The Interaction of Communication Satisfaction and Social Support with University Adjustment among University Students *

Üniversite Öğrencilerinde İletişim Memnuniyeti ve Sosyal Desteğin Üniversiteye Uyumla Etkileşimi

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ÖZET

İlk kez üniversiteye başlayan öğrenciler, yaşamlarının bu yeni döneminde çeşitli akademik, sosyal ve duygusal zorluklarla karşılaşabilmektedir. Bu zorlukların üstesinden gelmek ve üniversite ortamına uyum sağlamak, öğrencinin hem akademik başarısını hem de kişisel gelişimini önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir. Öğrencilerin bu süreçte deneyimledikleri iletişim kalitesi ve aldıkları sosyal destek, uyum süreçlerini kolaylaştırmada kritik bir rol oynamaktadır. Bu çalışma, üniversite uyumu bağlamında öğrenci iletişim memnuniyeti ve sosyal destek arasındaki ilişkileri inceleyerek, bu faktörlerin öğrencilerin uyum süreçlerine nasıl katkı sağladığını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Regresyon analizi sonuçları, öğrenci iletişim memnuniyeti ile üniversite uyumu arasında anlamlı ve pozitif bir ilişki olduğunu göstermektedir. İletişim memnuniyetindeki artışın, üniversite uyumu üzerinde anlamlı ve güçlü bir etkisi olduğu görülmüştür. Benzer şekilde, sosyal destek ile üniversite uyumu arasında da pozitif bir ilişki tespit edilmiş, sosyal destek arttıkça üniversite uyumunun da arttığı belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca, iletişim memnuniyeti ile sosyal destek arasında da pozitif bir ilişki olduğu saptanmıştır. Bu bulgular, öğrenci iletişim memnuniyetinin artırılması ve sosyal destek mekanizmalarının güçlendirilmesinin, üniversite uyumunu ve dolayısıyla akademik başarıyı desteklemek adına kritik öneme sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Çalışma, üniversite yönetimlerine, öğrenci memnuniyetini artırmaya ve sosyal destek politikalarını geliştirmeye yönelik yol gösterici öneriler sunarken, literatüre de değerli katkılar sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğrenci iletişim memnuniyeti, sosyal destek, üniversite uyumu, akademik başarı, motivasyon

ABSTRACT

First-year university students often face various academic, social, and emotional challenges during this new phase of their lives. Overcoming these challenges and adapting to the university environment significantly impacts both their academic success and personal development. The quality of communication they experience and the social support they receive play a crucial role in facilitating their adaptation process. This study aims to explore the relationships between student communication satisfaction and social support within the context of university adaptation, examining how these factors contribute to students' adjustment processes. Regression analysis results indicate a significant and positive relationship between student communication satisfaction and university adjustment. An increase in communication satisfaction has been found to have a significant and strong impact on university adjustment. Similarly, a positive relationship between social support and university adjustment has been identified, indicating that as social support increases, university adjustment also improves. Furthermore, a positive relationship between communication satisfaction and social support has also been observed. These findings highlight the critical importance of enhancing student communication satisfaction and strengthening social support mechanisms to foster university adjustment and, consequently, academic success. The study provides valuable contributions to the literature while providing guiding suggestions for university administrations to increase student satisfaction and develop social support policies.

Keywords: Student communication satisfaction, social support, university adjustment, academic success, motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Student communication satisfaction and social support are significant factors influencing university adjustment, directly shaping students' academic and personal achievements, motivation, and overall satisfaction with their university experience. Satisfaction can enhance students' interest in courses and boost their motivation. Social support, on the other hand, strengthens stress management and coping skills, positively impacting academic performance. Academic engagement, academic performance, and career development of university students are dramatically affected by these factors (Saintila et al., 2024: 01). A fundamental characteristic of student-teacher relationships is the support for relational development through students' emotions in the classroom (Frymier & Houser, 2000). The positive development of these relationships often results from direct and effective communication between teachers and students. One of the critical emotional variables that teachers need to consider is fostering a sense of communication satisfaction among students. Communication satisfaction is defined as the emotional response individuals give when their goals and expectations in communication processes are met (Hecht, 1978). This satisfaction emerges when positive expectations are fulfilled.

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Communication is one of the essential elements of individual and institutional success. An organizational climate composed of individuals with high levels of communication satisfaction provides a strong foundation for motivation and creates a productive working environment (Güllüoğlu & Güllüpunar, 2013: 726).

This study aims to identify the relationship between perceived communication satisfaction and social support in the context of university-student adjustment, based on Tinto's (1993) University Adjustment Theory.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Student Communication Satisfaction (SCS)

Effective SCS and robust social support are pivotal factors in shaping university adjustment. They play a crucial role in fostering academic and personal success, enhancing motivation, and enriching students' overall satisfaction with their university experience (Egland & Spitzberg, 1996; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). Appropriateness refers to the alignment of a behaviour with the norms or values of a specific context, ensuring that it does not violate those norms (Egland & Spitzberg, 1996).

