

General Outlook on Turkish Librarianship: UNAK-Turkish Platform of Law Librarians

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Abstract

This paper aims to give an overview of education of librarians, professional associations, publications and the types of libraries in Turkey. In addition, the activities of the Turkish Platform of Law Librarians and law librarianship in Turkey are presented.

Introduction

In the modern sense, library science education began in the 1940s in Turkey by the means of certificate programs and trainings. However, the establishment of existing libraries in Turkey goes back to the beginning of the Ottoman Empire. The first library in the Ottoman Empire was established in Iznik during the reign of Osman Bey.

There were a number of libraries established in the madrasas in Bursa and Balikesir at the reign of Bayezid. After Fatih Sultan Mehmet conquered Istanbul, he established major libraries throughout the city. Some of these libraries are still in use today.

Modern Turkish librarianship began with the establishment of the Turkish Librarians' Association in 1949 and with university library science departments in 1950s. In this context, the following topics should be mentioned:

- Education and training activities
- Professional Associations

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- Publications
- Professional Activities

Education of Information Professionals

There are seven universities in Turkey with departments of information and document management. These universities educate information professionals at the undergraduate level as well as at the graduate level. Prior to the establishment of these departments, librarians received training in several programs, some of which had been in existence since 1925.

The first department of Librarianship was opened at Ankara University in 1954. The second department opened at Istanbul University in 1963, then a third at Hacettepe University in 1972. Other universities followed, namely, Marmara University in 1994, Yakındođu University in 2004, and Atatürk University in 2007. Corresponding with developments and changes in the profession, these departments renamed themselves as Department of Information and Document Management in 2002 and updated their curricula.

The total number of registered students in the department of Information and Document Management in Turkey is 490. The breakdown is shown in the following table.

University Name	Number of Students
Ankara University	60
Atatürk University	80
Hacettepe University	80
Istanbul University	120
Marmara University	120
Near East University	30

These programs of study in librarianship typically require four years to complete. There are approximately 1900 students in undergraduate librarianship programs in Turkey. If one includes graduate students, the total is almost 2000. It is important to note that the number of students matriculating in these departments is increasing rapidly. The number of academic staff members in the combined departments consists of 41 men and 21 women.

Professional Associations

The first professional library organization is the Turkish Librarians' Association, which was founded November 19, 1949 in Ankara. The Association has twenty-five branches in different cities throughout the country. Today, the Turkish Librarians' Association has several working groups:

- public relations
- information technology
- social and cultural events
- freedom of thought
- The National Library.

The second major association is the University and Research Librarians Association (UNAK), founded in 1991. Within the UNAK there are eight working groups. These are;

- Medicine and Medical Sciences Working Group
- OCLC Executive Committee
- Web and IT Working Group
- Social Activities Working Group
- Media and Public Relations Working Group
- Professional Activities Working Group
- UNAK-Turkish Platform of Law Librarians
- Young UNAK

Another major library organization is Anadolu University Libraries Consortium (ANKOS). ANKOS was established in 2000 with 12 member libraries, and it quickly grew. Today, there are one hundred eight foundations that are members of ANKOS. Within the scope of ANKOS, there are several research and working groups. Working groups include:

- Licensing
- Public Relations
- User Statistics
- Negotiating Group on Databases
- Open access and Institutional Repositories
- Institutionalization

Research groups within ANKOS are;

- e- Books

- Federated Search
- Off Campus/Outreach
- Collaboration

One other key library organization is Innovative Library Initiatives Promotion Group (ILIPG), established in 2002 in Istanbul. ILIPG carries out successful projects focused on the subject of Information Literacy. Additionally, school librarians in Turkey formed their own association in 2002.

Publications

Most publications in librarianship are published by professional associations. These publications can be categorized as journals, books or other publications. The Turkish Librarians' Association (TKD) has published over 150 books since it was established. By comparison, the University and Research Librarians' Association (UNAK) published just seven books.

