



THE IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS SATISFACTION: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN TURKISH UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract:

Educational services have become crucial to student satisfaction and educational experience, especially for international students who need to adjust to a new educational environment. The research used an online survey, which effectively collected data from 177 students enrolled at six universities in Istanbul. The findings, based on a comprehensive examination of current literature and an analysis of quantitative data, show a positive correlation between education service and student satisfaction.

Keywords:

Educational Service, University Image, Technological Innovation, International Students' Satisfaction

1. Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in national development and contributes to shaping the social and economic landscape, enhancing societal progress through developing human capital, and meeting modern challenges. In recent times, the higher education sector in Turkey has witnessed a significant growth in the number of institutions and students, reflecting the increasing demand for education in the country. Many private universities have also been established, contributing to the development of education, and enhancing its quality and diversity. Private universities have become a vital part of education in Türkiye, contributing to the quality and diversity of education available and enhancing the country's national progress and global standing. The higher education sector in Turkey requires improving student satisfaction levels to compete effectively, as satisfaction contributes to positive marketing and attracting potential students (File & Prince, 1992). Student satisfaction helps maintain revenue streams, increases retention rates, and enhances the institution's standing and quality it also helps build a loyal and engaged alumni network and achieves long-term sustainability.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The concept of quality service

Parasuraman et al. (1985) states that Service quality relates to how valuable a service is to clients. This is largely subjective because it is influenced by the consumers' desires, expectations, and perceptions. As a result, it is frequently measured using quantitative consumer surveys. The following are some common examples of service quality. A reliable service, such as an airline that consistently comes on time. Abdullah (2006) supports the view that Many countries' economies are becoming more reliant on service sectors. Hernon et al. (1999) states that Service quality covers all aspects of the business, including behind-the-scenes activity. Every department serves both internal and external customers, and it's important to remember that even if you're not directly serving a client, you're serving someone else. Ultimately, in 1985, Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A., and Berry, L.L. created the SERVQUAL model to assess service quality.

2.2 Educational service quality

According to Parasuraman et al. (1985), Buyers assess service quality across five criteria. Building on this, many studies examined the components of service quality in higher learning using significant measures (Parasuraman, 1988), and we can establish that the dimensions of quality are listed as follows: The physical environment and instructional equipment, teachers' unbiased appraisal of pupils and their degree of comprehension, administration of student needs and academic material Hussein (2021). The administrative body provides services to students, including physical equipment, academic assistance, campus attractiveness, The administrative body offers students with services such as physical equipment, academic aid, campus attractiveness, library resources, classrooms, and educational material. Furthermore, the interaction between university professors and postgraduate is crucial for providing high-quality education. Hussein (2021).

2.3 Student Satisfaction

In higher education, students are the primary clients (Sultan & Wong, 2012). In addition, the concept of considering students as customers of university service providers is not new. Several academics argue that students are the principal clients and partners in the higher education industry since they voluntarily take and purchase services (Kuh & Hu,

2001). Furthermore, satisfaction with learning is connected to their curiosity, respect, or favorable sentiments toward their instructor, course, or institution. Student satisfaction differs from the service business, which considers contentment an objective. Academies often consider contentment as both a value and a means to an aim (Astin, 1999). Other important components of student fulfillment include academic achievement, quality of the program, teaching and academic advising, student contentment with their major, and the amount of isolation felt by the student Aitken (1982).

2.4 International Student Satisfaction

The internationalization literature claims that student satisfaction generates long-term benefits such as loyalty, a favorable image of the country or higher education institution, and successful word-of-mouth marketing Arambewela and Hall (2006). Furthermore, Macready and Tucker (2011) emphasize that understanding international students' needs is crucial for providing adequate care and support, as inadequate care can lead to deterrents returning home and affecting others' studies. The analysis of Uddin et al. (2017), reveals that educational quality significantly influences student satisfaction, with international students often considering quality when choosing an academic organization abroad.

2.5 Determinants of student's satisfaction

2.5.1 university image

Following the perspective of Kotler and Fox (1995), An image is a person's overall perception of a thing. The information provided may be partial and may vary depending on the institution's target audience. In this context, Mazursky and Jacoby (1986) introduces image as a cognition or effect derived from a series of current sensations and/or memory inputs associated with a reality, and it depicts what that experience means to the individual. Using the idea of image as perceptions based on intangible factors, the assessment of campus image relates to students' opinions of the institution in terms of the following aspects: prestigious, modern, famous, and in contact with the labour market.

