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DIMENSIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERALL SATISFACTION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Educational institutions around the world are always trying to impart the highest quality of education, and they are continuously improving their quality and standards. This practice enables them to attract much more capable students as well as academics. As the student is at the center of the learning process, his/her satisfaction is also at the center of the quality and standards of an educational institution. This study aims to find and assess the most important dimensions responsible for the overall satisfaction of Ibn Haldun's students. For this, a sample of 180 students from different departments, programs (undergraduate, graduate and language), gender (Male – 41.28% and Female – 58.72%), nationalities (Turkish – 71% and Foreigners – 29%), etc. were surveyed. Students were questioned about their satisfaction levels on different dimensions like academic, accommodations, facilities and services, extracurricular, economic and financial, social and cultural via their expectations before joining Ibn Haldun University. In-depth descriptive statistical analysis and multiple linear regression model with General to Specific methodology has been used to find and evaluate the key dimensions contributing to overall satisfaction. The study found overall satisfaction to be independent of gender and nationality. Also, graduate students were found to be more satisfied than undergraduates, while the number of semesters spent at Ibn Haldun University was found to be positively and highly correlated with overall satisfaction. Furthermore, economic and financial benefits granted to students by the university, academic features and the facilities and services dimensions are the key determinants of overall satisfaction of the students. The study concludes that the students' satisfaction can be further improved by enhancing the above-mentioned features and a special attention may be given to social and cultural integration of students, accommodation facilities provided to the students and extracurricular activities.

Ключевые слова: academic satisfaction; economic; financial satisfaction; students satisfaction; higher education

Introduction

Globally, education is becoming a lucrative and profitable business. With huge demand and competition, educational institutions need to constantly upgrade to meet the level of international educational standards in order to attract students. With the help of modern technology and research, institutions are constantly in flux to upgrade the quality of education in order to remain competitive and lure students. These institutions try to raise their standards, provide quality

education and satisfy their student's demands. Every year, educational institutions around the world try to attract new students in different ways such as through educational fairs, advertisements, scholarships, attractive programs, and competitive faculties; however, the already enrolled students and alumni of these institutions are the brand ambassadors who not only represent these institutions but also provide recommendations to new applicants. Thus, their satisfaction is vital not only for their own sake but also for the reputation of these educational institutions. Therefore, to retain as well as attract new students, they need to deliver quality education in order to satisfy the needs and demands of the students (Daniel, Liben & Adugna, 2017; Harsasi & Suawijaya, 2018; Kara, Tanui & Kalai, 2016; Ogunmokun & Timur, 2020; Abu-Rumman & Qawasmeh, 2022).

Satisfaction is a well-researched topic in both academia and industry and student satisfaction studies have helped institutions understand the changing demands and trends to upgrade (Witowski, 2008; Ten Eyck, Tews & Ballester, 2009; Razinkina, Pankova, Trostinskaya, Pozdeeva, Evseeva & Tanova, 2018). Satisfaction is the subjective evaluation of the level of fulfillment of overall short-term needs and expectations from a particular academic institution. Elliot and Healy defined Student satisfaction as "a short-term attitude, resulting from an evaluation of a student's educational experiences" (Elliott & Healy, 2001). Satisfaction is a multi-dimensional process that can be influenced by many factors. These factors include students' personal and institutional factors that can directly or indirectly influence their satisfaction. Personal and institutional factors are two groups influencing student satisfaction (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006; Kanwar & Sanjeeva, 2022). The personal factors include gender, age, GPA of the student, and preferred learning style whereas the institutional factors include, instructional style and quality, clarity of explanation, and promptness of instructor feedback. In addition to these factors, studies had found that numerous variables can influence students' satisfaction such as status and prestige of the university, curriculum, and curriculum flexibility, teaching quality and teachers' ability, student growth, development, faculty care, and student-centeredness, campus climate, and social conditions (Butt & Ur Rehman, 2010; Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017). Focusing on these issues, understanding them, and constantly upgrading these factors can enhance the learning environment and improve overall satisfaction among students. It also enhances their retention, dedication, and commitment to studies (Arambewela & Hall, 2009; Malik, Danish & Usman, 2010; Bedggood & Donovan, 2012; Tessema, Ready & Malone, 2012; Mokhethi, Malunga & Thetsane, 2019).