Journals

The first journal on librarianship published in Turkey was called TURKISH LIBRARIANS' ASSOCIATION BULLETIN. It was published by the Turkish Librarians' Association (TKD) and began its publication run in 1952. In 1987, the BULLETIN'S name was changed to TURKISH LIBRARIANSHIP. Since then, the journal has been published four times annually as a peer-reviewed journal. It is available through open access and accessible from the first issue to the current issue via the Internet.¹

University and Research Librarians Association (UNAK) publishes twice annually. Their publication is also peer-reviewed. Its title is BILGI DÜNYASI (INFORMATION WORLD). UNAK also publishes a bi-monthly e-bulletin as *UNAK News Letter*. INFORMATION WORLD; is indexed and abstracted in LISA (Library and Information Science Abstracts); EBSCOHOST-LISTA (Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts); IndexCopernicus and TUBITAK-ULAKBIM Social Sciences Database. INFORMATION WORLD is an open access journal and listed in DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals) and E-Lis (E-Prints in Library and Information Science).

¹ TURKISH LIBRARIANSHIP can be found at <http://tk.kutuphaneci.org.tr/index.php/tk>.

Anatolian University Libraries Consortium (ANKOS) publishes ANAKOS E-BULLETIN as a single annual publication.

There are also library journals which are published irregularly. For instance, National Library published a bulletin between 1957 and 1972 as *The National Library News*. There are a total of 143 issues of *The National Library News*.

In 1987, Istanbul University launched a journal named LIBRARIANSHIP JOURNAL. However, it only published three issues before it finally ceased publication.

Similarly, the Turkish Librarians' Association Ankara Branch published a short-lived journal named LIBRARIANSHIP JOURNAL. It appeared between 1972 and 1973. The following chart outlines the general chronology of subjects appearing in library journals in Turkey.

Decade	Subjects
1950s	Public and children's libraries, Ottoman libraries, library history, mobile libraries.
1960s	Library week, documentation, educating librarians, reading habits, and university libraries.
1970s	Archives, school libraries, university libraries and services, regulations.
1980s	Librarianship education, audiovisual sources, library automation, and problems of libraries.
1990s	Networks, IFLA, library administration, information society, systems management.
2000s	Management of information resources, websites, library buildings, consortia, digitization, and e-books.

Professional Activities

In Turkey as in many other countries, the number of meetings, seminars, and workshops about information and document management has been increasing every year. Some of these professional activities are:

Year	Event
1995	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. 2. 61ST IFLA General Conference and Council Istanbul, Turkey, 20-25 August. More than 3000 delegates from 100 countries attended.
2003	The 24 th Annual IATUL Conference Ankara, Turkey June 2-5, 2003 More than 150 participants attended this conference.
2008	LIBER 37 th Annual General Conference, Istanbul, 1-5 July 2008. More than 200 participants attended this conference.
2009	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EBLIDA Executive Committee Meeting March 31, 2009 Istanbul Bilgi University 2. 28th International Association of Law Libraries Annual Conference, October 11-15, Istanbul, Turkey
2010	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2nd International Symposium on Information Management in a Changing World, 2. September 22-24, 2010, Ankara, Turkey
2011	EAHIL- European Association for Health Information and Libraries 5-8 July 2011, Istanbul- Turkey

Types of Libraries in Turkey

Like most other countries, Turkey has basic library types: university libraries, public libraries, school libraries, special libraries, and manuscripts and archives libraries. In addition, Turkey also has legal deposit libraries. There are five legal deposit libraries in Turkey. The best known of them are the Library of the Parliament and the National Library in Ankara.

Public Libraries in Turkey

The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism collaborates with the General Directorate of Libraries and Publications. Part of this collaboration involves collecting data. According to library data from 2008, one can see recent information about the size and scope of public libraries in Turkey, illustrated in the table below.

