

Undergraduate Students' Expectations of Foundation Universities and Student Profile: Suggestions for University Administrators

Vakıf Üniversitesi Lisans Öğrencilerinin Üniversiteye Bakışı ve Beklentileri, Öğrenci Profili: Üniversite Yönetimine Öneriler

Özge HACİFAZLIOĞLU*

Nesrin ÖZDEMİR**

Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi

Öz

Son yıllarda vakıf üniversitelerinin sayısında göze çarpan artışla beraber, bu kurumların kalitesine ilişkin akademik tartışmalar da sürekli gündemde yer almaktadır. Bunun yanında, vakıf üniversitelerinde öğrenim gören öğrencilerin profilinin ne olduğu, beklentileri ve bu beklentilerinin ne derecede karşılandığına ilişkin ampirik çalışmalar sınırlıdır. Bu araştırmanın genel amacı, vakıf üniversiteleri öğrencilerinin üniversiteye bakışlarını, beklentilerini ve bu beklentilerin karşılanma düzeyini belirlemektir. Araştırma bulguları 3 yıl süren kapsamlı bir projeden sunulmuştur***. Araştırmada, öğrencilerin beklentileri ve bu beklentilerin karşılanmasına ilişkin görüşlerinin belirlenmesi amacıyla uygun genel tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri, ölçme aracının uygulanması yoluyla elde edilmiştir. İstanbul'daki 5 vakıf üniversitesinde öğrenim gören 881 öğrenci araştırmanın örneklem grubunu oluşturmuştur. Araştırmada öğrencilerin, öğrenci destek hizmetlerine yönelik beklentilerine ilişkin bulgulara yer verilip, üniversite yöneticilerine öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yükseköğretim, yükseköğretim yönetimi, vakıf üniversiteleri, öğrenci beklentileri.

Abstract

In Turkey, the number of foundation universities has increased dramatically in the last decade. With the influence of competition, universities feel the need to show their difference to attract high quality students into their institutions. The purpose of this study was to determine undergraduate students' expectations of universities and reveal students' perceptions of university administrators. This study was mainly based on quantitative design and it reports the results of a comprehensive, 3 year longitudinal study that involved 881 undergraduate students from 5 foundation universities in Istanbul. Within the context of the study, undergraduate students' expectations were revealed and recommendations were developed for university administrators.

Keywords: Higher Education, higher education administration, foundation universities, students' expectations.

* Yrd. Doç. Dr. Özge HACİFAZLIOĞLU, Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi, Çırağan Caddesi, Osmanpaşa Mektebi Sokak, Beşiktaş, İstanbul, ohacifazlioglu@bahcesehir.edu.tr

** Yrd. Doç. Dr. Nesrin ÖZDEMİR, Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi, Çırağan Caddesi, Osmanpaşa Mektebi Sokak, Beşiktaş, İstanbul, nozdemir@bahcesehir.edu.tr

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Introduction

Student integration and retention issues have received considerable attention in higher education literature for many years. Much has been written about how to raise academic standards and how to maintain quality within the institution and how to maintain sustainability in student enrollment and retention. University administrators became interested in hearing expectations of students and faculty in higher education so as to provide university leaders with rich empirical data. We thought we could bring another perspective to the scholarship of higher education through collecting undergraduate students' expectations from foundation universities due to the increasing supply in foundation universities in Turkey especially in the last decade. As the scholars and practitioners of higher education administration, we thought it would be helpful for us to work on students' expectations at foundation universities since it enables us a ground for practice as well as providing data about private higher education institutions in other countries****.

This study is unique since it projects undergraduate students' expectations at foundation universities in Istanbul, which is a cosmopolitan city encompassing students from diverse settings. For this reason, results of this study could contribute to the higher education administration scholarship from the basis of private university standards, which has been on the agenda of many countries. There has been scarcity of large empirical data on undergraduates' expectations of foundation universities. We believe our study will draw the picture of this group of students for university administrators, policy makers and academics. Collecting students' expectations serve as an important road map for university leaders when devising appropriate strategies. For this reason, collecting data regarding students' expectations from their present institutions through examining the existing circumstances establishes the ground for university administrators to maneuver. It should also be noted that satisfying students' expectations does not guarantee high standards. It can only serve as a vehicle for improvement.