Student satisfaction is becoming the prime focus of universities because of the competitive environment, competition of being among the top institutions, and providing quality education (Arambewela & Hall, 2009; Malik, Danish & Usman, 2010; Raza, Qazi, Khan & Shah, 2021). Before the onset of the internet and social media, it was impossible for universities to understand the role of student satisfaction in attracting new students. However, the recent trends in social media had changed the scenario and students often share their experiences

online, which can have a huge influence on the student's preferences and selection of institutions. Therefore, student satisfaction helps universities understand their shortcomings, redesign their programs according to the need of the time, and keep updating (Kairisto-Mertanen & Konst, 2020). Studies have found that to ensure high-quality standards, assessing student satisfaction enables universities to focus directly on the specific problems that influence the students' overall satisfaction (Santos, Marques, Justino & Mendes, 2020).

In the modern technological world, measuring and understanding student satisfaction is becoming essential for institutions to gain a competitive edge going forward. This works as a self-evaluation for these educational institutions and helps them understand the areas where students face challenges that are affecting student satisfaction. Studies have also found that such self-assessments from institutions help them improve the quality of services they are providing to students, which determines their survival and success in the long run (Osman & Saputra, 2019). Thus, it can be concluded that student satisfaction is one of the most important aspects every institution must assess and evaluate carefully. This study tries to assess and understand student's satisfaction in ibn Haldun University, a private university in Istanbul. Due to the influx of foreign students in the last decade and the competitive environment among newly opened private universities, there has been an increasing need to understand the determinants of student satisfaction to better provide quality education, sustain, remain and grow in the business. This study seek to understanding the personal and institutional factors which directly and indirectly affect Ibn Haldun University's students satisfaction.

Methods

This study seeks to establish the determinants of students' satisfaction of Ibn Haldun University. As such, a questionnaire was used to gather data from randomly selected undergraduate and postgraduate students across each department of the university. Participants were informed of the voluntariness of the study and the written permission was taken from ibn Haldun universities ethical committee. The questionnaire was administered to participants within the university campus and campus dormitories.

Data for the study was collected during the 2022-2023 semester. The survey consisted of closed-ended questions, including demographic information and questions related to institutional domains. The demographic information included students' age, gender, department, faculty, and number of years/semesters spent in the university, nationality, place of accommodation, and Language Proficiency. The institutional factors included questions on the university-wide academic and non-academic factors as related to academic work, dormitory, food, library, scholarship opportunities, and social and cultural events within the campus. The questionnaire consisted of 76 close-ended questions, which took students approximately 50 to 60 minutes to complete. Likert five (5) point scale: Totally/ Completely Unsatisfied (1), Unsatisfied (2), Cannot decide/in between (3), Satisfied (4), completely satisfied (5), is used to measure the overall satisfaction

of students. At the end of the questionnaire, students were asked an open-ended question to share any extra information they felt they needed to share regarding the study, which is not covered in close-ended questions. Quantitative methods and descriptive analysis were then used to make sense of the questionnaires and draw conclusions on the core determinants of Ibn Haldun University's student satisfaction.

Participant characteristics

The study uses a selective random sampling technique, and the study sample comprises 308 undergraduate and graduate students from 7 faculties and 27 nationalities from Asia, Africa, and Europe. Table 1. shows the faculties of the participants.

Table 1

Shows the faculties of the participants

Faculties	Frequency
School of Education	44
School of Law	44
School of Communication	44
School of Humanities and Social Sciences	44
School of Islamic Studies	44
School of Business	44
School of Languages	44
Total	308

Results and discussion

To assess the importance of different dimensions, including demographical factors affecting overall satisfaction, a multiple linear regression model is estimated whose results are depicted in Table 2. It is evident from Table 2 that age, academics, pre, and post-arrival expectations, and Arabic language level are significantly positively related to overall satisfaction. However, marginalization is significantly negatively related to overall satisfaction.

Earlier studies have found similar results for different institutions and found that Age (Bahian, 2021), Academics (Easterlin & Sawangfa, 2007; Teerooven-gadam, Kamalanabhan & Seebaluck, 2016), Pre and post-arrival expectations (Paterson, Keys, Phillips, Yntema & MacKay, 2019), and Arabic language learning (Al-Shargabi, Sabri & Aljawarneh, 2021) have a positive influence on overall satisfaction.