Public Libraries	2008
Number of Libraries	1,156
Number of Books	13,662,483
Number of Users (Readers)	19,034,750
Number of Enrolled Members	503,961
Number of Items Circulated	4,578,792
Number of Travelling Libraries	55
Number of Professional Librarians	331
Number of Other Library Employees	2,778

Library of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey

The history of Turkey's Grand National Assembly Library reaches back to the very first assemblies of the Ottoman Empire "Meclis-i Ayan" and "Meclis-i Mebusan." In 1916, "The Library" was established as a special facility within the administrative organization by a regulation in Meclis-i Mebusan internal regulations. One of the early actions of The Grand National Assembly of Turkey, which was opened in 23 April 1920, was to formally

establish the Assembly Library. The date of its foundation is September 28, 1920.

Law Librarianship in Turkey

Law libraries are not an entirely separate library type in Turkey. However, law collections can be found in different spaces within larger, diverse collections. They can also be part of a faculty library. Law libraries which are situated in courts, law firms, or bar associations, are structured as integral parts of these institutions. People who are employed in these institutions are usually graduates of one of the Information and Document Management programs. These are four year undergraduate programs offered in several Turkish universities. Additionally, there are librarians who also have masters' degrees in librarianship or in other disciplines. People who are graduates of different disciplines can be employed in libraries as staff members. The exact number of law librarians in Turkey is not known as law librarianship is not considered a distinct type of librarianship and law libraries are not considered distinct types of libraries.

Librarians who specialize in the field of law librarianship perform reference and public relations, select publications, give seminars, and catalog law resources. Generally, one can say the following about law libraries in Turkey;

- There are libraries of faculties of law at forty-nine universities.
- There are employees with education in law librarianship in High Courts, in the Supreme Court, in the Council of the State, and the Court of Accounts.
- There are twenty-three professional staff members holding Information and Document Management degrees in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Additionally, there are sixty-three people holding different undergraduate degrees employed in the library. Four of the staff members have doctorate degrees, and seven of them have other graduate degrees.
- Bar associations are institutions with law libraries. Through a survey of websites, and by e-mail and phone inquiries, we have determined that there are seventy-six bar associations in various cities throughout Turkey.
- Also, there are libraries law firms. The number of firm libraries is rapidly increasing. There are currently eighty-three law firms in Turkey. As a result of phone survey, 51 of 61 law firms reported that they have libraries.

- Four librarians and twenty-four other staff members work in these libraries. Twenty-three of the sixty-one responding institutions reported that there are no staff members responsible for the libraries in these firms.
- There is not a special course for law librarianship in Turkey's higher education system, though legal resources are included in some courses.
- The field of law librarianship gained distinction with the foundation of the UNAK-Turkish Platform of Law Librarians in 2007. The number of law librarianship courses increased in information and document departments. Training and seminars were added for law students in law faculties. Istanbul Bilgi University was the first institution in Turkey to include a mandatory course for first year law students on Research Methods and Accessing Legal Information Resources. This course provides students with a working knowledge of the academic research process and research methods, focusing on print and electronic legal information resources, along with recent academic research on the subject. The goals of the course are, in addition to the above, to develop students' academic writing skills and increase their exposure to various applications used in academic research and to help them become proficient in using traditional and online library systems.
- UNAK-Turkish Platform of Law Librarians arranges parallel seminars in UNAK Conferences, held in September or October every year.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we cannot deny the rapid progress of Turkish librarianship, especially in recent years. As for law librarianship in Turkey, it is important to note the IALL 2009 Conference held in Istanbul. This event helped promote the growth of law librarianship. It is clear that law librarianship in Turkey is wide open to development. Additional research will provide ongoing benefits. Law librarianship in Turkey is rapidly growing and improving and will soon compete with the best practice in the field.

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Electronic Resources

<http://www.ankos.gen.tr/>

http://www.beyazitkutup.gov.tr/1464_Kutuphane-nedir-.html

<http://www.kutuphaneci.org.tr/>

<http://kygm.kulturturizm.gov.tr/Genel/Default.aspx?F6E10F8892433CFF0D262A49C727F232AA79C0764A877FEA>

<http://www.osym.gov.tr/Genel/BelgeGoster.aspx?F6E10F8892433CFFAAAF6AA849816B2EF8F59EC4393613791>

<http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/index.htm>

<http://www.unak.org.tr/>