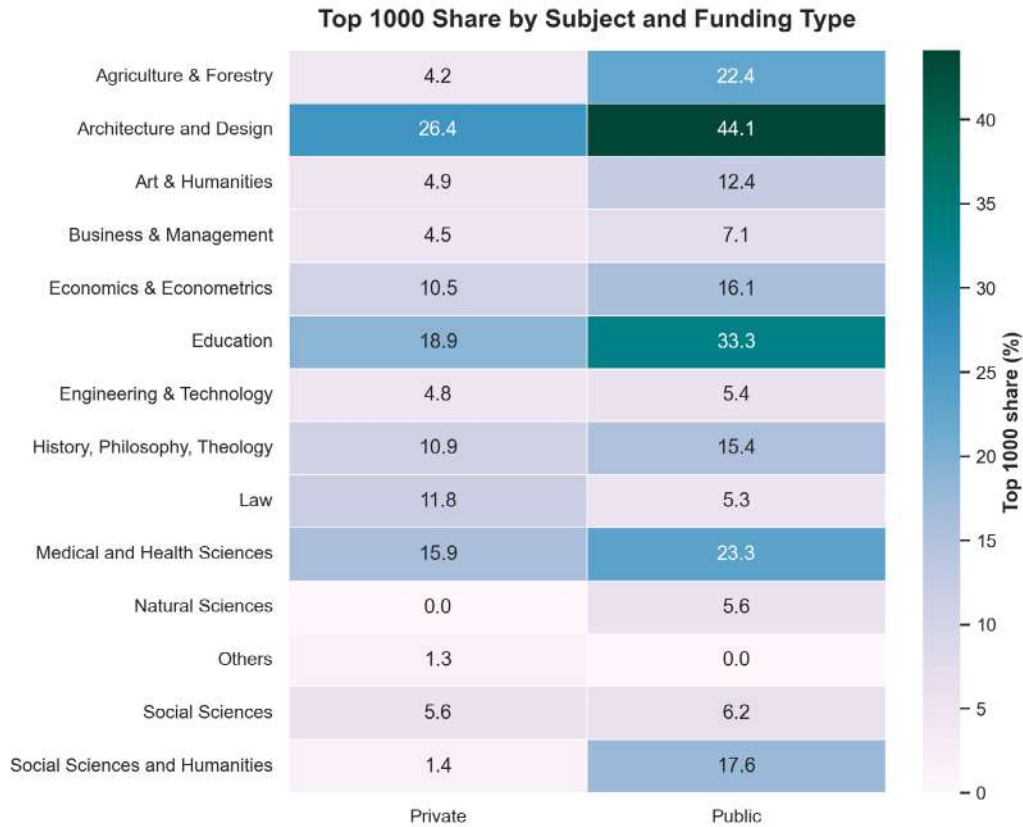


Figure 58. Best Achieved Subject Rank by Funding Type in Türkiye

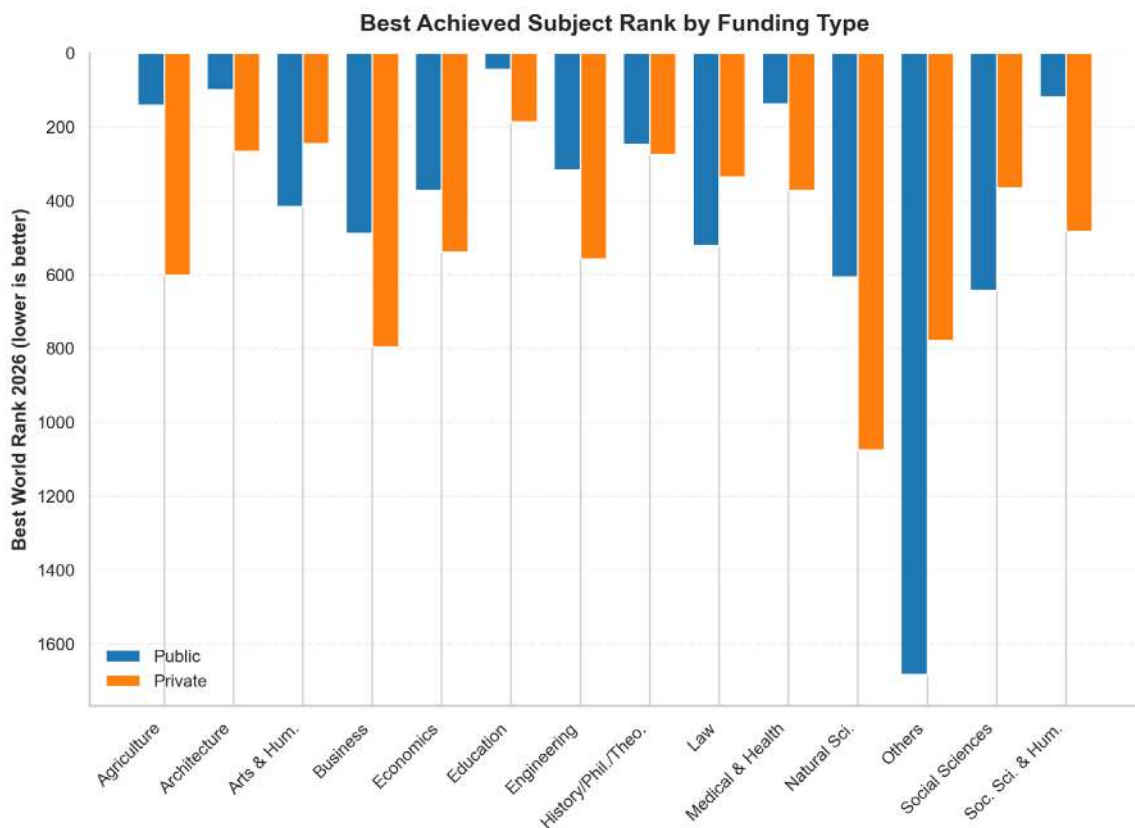
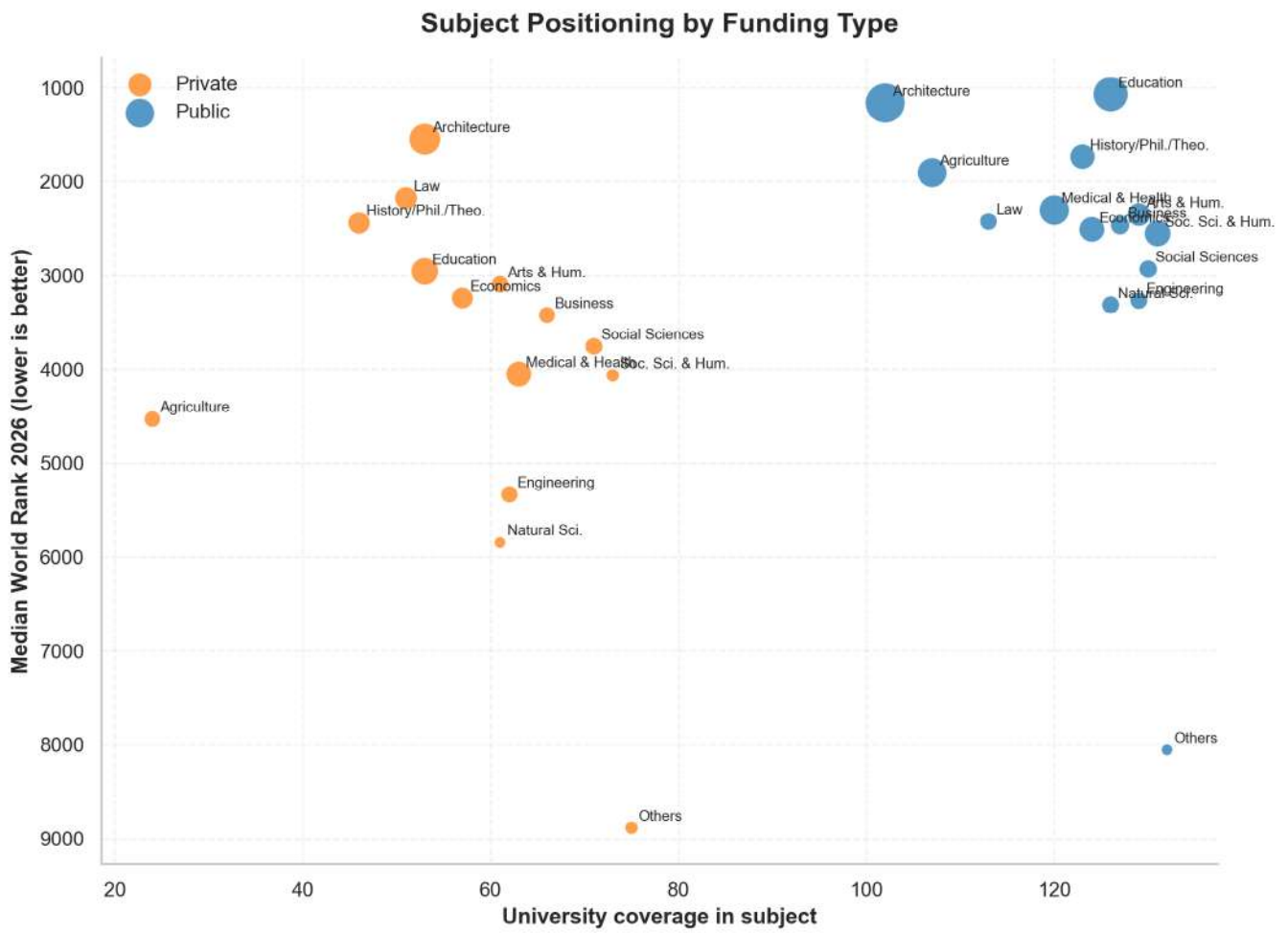


Figure 59. Subject Positioning by Funding Type in Türkiye



Strength and Weakness Maps of Top Turkish Universities

The strength and weakness maps of Türkiye's top universities provide a more nuanced view of the national academic landscape because they move beyond overall rank and show how competitive capacity is distributed across subjects. These maps make one point especially clear: the strongest Turkish universities are not equally strong in all fields. Even among the national leaders, academic advantage is selective rather than uniform. Some institutions combine relatively broad subject-level visibility across multiple areas, while others derive their national standing from concentration in a smaller number of disciplines. In this sense, the top tier of Turkish higher education is not a flat group of similarly balanced institutions. It is a differentiated layer shaped by distinct academic profiles.