Literature Review

University education not only equips the students with new academic skills but also helps one to construct his or her new identity through the process of undergraduate education. Pascarella (1991) argued that:

Studies which estimate the net effects of college are few... if they are done rigorously these studies are worth their weight in gold. Estimating the net effects of college, not simply describing student change, is clearly a worthy place to put out intellectual resources in the future (p. 456).

Pascarella (1991) criticized attempts to determine student achievement only through quantitative measures with the belief that students learn more in the campus setting than they learn in their courses. He emphasized the value of intellectually and socially contented resources that could contribute on a students' development. Similarly, Vermeulen and Schmidt (2008) analyzed the learning environment at universities in three dimensions. The first one is the interaction between students and lecturers; second one is students' interaction with their peers and the third one is the curriculum. In addition to these dimensions they identified two forms of behavior in their study: "The first is the motivation to learn and the second is the extent to which students get involved in extra-curricular, out of class activities" (p. 432).

In their study of private university standards, Bakioğlu and Hacifazlıoğlu (2007) stated that the focus of communication and integration could be diverse, ranging from governance and regulation of the institution and its organizational processes through the academics' attitudes and manners. Following factors could be seen important in creating a culture of collaboration and integration:

**** According to Turkish Council of Higher Education Law 2547 article 4, there is no private university in Turkey. Foundation Universities are established as non-profit institutions. Private universities are commonly seen in many parts of the world.

Faculty culture and philosophy,
 Academic contribution to the faculty culture,
 Administrative contribution to the faculty culture,
 Learning environment and learning support services,
 Students' expectations and levels of satisfaction,
 Students' background (Hacifazlıoğlu, 2006: 3).

In line with the concept of integration peer interaction plays a crucial role. Mackie (2001) noted that students who fail to make friends are likely to withdraw. He underlined the importance of the process of renegotiating social support networks, redefining existing relationships with family and friends at home and establishing new friendships since they serve as means for a successful transition to university. Similarly, Kember (2004), Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) underlined the impact of climate created within the campus. The idea of student engagement and support were presented as a means of healthy and collaborative faculty and university climate. This idea was presented to the scholarship more than 30 years ago by Tinto (1975) who postulated that students enter college with expectations. If these expectations are unmet, there is early disenchantment with social and academic communities.

Therefore, it is obvious from the very early ages that students' expectations for academic and career development were affected by both academic and social integration. However, the nature of the expectations changed in certain ways due to the influences experienced in transition periods. Braxton, Vesper and Hossler (1995) found a "close resemblance between a student's college experience and expectations for college tends to play a role in the shaping of a student's desire to establish membership in the academic or social communities of the college he or she is attending and to remain enrolled" (p. 607). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) and Astin (1993) examined the reflections of students' involvement in the academic life to employment opportunities after graduation. They emphasized that graduates' job competencies and career success were affected by their earlier involvement in extra-curricular activities in some respects.

Collecting students' expectations serve as a means for university leaders when devising appropriate strategies. For this reason, we aimed to collect data regarding students' expectations from their present institutions through examining the existing circumstances. Therefore, we wanted to provide the picture of the sample institutions through students' lenses and develop their strategic plans and administrative actions through these views. It should be noted that collecting students' expectations does not mean practicing their wishes exactly; rather we expect university leaders to tailor their own practices for their own universities. Although there have been several attempts to maintain certain standards and quality across the countries, we believe that the university should develop its own philosophy and culture by examining the present systems rather than imitating, which has been implemented at highly ranked – ivy league- universities.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to determine undergraduate students' expectations of foundation universities. This study aims to reveal previews of students for university administrators and it is based on the following research questions:

1. What are student demographics in private universities in terms of accommodation, monthly expenses, parents' educational and socio-economic status, scholarship, sports?
2. What are students' reasons for selecting their present institutions?
3. What are students' expectations of physical conditions?
4. What are students' expectations of student support services? (library, student affairs office, psychological guidance and counseling)
5. What are students' preferences in socio-cultural activities?

