Student Satisfaction at Higher Education Institutions in Turkey: A Case of Faculty of Education

Türkiye'de Yükseköğretim Kurumlarında Öğrenci Memnuniyeti: Eğitim Fakültesi Örneği

Şakir Çınkır[*]
Sevgi Yıldız[**]

To cite this article/ Atıf icin:

Abstract. This study aims to explore the satisfaction of students studying at university with the education and learning, examination and support services they receive. The study group of the research is comprised of 500 students in total studying in eight programs at five faculties of education in Turkey. Research data was collected using a data collection instrument developed by the researchers and focusing on the critical incidents based on student experiences. Data acquired from the students was subjected to content analysis through NVivo program. According to the research findings, student experiences in attitude, functionality and proficiency themes, respectively, were found to be critical in their satisfaction with education-learning, exams, and support services. Also, while experiences in socializing, communication and access themes enable students to feel satisfied with these services, experiences in management, safety, and payment themes were found to be the sources of dissatisfaction. According to these results, higher education institutions are recommended to do improvement and development activities by reviewing their policies based on the results derived from the satisfaction research.

Keywords: Students, critical incident technique, higher education, student satisfaction, faculty, faculty of education.

Öz. Bu çalışmada üniversiteye devam eden öğrencilerin aldıkları eğitim-öğretim, sınav süreçleri ve destek hizmetlerine yönelik memnuniyetlerinin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu, Türkiye'de beş eğitim fakültesinin sekiz programında öğrenimlerine devam eden toplam 500 öğrenciden oluşmaktadır. Araştırmanın verileri araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen ve öğrencilerin deneyimlerinden oluşan hikayelere dayalı olarak kritik olaylar üzerine odaklanılan veri toplama aracı ile toplanmıştır. Öğrencilerden elde edilen veriler NVivo programı aracılığıyla içerik analizine tabi tutulmuştur. Araştırma bulgularına göre eğitim fakültesi öğrencilerinin eğitim-öğretim, sınavlar ve destek hizmetlerde memnuniyet durumlarında sırasıyla tutum, işlevsellik ve yeterlik temalarında yer alan yaşantıların kritik olduğu belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca sosyalleşme, iletişim ve erişim temalarında yer alan yaşantılar öğrencilerin bu hizmetlerden memnuniyet duymalarını sağlarken; yönetim, güvenlik ve ödeme temalarında yer alan yaşantılar memnuniyetsizlik kaynakları olarak belirlenmiştir. Bu sonuçlara göre yükseköğretim kurumlarının memnuniyet araştırmalarından elde edilen sonuçlara göre politikalarını gözden geçirerek iyileştirme ve geliştirme faaliyetlerinde bulunmaları önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğrenciler, kritik olay tekniği, yükseköğretim, öğrenci memnuniyeti, fakülte, eğitim fakültesi.

---

[*] *Correspondence:* Ankara University, Turkey, e-mail: cinkir@gmail.com ORCID:0000-0001-8057-938X

[**] Ankara University, Turkey, email: yldzsvg@gmail.com ORCID:0000-0003-1116-7896

Introduction

The principal objective of educational institutions is to offer high-quality education and learning service. Universities are institutions where students gain important experiences for the future, socialize and acquire many different types of knowledge during their initial youth years. In addition to the importance of universities for students, students that are considered one of the stakeholders in the education process (Yorke, 1999) constitute the input of the education process while they also represent one of the important output indicators in the evaluation of the education quality at universities being a major representative of the higher education. One of these outputs is the student satisfaction level based on their experiences at the university. Knowing student satisfaction level is an improvement tool that allows identifying the failing and deficient sides of higher education institutions and taking measures to eliminate such deficiencies.

The educational echelons expect students to acquire the intended knowledge and demonstrate the expected practices in real life. Differently than the other educational levels, universities are institutions that offer education-learning and social, cultural and sportive services altogether. Accordingly, universities are expected to develop in line with the student needs and demands and appeal to students. In this context, results that will allow the development of institutions is possible by research on university life that places students in the center. Research that places students in the center is those focusing on the quality of education and therefore must be taken into consideration by higher education management. As evaluation and feedback studies conducted by students may reflect on the education of students (Rawley, 2003) and will enable their personal development as well as their academic development (Çokluk & Yılmaz, 2007), and are an indication of the service quality (Zineldin, Akdağ Camgöz & Vasicheva, 2011), they are considered extremely important. According to Rawley, there are four main reasons for collecting feedback from students. These are providing controllable evidence for the quality improvement by student comments on classes, allowing students to evaluate their own learning process with positive and negative outputs and thus providing an incentive to improve their learning proficiency. Also, such feedback will also provide an opportunity for students to provide indicators allowing comparisons about the university reputation and express their academic experiences and satisfaction level. Across the world, educational institutions generally identify student opinions on all aspects of academic life through satisfaction surveys (Douglas, Douglas & Barnes, 2006). Erdoğan and Uşak (2005) emphasize that the quality of educational institutions has a significant impact on the quality of students. For all these reasons, universities are increasingly interested in student satisfaction practices (Şahin, 2009). Yılmaz, Filiz and Yaprak (2007) state that the service quality of educational institutions is determined by the level of education, socio-cultural activities and satisfaction levels of the students. According to this, it should be seen as a necessity for higher education administrations to carry out studies to determine student satisfaction.