A first broad pattern is that the leading public universities tend to display a wider subject footprint. Institutions such as Hacettepe University, Middle East Technical University, Istanbul Technical University, Ege University, and other major public flagships appear not simply as strong overall universities, but as institutions whose visibility is supported by a broader disciplinary base. This does not mean that they are equally strong in every field. Rather, it suggests that their national leadership is built on multi-field capacity and stronger institutional depth. The importance of this pattern is strategic: universities with broader strength are generally better positioned to sustain competitiveness over time because they are less dependent on a narrow academic base.

By contrast, some of the most visible private universities appear to follow a more concentrated model of strength. Their competitive profile is often anchored in selected high-performing fields rather than in a fully broad disciplinary spread. This is especially consistent with the role of institutions such as Koç University, İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, Sabancı University, and in more specific domains, MEF University. These institutions may not match the large public universities in system-wide depth, but they achieve strong visibility through targeted academic concentration. In the strength and weakness maps, this kind of profile is particularly important because it shows that national academic success can emerge through more than one route: either through broad institutional coverage or through selective excellence in carefully positioned subjects.

The maps also reinforce one of the central findings of the report: subject imbalance remains a defining feature of the Turkish system. Even among top universities, strengths are clustered more clearly in some fields than in others. Subjects such as Education, Architecture and Design, Agriculture and Forestry, and Medical and Health Sciences are more likely to appear as areas of comparative strength, while broader fields such as Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Business and Management, and parts of Law often appear more uneven or weaker in high-end conversion terms. This means that institutional strength in Türkiye is closely tied to the country's broader subject structure. Universities do not operate outside the national disciplinary pattern; in many cases, they reproduce it.

A second important implication of the maps is that overall university rank can conceal internal asymmetry. A university may appear highly placed in the national hierarchy while still showing important subject-level weaknesses. Likewise, an institution with a more modest overall position may still stand out in one or two fields. This matters because it changes how institutional competitiveness should be interpreted. The question is not only which universities rank higher overall, but also whether those universities have balanced academic portfolios or rely on narrow areas of strength. From a policy and strategy perspective, these are very different institutional models.

The maps therefore suggest that Türkiye's top universities can be read in at least three broad categories. First, there are broad-based leaders, whose strength is supported by relatively wide disciplinary presence. Second, there are focused high-performers, which derive visibility from concentrated excellence in a smaller set of subjects. Third, there are institutions with mixed portfolios, where visible success in one area coexists with more pronounced weakness in others.

This typology is useful because it shows that academic competitiveness is not simply about being stronger or weaker overall. It is also about the internal structure of institutional strength.

Taken together, the strength and weakness maps show that Türkiye's top universities form a differentiated competitive layer rather than a uniformly balanced elite. Some institutions are stronger because they combine visibility across multiple disciplines, while others are stronger because they dominate particular niches. The broader implication is clear: long-term academic resilience will depend not only on preserving current institutional leaders, but also on reducing internal subject imbalance within universities and expanding strong performance across a wider range of fields. A system in which top institutions become more balanced will be better positioned to sustain national competitiveness than one that relies too heavily on narrow, concentrated strengths.