Method

This study made use of quantitative research design procedures. This is a longitudinal study, which started in 2006 and completed in 2008. The quantitative part has two phases. In the first phase, the questionnaire was developed and administered as a pilot study and in the second phase the revised questionnaire was administered on the sample group.

Research Instrumentation

"Students' Profile and Expectation Questionnaire" was developed after reviewing the related literature: Ozga and Sukhnandan (1998), Reichert and Tauch (2003), Hacifazlıoğlu (2006), Tinto (1975, 1986) and Yorke (1999). The draft questionnaire was examined by 5 experts from the field. After revising the draft questionnaire by taking experts' feedback into consideration, it was conducted on 400 students as a pilot study. In piloting feedback from the students were received as well. Unclear items were revised and the questionnaire was given its final shape in a way to focus specifically on the aspect of "expectation". We administered the questionnaire during 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 academic years. Items in the questionnaire included a checklist and open ended questions.

Sample

Foundation universities in Istanbul constituted the scope of the study. Purposeful sampling was used in the study. Invitation letters were sent to university presidency offices which were established in the 1998-1999 academic year. Out of the 7 universities, 5 accepted to take part in the project. These universities had common characteristics with regards to year of foundation and physical standards.

The instruments were distributed to 1200 students and 930 returned, which is equal to a response rate of 77,5%. Because 39 questionnaires contained missing data, we submitted only 881 of the questionnaires for data analysis.

Limitations

This study is limited to 881 undergraduate students' expectations from 5 foundation universities in Istanbul. The study is limited to 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 academic years and students' expectations are limited to the items asked in the questionnaire.

It should also be noted that the study projects expectations mainly from three units (library services, student affairs and psychological guidance and counseling). We were unable to examine students' expectations from other service units (e.g. dean of students, career guidance, alumni, health etc) since not all the universities had these units during the phase of data collection.

Procedure

Researchers administered the questionnaires during site visits. The questionnaires were administered at the end of courses with course instructors' permission. The administrative staff both provided schedules for the researchers and helped them to have appointments with the lecturers. The questionnaires were completed in 15-20 minutes. Researchers gave brief explanation to students before distributing the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of the quantitative the data, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences 15) was used. Each item in the questionnaire was coded by 2 undergraduate students and one administrative staff. Students' expectations were then changed into percentages and frequencies. We aimed to provide university administrators with rich empirical data collected from students rather than comparing the institutions individually. It is for this reason that the data analysis was

conducted by taking all the students opinions in the same pool. We were also able to take field notes during the administration process. Although the study was handled quantitatively, certain themes were supported through the voices of the students, faculty and parents, which is reflected in the discussion part.

Data obtained through a check list and open-ended responses were categorized and calculated in frequencies and percentages. Therefore each item was analyzed separately.

Findings and Results

We aimed to have a snapshot of the student population. In order to keep the anonymity of the universities in which the study was carried out we did not give any specific information that could reveal the university's name. Students' information regarding the family income was converted into US dollars to project the picture to a wider audience of readers.

Research Question 1: What are student demographics in foundation universities in terms of accommodation, monthly expenses, parent educational and socio-economic status, scholarship and sports?

Survey conducted on the five foundation universities revealed that more than half of the students live with their families in Istanbul. Thirteen percent of the participants indicated that they stay with their friends, 10 percent at home alone. Only 7.5 percent indicated that they stayed in a dormitory. As for the students monthly expenses, 14 percent of the students indicated that they spend between 601-800; 13.5 percent more than 800 dollars; 9.6 percent around 500 dollars. 22 percent of the students stated that they spend between 100 – 220 dollars. 8.2 percent of the students did not want to indicate the amount they spend each month. As for their families income families income levels, 25.3 percent stated to have more than 3000 dollars, 8.5 percent 2000-3000 dollars and 8 percent between 3001-4000 dollars. It could be said that half of the students in the research sample fall into high income category whereas the rest appears to have financial difficulties. Eighteen percent of the students did not want to give any information regarding their families' income.

