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## Determination of veterinary medical students' satisfaction levels: The case of Selçuk University

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### ABSTRACT :

The aim of this study is to determine the satisfaction levels of students studying at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Selçuk University regarding the educational services provided to them. The study group of the research consists of 131 students (40 female, 91 male) who study at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Selçuk University and accept the research. The data were obtained from the information form containing the demographic characteristics of the students and the 'A Student Satisfaction Scale' consisting of 77 questions. Thus, the satisfaction levels of the students from the educational services offered to them were tried to be determined in 6 sub-factors. It was determined that the satisfaction scores of the students were higher in the first-year students. It is concluded that as the year levels increase, satisfaction levels decrease. There is no statistically significant difference in Total Satisfaction Scale Score and its sub-factors in terms of gender variable belonging to students ( $p<0.05$ ). However, when the Total Satisfaction Scale is analysed, it is seen that the scores of female students are higher. The highest relationship was observed between Physical Condition and Academic Staff/Course Contents. The lowest one was observed between Student Profile Evaluation and Academic Staff. The data used in the study were collected before the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been changes in education during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. It is thought that the findings obtained in the study will contribute to studies to be conducted after the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, by comparing before and after the pandemic, it is thought that it will contribute to determining what kind of changes have occurred in students' views after the pandemic.

## Veteriner fakültesi öğrencilerinin memnuniyet düzeylerinin belirlenmesi: Selçuk Üniversitesi örneği

### ÖZET:

Bu çalışmanın amacı Selçuk Üniversitesi Veteriner Fakültesinde öğrenim gören öğrencilerin kendilerine sunulan eğitim hizmetlerinden memnuniyet düzeylerini belirlemektir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu Selçuk Üniversitesi Veteriner Fakültesinde öğrenim gören ve araştırmayı kabul eden 131 öğrenci (40 kadın, 91 erkek) oluşturmaktadır. Veriler, öğrencilerin demografik özelliklerini içeren bilgi formu ve 77 sorudan oluşan 'Öğrenci Memnuniyet Ölçeği' kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Böylece öğrencilerin kendilerine sunulan eğitim hizmetlerinden memnuniyet düzeyleri 6 alt faktörde belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin memnuniyet puanlarının daha yüksek olduğu belirlendi. Yıl düzeyi arttıkça memnuniyet düzeyinin azaldığı sonucuna varılmıştır. Öğrencilerin cinsiyet değişkenine göre Toplam Memnuniyet Ölçeği Puanı ve alt faktörlerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark bulunmamaktadır ( $p<0,05$ ). Ancak Toplam Memnuniyet Ölçeği incelendiğinde kadın öğrencilerin puanlarının daha yüksek olduğu görülmektedir. En yüksek ilişki Fiziki Durum ile Akademik Kadro/Ders İçerikleri arasında, en düşük ilişki ise Öğrenci Profili Değerlendirmesi ile Akademik Kadro arasında gözlemlenmiştir. Çalışmada kullanılan veriler COVID-19 pandemisi öncesinde toplanmıştır. COVID-19 pandemisi sırasında ve sonrasında eğitimde değişiklikler olmuştur. Çalışmada elde edilen bulguların COVID-19 pandemisi sonrasında yapılacak çalışmalara katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Dolayısıyla pandemi öncesi ve sonrası karşılaştırılarak pandemi sonrasında öğrencilerin görüşlerinde ne tür değişiklikler olduğunun belirlenmesine katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education has been an important factor for countries such as economic development and social mobility both industrialized and developing world. It is known that education will continue to be a crucial factor in the future. For individuals, it is an investment tool that one can benefit from during its life (1, 2). University education is an important part of this long process in terms of obtaining occupational goals. In recent years, there is increasing competition among universities due to the increase in the number of universities. As in business schools universities must behave new perspectives by reviewing their objectives and management styles and keeping them up-to-date. In this context, universities should improve their functions and their education quality in order to give a successful education (3).