Figure 60. Subject Strength Heatmap for Top 25 Turkish Universities

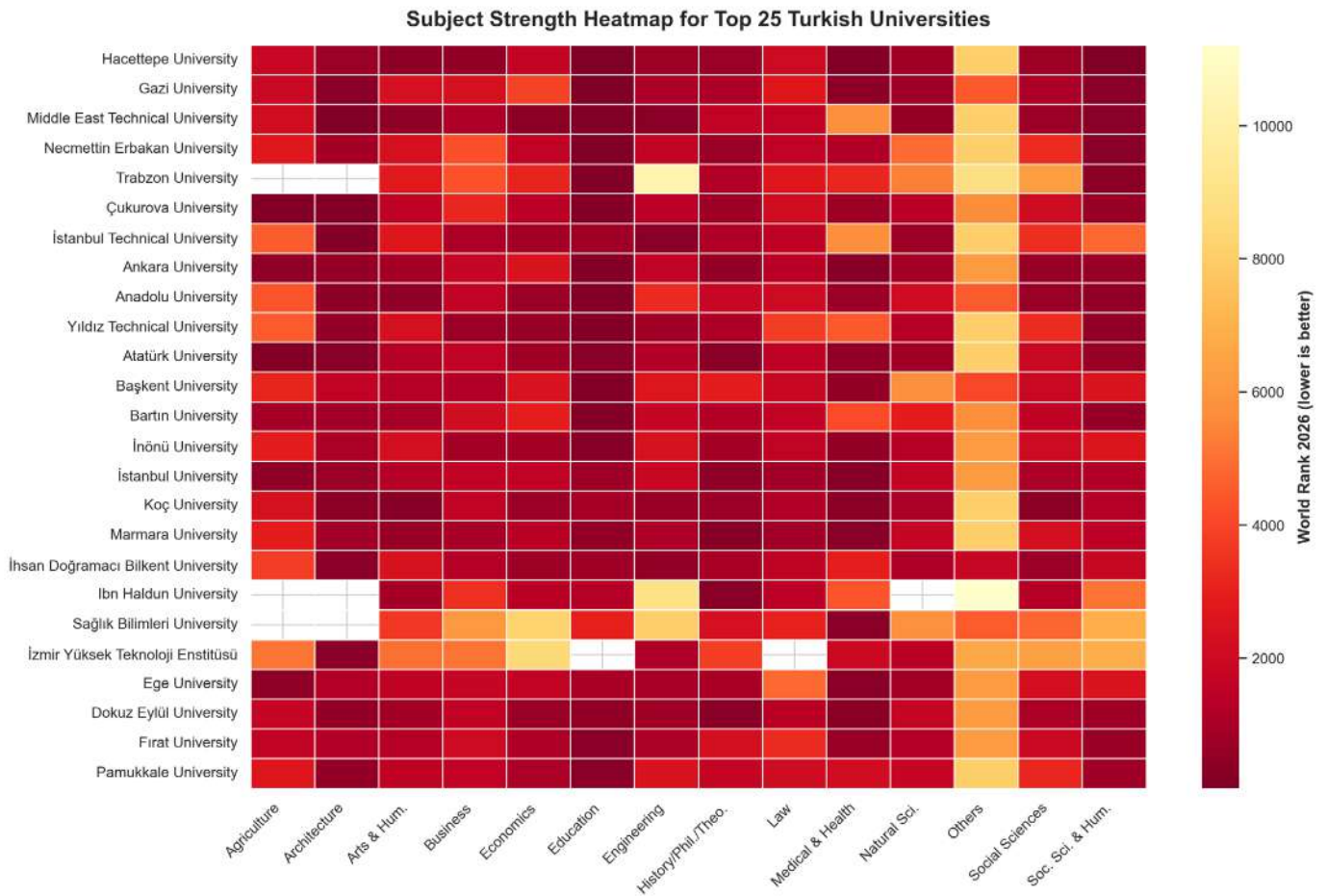


Figure 61. Subject Weakness Map for Top 25 Turkish Universities

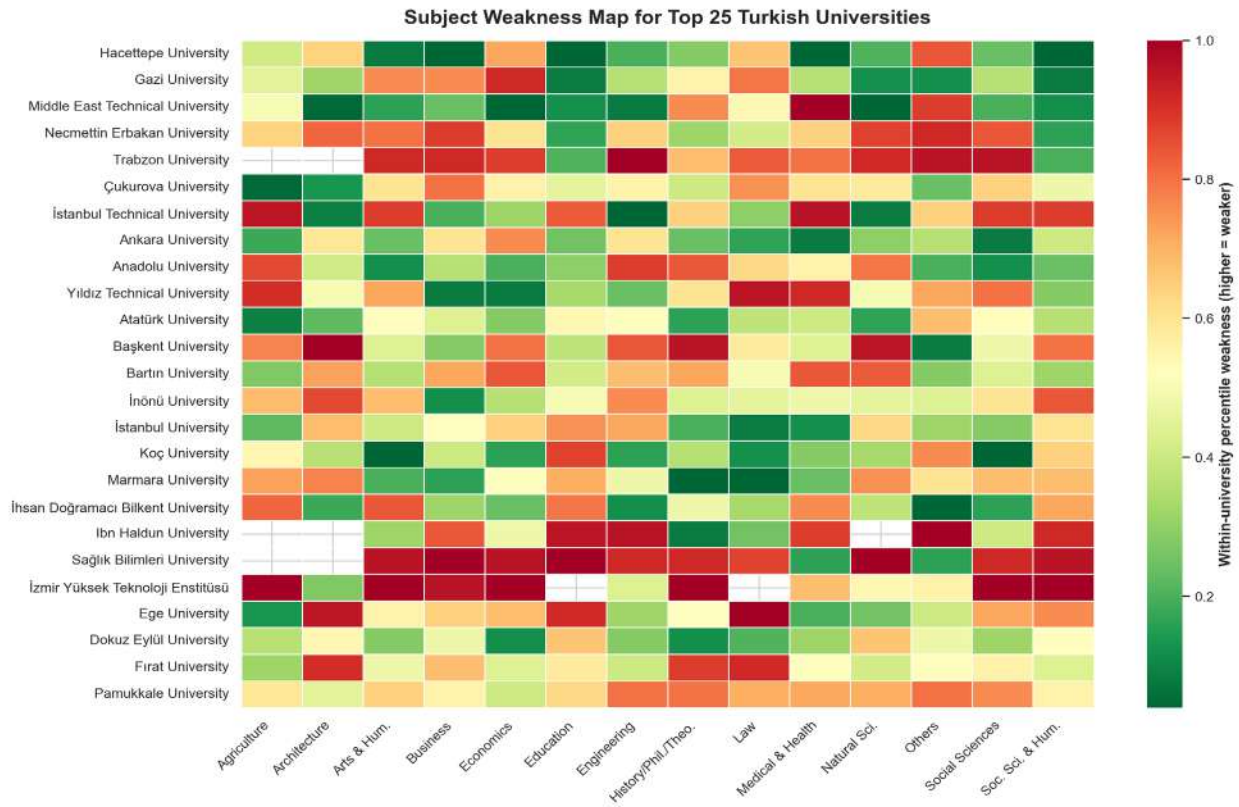
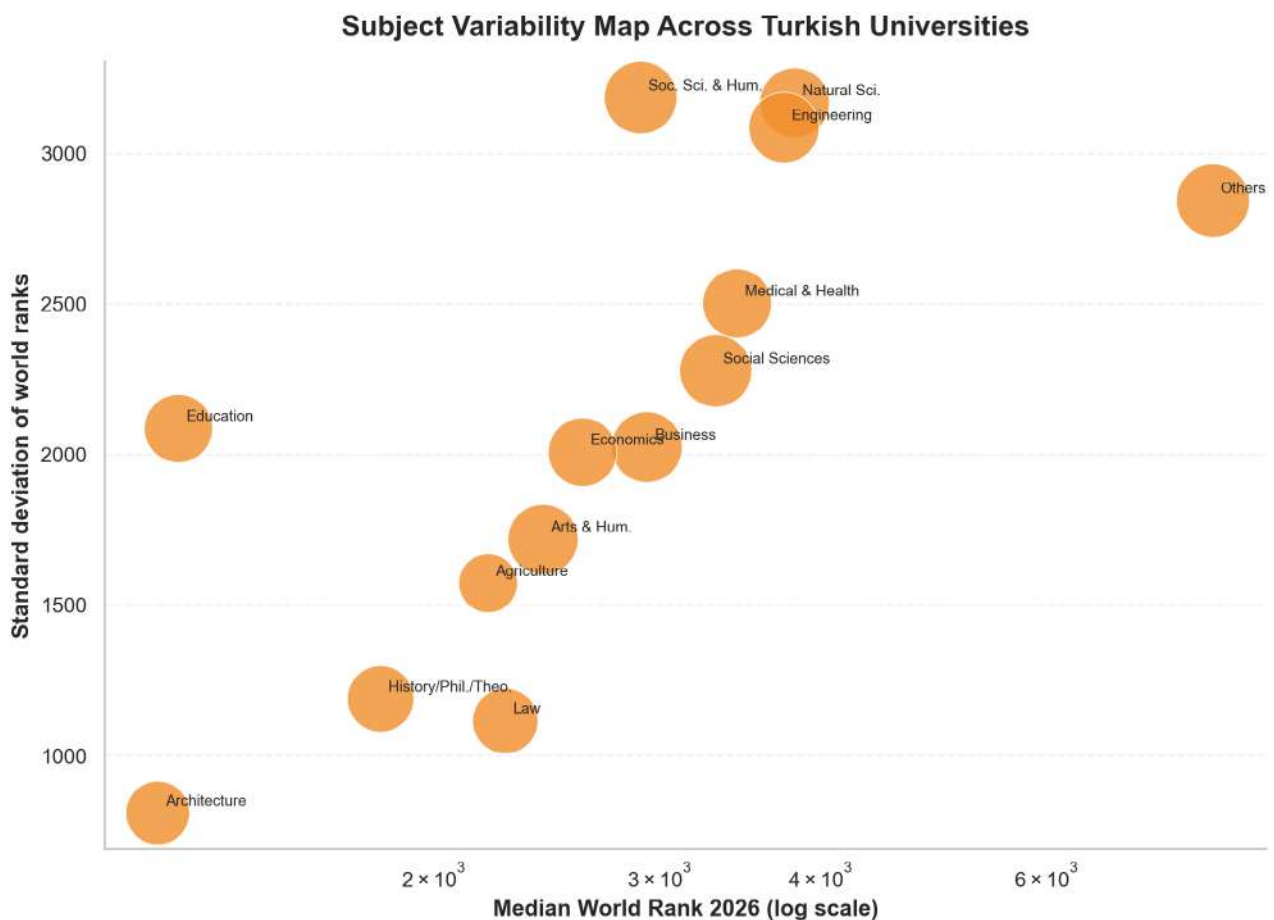


Figure 62. Subject Variability Map Across Turkish Universities



Strategic Insights for Turkish Higher Education

The evidence presented throughout this report points to a clear strategic conclusion: Türkiye's higher education system has already achieved substantial institutional breadth, but its next phase of development will depend far less on additional expansion and far more on quality conversion. The country has a large ranked university base, visible national leaders, and several subject areas of comparative strength. Yet top-end global concentration remains limited, subject competitiveness is uneven, and positive momentum is not broad-based across the system. In this sense, the central challenge for Türkiye is no longer simply to grow, but to convert scale into stronger and more sustainable international academic positioning.

A first strategic implication is that public universities will remain the main drivers of national academic competitiveness. The evidence shows clearly that the public sector carries the strongest median rank position, dominates the Top 1000 layer, and provides the broadest subject-level academic base. This means that any strategy aimed at improving Türkiye's overall international standing must continue to strengthen the performance capacity of its major public institutions. In practical terms, this includes not only preserving the status of existing flagship universities, but also improving the quality and visibility of the broader public-university tier that sits below the very top. A system with only a few strong public leaders will remain narrow; a system with a deeper public competitive layer will be more resilient and internationally visible.