2.5.2 Technological Innovation in the Education System

Over the past twenty years, with the advent of the knowledge economy, the innovation process has evolved from the linear model of technology transfer to a much more interactive model known as open innovation (De Ketele, 2010). Moreover, Innovation involves creating new services and products that answer unmet needs or solve previously unsolved challenges Gyimah (2020). Jeifets and Jeifets (2016) states that technology is seen as an important means of renewing and improving education.

3. Hypotheses Development

3.1 Education Service Quality and Student Satisfaction

Naumann and Hoisington (2003) point out that service quality, characterized by reliability, responsiveness, and assurance, is a measurable aspect that customers evaluate, and when perceived as strong, customer satisfaction naturally follows. Thus, service quality in educational settings directly influences student satisfaction by meeting or exceeding their needs and expectations, thereby enhancing the overall quality of the university Cronin and Taylor (1992). Considering both sides, the relationship between educational service quality and student satisfaction is positive, especially in higher education Tuan (2012). As indicated by Cronin and Taylor (1992), in the SERVQUAL model which focused on the fact that dimensions such as response, reliability and empathy could improve satisfaction outcomes, benefiting students and institutions. Thus, this first hypothesis was developed:

H1: Educational services quality positively influences student satisfaction.

3.2 University Image and Its Influence on Satisfaction

The Image is an important element in determining student satisfaction and its influence is equally important in determining student loyalty (Azoury & Daou, 2013). In addition, one of the most important things that affect the image is satisfaction through value, and this was confirmed by Barich and Kotler (1991) that dealing with high value and in a good way with customers has a direct and strong impact on the company's image. As well, the researchers found that when the student feels satisfied with the service provided by the university, this will leave a positive and good image in his mind, and thus this valuable image will directly affect the student's satisfaction (Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998). Based on the findings of marketing theory, university image is more essential than service quality in ensuring student satisfaction (Kotler Karen, 1995). As a result, the study of Alves and Raposo (2010), revealed a positive and

direct impact of image on satisfaction and contributing to a better understanding of university image and its value for higher education institutions in retaining existing students and attracting new students. Thus, the second hypothesis has achieved.

H2: University image has a positive impact on student satisfaction.

3.3 Technological Innovation and student satisfaction

Based on the findings of Pailing (2002); Sell (1997), Fraser and Deane (1999), IT improves education by providing timely feedback, personalized learning, interactive activities, collaborative learning, breaking time and location barriers, access to latest information, and skill reinforcement. In addition, Kitcharoen (2018) noted that IT could raise the quality of engagement between students and instructors. Moreover, research shows a high correlation between learners' satisfaction and personalized systems (X. Chen & Carroll, 2005). (Costen, 2009) shown on her study many benefits of using a Virtual learning environment. First, highlighting the creation of an online collaborative environment that is more student-centered. In addition, the study found that students gained a deeper understanding of course concepts through reading comments on the discussion board and sharing personal work experiences. Thus, the study indicates that students engage more frequently with course material online, demonstrating their comfort and familiarity with online learning compared to traditional lecture classes Costen (2009). Hence, the third hypothesis was developed.

H3: Technological innovation has a positive impact on student satisfaction.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data collection

Data for this study will be collected using a structured questionnaire that aims to explore that students are the most important customers of the education service. The survey will be conducted online using Google Forms and target student individuals who meet the participation criteria. It is important that the survey is easily accessible and convenient for respondents, enabling efficient data collection from different geographic locations. The questionnaire is carefully organized into three sections that aim to capture the key aspects of the study. Items included in the questionnaire are designed to measure key variables: education service and student satisfaction. The use of pre validated scales ensures the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, increasing the accuracy and credibility of the data that will be collected.