As for the family income, 25.3 percent stated to have more than 5001 Turkish Liras, 8.5 percent 4001-5000 and 8 percent 3001-4000 Turkish Liras. It could be said that half of the students in the research sample fall into high income category whereas the rest appears to have financial difficulties. Eighteen percent of the students did not want to give any information regarding their families' income.

Parents' educational levels revealed that 31.8 percent of the fathers were high school graduates and 46 percent were university graduates. As for the mothers, 25.7 percent hold university degrees and 39 percent hold high school diplomas. 1.1 percent of the fathers and 2.9 percent of the mothers were determined to be illiterate. On the other hand, 1.7 percent of the fathers and 2.7 percent of the mothers were determined to be holding PhDs.

Twenty-two percent of the students indicated that they started their undergraduate education with the scholarship obtained from the first year. Students who stated that they do not have any kind of scholarship make up 61.1 percent of all students. In this context it could be said that nearly half of the students obtain various forms of scholarships at private universities.

Parents' occupations showed that 18.5 percent of the fathers holding their own companies, 7.6 percent are engineers, 5.4 works in textile sector; 3.5 percent work in trading sector. Those who work at higher administrative posts make up 3.5 percent while 5 percent work as workers, technicians or drivers. Officers make up 23.5 percent and 3 percent are teachers. Those who work in the medical sector as doctors, dentists or nurses make up 3.6 percent of all students while 2.6 percent work in the construction sector or run their own companies.

As for the mothers, a little bit more than half of them are housewives (54.9 percent); 4,7 run their own business, 5.8 percent are retired. Those who work as lawyers, architects, and doctors at various jobs make up 39.3 percent while 19.2 percent of all mothers work as officers at various companies as a secretary, worker and such.

As for students' areas of interest in sports, 27.5 percent of the students indicated that they played football. Those who were interested in water sports make up 29.5 percent whereas 16.6 percent of all indicated basketball and 15.4 percent indicated winter sports. Fourteen percent stated that they play tennis and similarly the same number of students indicated bowling (14,1 percent). Interestingly 8,5 percent of the students stated that they are interested in automotive sports. As for the gymnasium, fighting sports and horse riding the percent distribution is around 5 percent for each mentioned sport. Trekking, athletics, handball and American football were mentioned only a small number of students with a percentage of 2.

Research Question 2: What are students' reasons for selecting their present institutions?

Students' decisions to pursue their careers at an institution, which will in a way determine their direction in their professional lives reveal important information about the institution. From this assumption we wanted to share students' preferences for selecting their present institutions. Table 1 below reveals frequency and percent distribution of students' responses for each item.

Table 1.
Students' Reasons for Selecting Their Institutions

| | <i>f</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Total f</i> | <i>Total %</i> |
|--|----------|----------|----------------|----------------|
| <i>City where university is located</i> | 396 | 44.7 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Medium of instruction (English)</i> | 326 | 36.8 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>My score from university entrance examination</i> | 289 | 32.6 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>High educational standards</i> | 229 | 25.8 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Location of the university</i> | 217 | 24.5 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>High quality education in my field</i> | 176 | 19.9 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>My family</i> | 149 | 16.8 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Academic and social structuring of the university</i> | 119 | 13.4 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>I did not have better alternative</i> | 116 | 13.1 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Scholarship opportunities</i> | 104 | 11.7 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Teachers, principals' guidance</i> | 89 | 10 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Unintentionally</i> | 66 | 7.4 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Media</i> | 61 | 6.9 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Social activities arranged at the university</i> | 50 | 5.6 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>My friends</i> | 50 | 5.6 | 881 | 100 |