A second strategic insight is that private universities should be treated as selective accelerators rather than as broad substitutes for the public system. Their role in Türkiye is not primarily to carry the system at scale, but to create focused excellence where institutional strategy, resources, and specialization can be concentrated effectively. The strongest private institutions already show that this model can work, especially in selected subject areas such as Law, Art and Humanities, and Social Sciences. This suggests that Türkiye's academic future will be strongest not when public and private institutions are expected to do the same job, but when each is supported according to its comparative role: public institutions as the main academic infrastructure, private institutions as niche-based innovation and excellence hubs.

A third implication concerns subject-level strategy. Türkiye's strongest fields - especially Education, Architecture and Design, Agriculture and Forestry, and Medical and Health Sciences - already function as nationally recognizable academic assets. These areas should be understood not simply as current successes, but as strategic anchors for international visibility. Protecting and deepening strength in these fields is essential because they represent the clearest parts of the country's academic comparative advantage. At the same time, the report also shows that several broader and globally important domains - most notably Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Business and Management, and parts of Law - do not yet convert institutional presence into upper-tier visibility effectively enough. The strategic goal, therefore, is not only to preserve strong fields, but also to raise conversion quality in the weaker large-scale domains where the institutional base already exists.

A fourth strategic insight is that Türkiye needs wider elite depth, not only visible national leaders. The current system includes recognizable top universities, but the national upper tier remains relatively narrow. Only one institution appears in the Top 500, and the total number of Top 1000 universities is still limited relative to the size of the system. This means that the future competitiveness of Turkish higher education will depend not only on the continued success of Hacettepe University, METU, İstanbul Technical University, Koç University, and other visible leaders, but on whether more universities can move upward into the stronger global bands. A system with a broader elite layer is more durable than one that depends too heavily on a small number of anchor institutions.

A fifth implication concerns institutional balance and academic resilience. The strength and weakness maps suggest that even leading universities are not uniformly strong across subjects. This matters because long-term academic resilience depends not only on having high-performing institutions, but on having institutions with sufficiently balanced academic portfolios.

Universities that rely too heavily on a narrow subject base may remain visible for a time, but they are more vulnerable to fluctuations in disciplinary competitiveness. By contrast, institutions with broader and more balanced strength are generally better positioned to sustain international standing over time. For Türkiye, this means that future strategy should emphasize not just excellence in isolated areas, but also internal academic balance within the leading institutions themselves.

A sixth strategic insight is that young universities matter for renewal, even if they do not yet define the top tier. The under-30 university ranking shows that newer institutions are already entering the competitive landscape, which is a positive sign for long-term system dynamism. However, most of these younger universities remain outside the very top national layer, meaning that their role today is more developmental than dominant. The key strategic question is whether Türkiye can help this younger institutional segment move beyond visibility and toward deeper quality. If younger universities can strengthen subject capacity, improve rank quality, and develop more durable academic profiles, they may become an important second generation of national academic leaders.

A seventh and especially important implication is that momentum should be treated as a policy signal, not just as a descriptive metric. The report shows that some areas are moving upward while others are losing ground. This means that rank position alone cannot guide strategic thinking. Fields with positive movement may deserve support as emerging strengths, while fields with negative momentum may require targeted interventions before their current weaknesses become structurally deeper. In this respect, momentum analysis is valuable because it helps distinguish between areas that are merely visible today and areas that are likely to remain competitive tomorrow. Türkiye's long-term academic strategy will be stronger if it responds not only to current standing, but to the direction of recent change.

Taken together, these findings suggest a broader national strategy built around four priorities: deepen public-sector quality, use private-sector selectivity strategically, protect strong subjects while repairing weaker large-scale fields, and expand elite depth beyond a narrow leadership cluster. The strategic message is therefore clear. Türkiye does not lack institutional scale. What it needs now is stronger conversion from scale into rank quality, from subject presence into subject excellence, and from selective visibility into more balanced and durable international competitiveness. The universities and disciplines that can make this transition most effectively are likely to shape the next phase of Turkish higher education.

Methodology – AD Scientific Index

1. What Is the AD Scientific Index? (Purpose and Positioning)

Founded in 2021 by Prof. Dr. Murat Alper and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Cihan Döğ̈er, the AD Scientific Index (Alper–Döğ̈er Scientific Index) is an independent, international academic evaluation and decision-support organization dedicated to measuring scientific contribution where it is actually produced -at the level of the individual researcher. Operating independently of governments, universities, and publishers, the AD Scientific Index is built on the principles of transparency, inclusivity, reproducibility, and accountability, offering a globally comparable framework for understanding real academic performance beyond reputation-based and closed-system assessments.

The AD Scientific Index goes beyond traditional ranking systems by rejecting prestige-driven proxies, closed databases, and non-reproducible composite scores. Instead, it evaluates academic performance at both individual and institutional levels using publicly verifiable, researcher-level data and field-sensitive methodologies.

In this sense, the AD Scientific Index is not merely a ranking list, but a methodological framework and a strategic analytics platform designed to support universities, policymakers, and academic communities in understanding real performance, current momentum, and disciplinary diversity.

Through its SMART Institutional Excellence Plan, the platform translates ranking data into actionable institutional intelligence, enabling continuous monitoring, benchmarking, and evidence-based academic strategy.

At the time of this report, the AD Scientific Index analyzes 2,627,829 scientists affiliated with 24,568 institutions across 221 countries, covering 13 main scientific fields and 211 sub-disciplines.