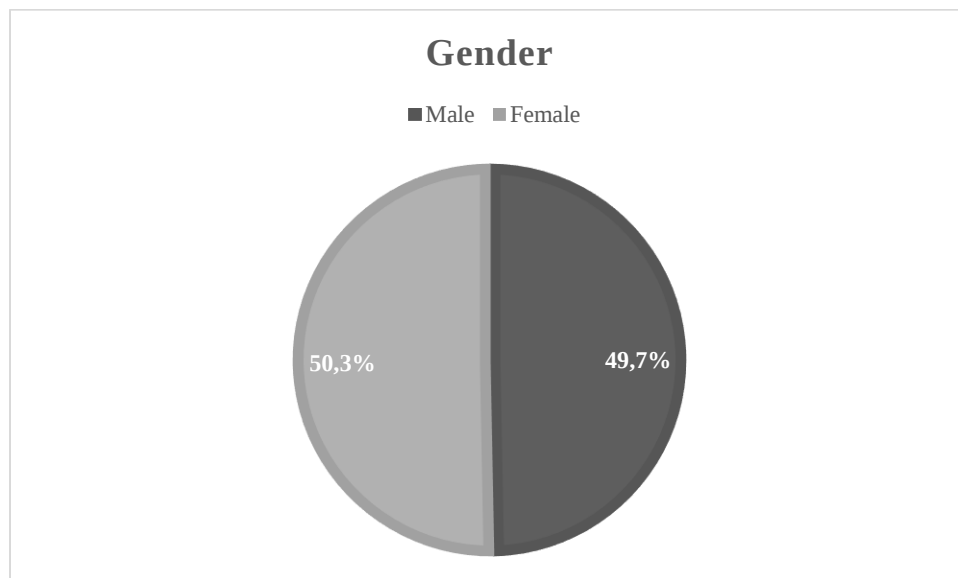
4.2 Measurement model

The dependent variable service quality analyzed using The HESQUAL scale, developed by (Teeroovengadum et al.,2019). The HESQUAL scale consisting of 5 dimensions and 9 sub-dimensions. divided into two items to measure administrative quality, 3 items to measure physical environment quality, and four items to measure core educational quality, uses a five-point Likert scale from 1 = Very High, to 5 = Very Low. The university image variable was measured using five items. The items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 representing “extremely unmatched” and 7 “extremely matched”. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.98. Bolliger et al. (2024) developed the program and organization subscale of the online Learner Satisfaction Instrument (OLSI) consisting of 5 items, items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 4 (very satisfied). The dependent variable student satisfaction was assessed by Students’ Satisfaction Scale developed by (Kara et al., 2016). The scale has six items and uses the 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) (Kara et al., 2016).

5. Results

Gender

<i>Gender</i>		
	N	%
Male	88	49.7%
Female	89	50.3%

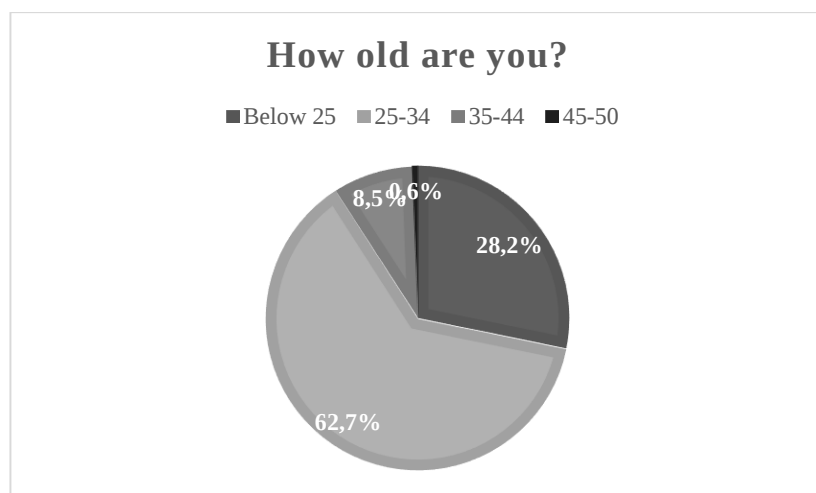


The gender distribution among the respondents is nearly balanced, with a slight predominance of female students. Out of the total respondents, 49.7% are male (N=88) and 50.3% are female (N=89). This near-equal representation suggests that the study's findings will be reflective of both genders' perspectives on educational services and their satisfaction levels. The balanced gender ratio is crucial for ensuring that the results are not biased towards one gender, providing a comprehensive understanding of the overall student satisfaction.

Age

How old are you?