As can be seen in Table 1, a quarter of the participants indicated quality of education as one of the main reasons. Almost half of them stated that location of the university affected their decisions. Another interesting finding was found in the promotion activities conducted by the institutional communication offices. Ten percent of the students revealed that they were impressed by the marketing strategy used through those offices, people, academics and other social activities. Eleven percent of the students indicated that they chose the present institution because they were offered desirable scholarship opportunities. During the administration of the

questionnaires it was found that some universities offer additional scholarship opportunities for the ones who scored competitively high during the university entrance examinations. 19 percent of the students believe that the best education in their field of study is provided in their present departments. Seven percent of the students indicated that they were placed unintentionally regarding the scored they obtained from the exam.

Research Question 3: What are students' expectations from physical conditions?

Physical conditions appear to be one of the main constraints at public and foundation universities. Table 2 reveals students' ideas on the physical conditions. Students' suggestions for non academic conditions are presented in this context.

Table 2.
Students Expectations from Physical Conditions

| <i>I want university leadership to . . .</i> | <i>f</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Total f</i> | <i>Total %</i> |
|---|----------|----------|----------------|----------------|
| <i>... increase natural campus areas</i> | 466 | 52.6 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>... establish social campus settings</i> | 452 | 51 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>... increase the number of canteen and cheap food opportunities</i> | 429 | 48.4 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>... increase the number of places for team and group studies</i> | 388 | 43.8 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>... enlarge parking lots</i> | 345 | 38.9 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>... increase campus standards for impaired students (library, parking, bathrooms and others)</i> | 332 | 37.5 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>... equip all classes with educational technology</i> | 302 | 34.1 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>.... provide cheaper transportation</i> | 290 | 32.7 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>... attach more importance to the general hygiene of the areas of common use.</i> | 279 | 31.5 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>.... attach more importance to general maintenance of the building</i> | 248 | 28 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>.... provide professional health services</i> | 233 | 26.3 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>... provide cheap accommodation opportunities</i> | 178 | 20.1 | 881 | 100 |

The nature in the campus setting was determined as one of the priorities in students' preferences. Half of the students indicated that university leadership team should develop the campus setting both naturally and socially. In parallel with this idea, almost half of the students indicated cheap food opportunities as the second highest preference, following the items related to campus life. Almost 40 percent of the students indicated that they wanted the number of parking lots to be increased.

Research Question 4: What are students' perceptions of student support services (library, student affairs, psychological guidance and counseling)?

Under the topic student support services, we examined library, student affairs and psychological counseling services. We asked students to indicate the items that they expect to be developed in relation to the service mentioned below.

Students' expectations of library services. Most of the students stated to have benefited from their university libraries (85 percent). When asked about the weaknesses they observed in the library services, most of them revealed positive responses. Students recommended the below mentioned aspects to be healed in the library.

Table 3.
Students' Expectations of Library Services

| <i>I want library . . .</i> | <i>f</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Total f</i> | <i>Total %</i> |
|--|----------|----------|----------------|----------------|
| <i>... to be more quiet</i> | 89 | 10 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>... to be larger</i> | 69 | 7.8 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>.... to have better air conditioning</i> | 56 | 6.3 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>... to have more up to date books</i> | 53 | 6 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>... to have better online search system</i> | 37 | 4.2 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>... support staff to be more qualified</i> | 13 | 1.5 | 881 | 100 |

As can be seen in the table above, only 10 percent indicated the library to be more quiet and only 7.8 percent wanted to have more up-to-date sources. In terms of the online search system and the qualifications of the support staff, almost all of them appeared to be satisfied with the systems used in their university libraries. Therefore, it could be seen from the findings that university administration attach importance to research and library services at their universities.

Students' perceptions of student affairs. Student Affairs office is one of the backbones of the students, in which they are welcomed from the very beginning of their career through graduation and almost after graduation. We asked students to report the areas where healing could be done in these offices. Students' ideas are revealed below.