2. Core Principles and Alignment with Research Assessment Reform

The AD Scientific Index is explicitly aligned with global research assessment reform movements, including:

- ◆ DORA (San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment)
- ◆ Leiden Manifesto
- ◆ Open Science principles
- ◆ Responsible Metrics frameworks

In line with these initiatives, the Index deliberately avoids:

- ◆ journal-level prestige metrics,
- ◆ reputation surveys,
- ◆ opaque composite scores, and
- ◆ closed or non-verifiable data sources.

Instead, it adopts a transparent, inclusive, researcher-centered, and field-sensitive evaluation model, ensuring that institutions are not reduced to a single abstract score and that disciplinary diversity is preserved.

3. Why Google Scholar? A Conscious and Principled Methodological Choice

No bibliometric database represents a universal gold standard. Every database reflects policy-driven decisions regarding coverage, language, publication types, and disciplinary priorities.

The AD Scientific Index uses Google Scholar not by necessity, but as a conscious and principled methodological choice.

Google Scholar provides the broadest inclusive coverage across:

- ◆ all languages,
- ◆ all disciplines,
- ◆ all publication types (articles, books, chapters, proceedings, reports),
- ◆ universities, institutes, hospitals, companies, and independent researchers.

This inclusivity is particularly critical for Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities, where books, non-English publications, and locally relevant research outputs play a central role and are systematically underrepresented in selective citation indexes.

It must also be acknowledged that no bibliometric database is free from noise. The methodological question is not whether noise exists, but whether it is visible, measurable, and systematically managed.

The AD Scientific Index actively governs Google Scholar data through:

- ◆ automated filtering and normalization,
- ◆ manual expert validation,
- ◆ continuous data-cleaning and ethical oversight mechanisms.

The AD Scientific Index does not rank databases.

It ranks scientific contribution.

4. Scientific Metrics Used

The AD Scientific Index evaluates academic performance using six transparent and reproducible indicators, applied consistently across all fields, countries, and institution types.

H-index

Measures sustained productivity and impact by identifying the largest number h such that h publications have each received at least h citations.

i10-index

Counts publications with at least 10 citations, highlighting the breadth and continuity of scholarly output.

Citation Count

Represents the total scholarly attention received by a researcher's work and provides essential context for academic visibility and influence.

5. Dual-Timeframe Model: Balancing Legacy and Momentum

Each metric is evaluated across two complementary timeframes:

- ◆ **Total (Career Impact):** reflects long-term academic contribution
- ◆ **Last 5 Years (Recent Impact):** captures current productivity, relevance, and engagement

This structure produces six independent data points per researcher, preventing overreliance on historical reputation and enabling dynamic evaluation.

6. Momentum: Measuring Academic Dynamics in Real Time

Momentum refers to the relationship between Recent Impact and Career Impact.

By comparing Last 5 Years metrics against Total values, the AD Scientific Index reveals whether researchers and institutions are:

- ◆ accelerating,
- ◆ stable, or
- ◆ declining in academic activity.

This allows rankings to reflect current scientific direction, not just accumulated past achievements.

7. How Are Scientists Ranked? (Individual-Level Evaluation)

Scientists are ranked using six independent indicators evaluated across two timeframes, without composite scores or hidden weights.

Indicators

- ◆ H-index (Total & Recent)
- ◆ i10-index (Total & Recent)
- ◆ Citation Count (Total & Recent)

Ranking Logic

Each ranking type follows a transparent priority order to resolve ties:

- ◆ **Total H-index:** Total H-index → Recent H-index → Total i10 → Total Citations
- ◆ **Recent H-index:** Recent H-index → Recent i10 → Total H-index → Recent Citations
- ◆ **Total i10-index:** Total i10 → Recent i10 → Total H-index → Total Citations
- ◆ **Recent i10-index:** Recent i10 → Recent H-index → Total i10 → Recent Citations
- ◆ **Total Citations:** Total Citations → Recent Citations → Total i10 → Recent i10
- ◆ **Recent Citations:** Recent Citations → Total Citations → Recent i10 → Total i10

This logic reduces artificial clustering, highlights rising researchers, and enables fair comparison across career stages. Large-scale collaborative publications with unusually high citation counts are transparently flagged, and alternative ranking views are provided.

8. How Are Institutions Ranked? (Researcher-to-Institution Model)

Institutional rankings are derived using a bottom-up, researcher-centered aggregation model.

Institutions are evaluated based on the percentile distribution of their affiliated researchers across the global performance spectrum:

- ◆ Top 10%
- ◆ Top 20%
- ◆ Top 40%
- ◆ Top 60%
- ◆ Top 80%
- ◆ Top 90%

Ranking proceeds sequentially from the highest percentile group, with total affiliated researcher count used only as a final tie-breaker.

This methodology ensures that:

- ◆ institutional success reflects actual academic strength,
- ◆ size alone does not guarantee higher rank,
- ◆ focused and high-performing institutions are properly recognized.

9. Data Quality, Ethics, and Governance

The AD Scientific Index maintains data integrity through a multi-layered governance framework:

- ◆ AI-assisted anomaly detection
- ◆ Manual expert review
- ◆ Community and institutional reporting

Ethical violations—including false authorship, citation manipulation, retracted publications, or fabricated content - may result in removal without refund and, in severe cases, permanent exclusion.