From Table 2, it can be concluded that age is a very strong determinant of students' overall satisfaction. It can be assumed that the undergraduate students who are being independent from their parent tutelage for the first time have higher expectations from university life. However, as graduate students spend more time in universities their expectations get mature and realistic.

Table 2

Different dimensions of overall satisfaction

Overall Satisfaction	Coef.	St. Err	t-value	p-value	Sig
age	.054	.032	1.70	.093	*
sex	.086	.141	0.61	.545	
Region/Nationality	-.337	.219	-1.54	.126	
Double major	-.101	.18	-0.56	.577	
Education level	-.071	.164	-0.44	.664	
Academic Satisfaction	.081	.016	4.97	0	***
Accommodation satisfaction	.003	.012	0.24	.809	
Non-academic satisfaction	.018	.017	1.06	.294	
Extracurricular Activities satisfaction	.034	.042	0.81	.419	
Economic satisfaction	.007	.021	0.31	.754	
Social satisfaction	-.034	.041	-0.83	.409	
Students' expectations Pre and Post Arrival	.055	.026	2.12	.036	**
Marginalization on the basis of gender, country or Region	-.276	.102	-2.71	.008	***
English level	.065	.083	0.78	.435	
Turkish level	.003	.071	0.04	.968	
Arabic level	.111	.045	2.45	.016	**
Constant	-1.281	.871	-1.47	.145	
F-test	7.112		Prob > F	.000	***
*** p < .01, ** p < .05, * p < .1					

Overall satisfaction is strongly related to the academic domain and early studies have shown that they are highly related and influence each other (Casas, Bălătescu, Bertran, González & Hatos, 2013). The main purpose of the students in universities is their academics and any issues or problems in academics will directly influence their overall satisfaction. Pre and post-arrival expectations also influence overall satisfaction (Geeraert, Demes & Ward, 2021). As results had concluded and this may be because if the pre-arrival expectation is fulfilled will have a definite effect on overall satisfaction. Students whose pre-arrival expectations are met might feel that the purpose and aims to join academic institution is fulfilled and is helping them to achieve their goals and can results higher satisfaction.

Coming to the language, learning a new language, particularly the Arabic language, influences overall satisfaction. Knowing an additional language in the environment when there is a considerable flow of migrants and refugees in the region from the Arab peninsula might help students communicate within and outside the campus, which somehow influences their overall satisfaction. In addition, Ibn Haldun University has a good number of students from Arab-speaking countries, which might help them feel socio-culturally affiliated and increase their overall satisfaction.

Other than these dimensions, only marginalization is significantly negatively related to overall satisfaction. The results concluded that marginalization faced or felt by students can decrease their overall satisfaction. A study conducted in Australia concluded that feeling of being marginalized among students can reduces their overall satisfaction (Arkoudis, Dollinger, Baik & Patience, 2019).

Diving deep into the sub-dimensions of overall satisfaction, Table 3 shows the effect of different sub-domains of overall satisfaction. The dimensions include demographic, academic, accommodation, etc. then each dimension have more sub-dimensions that affect overall satisfaction and their effects on overall satisfaction have been depicted in Table 3.

Considering the effect of the demographic sub-dimension on overall satisfaction, the results in Table 3 show that non-Turkish students are more satisfied than Turkish students are. This results contradict the literature as a study in the United States shows that non-native students are less satisfied than native students because of many factors, such as frequent positive and negative cross-racial interactions in the host country, which affects their overall satisfaction than native students (Zhou & Cole, 2017). However, in the case of Turkish universities, the multicultural environment, a good number of international students and communities around the campus might have created a reverse effect.

Moreover, the results in Table 3 also show that overall satisfaction is positively affected by the education level i.e. graduate students show higher level of overall satisfaction than undergraduate students.