Table 4.
Students' Expectations of Student Affairs

| <i>I want ...</i> | <i>f</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Total f</i> | <i>Total %</i> |
|---|----------|----------|----------------|----------------|
| <i>...the services provided at student affairs to be more sophisticated.</i> | 401 | 20.8 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>...staff working at students affairs to keep the records correctly.</i> | 358 | 18.6 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>.... staff working at students affairs to be more qualified.</i> | 722 | 37.5 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>.... staff working at student affairs to be more helpful towards students needs.</i> | 467 | 24.3 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>.... staff working at student affairs to be more positive.</i> | 503 | 26.1 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>.... the database and the electronic system to be more updated.</i> | 426 | 23.1 | 881 | 100 |

As can be seen in the table that most of the students reported that staff working in these offices are professional in finding solutions to students needs and concerns whereas 20 percent indicated them to be more sophisticated. In parallel with this finding 37.5 percent reported that the quality of the staff needs to be increased. Therefore there seems to be agreement on the staff quality yet nearly half of the students expect the staff to be more qualified. A quarter of the students wanted the staff to be more positive towards them. Similarly a quarter of the students wanted them to be more helpful. As could be seen in these items students suggestions were encompassed around the staff. This result could be interpreted with the importance of communication established in these offices. Only 23.1 percent of the students wanted the student management systems to be updated.

Students' expectations of psychological guidance and counseling center. University life is not only a new beginning in undergraduates' life but also an entrance to the mature phase of life of the undergraduates. In this context, psychological guidance and counseling center plays a crucial role in undergraduate students' integration to the university life. We asked students whether they have ever asked for professional support at their universities, only less than a quarter of them replied that they did so. For this reason, we asked students to give their reasons for not making use

of the psychological counseling services provided free of charge. It appears that undergraduate students feel the need to get professional support but they appeared to be hesitant to ask for help. One of the most significant reasons they put forward was the belief to overcome their problems by their own means. This also reveals a cultural perspective, where psychological counseling is believed to be a place where serious cases are undertaken. Thirty-two percent of the students indicated that they prefer to talk their problems with their friends, while 23 with their families and 11 percent with their lecturers.

Research Question 5: What are students' preferences socio-cultural activities?

University life prepares students for real life as well as their professional careers. This preparation could be provided through various socio-cultural activities that are organized systematically through the collaboration of students, faculty and the administration. Social clubs are crucially important in enhancing students' awareness for the social and global problems as well as establishing their social connections. Half of the students in our study stated that they did not find socio-cultural activities satisfactory 43 percent indicated that they found it at the moderate level and the remaining 7 percent unsatisfactory.

Forty percent of the students indicated that they had never participated in any socio-cultural activities in their campuses. When asked about the reasons for not attending socio-cultural activities, 28 percent of the students stated that it was due to heavy course work. In support of this idea they presented timing as one of the main constraints. Seventeen percent stated that transportation is a problem for them. Socio-cultural activities, which are held at nights, could be the reason for this constraint since 15.5 percent stated that activities overlap with their class hours while 5.6 percent indicated that they are not interested in participating in any kind of socio-cultural activity. These constraints could serve as a data for the administrators when devising these activities. We also asked students to indicate their preferences of socio-cultural activities. Table 5 gives an idea of students' areas of interest in our sample.

Table 5.

Students Preferences of Socio-Cultural Activities

| | <i>f</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Total f</i> | <i>Total %</i> |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------------|----------------|
| <i>Movies</i> | 189 | 21.3 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Seminars / meetings</i> | 153 | 17.3 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Student club activities</i> | 120 | 13.5 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Theatre</i> | 68 | 7.7 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Music / concerts</i> | 67 | 7.6 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Festival orientations</i> | 64 | 7.2 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Trips</i> | 64 | 7.2 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Demonstrations</i> | 49 | 5.5 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Orientation activities</i> | 46 | 5.2 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Dance / folk dance</i> | 42 | 4.7 | 881 | 100 |
| <i>Literature activists</i> | 22 | 2.5 | 881 | 100 |

As can be seen in the Table 5 above, movies ranked first in students' favorite preferences as socio-cultural activities. Seminars ranked second and this was followed by student club activities. Other activities appeared to be significantly low with a value of less than 8 percent most of the time. This finding highlights that students are not involved much in literature, dance, folk dance and other types of social activities. In some universities, where the numbers of student clubs were

high and active, students appeared to be involved in these activities more when compared with the ones who do not have a systematic approach. It could be interpreted from the findings that, students could not be interested in a certain social or cultural activity but university's philosophy and approach towards these activities shape students tendencies. This is also one of the missions of many universities. However this mission is left on paper at some universities.