Student Satisfaction at Higher Education

Universities would like to be always preferred by students and be at the top of the university rankings. Law and Cheung (2013) suggest that universities have to understand the students' needs and create appropriate education programs to attract successful students nationally and internationally. For universities focusing on the student market, student satisfaction surveys, for mitigating negative experiences regarding universities and results such as student admissions in

the long term, student attitude, financial stability, etc. can prove to be an important instrument (Douglas, McClelland & Davies, 2007). However, student satisfaction is seen to be a difficult concept to describe in higher education. Richardson (2015) describes student satisfaction as a complex concept due to the difficulty of evaluating the programs and the higher education institutions as a whole. Bandeviča and Līgotne (2014) report that there are two fundamental problems that make the concepts of quality and satisfaction that are intertwined with each other harder. The first is that the concept of quality in higher education is more specific and complex than other fields due to the different objectives of higher education, its members and the impossibleness of comparison with other public institutions. The second is that looking at the concept from a different perspective due to the different needs of stakeholders (academia, administrative personnel, management, and students) and the intrinsic diversity of the higher education differentiates the content of the concept.

Another discussion on student satisfaction at higher education is about the student-customer context. Law and Cheung (2013) argue that universities must have a market-oriented approach to understand the objectives of students in different programs of the university. DeShields Jr, Kara and Kaynak (2005) also recommend in a similar way that university administrators apply customer-oriented principles without seeking profit due to the changing nature of the higher education market. On the contrary, Lawson, Leach, and Burrows, (2012) stress that seeing students as customers in higher education is a worrying trend. Lomas (2007) reports that seeing higher education students that are viewed by other public institutions as customers only as students depends on the academic discipline. With the current new trends in higher education, it seems that student-customer discussions will continue.

In spite of the existence of a general opinion that it is a complex concept, according to Elliot and Shin (2002), student satisfaction refers to a subjective assessment by a student of various outputs and experiences related to education. Harvey (2006) reports that the approach of identifying student satisfaction must be seen as a cycle of data collection, reporting and implementation that enables the management's making some improvements with direct student support. Appleton-Knapp and Krentler (2006) report that student satisfaction in higher education is affected by various factors. Students' demographic characteristics (sex, character, preferred learning styles and grand point average) and education experience, as well as the characteristics of the institution (academic structure and quality etc.), are some of the basic factors that affect student satisfaction. Measuring student satisfaction that is affected by these factors may be suggested to get harder.

The main purpose of student satisfaction is maximizing student experience and satisfaction and minimizing their dissatisfaction when they are at university as well as increasing the performance of the institutions. Improvements can be achieved this way. Therefore, improvement activities at universities are closely related to student satisfaction (Douglas, McClelland & Davies, 2007; O' Driscoll, 2012). Sarrico and Rosa (2014) also report that student satisfaction surveys may prove to be an informative mechanism for institutional strategic development and enable institutions to continuously improve their services and go beyond the current status and thereby encourage innovation. Duong (2015) describes student satisfaction as an important part of success in higher education market and finds it necessary to identify the quality of educational programs and learning. Waggoner and Goldman (2005) suggest that with the situation of satisfaction combined with high satisfaction rates, student development levels shall rise and the reputation of the institution shall increase. However, it is known that students consider elements such as employment and quality in the demand for higher education

institutions (Higher Education Council, 2017). In addition to the institutional gains, as Taylor and Machalo (2006) also draws attention to the fact that information acquired from satisfaction studies may help design strategies at institutional level to respond student expectations and the environment that has increasing demands. Kane, Williams and Ansfield (2008) report that satisfaction feedback data may help understand socio-economic, political and cultural effects on the student experiences and show how student priorities and concerns may change over time. Tayyar and Dilşeker (2012) also point out that if universities increase student satisfaction, they will have students who have more loyalty and recommend their university to others and that they can survive in the long term. In this context, satisfaction is a very important variable. The satisfaction of international students is an important criterion especially for the universities that are directed to the overseas market. For this reason, it is observed that studies towards the satisfaction of international students in different universities also increased (Arambewale, Hall, 2009; Selected, Kılıçlar & Sarı, 2012; Bianchi, 2013; Wilkins & Balakrishnan, 2013; Asera-Nuamah, 2017).

Considering all of the above information, criticism by students, who is an important stakeholder of the higher education process, on universities and faculties as well as their current program of study, must be taken into consideration. Feedback on education-learning activities and all types of support services by students who are an important stakeholder may be suggested to be important for universities and faculties to achieve their vision and mission. Benjamin and Hollings (1997) also argue that this important problem should be fully investigated. The present study aims to identify student satisfaction with services offered at their faculties based on their positive and negative experiences during the time they study at a Faculty of Education. In line with this overall objective, answers were sought for the question, "What are positive and negative experiences of teacher candidates regarding education-learning, exams and support services at their faculty?"

Method

Research Design

In this study, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) and narrative research design were used that are a qualitative research method to collect "freestyle texts" on experiences students remember as positive and negative. In this study, a type of narrative research, personal stories, were used. In personal stories, a person's experiences in a specific time frame or regarding a specific incident are involved (Creswell, 2013). In this study, students' positive and negative experiences on education-learning, assessment and support services were acquired through stories.

Critical Incident Technique

CIT research is that which is conducted in natural environments and is the key instrument for a researcher to collect data by themselves. In CIT research that aims to reveal participant perceptions, data is collected by interviews, participant observations and/or open-ended qualitative questions in the form of words verbally or in writing and data analysis is performed based on induction principle (Creswell, 2012). With CIT, participants express particularly their satisfying and dissatisfying experiences on a specific service in the form of small stories they narrate. CIT is based on using these stories as data and classifying this data (Öztürk, 2000). CIT

is regarded by many researchers as an appealing method recently. However, in higher education, conventional surveys with pre-defined questions and student responses are conducted. On the contrary, CIT enables participants to describe their experiences freely and express their feelings openly without being restricted to certain areas (Douglas, McClelland & Davies, 2007).