Teacher-student relationships are viewed as an essential component of the educational process, significantly influencing and shaping students' learning experiences. In recent years, researchers in interpersonal and instructional communication have increasingly focused on these relationships, delving deeply into their dynamics (Boztepe, 2017: 27).

Higher levels of student satisfaction contribute to a more competitive environment among institutions, facilitating both the recruitment of new students and the retention of current ones. This emphasis on student satisfaction serves as a core motivational driver for institutional development (Temizer & Turkyilmaz, 2012).

Social Support (SS)

The impact of SS on students' academic success has garnered significant attention from researchers. For instance, Steinberg and Darling (1994) highlighted that support from family and friends plays a pivotal role in shaping students' academic achievements. SS has been consistently identified as a critical factor influencing academic performance (Steinberg & Darling, 1994; Hughes & Kwok, 2007). Some researchers define social support as the care, value, and guidance provided by family, peers, and community members (Dollete et al., 2006).

Social support has been shown to play an essential role in addressing challenges such as university adjustment (Somera & Ellis, 1996), academic stress (Boujut & Bruchon-Schweitzer, 2009), and depression (Dyson & Renk, 2006). Emotional support, including advice and encouragement, is consider crucial for a successful university experience (Arnett, 2004). Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that factors influencing students' academic outcomes include the perceived social support from family and peers within and outside the university setting (Wang & Eccles, 2012; Kranstuber et al., 2012).

Effective student retention relies not only on providing quality education but also on fostering a campus environment characterized by a strong sense of belonging and a commitment to creating an inclusive educational and social community (Tinto, 1993).

University Adjustment (UA)

SS is a form of social capital that individuals acquire through social interactions with various groups of people. General SS provided by family, friends, and significant others can play an effective role in enhancing an individual's life satisfaction (Restubog et al. 2010). Among the numerous challenges encountered in higher education, the difficulties faced by first-year students during their learning process stand out prominently (Badelina, 2020). The issue of adapting to educational activities at the university has been explored from various perspectives over time, including sociological, psychological, and pedagogical dimensions. Primarily, students' adjustment challenges have been addressed within the context of social integration studies (Miloslavova, 1973; Shafazhinskaya, 1981). As stated by Restubog et al. (2010), SS is a form of social capital acquired through social interactions with various groups of people. General social support received from family, friends, and significant others can significantly contribute to an individual's overall life satisfaction.

The integration of students into an institution occurs along two primary dimensions: academic and social integration. Academic integration involves participation in the intellectual life of the university, while social integration is facilitated through relationships and connections formed outside the classroom. Although analytically distinct, these dimensions interact and reinforce each other (Tinto, 1993). Tinto (1993) suggests that students who are integrated into the social and academic structures of a university are more likely to persist in their studies. Social integration can occur through forming meaningful relationships, joining clubs, or actively participating in extracurricular

activities. In this context, social and academic integration strengthens students' ties with the institution, thereby supporting their retention.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose, Scope, and Method of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between SCS, SS, and UA. A quantitative research approach was employed to achieve this objective. During the literature review, it was observed that there are limited studies addressing these variables. This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by shedding light on the roles of emotional and social factors, such as communication, social support, and adjustment, in students' academic adaptation processes.

Research Model and Hypotheses

The hypotheses developed in line with the study's objectives are presented below, and the research model designed to test these hypotheses is illustrated in Figure 1:

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between SCS and UA.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between SCS and SS.

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between SS and UA
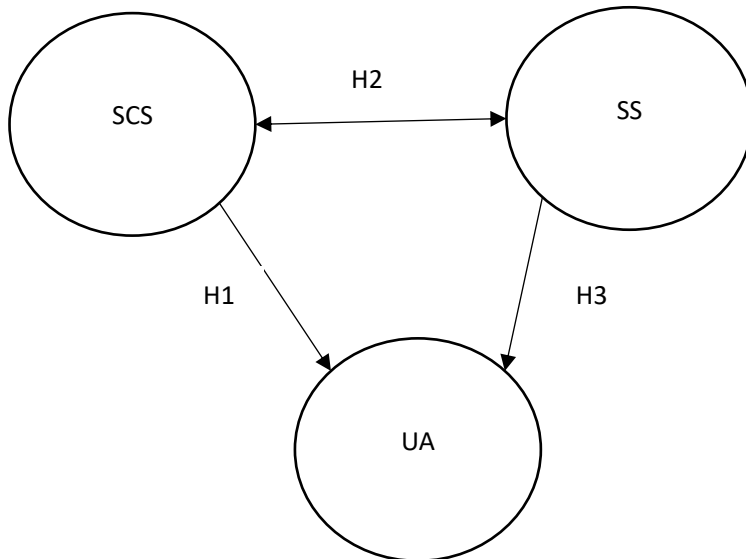
Figure 1: Research Model
Kaynak: Yazar tarafından üretilmiştir.