Discussion

Undergraduate education plays a crucial role in one's preparation for the future life. University leaders in this respect perform key roles in shaping not only one's future but also a generation's future through their visions and the way how they implement their visions. Astin and Astin (2000) illustrated university as community places for future's leaders with the following words:

each faculty member, administrator, and staff member is modeling some form of leadership and that students will implicitly generate their notions and conceptions of leadership from interactions inside the classroom and in the residence hall, through campus work and participation in student activities, and through what is taught intentionally and unintentionally across the educational experience. There are opportunities to make a difference that are within the reach of every one of us engaged in the process of higher education (p. vii).

Students' reasons for selecting their institutions appeared to have influence on their attainment in their institutions (Zemsky and Oedel, 1983; Tinto 1987, 1993; Braxton, Vesper and Hossler, 1995). In these studies, a parallelism appeared between students' level of involvement and the degree their expectations met. Tinto (1993) asserted that students with unmet expectations are unlikely to become integrated into the academic or social communities of the institution because they perceive that they were misled by the institution prior to matriculation. In our study a quarter of the participants indicated quality of education as one of the main reasons for their decisions to choose their universities. Nearly half of them indicated that location of the university affected their decisions. Ten percent of the students claimed that they were impressed by the marketing strategy used through university staff and academics. For the last few years there have been various attempts to arrange orientation programs to attract successful students in many countries. This is especially the case at foundation universities. However, although these activities provide university candidates with the opportunity to learn more about the prospective university, there is always a possibility that they may not exactly find what expect or their expectations might change in time.

As for students' expectations from physical settings, nature in the campus setting was determined as one of the priorities in students' preferences. This was stated by half of the students in the students who underlined the importance of natural and social campus areas. Cheap food opportunities were ranked second within this sub dimension. Nearly half of the students wanted the number of parking lots to be increased. This study clashes with that of Hacifazlıoğlu's (2006) previous study in which undergraduate students' priorities appeared to differ in foundation universities. This could be interpreted with the students' socio-economic background. Yet from another side of the picture, 34 percent of the students wanted to have cheaper transportation opportunities. Nearly 30 percent of the students wanted accommodation and health services to be improved within the campus. During the study we observed university administration finding alternative methods to meet the accommodation demands by establishing dormitories in different parts of the city. We also observed during the research period that many families, especially the ones from urban areas, prefer to send their children more to dormitories rather than renting houses even though the monthly fee could be the same in each case.

Students' expectations from student services were determined in relation to the three units, which are under progress at each university in the sample group. Under the title student support

services we examined students' expectations from 'library services, student affairs office and psychological counseling center'. In our study, majority of the students (82.6 percent) indicated that they benefit from the library. As for student affairs office, 40 percent of the students wanted staff to be more qualified. It could be thought from these findings that students' concerns mainly focus on the interaction and communication in these offices. Limited number of staff could be the reasons for their concerns. Yet in our interviews with the heads of these units, we observed that at some universities there is a tendency to recruit qualified staff. Individuals with an experience at student support services are offered challenging opportunities. Therefore the transfer mechanism observed in faculty is also seen in the administrative staff. We were also impressed by the opportunities provided for the admin staff in these offices. Some of them appeared to be master or undergraduate students in fields of organization and administration. However, Hacifazlıoğlu (2006) found a contrasting picture in a study of 3500 public students. Quality of administrative staff was determined to be one of the main problems in the mentioned study.