The fact that students have good performance in the education process increases the level of satisfaction with their study experience. Hence, this factor improving their acquired knowledge, university and professional career. More effective courses at universities may attract more motivated students and receive increased funding from institutional lenders. In order to have an effective course; an organization that is suitable for today's condition, includes teaching activities and responsiveness to the needs of students is required. Different training materials need to be developed and used in line with the need (4-6).

Along with the change and development in educational services, it has brought a concept of satisfaction to the university education (7). In order for individuals to be satisfied with the education they receive, the physical conditions and infrastructure of the universities, the adequacy of the materials used in the courses, the academic staff giving the course should be sufficient in number and have research qualifications and sociocultural resources (8). Universities aim to be preferred by students and to be in the top levels in university rankings by maximizing student satisfaction and minimizing dissatisfaction (9). Because university education is considered an important factor for the social, economic and political development of a country (10).

It is known that the right to access university education is mentioned in a number of international human rights treaties. This right and the high standard of quality of training process provided are the responsibility of state and private universities providing educational services. Especially, state and private universities should achieve high standards of quality in teaching, research, administrative services and available facilities to pursue their mission better. In education as well as in other services, the equivalent of the high quality is a high performance. But the definition of quality in higher education is quite complex (5, 11-13).

There are many factors that affect the satisfaction level of undergraduate students in their education. The physical conditions of the faculty, the infrastructure of the university, the content of the courses, the communication of academic and administrative staff with students are the most important factors affecting student satisfaction (4,14). According to different study, an individual's intentions and behaviour may be predicted by attitudes (15). From this perspective, researchers have offered that student satisfaction supports their intention to stay in college. As a result, the time students spend at college and their retention to college is increasing (14, 15, 16).

Students' satisfaction is the individual evaluation of students based on their educational processes. The level of students' satisfaction is directly related to individuals' intentions and how much these intentions are met (8, 17, 18).

Researches show that the quality of universities is determined by the level of meeting students' willings and educational opportunities. These factors are related to learning opportunities, environment and the quality of the university (19). In order for the universities to meet the willings of the students, they must have the facilities to meet the academic expectation of the students (3, 20). One of the most important of these expectations is the employment status of the graduate students and their accreditation to institutions that provide quality assurance certificates (21).

Another factor in the evaluation of the education services received by students is their relationship with the academic staff. While evaluating the performance of academic staff in the course different situations should be taken into account (22, 23).

It is stated that students of veterinary faculties have difficulties in high-level learning because of heavy the curriculum intensity of the education. Moreover, students may be at increased risk of mental health problems (24, 25). Because of having possessed inadequate coping strategies when faced with adversity, veterinary students suffer from high levels of anxiety and stress. Also, veterinary students may find it difficult to access university opportunities due to

the busy workload and geographical isolation of faculty buildings and farms. Mental well-being is necessary to be successful in the profession. Findings suggest that mental health concerns may impair students' academic performance clearly. Especially mental health challenges are growing concern to veterinary faculties in recent years. Veterinary education has been an increasing focus on building resilience in students. It is focused on the causes of stress factors such as the transition into the veterinary curriculum for first-year. While existing studies suggest that professional students (e.g., medical, dental, nursing, etc.) experience high level of stress and depression. Although a large number of veterinary medical students experience clinical levels of anxiety and depression, the experiences of veterinary medical students have been less well examined (26-29). Considering the recent development of educational models using social media, digital education platforms, and three-dimensional printing, it is crucial to identify the reasons for the challenges students face and their satisfaction with the education they receive to create an effective educational environment. Students' opinions on the services provided by their respective faculties are collected through student satisfaction surveys. These studies reveal both the faculty's services and students' expectations and satisfaction levels (30,31,32).