Study Group

In this research, the faculty of education of five universities in Turkey was identified as the case study. 500 teacher candidates in total from eight different programs at the faculties of education participated in the study. Sex, department and year information of the teacher candidates that participated in the study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Demographic Information on Teacher Candidates Participating in The Study

Variable		Number
Sex	Female	322
	Male	178
Department	Computer and Teaching Technologies Teaching	36
	Guidance and Psychological Counseling	77
	Primary Education Teaching	165
	Social Sciences Teaching	38
	Pre-School Teaching	67
	Mentally Disabled Teaching	40
	Turkish Teaching	45
	Physical Education and Sports Teaching	32
Year	2	35
	3	234
	4	231

According to Table 1, the majority of the teacher candidates comprising the sample are seen to be female students. This is in parallel with the female-dominant structure of the faculties of education. However, considering the sufficiency of the experiences of the students on third and fourth-year levels at the faculties, their participation in the study was enabled more. First-year students, on the other hand, were not included in the research since they do not have enough experience at the faculty.

Data Collection Tool and Data Collection

In this study, a data collection tool was developed by the researchers. The first section of the data collection tool comprised of two sections is intended for acquiring demographic information on sex, department and year. The second section contains the participant narratives regarding the positive and negative memories they had with regard to education-learning, exam services and other support services, and questions for identifying their satisfaction level with the faculty. Research data was collected on a voluntary basis by directly reaching the students during the spring term of the 2014-2018 and providing necessary information.

Data Analysis

Following the completion of data collection, data was transferred to computer environment and raw data was edited/arranged by content analysis. Data was analyzed on NVivo program. Thereunder, data acquired by the data collection tool was transferred to the computer environment as was to arrange raw data. Later, data was thematized in line with the research objectives. This data that was interpreted descriptively are presented in italics with participant codes by direct quotation.

Validity and Reliability Study

The content validity of the data collection tool used in the research was referred to two subject-matter experts for their opinion and the form was prepared in final. To ensure the reliability in the study, the researchers identified the views revealed in the texts that were independently decoded and grouped them under themes developed by the researchers together. Creswell (2012) reports that colleague evaluations are an effective method to ensure the conclusiveness of qualitative research.

To ensure the reliability of the research, the agreement percentage among the experts, the views entered into NVivo program by the researchers for the use of Miles, Huberman and Saldona's (2014) formula and possible themes that were determined were entered into an excel file. In the research, themes created by Johnston (1995) were taken as basis and themes were re-arranged by the researchers according to the concerned context. Later, two experts were asked to group the respective views under the themes. The consensus between the experts was found to be 87%. According to Miles and Huberman (2015), the consensus between the experts must be 70% or above to establish reliability. Also, according to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013), validity and reliability require detailed descriptions, in other words, direct quotes. For this purpose, the findings were supported by direct quotes.

Results

Positive Experiences of Teacher Candidates about Education-Learning and Exam Services at the Faculty

Information that was acquired as a result of the analysis of the positive stories of the teacher candidates about the education-learning and exam services at the faculty are presented in Table 2. As seen from Table 2, stories of the teacher candidates about education-learning and exams are grouped under the themes of functionality, attitude, proficiency-quality, socializing and communication. One of the students that feel satisfied with the different methods and techniques, group studies and presentations by students in the functionality theme describes their view as follows; *"Presentation we make in the classes are both an experience and are taken into consideration during the assessment process (S14: F, GPC, 3)."* A student reports their view under the attitude theme as follows: *"all of my exams at which the professor had a smiling face and the assistants did not pretend to be professors went well (S21: M, PET. 3)"*, and thus stresses that they prefer academic members to be good-humored and congenial. In the proficiency theme, on the other hand, they stress the quality of the education they receive by saying, *"thanks to our professors who are subject-matter experts, we are able to answer the*

questions asked by the teachers easily during the internship (S334: F, MDT, 4).'' In the communication theme, they express their satisfaction with the healthy communication in the education-learning and exam processes by saying, *"It was a nice day when the students in the program were gathered in the conference hall to communicate their wishes and complaints to the dean and professors, because it shows that our views are valued (S12: F, GPC, 3)."* In the socializing theme, a student stating that they get closer and spends enjoyable time with their friends particularly in group studies and exams expresses their view as follows: *"We study till morning with friends on some days when we prepare for exams. We spend more time and get closer well (S221: F, MDT, 4)."*

Table 2.

Themes for Positive Experiences of Teacher Candidates about Education-Learning and Exam Services at The Faculty of Education

Themes	Core Relevant Narrative Formed From Quotation
Functionality	- Making presentations increase our narration experience. - Different teaching methods and techniques attract our attention. - Double major implementation is very good. - It is very good to have two weeks for final exams. - Great ideas emerge in group studies.
Attitude	- Some professors provide material-moral support for us to do graduate study. - Some professors do not make an issue if we are late for the exam. - Some professors provide information on questions in exams we do not understand. - Some professors and research assistants behave positively at exams. - We feel more comfortable if there are research assistants from the department at the exams. - We are asked of our ideas and opinions in some classes.
Proficiency	- Teachers with whom we do our internship find us qualified. - Some professors in the department are very well-equipped. - Some professors in the department pay very much interest in us. - Most of our professors are subject-matter experts. - Most of our classes are conducted comprehensively. - Some professors come to the class very willingly.
Socializing	- The orientation program implemented at the beginning is very good. - We study with friends for some exams and get closer.
Communication	- Particularly, professors communicate with us more closely during the last days of school. - The dean and assistant deans listen to our complaints and demands.