	N	%
Below 25	50	28.2%
25-34	111	62.7%
35-44	15	8.5%
45-50	1	0.6%

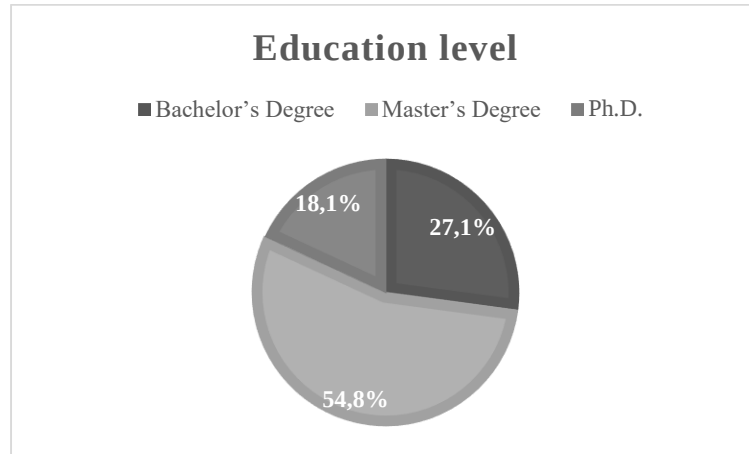


The age distribution of the respondents indicates that the majority are young adults, with 62.7% (N=111) falling within the 25-34 age range. This is followed by 28.2% (N=50) who are below 25 years old, 8.5% (N=15) aged between 35-44, and a small fraction of 0.6% (N=1) aged between 45-50. The predominance of respondents in the 25-34 age group suggests that the study primarily captures the experiences and satisfaction levels of students who are likely to be in the early to mid-stages of their higher education journey. This age group is typically characterized by a high level of engagement and interaction with educational services, making their feedback particularly valuable.

Education Level

Education Level

	N	%
Bachelor's Degree	48	27.1%
Master's Degree	97	54.8%
Ph.D.	32	18.1%

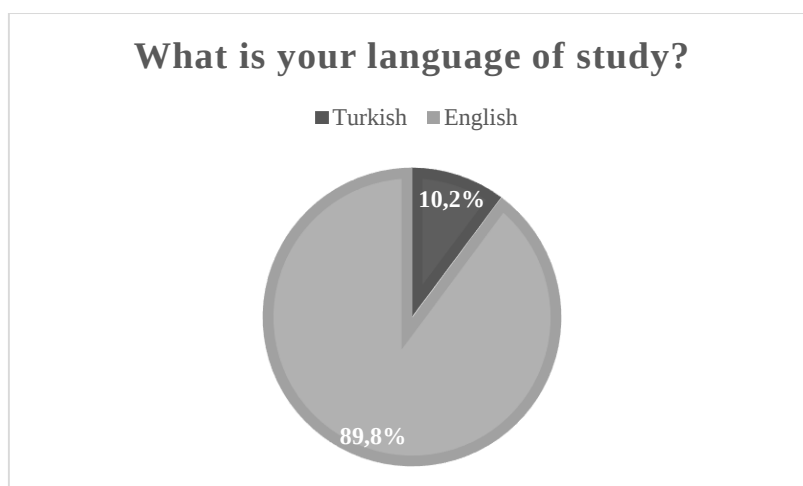


Regarding the education level of the respondents, the majority are pursuing or have completed a Master's degree, accounting for 54.8% (N=97) of the sample. This is followed by 27.1% (N=48) with a Bachelor's degree and 18.1% (N=32) who are Ph.D. students. The high proportion of Master's degree students suggests that the study's findings will be particularly relevant to this group, providing insights into their specific needs and satisfaction levels. The presence of respondents from all three educational levels ensures that the study captures a diverse range of experiences and perspectives, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of international students' satisfaction with educational services.

Language of Study

What is your language of study?