Those who appeared to be satisfied with the online system used at universities make up 75 percent. Similarly, we observed during our conversations with the heads of these offices that all these universities give priority to online student services and they allocate a huge amount of money to develop their current systems. Psychological counseling and guidance center serves as one of the main pillars of students' attainment. We observed in the study that majority of the students fell hesitant to use these centers. Career Guidance Office also serves as the counterpart pillars of higher education since they support students from the freshman to senior years and after graduation as well. They have a fundamental role to realize almost all universities' end goal, which is to pave way to have high rate of employment among the graduates. During the research period we determined only 2 universities which had career guidance offices in our sample group yet the rest 3 universities stated that it was on their agenda. Therefore, we did not examine students' expectations in regards to this unit. In line with this data, in her study of undergraduates Ünal (1990) found that half of the students enter university for self development and 37 percent for employment opportunities in high income jobs. Further studies can be conducted to see the current situation in career guidance offices and progress could be tracked.

Socio-cultural activities work metaphorically as projectors that light new paths in one's career. Students attend universities most of the time without having specific intentions to become active participants of these activities. It is for this reason that freshman year is experienced as the honeymoon period where students learn the culture of the institution. Yet in the coming years students may not fully and willingly participate in these activities due to many social, cultural, economic and family factors. When talked privately with the students we found that they had satisfactory time yet they appeared to spend their free time activities at canteens, cafes or other places most of the time. In this context, university administration that is responsible for these organizations should be focused more specifically to enhance student participation in these activities. Theatre, music, cinema and literature days and such cultural activates should be a part of the institutional culture, where students will feel the need to attend rather than see it as a compulsory duty. From the first years students will be involved in this culture through these orientation and support programs. Integration could be sometimes easy and sometimes very difficult depending on the nature of the student and his or her family background. All these parameters should be taken into consideration when university policies and practices are to be developed by the upper administration.

Korkut (1992) contended that university leadership has a crucial role in preparing future generations and human relations serve the basis for all these processes. Gizir and Şimşek's (2005) study on communication problems encountered among academics highlights an important issue of faculty and campus culture, which plays an important role in students and faculty's integration to the university culture. In the mentioned study, it was emphasized that there are many sub cultures, which makes up the overall campus culture (see also Clark 1983, Peterson and Spencer, 1993).

Conclusion

This study shed light on students' expectations from foundation universities. The profile of the students seems to differ from the earlier studies conducted on undergraduates from public universities. Foundations university students' profile in this context seems to vary on a wide spectrum. Students from different socio-economic backgrounds have an access in these institutions.

Foundation universities appear to be more advantageous in terms of providing better physical and social conditions. However some of them appear to have difficulty in finding new spaces for more students. We did not examine students' perceptions of academics related activities. Research, teaching and learning dimensions could be analyzed in detail in further studies.

The scope of higher education administration is based on a wider ground and what we presented in this article is only a snapshot. In the era of globalization and in the wake of Turkey's access to the European Union, many universities started to participate in the works of European Higher Education system by and large. It is for this reason that international students' perceptions are as equally important as the national studies. Further studies, which specifically focus on international students could provide insights for university administrators.

The notion of instructional leadership (Gümüşeli, 1996; Şişman, 2004) should be adopted within the context of higher education. University administrators, especially department chairs perform instructional leadership roles since they carry a crucial role in "instruction learning and development" as well as the administration (Gümüşeli, 2001). University administrators are expected to observe the context and the trends affecting their institutions. They need to take all stakeholders' expectations and views into consideration in line with the university's vision and mission.

Platforms, which could establish a ground for "Communities of Practice" should be initiated. We observed a lack of communication among the administrative staff across the universities in implementing the questionnaire. While university leadership teams stated to have some sort of connection and coordination with other university leadership teams, administrative staff and middle management appeared to be working more in their own circumstances. In service training and workshops could be arranged in a way to gather administrative staff from different universities. These platforms could enable them to share their experiences and expertise collectively.

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