S: Student, F: Female, M: Male
CTTT: Computer and Teaching Technologies Teaching, GPC: Guidance and Psychological Counseling, PET: Primary Education Teaching, SST: Social Sciences Teaching, PST: Pre-School Teaching, MDT: Mentally Disabled Teaching, TS: Turkish Teaching, PEST: Physical Education and Sports Teaching

Negative Experiences of Teacher Candidates about Education-Learning and Exam Services at the Faculty

Information that was acquired as a result of the analysis of the negative stories of the teacher candidates about the education-learning and exam services at the faculty are presented in Table 3.

When Table 3 is examined, one of the students that feel annoyed with the negative attitudes towards them express their annoyance as follows: *"In some classes, some students are discriminated positively. I feel very sour about qualifying people according to their political views and giving them higher grades (S209: F, MDT. 4)."* A student that argues that conventional practices in exams and classes are not effective expresses their view as follows: *"Having exams is very illogical because there should be an ongoing assessment during the process (S10: M, PET, 4)."* In the management dimension, one of the students who think that the education and learning and exam processes are disrupted particularly by acts of violence at the faculty and the campus expresses their annoyance as follows: *"Continuous acts of violence experienced in our faculty and campus. Last year, right before our eyes, everyone stood by and watched when a friend was taken out of the exam and lynched. It was terrible. (S206: F, MDT, 4)."* In the proficiency dimension, on the other hand, one of the students that feel annoyed with the conventional teaching methods and lack of proficiency of some professors expresses their views as follows: *"There are not many professors that use interesting methods and techniques in the teaching process (S12: F, GPC, 3)"*, while another one criticizes as follows: *"Some professors in the subject-matter classes are very incompetent. They definitely do not contribute to me in any way at all (S26: F, CTTT, 3).*"

Table 3.

Negative Experiences of Teacher Candidates about Education-Learning and Exam Services at The Faculty of Education

Themes	Examples of Basic Formatted Quotes
Attitude	- Some professors are very inconsiderate and judgmental. - Some professors chide us as if we were children. - Some research assistants are very priggish during the exams. - Professors that teach using a conventional style snap at us when we recommend a style change. - Some teachers discriminate. - Professors teach biased and incomplete information on sensitive subjects during the classes.
Functionality	- In some classes, process assessments should be made instead of exams. - Some professors make students teach the class always. - Some professors preparing the exams do not know how to assess and evaluate. - There should be no attendance requirement. - In exams, cheating is overlooked.
Management	- We are scared of political incidents at our faculty. - Collective groups and racist activities are terrible. - The mid-term week is very short. - There should be no grade limitations. - There should be no attendance requirement.
Proficiency	- Interesting methods and techniques are rarely used. - Some professors constantly talk about politics during the class. - Memorizing is enough for some exams. - We only acquire theoretical knowledge on teaching. - Classroom capacity is not sufficient.

Positive Experiences of Teacher Candidates about Support Services at the Faculty

Information that was acquired as a result of the analysis of the positive stories of the teacher candidates about the support services at the faculty are presented in Table 4. When Table 4 is examined, the students are seen to express less number of positive views about the support services. A student that feels satisfied with the positive attitude of the support services toward them and their meeting students' needs expresses their view as follows: *"The personnel at the student affairs office treated me quite cordially even if I didn't have my student i.d. with me and gave my student certificate by looking at my photo in my student page (S53: M, CTTT, 3)."* In the functionality dimension for the support services, one student stresses the functionality of the signboards as follows: *"Posting signboards on the walls directing to the classes has reduced the time and energy spent looking for the classrooms (S102: F, PST, 3)."* The student view, *"Giving the opportunity to participate in educational seminars, symposia and congresses is the most positive side of our university (S411: F, SST, 4)*" is an example of the student views expressing satisfaction with the access to the social activities, festivals and unit services. Lastly, few students expressed their view in the proficiency dimension that student affairs and cleaning services were sufficient.

Table 4.

Positive Experiences of Teacher Candidates about Support Services at The Faculty of Education

Themes	Examples of Basic Formatted Quotes
Attitude	- Those in the student affairs office are sometimes helpful. - They can issue a student certificate quickly in emergencies. - Sometimes they can demonstrate an attending behavior.
Functionality	- Having elevators. - WI-FI and the computers at the library help us greatly. - Signboards directing to the classroom make it easier for us to find the classrooms.
Access	- We can participate in summer camps, trips, etc. activities for a small fee. - The festival at the faculty (pen festival) is great. - The societies at the faculty are very active.
Proficiency	- Classroom cleanliness is sufficient. - The student affairs office can do what is required. - We can benefit from the services of Special education and GPC units. - We can participate in activities such as educational seminars, symposia, and congresses.

Negative Experiences of Teacher Candidates about Support Services at the Faculty

Information that was acquired as a result of the analysis of the negative stories of the teacher candidates about the support services at the faculty are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.