	N	%
Turkish	18	10.2%
English	159	89.8%

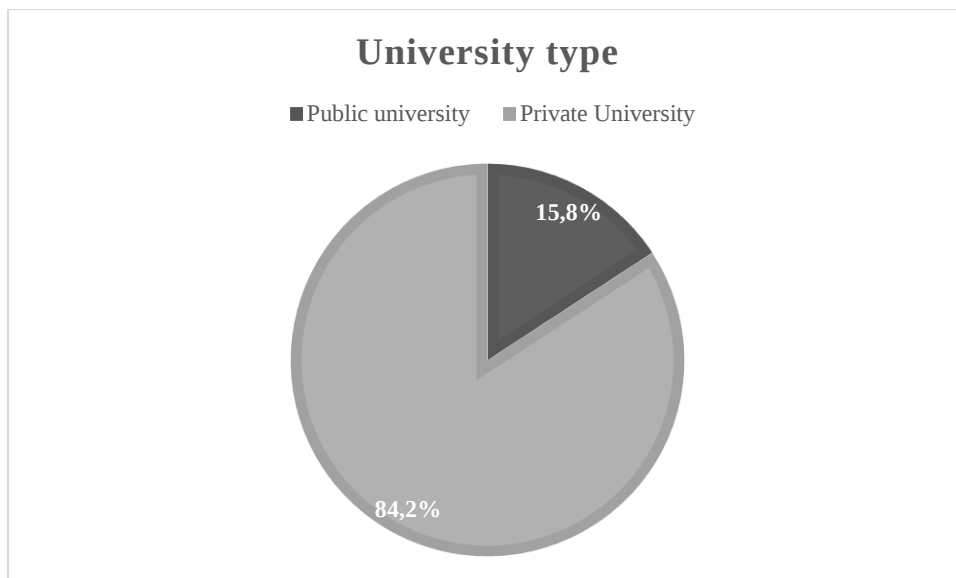


The majority of respondents, 89.8% (N=159), are studying in English, while only 10.2% (N=18) are studying in Turkish. This significant preference for English as the medium of instruction highlights the global appeal and accessibility of Turkish universities to international students. It suggests that these institutions are catering to a diverse student body by offering programs in a widely spoken and understood language, which can enhance the overall satisfaction and academic experience of international students.

University Type

University Type

	N	%
Public university	28	15.8%
Private University	149	84.2%

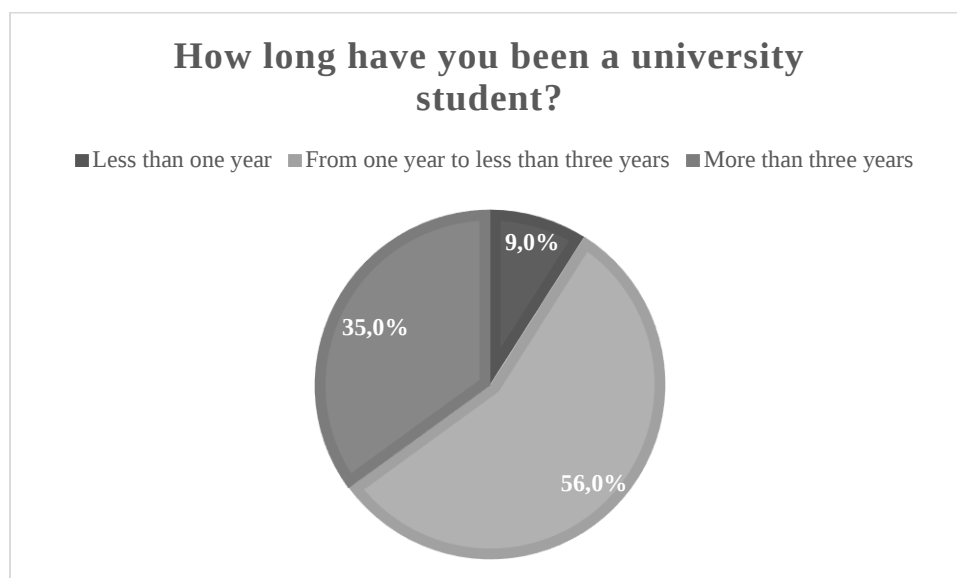


A substantial majority of the respondents, 84.2% (N=149), are enrolled in private universities, compared to 15.8% (N=28) in public universities. This distribution indicates a strong inclination towards private institutions among international students. Private universities may offer more specialized programs, better facilities, or more personalized services, which could contribute to higher satisfaction levels. The preference for private universities might also reflect perceptions of quality, reputation, and the availability of resources that are crucial for international students.

Duration of University Enrollment

How long have you been a university student?