10. Testable Inclusivity and Comparative Validation

The AD Scientific Index's methodology is empirically testable.

Users may select any country, include all institutions, and compare outcomes with other global rankings. Such tests consistently demonstrate that the AD Scientific Index produces:

- ◆ the most inclusive coverage,
- ◆ the most sensitive differentiation,
- ◆ and the most coherent translation of individual performance into institutional outcomes.

Inclusivity is not an assertion.

It is a repeatable methodological result.

11. Update Frequency and Data Refresh Cycles

- ◆ Profile metrics updated every 20–25 days
- ◆ Rankings refreshed every 2–3 days
- ◆ Corrections reflected within 0–4 days

12. Inclusion Policy

Inclusion occurs through:

- ◆ Individual Registration
- ◆ Institutional Bulk Registration

Automatic indexing of all public profiles is deliberately avoided to protect data quality, sustainability, and accountability.

13. Subject-Based and Interdisciplinary Equity

The AD Scientific Index evaluates performance across 211 sub-disciplines within 13 major fields, using field-adaptive evaluation frameworks rather than one-size-fits-all metrics.

This ensures equitable visibility for:

- ◆ STEM disciplines,
- ◆ Social Sciences,
- ◆ Arts & Humanities,

across all languages, regions, and publication traditions. Recognizing that scientific knowledge is no longer produced exclusively within universities, Subject Rankings are calculated across all institution types combined (Universities, Companies, Research Institutions, and Hospitals). This field-based approach reflects the contemporary structure of global knowledge production and ensures institutional neutrality in disciplinary evaluation.

Conclusion

The AD Scientific Index represents a methodological shift in global academic evaluation.

It does not measure prestige.

It measures scientific contribution, momentum, and real academic impact - transparently, inclusively, and at scale.

SMART Institutional Excellence Plan

Transforming Academic Data into Strategic Advantage

The insights presented in this report can be further explored and operationalized through the **SMART Institutional Excellence Plan**.

Developed by AD Scientific Index, SMART is an advanced academic analytics and strategic intelligence platform designed to help institutions understand, monitor, and improve their global academic performance.

Built on a **near real-time data infrastructure**, SMART enables continuous monitoring of academic performance and dynamic evaluation of global research systems. With coverage spanning **221 countries and more than 24,500 institutions**, SMART provides one of the most comprehensive global benchmarking environments available today.

Core Capabilities

- **Real-Time Academic Performance Monitoring**

Track institutional and individual performance continuously using near real-time data updates.

- **Global Benchmarking at Scale**

Benchmark your institution against **24,500+ institutions across 221 countries**, at global, regional, and national levels.

- **Department and Individual-Level Strength & Weakness Analysis**

Analyze institutional performance in depth by identifying **strengths and weaknesses across departments, disciplines, and individual researchers**.

This enables institutions to:

- ◆ Detect high-performing and underperforming academic units
- ◆ Identify key contributors driving institutional success
- ◆ Reveal structural gaps across departments and disciplines
- ◆ Support targeted recruitment and performance improvement strategies

- **Individual-Based Contribution Analysis (ACAM)**

Measure the contribution of each researcher to institutional success using advanced bibliometric indicators.

- **Field and Discipline-Based Performance Mapping**

Analyze strengths and weaknesses across **13 main fields and 200+ sub-disciplines**.

- **Ranking Simulation Module**

Simulate how changes in academic performance may affect institutional rankings and future positioning.

- **Academic Visibility and Positioning Tools**

Enhance institutional visibility through optimized academic profiles, strategic positioning, and **data-driven global exposure strategies**.

What Makes SMART Different?

- ◆ Near real-time data instead of static annual datasets
- ◆ Global benchmarking across **221 countries and 24,500+ institutions**
- ◆ Department- and individual-level performance analysis
- ◆ Strategic insights instead of descriptive rankings
- ◆ Actionable outputs instead of passive reporting

SMART does not only show **where you are** —

it explains **why you are there** and **how you can improve**.

Who Is It For?

- ◆ Universities and Higher Education Institutions
- ◆ Research Institutes and Centers
- ◆ Policy Makers and Strategic Planning Units
- ◆ Academic Leaders and Decision Makers

Strategic Impact

SMART enables institutions to:

- ◆ Identify hidden strengths and structural weaknesses
- ◆ Benchmark globally with unmatched scale and depth
- ◆ Improve ranking performance through data-driven strategies
- ◆ Optimize recruitment and academic investment decisions
- ◆ Enhance global academic visibility and institutional positioning
- ◆ **Use academic resources more efficiently to achieve sustainable and long-term institutional success**

Strategic Value Proposition

SMART transforms academic data into:

- Greater global visibility
- Efficient resource allocation
- Sustainable institutional success

Learn More

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Türkiye Academic Landscape and Ranking Momentum Report 2026

Methodology

- Covers 210 Turkish universities and 84,033 scientists
- Maps institutional scale and ranking dynamics
- Analyzes public, private, and younger-university performance
- Explores elite visibility across scientific disciplines
- Assesses Türkiye's strengths, weaknesses, and future potential
- Offers strategic insights for Turkish higher education

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