Negative Experiences of Teacher Candidates about Support Services at The Faculty

Themes	Examples of Basic Formatted Quotes
Attitude	- The student affairs employees are grim-faced. - The student affairs employees treat us like dirt. - We are chided at the student affairs office. - Those who are not of the mainstream opinion are treated inferiorly at the school. - The management does not regard our views that do not match their view of the world. - We cannot access the student affairs services for fear of being snapped at. - The student affairs office gives superficial answers.
Functionality	- The internet connection at the school is weak. - The library is small. - There is a hall, but it is not used.
Proficiency	- Activities that will help our personal development are not adequate. - Social activity areas on the campus are inadequate. - The cafeteria food is filthy and bad. - The cafeteria food has no meat in it. - The student affairs personnel are not knowledgeable. - Bathroom cleaning is inadequate. - Classroom cleaning is inadequate. - The classrooms are small. - GPC services are inadequate.
Safety	- Campus security is inadequate. - Terrorism supporters are not interfered with at the school. - Terrorism propaganda is overlooked at the school. - Some students eat for free at the cafeteria. - Clashes are not interfered with at the school. - Some groups show violence at the school. - Some groups at the school intimidate those who do not share their views. - Our lives are not safe. - Our families worry about our safety very much.
Payment	- Cafeteria prices are too high. - Meal prices are too high compared to other universities.
Access	- There are no spring festivals. - We are not informed about department meetings. - We cannot participate in trips.

When Table 5 is examined, teacher candidates are seen to have many negative stories about support services. Particularly, one of the students that feels annoyed with the student affairs offices' failure to help them, chiding students, as well as their negative attitude, express their view as follows*: "We cannot access the student affairs services for fear of receiving a negative response to our questions (S12: F, GPC, 3)."* In the functionality theme, a student expresses their annoyance as follows: *"We have a hall (drama), but no none knows when to use it (S1: M, PET, 3)."* In the proficiency dimension, a student criticizes the inadequacy of the support services in the support services dimension as follows: *"The student affairs personnel have no clue about what they do and each other (S1 : M, PET, 3)."* One of the students that argue that

there is a security gap at the campus summarizes the status as follows: *"There is no security at the campus (S26: F, CTTT, 3)."* In the payment dimension, the students feel annoyed with the high prices at the cafeteria. In the access dimension, a student expresses their annoyance particularly about the socio-cultural activities at the school as follows: *"Few spaces are reserved for school trips (S28: F, CTTT, 3)."*

When tables examined (Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5), the attitude, functionality and proficiency themes are seen to be present in all of the education-learning and exams and support services dimensions. On the other hand, socializing, access and communication themes are present in the satisfaction while the management, safety, and payment themes are present in student dissatisfaction. The model created for student satisfaction in higher education based on these data is provided in Figure 1.
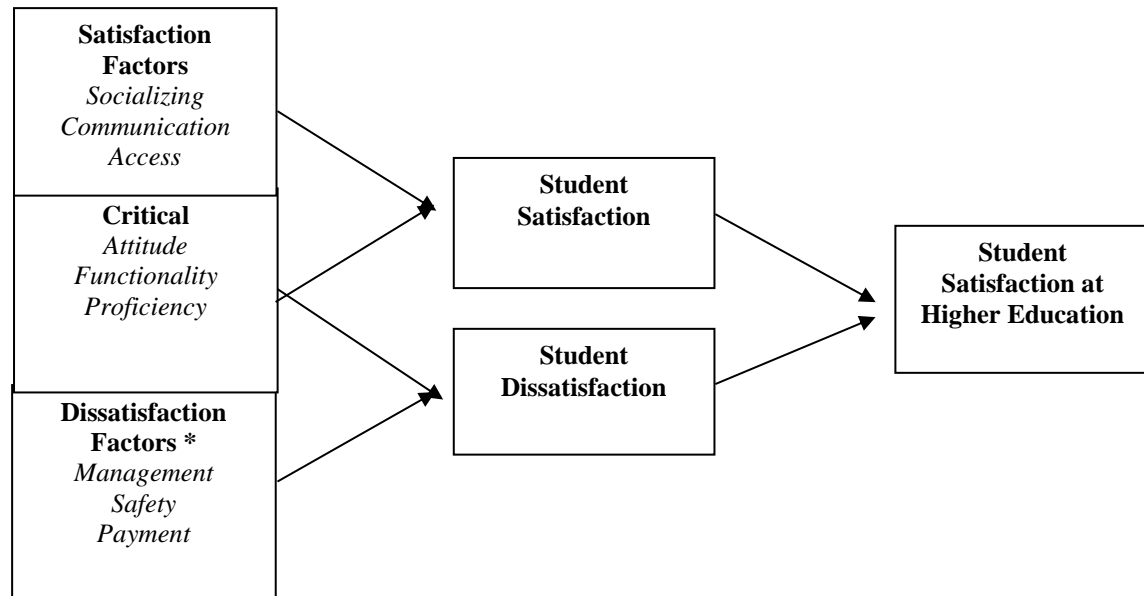
Figure 1. *Model for Student Satisfaction in Higher Education Based on Student Experiences*[†]

As seen in Figure 1, according to the model explaining the student satisfaction with education-learning and exams and support services in higher education based on their own experiences, experiences under the *attitude, functionality and proficiency* themes are critical for student satisfaction. Experiences under these themes derive student satisfaction and cause their dissatisfaction. Also, experiences under the *socializing, communication and proficiency* themes are influential on student satisfaction while experiences under the *management, safety and payment* themes are influential on student dissatisfaction. According to the model, experiences under the attitude, functionality, proficiency, socializing, communication, access, management, safety and payment themes are consequently influential on student satisfaction.

[†] *It is not included in this part of the model since the frequency of access is low.*

Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions

This research was conducted to identify student satisfaction with services offered at their faculties based on their positive and negative experiences during the time they study at the faculty of education. According to the research findings, the students of the Faculty of Education reported their views in the attitude, functionality and proficiency themes, respectively, with regard to education-learning and exams and support services. Also, according to the research findings, while positive experiences under the socializing, communication and access themes increase student satisfaction with the education-learning and exams and support services, negative experiences under the management, safety and payment themes lead to student dissatisfaction.