Table 3

Different Sub-dimensions of Overall satisfaction

Overall Satisfaction	Coef.	St. Err.	t-value	p-value	Sig
Demographic					
age	-.018	.032	-0.57	.572	
sex	-.055	.16	-0.34	.731	
Region / Nationality	-.406	.198	-2.05	.042	**
Double Major	-.028	.215	-0.13	.895	
Education level	.406	.17	2.39	.018	**
Constant	.818	.694	1.18	.241	
	F-test	4.020	Prob > F	.002	**
Academic					
My level of satisfaction with the core courses curriculum	.407	.105	3.88	0	
My level of satisfaction with the curriculum of the elective courses	-.033	.105	-0.32	.752	
My level of satisfaction with full-time teaching faculty	.16	.096	1.67	.099	
My level of satisfaction with visiting / part-time teaching faculty.	.042	.087	0.48	.631	
If any, My level of satisfaction with courses given in English (Other than TÖMER)	.034	.087	0.39	.698	
If any, My level of satisfaction with courses given in Turkish (Other than TÖMER)	.075	.093	0.81	.419	
If any, My level of satisfaction with courses given in Arabic (Other than TÖMER)	.094	.083	1.13	.261	
My level of satisfaction in English writing skills	-.181	.09	-2.02	.047	
My level of satisfaction with Turkish writing skills	-.049	.077	-0.63	.528	
If any, My level of satisfaction with the Double Major facility	-.102	.108	-0.95	.346	

Dimensions Responsible for Overall Satisfaction Among University Students

The continuation of the table 3

Overall Satisfaction	Coef.	St. Err.	t-value	p-value	Sig
My level of satisfaction with the diversification of elective courses for my program	-.023	.089	-0.26	.798	
My overall level of satisfaction with the student-teacher ratio in class	.065	.123	0.53	.596	
My overall level of satisfaction with exam evaluation	-.056	.096	-0.58	.566	
My overall level of satisfaction with the study workload	.201	.085	2.37	.02	
Constant	.503	.164	3.07	.003	
F-test	7.722		Prob > F	.000	
Accommodation Facilities					
Dorm Management	.122	.052	2.35	.02	**
Dorm Cleanliness	.054	.057	0.94	.346	
Personal Space in the dorm	.077	.061	1.27	.207	
Sitting and Seating Place	-.071	.063	-1.13	.259	
My level of satisfaction related to the distance between my dorm and the University canteen for food	.006	.059	0.10	.924	
Internet facility	.03	.055	0.55	.586	
TV lounge	.06	.055	1.09	.275	
Guest waiting area	-.012	.062	-0.19	.846	
Online order delivery facility	.115	.054	2.14	.033	**
Constant	.718	.087	8.27	0	***
F-test	4.033		Prob > F	.000	***
Non-academic / Facilities and services					
My level of satisfaction with the behavior of Administrative staff / Non-Academics	.218	.053	4.07	0	***
Security	.03	.065	0.47	.638	
Online Information System (Canvas, IBER, Student Information System, etc.)	.238	.072	3.30	.001	***
Library	-.137	.063	-2.17	.031	**
My level of satisfaction with the quality of food	.157	.059	2.66	.008	***
My level of satisfaction with the quantity of food	.001	.055	0.03	.978	
Mental health services (REDAM, IPAM)	-.011	.065	-0.16	.87	
Medical Facility within the campus	-.056	.064	-0.89	.376	
Sign boards / Map location guide within the campus	.157	.054	2.89	.004	***
Career counseling	.059	.056	1.05	.293	
Constant	.382	.112	3.41	.001	***
F-test	9.713		Prob > F	.000	***
Extracurricular activities facilitated by the University					
Student Clubs	.091	.062	1.47	.144	
Seminars / Conferences / Community Events	.197	.059	3.33	.001	
Constant	.494	.059	8.43	0	
F-test	15.256		Prob > F		
Economic / Financial					
My level of satisfaction with the amount of Stipend/ Scholarship (Only for those who are getting stipend/Scholarship)	-.411	.264	-1.56	.13	