	N	%
Less than one year	16	9.0%
From one year to less than three years	99	55.9%
More than three years	62	35.0%



Regarding the duration of their university enrollment, 55.9% (N=99) of respondents have been students for one to less than three years, 35.0% (N=62) for more than three years, and 9.0% (N=16) for less than one year. The majority of respondents being in the one to three-year range indicates that most international students are in the midst of their academic programs. This group is likely to have substantial experience with the educational services provided, making their feedback particularly valuable. The presence of students with varying lengths of enrollment ensures that the study captures a wide range of experiences, from newcomers to those nearing the completion of their studies.

Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire items used in this study, a reliability test was conducted, and the results are summarized below:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.967	25

The reliability of the questionnaire items was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, a measure of internal consistency. The Cronbach's Alpha value obtained is 0.967 for the 25 items included in the questionnaire. This value is exceptionally high, indicating excellent reliability. In general, a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7 is considered acceptable, above 0.8 is good, and above 0.9 is excellent. Therefore, a value of 0.967 suggests that the questionnaire items are highly consistent and reliable in measuring the constructs of interest.

H1: Educational services quality positively influences student satisfaction.

To test this hypothesis, we used regression analysis because it allows us to quantify the relationship between the quality of educational services and student satisfaction, providing a clear measure of the impact. And the results were as follows:

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.722 ^a	.522	.519	.75993	2.055

a. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality

b. Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	110.323	1	110.323	191.037	<.001 ^b
	Residual	101.062	175	.577		
	Total	211.385	176			

a. Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	.516	.231		2.238	.026
	Service Quality	.861	.062	.722	13.822	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction

The analysis reveals a strong positive relationship between the two variables. The correlation coefficient (R) is 0.722, indicating a robust association. The R Square value of 0.522 suggests that 52.2% of the variance in student satisfaction can be explained by the quality of educational services. The model's significance is confirmed by an F-value of 191.037 ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating that the model is a good fit. The unstandardized coefficient for service quality is 0.861, meaning that for each unit increase in service quality, student satisfaction increases by 0.861 units.

The t-value of 13.822 ($p < 0.001$) further supports the statistical significance of this relationship. These results strongly support the hypothesis, indicating that improvements in educational service quality are likely to lead to higher levels of student satisfaction among international students in Turkish universities. The positive influence of educational service quality on student satisfaction is well-documented in the field of higher education, particularly among international students. These elements collectively enhance the learning experience, making it more engaging and fulfilling for students. High-quality educational services can mitigate these challenges by providing tailored support, fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment, and ensuring that students have access to the necessary resources to succeed academically. Moreover, the positive relationship between service quality and student satisfaction is supported by the data, which shows a strong correlation ($R = 0.722$) and a significant impact (unstandardized coefficient = 0.861) of service quality on student satisfaction. This indicates that improvements in educational service quality are likely to lead to higher levels of satisfaction among international students, as they feel more supported and valued in their academic journey. Consequently, universities that prioritize and invest in high-quality educational services are better positioned to attract and retain international students, thereby enhancing their reputation and competitiveness in the global education market.

H2: University image has a positive impact on student satisfaction.

To test this hypothesis, we used regression analysis because it allows us to understand the extent to which the university's image influences student satisfaction, providing a quantifiable measure of this impact. And the results were as follows:

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the	
				Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.692 ^a	.478	.475	.79388	2.060

a. Predictors: (Constant), University Image

b. Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	101.093	1	101.093	160.403	<.001 ^b
	Residual	110.292	175	.630		
	Total	211.385	176			

a. Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), University Image

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.022	.212		4.813	<.001
	University Image	.518	.041	.692	12.665	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction

The analysis reveals a strong positive relationship between the two variables. The correlation coefficient (R) is 0.692, indicating a robust association. The R Square value of 0.478 suggests that 47.8% of the variance in student satisfaction can be explained by the university's image. The model's significance is confirmed by an F-value of 160.403 ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating that the model is a good fit. The unstandardized coefficient for university image is 0.518, meaning that for each unit increase in university image, student satisfaction increases by 0.518 units. The t-value of 12.665 ($p < 0.001$) further supports the statistical significance of this relationship. These results strongly support the hypothesis, indicating that a positive university image is likely to lead to higher levels of student satisfaction among international students in Turkish universities. A positive image can reassure them about the quality of education and the support they will receive, thereby influencing their overall satisfaction. The data supports this hypothesis, with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.692 indicating a strong relationship, and an R Square value of 0.478 suggesting that 47.8% of the variance in student satisfaction can be explained by the university's image. The unstandardized coefficient for university image is 0.518, meaning that for each unit increase in university image, student satisfaction increases by 0.518 units. The significant F-value of 160.403 ($p < 0.001$) and t-value of 12.665 ($p < 0.001$) further confirm the model's validity. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining and enhancing a positive university image to attract and retain international students. Universities that invest in building a strong, positive image are likely to see higher levels of student satisfaction, which can lead to better academic outcomes and a more vibrant campus community.