According to the views of the students of the Faculty of Education, experiences under the *attitude, functionality and proficiency* themes, respectively, are found to be critical for ensuring student satisfaction in higher education. These experiences are shared matters that may both derive student satisfaction and cause student dissatisfaction. In addition to these themes, experiences under the *socializing, communication and management* themes are found to be satisfaction factors in education-learning and exams. Accordingly, students may be suggested to pay importance to attitudes towards them in the context of satisfaction. Students wish to be paid attention by the academic personnel and feel satisfied with cordial, warm and positive behaviors. Teacher candidates are seen to be satisfied with the material-moral support and want a positive atmosphere particularly during the exams. Similarly, in the research conducted by Zineldin, Akdağ Camgöz and Vasicheva (2011) and Yıldız and Gizir (2018), *relationships and communication* in the universities in Turkey proved to be the most important factor for the student satisfaction. Douglas, McClelland, and Davies (2007) identified that the communication atmosphere in the faulty was critical for satisfaction. Oluseye, Tairat and Emmanuel (2014) also found in the study they conducted in Nigeria that strong relationships increased student satisfaction at universities. The findings of the research conducted by Çınkır and Yıldız (2018) with graduate students also suggest that these students have similar expectations, too. Accordingly, professors may be suggested to adopt positive communication toward students on every stage of higher education.

On the other hand, students draw attention to functionality and quality in terms of academic aspects, they object to conventional methods especially in classes and find different teaching methods and techniques, group studies and classes in which students actively participate functional. Students feel annoyed with exams based on memorization, classes conducted by students only and professors' doing politics. Students enjoy doing classes with well-equipped professors and think that their qualities increase with such classes. Similarly, the studies conducted by Douglas, Douglas and Barnes (2006) in England; by Duong (2015) in Vietnam; by Guo, Teng, Guo and Sun (2014) in China; by Yusoff, McLeay and Woodruffe-Burton (2014) in Malasia; and by Wilkins and Balakrishnan (2011) in the United Arab Emirates have established that the quality of the academics and the academic processes have an effect on the university student satisfaction. Douglas, McClelland and Davies (2007) and Machado, Brites, Magalhães and José Sá (2011) point out that satisfaction with academic aspects is a fundamental determinant of student satisfaction. Also, Joseph and Joseph (1997) report that suitable learning environments equipped with information and communication technology will increase the academic satisfaction of students. Accordingly, improving the quality of the learning environments of students may also be suggested to have an effect on their academic satisfaction.

Indeed, the research (Coles, 2002; Yusoff, McLeay & Woodruffe-Burton, 2014; Wilkins & Balakrishnan, 2011; Zineldin, Akdağ Camgöz & Vasicheva, 2011) shows that learning environments affect student satisfaction. It can be said that the functionality of academic processes critical to student satisfaction and the quality of academics and learning environments should be taken into consideration by the university administration. Considering the opinions and suggestions received from the students, these processes can be made more qualified.

One of the most important reasons for negativity as expressed by students with regard to classes and exams are experiences concerning faculty management. Feeling annoyed with practices such as shortness of exam weeks, passing grade, attendance requirement, students are concerned about political incidents and clashes that they think are caused by the security gap within the faculty. Also, students pay importance to their demands regarding education-learning process being paid attention by the management and the relationships with the management. Other researchers (Elliot & Healy, 2001; Elliot & Shin, 2002; Douglas Douglas & Barnes, 2006; Şahin, 2009) have also found results similar to the effect of the relationships with the faculty management on student satisfaction. According to this, the management's taking the demands of the students about the academic processes seriously can increase their satisfaction by making them feel important.

In addition to the critical themes in the support services, experiences expressed by the students of the Faculty of Education in the *access, safety and payment* themes are found to have an impact on their satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Particularly, situations caused by attitude and communication such as the way the student affairs are not helpful, are grim-faced, and chide and snap at the students are noted as problems students feel annoyed with most. Also, the students feel annoyed with the administrative personnel that is not sufficiently knowledgeable and do not help the students with the solution to their problems. The research findings of Barutçu Yıldırım, Yerin Güneri and Çapa Aydın (2015) suggest that support services provided by the administrative personnel are the areas with which the students feel satisfied least. Douglas, McClelland and Davies (2007) and Zineldin, Akdağ Camgöz and Vasicheva (2011) also draw attention to the fact that solving the student problems is critical for their satisfaction. In general, it can be said that support services have an effect on students 'satisfaction and that increasing the quality of these services will support the increase in students' satisfaction.

In the support services, students especially demand that the school library be improved quantitatively and qualitatively and that the functionality of services such as the Internet and computer be improved. In other words, students expect that services supporting education-learning be improved in terms of capacity and quality and modernized technologically. Similar results regarding the quality and technological infrastructure of the supporting learning environments have also been revealed in the findings of Machado, Brites, Magalhães and José Sá (2011), Wilkins and Balakrishnan (2013) and Yusoff, McLeay and Woodruffe-Burton'un (2014). Also, increasing the number of educational services supporting education-learning and social, cultural and sportive activities is another factor that increases student satisfaction. Joseph and Joseph (1997) argue that increasing in-campus social facility opportunities will increase student satisfaction.