The end of the table 3

Overall Satisfaction	Coef.	St. Err.	t-value	p-value	Sig
My level of satisfaction with Tuition Waive/Scholarship (Only for those who are getting Tuition Waive / Scholarship)	.22	.226	0.97	.339	
TA / TF / RA Fellowship (Only for Master and Ph.D. students)	.408	.199	2.05	.049	**
Self-generated income within the campus (Only for those who are working part-time at University)	-.044	.219	-0.20	.844	
Cost of living	.322	.273	1.18	.248	
The geographical location of IHU	-.059	.266	-0.22	.826	
The geographical location of IHU in terms of cafeteria / restaurant / shopping	.015	.217	0.07	.945	
Constant	.647	.262	2.47	.02	**
F-test	1.241		Prob > F	.315	
Social and Cultural					
My level of satisfaction with English communication skills	.228	.057	4.02	.339	***
My level of satisfaction with Turkish communication skills	-.087	.053	-1.62	.019	
My level of satisfaction with socialization on campus	.192	.044	4.32	.279	***
Constant	.491	.091	5.40	.671	***
F-test	14.954		Prob > F	.000	***
Students expectations					
My level of satisfaction matches my pre-arrival and post-arrival expectations	.195	.098	1.98	.052	*
IHU met my expectations of offering a window into Turkish culture (for International students only)	-.011	.103	-0.11	.915	
IHU met my expectations of offering a window into the outer world (for Turkish students only)	.233	.11	2.13	.037	**
My level of satisfaction with student affairs	-.066	.101	-0.65	.515	
My level of satisfaction with SKS (Health Culture and sports)	.013	.105	0.12	.905	
My level of satisfaction with the international office	.024	.085	0.28	.777	
Constant	.708	.101	6.99	0	***
F-test	3.140		Prob > F	.009	***
*** p < .01, ** p < .05, * p < .1					

Furthermore, with respect to other dimensions of overall satisfaction like academic, accommodation, non-academic and administrative facilities and extra-curricular activities effecting overall satisfaction, among the academic factors core courses, full-time teaching faculties and study/workload is shown to have a significant and positive impact on overall satisfaction. While English writing skills are showing a significant negative relationship with overall satisfaction. Meanwhile, among accommodation factors, dorm management and online order food delivery facility are showing significant positive relation with overall satisfaction. In non-academic factors, Administrative staff behavior, online students'

information system, quality of food and map/locations/sign boards are showing significant positive relation with overall satisfaction. However, Library shows significant negative relation with overall satisfaction.

In addition to above factors extracurricular activities seminars, conferences, and community events are showing significant positive relation with overall satisfaction. In economic factors, Teaching assistant/Teaching fellow/Research fellowship shows significant positive relation with overall satisfaction.

Conclusions

The pursuit of education in any institution is a student's individual choice. However, this choice can be persuaded by various factors. Each of these factors expected and compared after being part of that institution can have a strong relationship with satisfaction. Every institution's duty and responsibility is to deliver the promises of quality education and positive experiences to their students. On the other hand, student satisfaction is an assessment tool to understand institution's performance and accountability to their promises of quality education. It contributes to understanding the changing trends in the educational market and the new generational approaches to the learning and learning environment.

Assessing and understanding student's overall satisfaction is one of the easy processes every institution can adapt. A simple survey among students can give a quick review of the performance of any institution. This study aims the same and adapts a simple assessment tool to understand the domains and parameters influencing student satisfaction. It helps the institute figure out the gaps in the learning environment so they can be minimized. The study found that specific aspects such as age, academics, pre- and post-arrival expectations, and Arabic language influence student's satisfaction in a positive direction.

Age and academics are the essential domains, and both strongly influence overall satisfaction. Older students may have more realistic expectations than younger students, and the primary purpose of enrolling in institutions is academics; if the institutions are successful in delivering quality, education will directly influence their satisfaction, and students may ignore other minor domains.

Meanwhile, it is essential to highlight here that Ibn Haldun is one of the unique kind of university in Türkiye which promote multi-cultural and multi-lingual education, and Arabic is one of them. It can be concluded from these results that in today's globalization, language has become one of the essential qualities for a new generation, which can open more opportunities for them in their future life. In addition, the non-Turkish are more satisfied than Turkish students can be understood from a multi-cultural environment and Arabic language learning as most students are from the Arab peninsula. Such culture might make them feel homely and indirectly influence their overall satisfaction. On the other hand side if students encounter marginalization in terms of gender, country and region, they belong to can affect their satisfaction negatively.

In a nutshell, student satisfaction is an important parameter to understand the qualitative aspect of the institution's aims and deliverability of its promised

quality education and learning environment. Every institution must focus on student satisfaction, which helps them understand their effectiveness and shortcomings and improve, upgrade, and search for innovative ways to deliver quality education.

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