Population, Sample and Scales of the Research

In line with the purpose of the research; Kocaeli University Ali Rıza Veziroğlu Vocational School students constitute the population of the research. First year students were determined as the sample. 181 students voluntarily participated in the research using the convenience sampling method. The data was obtained from a survey study. Student communication satisfaction scale, social support scale and university adjustment scale were used in the survey. Research data was collected in October-November 2024.

Validity and Reliability Analysis of the Scales

Student Communication Scale: The reliability of the scale developed by Zimet GD, Dahlem NW, Zimet SG, and Farley GK (1988) is 0.841.

Social Support Scale: The reliability of the scale developed by Boztepe (2017) is calculated as 0.903.

University Adjustment Scale: The reliability of the university adjustment scale developed by Erzen (2018) is 0.881. The scales are designed using a 5-point Likert type.

For the application of the survey of this study, ethics committee permission was given by Kocaeli University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with the decision dated 12.10.2024 and numbered E.666085

FINDINGS

The data of the study were analysed using IBM SPSS 20 software. A significance level of 0.05 was accepted for the data analysis. In the data showing normal distribution, correlation and regression analyses were applied. The findings obtained from the analysis are shown below:

According to the factor analysis applied: the SCS scale has a KMO value of 0.858 and a significance value of (p=0.00); the SS scale has a KMO value of 0.860 and a significance value of (p=0.00); and the UA scale has a KMO value of 0.831 and a significance value of (p=0.00). These values indicate that the sample size is adequate.

For the SCS scale, the highest factor loading value is 0.768, and the lowest factor loading value is 0.400; for the SS scale, the highest factor loading value is 0.856, and the lowest factor loading value is 0.536; for the UA scale, the highest factor loading value is 0.676, and the lowest factor loading value is 0.350.

The total variance explained by the SCS scale is 66.740. The total variance explained by the SS scale is 66.288, and the total variance explained by the UA scale is 57.169.

Table 1: Reliability Coefficients

Variables	Cronbach Alfa
Student communication satisfaction	0,841
Social support	0,903
University adaptation	0,881

The reliability values of the Student Communication Satisfaction, Social Support, and University Adjustment scales are provided in Table 1. Based on these values, it can be stated that the reliability of the scales is high.

Table 2: Correlation Values of the Scales

Variables	SCS	SS	UA
Student communication satisfaction	1	,428	,675
Social support	,428	1	,529
University adaptation	,675	,529	1

*p<0.01; *p<0.05

The correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to +1; a value between 0.00-0.49 indicates a weak relationship, 0.50-0.69 indicates a moderate relationship, and 0.70-1.0 indicates a strong relationship. A significant weak relationship (r: 0.428) was found between Student Communication Satisfaction (SCS) and Social Support (SS).

A significant moderate relationship (r: 0.675) was found between SCS and UA. There is a moderate significant relationship (r: 0.529) between SS and UA.

Table 3: Relationship between Student Communication Satisfaction, Social Support, and University Adjustment

Independent variable	R	R²	B	β	T	F	P
Student communication satisfaction	,550	,302	,694	,550	9,637	5,433	,00
Social support	,294	,086	,226	,294	5,159	4,227	,00

Dependent variable "university adjustment", p<0,05

According to the regression analysis, since the significance level is 0.00<0.05, there is a significant relationship between SCS and UA. A 1-unit increase in SCS leads to a 0.675 increase in UA.

According to the regression analysis, since the significance level is 0.00<0.05, there is a significant relationship between SS and UA. A 1-unit increase in SS leads to a 0.529 increase in UA.

There is a significant relationship between SCS and SS. A 1-unit increase in SCS leads to a 0.428 increase in SS.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationships between SCS, SS, and UA in the context of university adaptation. Based on the findings obtained from regression analysis, the following conclusions were drawn:

SCS and UA: The analysis results revealed a significant and positive relationship between SCS UA ($p<0.05$). A one-unit increase in SCS leads to a 0.675 increase in UA. This finding highlights the importance of communication satisfaction as a key factor in students' adjustment to university life.

SS and UA: A significant and positive relationship was also found between SS and UA ($p<0.05$). A one-unit increase in SS leads to a 0.529 increase in UA. This result underscores the critical role of SS in easing students' university experiences.

SCS and SS: A significant relationship was identified between SCS and SS. A one-unit increase in SCS leads to a 0.428 increase in SS. This shows that SCS plays an important role in enhancing the effectiveness of SS mechanisms.

These findings have significant implications for university administrations and educational policymakers. It is evident that student communication satisfaction and social support play important roles in students' university adjustment processes. Therefore, developing communication strategies to increase student satisfaction and strengthening social support mechanisms are crucial for supporting university adjustment and, consequently, academic success. Furthermore, this study contributes valuable insights to the literature by demonstrating how emotional and social factors, such as satisfaction and support, contribute to improving the university experience.

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