Another important experience causing student dissatisfaction with support services is related to safety. Situations experienced at school and the campus, particularly politics-related threats, acts of violence, fights, clashes etc. cause student reaction. The high number of student views arguing that security is inadequate draws attention to a security gap at the faculty and campus as one of the striking findings of the study. Despite the security problem revealed by this research,

it is remarkable that no research is found in the national literature revealing the existence of a security problem at university campuses. Adeyemi (2009) found that student incidents that endangered the campus security in Nigeria were caused by the failure of the university managements to meet student demands, and reported as a conclusion that the educational programs deteriorated and that deaths occurred. Karimi (2008) reports that a student demonstration, which is a security problem, is a traditional opportunity for students to have their voices heard by the management. Accordingly, university managements are recommended to use the way of dialogs toward demands and complaints received from all students without discriminating and take necessary measures in cooperation with students. Another reason for the dissatisfaction in the research is that students criticize the inadequacy and expensiveness of the cafeteria and canteen services. Similar findings are also observed in Barutçu Yıldırım, Yerin Güneri and Çapa Aydın (2015). On the contrary, Douglas, Douglas and Barnes (2006) found that catering services were not effective on student satisfaction.

In conclusion, students feel satisfied with academic services and support services provided in line with their intended purpose, and cordial, warm and good-humored behaviors toward them. However, activities and services that do not fit their intended purpose and are dysfunctional, and the way students are disregarded are found to be the most important causes of dissatisfaction among students. In this research, the best functioning and the most failing aspects of the services provided at the faculty have been identified by the overall evaluation of the services by the teacher candidates. While the criticism about the support services provided by the faculty is closely concerning the faculty and university management as well as the administrative personnel, particularly the criticism about the education-learning and assessment process has revealed results that also involve professors. Also, the safety problem [*student protests over broader political issues*] experienced at the faculty and campus, as a finding not found in the national literature, appears to be the most remarkable result of the research. In this context, university managements are recommended to implement such policies and practices that take student satisfaction as basis for them to offer high-quality education and learning service to all students.

In future studies, more comprehensive results can be obtained for student satisfaction in higher education in studies to be carried out on large samples with the participation of undergraduate students from different faculties and universities. In addition to this research, which is used in critical events technique, researchers can perform satisfaction studies using different methods and techniques. In this study, satisfaction results can be examined according to demographic variables. Moreover, it can be carried out with graduate students towards the satisfaction of students in higher education. The co-operation of all stakeholders may reveal the big picture of the satisfaction process in higher education.

References

Adeyemi, T. O. (2009). Causes, consequences and control of students' crises in public and private universities in Nigeria. *Educational Research and Review, 4*(4), 156-163.

Alves, H., & Raposo, M. (2009). The measurement of the construct satisfaction in higher education. *The Services Industries Journal, 29*(2), 203-218.

Appleton Knapp, S. L., & Krentler, K. A. (2006). Measuring student expectations and their effects on satisfaction: the importance of managing student expectations. *Journal of Marketing Education, 28*(3), 254-264.

Arambewela, R., & Hall, J. (2009). An empirical model of international student satisfaction. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 21(*4), 555-569.

Asera-Nuamah, P. (2017). International students' satisfaction assessing the determinants of satisfaction. *Higher Education for the Future, 4*(1), 44-59.

Bandeviča, L., & Līgotne, A. (2014). Higher education study programme quality assessment. *Regional Formation and Development Studies, 7*(2), 6-18.

Barutcu Yildirim, F., Yerin Guneri, O., & Capa Aydın, Y. (2015). University students' satisfaction level and related variables. *Journal of Theory and Practice in Education, 11*(2), 521-533.

Bianchi, C. (2013). Satisfiers and dissatisfiers for international students of higher education: an exploratory study in Australia. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *35*(4), 396-409.

Coles, C. (2002). Variability of student ratings of accounting teaching: Evidence from a Scottish business school. *International Journal of Management Education, 2*(2), 30-39.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among the five.* Thousand Oaks, CL: Sage.

Cinkir, S. & Yildiz, S. (2018). The study of Bologna evaluation: Analysis of attainments of qualifications in educational administration graduate programme. *Journal of Higher Education, 8*(1), 55-67.

Cokluk, O., & Yilmaz, K. (2007). Analysis of University students' views about the quality of faculty life using various variables. *Ankara University, Journal of Faculty of Educational Sciences, 40*(2), 179-204.

Deshields, Jr. O, Kara, A., & Kaynak, E. (2005). Determinants of business student satisfaction and retention in higher education: applying Herzberg's two-factor theory. *International Journal of Educational Management, 19*, 128–139.

Douglas, J. Douglas, A., & Barnes, B. (2006). Measuring student satisfaction at a UK university. *Quality Assurance in Education, 14*(3), 251-267.

Douglas, J. McClelland, R., & Davies, J. (2007). The development of a conceptual model of student satisfaction with their experience in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education, 16*(1), 19-35.

Duong, M. Q. (2015). University experiences and satisfaction of Vietnamese university students. *Journal of Studies in Education, 5*(4), 90-99.

Elliot, K. M., & Healy, M. A. (2001). Key factors influencing students' satisfaction related to recruitment and retention. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education, 10*(4), 1-12.

Elliot, K. M., & Shin, D. (2002). Student satisfaction: An alternative approach to assessing this important concept. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 24*(2), 197-209.

Erdogan, M., & Usak, M. (2005). The development of prospective science teachers' satisfaction scale. *Gazi University Journal of Gazi Faculty of Education,* 25 (2), 35-54.

Guo, S., Teng, F., Guo, J., & Sun, Y. (2014). The construction of college student's satisfaction model based on structural equation model. *Journal of Chemical and Pharmaceutical Research*, *6*(6), 164-169.

Harvey, L. (2006). Impact of quality assurance: Overview of a discussion between representatives of external quality assurance agencies. *Quality in Higher Education, 12*(1), 287–90.