H3: Technological innovation has a positive impact on student satisfaction.

To test this hypothesis, I used regression analysis because it allows us to quantify the relationship between technological innovation and student satisfaction, providing a clear measure of the impact.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
				Durbin-Watson	
1	.539 ^a	.290	.286	.92595	1.423

a. Predictors: (Constant), Technological Innovation

b. Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction

ANOVA^a

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Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	61.343	1	61.343	71.546	<.001 ^b
	Residual	150.043	175	.857		
	Total	211.385	176			

a. Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Technological Innovation

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.317	.279		4.718	<.001
	Technological Innovation	.818	.097	.539	8.458	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction

The analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between the two variables. The correlation coefficient (R) is 0.539, indicating a moderate association. The R Square value of 0.290 suggests that 29.0% of the variance in student satisfaction can be explained by technological innovation. The model's significance is confirmed by an F-value of 71.546 ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating that the model is a good fit. The unstandardized coefficient for technological innovation is 0.818, meaning that for each unit increase in technological innovation, student satisfaction increases by 0.818 units. The t-value of 8.458 ($p < 0.001$) further supports the statistical significance of this relationship. These innovations enhance the learning experience by providing students with flexible, accessible, and interactive educational tools. For international students in Turkish universities, technological innovation is particularly important as it can help bridge the gap between different educational systems and cultural backgrounds. Access to advanced technology can facilitate better communication, collaboration, and access to information, thereby improving the overall academic experience. The data supports this hypothesis, with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.539 indicating a moderate relationship, and an R Square value of 0.290 suggesting that 29.0% of the variance in student satisfaction can be explained by technological innovation. The unstandardized coefficient for technological innovation is 0.818, meaning that for each unit increase in technological innovation, student satisfaction increases by 0.818 units. The significant F-value of 71.546 ($p < 0.001$) and t-value of 8.458 ($p < 0.001$) further confirm the model's validity. These findings highlight the importance of investing in technological advancements to enhance student satisfaction. Universities that prioritize technological innovation are likely to see higher levels of student satisfaction, as students benefit from a more engaging, efficient, and supportive learning environment. This is particularly relevant for international students who may rely heavily on technology to navigate their academic journey in a foreign country.

5.1 Conclusion

The study indicated the influence of educational service quality on international students' satisfaction and achievement at institutions in Istanbul. Universities should focus on factors such as administrative efficiency, cultural support, and technological innovation to achieve student satisfaction. Hence, the quality of educational services greatly affects the satisfaction of international students, as it affects their academic success and their emotional and social adjustment. This study identified a gap in the present literature on this topic. Research on the relationship between educational service quality and international student satisfaction is limited, with studies primarily focusing on academic achievement, cultural integration, and financial challenges, neglecting the critical role of factors like administrative support, faculty responsiveness, and technology use. In addition, Istanbul's universities, attracting international students, face unique challenges like cultural adaptation, adjusting to diverse educational systems, and language difficulties, distinguishing them from regional institutions. In conclusion, the findings of this study point out that education service, university image, and technological innovation positively impact international students' satisfaction. Moreover, focusing on six private institutions in Istanbul improved the study's strength.

5.2 Limitations

According to our results, most international students attend private institutions in Istanbul. Future research might concentrate on public universities and the experiences of overseas students attending in terms of adaptability and learning Turkish.

5.3 Recommendations

Future research could provide a comprehensive analysis of public universities in Istanbul and reveal the impact of services on student satisfaction and academic success and analyze the role of mediators and different factors, such as student loyalty and adaptation of international students in a big city like Istanbul. Future studies should also include qualitative research using interviews.

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