Johnston, R. (1995).The determinants of service quality: Satisfiers and dissatisfiers. *International Journal of Service Industry Management, 6*(5), 53-71.

Kane, D., Williams, J., & Cappuccini-Ansfield, G. (2008). Student satisfaction surveys: The value in taking an historical perspective. *Quality in Higher Education, 14*(2), 135-155.

Karimi, F. (2008). Student satisfaction and empowerment through complaining in institutions of higher learning. Doctoral Dissertations. 160. http://repository.usfca.edu/diss/160.

Law, K. K., & Cheung, R. (2013). Mearsuring student satisfaction in distance education in Hong Kong. *Business and Information. 7-9,* 443-470.

Lawson, A. Leach, M., & Burrows, S. (2012). The implications for learners, teachers and institutions of using student satisfaction as a measure of success: A review of the literature. *Education Journal,* 138, 7-11.

Lomas, L. (2007) Are students customers? Perceptions of academic staff. *Quality in Higher Education, 13*(1), 31-44.

Machado, M. L. Brites, R. Magalhães, A. & José Sá, M. (2011). Satisfaction with higher education: Critical data for student development. *European Journal of Education*, *46*(3), 415-432.

Miles, M. B, Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (Third Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CL: Sage.

O'Driscoll, F. (2012). What matters most: An exploratory multivariate study of satisfaction among first year hotel/hospitality management students. *Quality Assurance in Education, 20*(3), 1-21.

Oluseye, O. O. Tairat, B. T., & Emmanuel, J. O. (2014). Customer relationship management approach and student satisfaction in higher education marketing. *Journal of Competitiveness, 6*(3), 49-62.

Ozturk, S. A. (2000). A new approach to measuring service quality: Critical events technique. *Anatolia: Journal of Tourism Research,* 11, 57-68.

Richardson, J. T. E. (2005). Instruments for obtaining student feedback: a review of the literature. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 30*(4), 387-415.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Rowley, J. (2003). Designing student feedback questionnaires. *Quality Assurance in Education, 11*(3), 142-9.

Sarrico, C. S., & Rosa, M. J. (2014) Student satisfaction with Portuguese higher education institutions: the view of different types of students. *Tertiary Education and Management, 20*(2), 165-178.

Secilmis, C. Kiliclar, A., & Sarı, Y. (2012). The relation between the perception of satisfaction and academic success in students from Turkic world: the case of tourism students. *Milli Eğitim, 195,* 118-130.

Sahin, A. E. (2009). Assessing service quality in faculty of education via student satisfaction scale (FE-SSS). *H. U. Journal of Education, 37,* 106-122.

Taylor, J. S., & Machado, M. L. (2006). Higher education leadership and management: From conflict to interdependence through strategic planning. *Tertiary Education and Management,* 12, 137–160.

Tayyar, N., & Dilseker, F. (2012). The effect of service quality and image on student satisfaction at state and private universities. *Mugla University Journal of Social Sciences Institute, 28,* 184-203.

Waggoner, D. & Goldman, P. (2005) Universities as communities of fate. Institutional rhetoric and student retention policy. *Journal of Education Administration,* 43, 86–101.

Wilkins, S., & Balakrishnan, M. S. (2013). Assessing student satisfaction in transnational higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management, 27*(2), 143–156.

Yildirim, A., & Simsek, H. (2013). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yontemleri*. Ankara: Seckin Publishing.

Yildız, S., & Gizir, S. (2018). A phenomenological study of the perceptions of candidate teachers about the concepts of school, teacher and student in their dreams. *International Journal of Instruction, 11*(2), pp. 309-324.

Yilmaz, V., Filiz, Z., & Yaprak, B. (2007). Service quality measurement in the Turkish higher education system with SERVQUAL method. *Anadolu University Journal of Social Sciences.* 7 (1), 299-316.

Yorke, M. (1999). Assuring quality and standards in globalised higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education, 7* (1), 14-24.

Yusoff, M. McLeay, & F. Woodruffe-Burton, H. (2015). Dimensions driving business student satisfaction in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education, 23*(1), 86 – 104.

Higher Education Counsil (2017). *YOK'un yaptığı anket sonuclandi: Bilincli tercih, istihdam, kalite.* Retrieved from http://www.yok.gov.tr/web/guest/yok-tercih-anketi-sonuclandi

Zineldin, M., Akdag Camgoz, H., & Vasicheva, V. (2011) Assessing quality in higher education: New criteria for evaluating students' satisfaction. *Quality in Higher Education, 17*(2), 231-243.

Authors

Dr. Şakir CINKIR earned his MA degree in 1989 from Ankara University's, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Department of Educational Management and Planning and his PhD in 2000 from the School of Education, at Leeds University. His major areas of study are; Educational Management, Educational supervision, school management and school leadership, continuing, professional development, restructuring and capacity building, cross-cultural leadership, teacher training and development, performance management and performance evaluation.

Research assistant Sevgi Yıldız is a PhD. candidate at Ankara University, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Department of Educational Management. Her major areas of study are; higher education, restructuring and capacity building, teacher training, educational management, and educational inspection.

Contact

Doç. Dr. Şakir ÇINKIR, Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi, Eğitim Yönetimi A.B.D., Cebeci Yerleşkesi, Çankaya/Ankara Türkiye. e-mail: cinkir@gmail.com

Research Assistant Sevgi Yldız, Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi, Eğitim Yönetimi A.B.D., Cebeci Yerleşkesi, Çankaya/Ankara Türkiye. e-mail: yldzsvg@gmail.com