The motivation of this study is that there is no study related to their satisfaction with veterinary medical students' who have a high workload and curriculum density in our country. In this context, the aim of the study is to determine the satisfaction levels of veterinary medical students at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Selcuk University.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The material of the research was the primary data obtained online and face-to-face survey methods to students in formal education at Selcuk University Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in the 2019-2020 academic year (Before COVID-19 pandemic). Generally, data was collected by authors face to face interaction.

In the research, A Student Satisfaction Scale developed by Tatar et al. (2017) (33) was applied. The scale consists of 77 questions and includes 6 sub-factors. Scores of items has been evaluated between 1 and 5. The values corresponding to the answer options of the items were collected and total score means were obtained by dividing the number of items answered. The total scale score was reached by multiplying the obtained value by 20 (33).

$$\text{A-SSS Lower Dimension / Overall Total Score} = \left( \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k \text{item}}{k} \right) \times 20$$

Data were analyzed using SPSS 25 (IBM Corp. Released 2017. IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 25.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.) statistical software. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, median value, minimum, maximum, number and percentile) are given for continuous and categorical variables. Normality assumption, which is one of the assumptions of parametric tests, has been controlled by the "Shapiro-Wilk" test, and the assumption of homogeneity of variances has been controlled by the "Levene" test. When the assumptions of parametric tests are provided when the difference between the two groups is evaluated, "Student's t Test"; "Mann Whitney – U test" has been used when it was not provided. For parametric test assumptions for three or more group comparisons, Kruskal Wallis test has been used when One-Way Variance Analysis was not provided. If the results of the Analysis of Variance were significant, the Dunn-Bonferroni test was used as multiple comparison tests. The relationship between the two variables was evaluated with the Pearson Correlation Coefficient when the parametric test assumptions were provided, and the Spearman Correlation Coefficient when it was not.  $p < 0.05$  and  $p < 0.01$  levels were accepted as statistically significant. The study was approved by the Local Ethics of Selcuk University, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (Approval number: 2020/12 Date: 27/02/2020).

## 3. RESULTS

The data of this research were collected from veterinary medical students by using the 'A Student Satisfaction Scale'. Findings related to the internal consistency studies of the scale are presented in Table 1. It was concluded that the scale can be used to determine the satisfaction levels of the students.

**Table 1:** Internal consistency coefficient for the sub-factors of the student satisfaction scale.**Tablo 1:** Öğrenci memnuniyet ölçeğinin alt faktörlerine ait iç tutarlılık katsayısı.

	x±sd	Number of items	Cronbach Alfa	Confidence Interval		p
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Assessment of the University's Physical Conditions	46.80±13.11	18	0.886	0.856	0.913	0.001
Evaluation of the University's Infrastructure	30.98±9.94	12	0.881	0.849	0.909	0.001
Evaluation of Courses and Course Contents	35.69±10.96	13	0.889	0.859	0.915	0.001
Evaluation of Lecturer Academic Staff	58.03±19.12	19	0.955	0.943	0.965	0.001
Assessment of University Employees Other than the Lecturer Academic Staff	21.80±6.08	7	0.805	0.750	0.852	0.001
Student Profile Evaluation	18.67±7.32	8	0.894	0.864	0.919	0.001
Total Student Satisfaction Scale	212.0±54.13	77	0.969	0.961	0.976	0.001

*x mean, sd standard deviation*

In this application, the internal consistency coefficients of the sub-factors are between 0.80-0.95 and the total sum of the scale is 0.969. As a result, A-SSS has demonstrated exceptionally high internal reliability.

As shown in Table 2, 69.5% of the students participating in the research are male students. 86.3% of the students lived in the longest urban area and 29.8% of them are third-year students.

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics of veterinary faculty students.**Tablo 2:** Veteriner fakültesi öğrencilerine ilişkin tanımlayıcı istatistikler

		n	%
Gender	Female	40	30.5
	Male	91	69.5
The place where you live the longest	Urban	113	86.3
	Rural	18	13.7
Year	1	19	14.5
	2	34	26.0
	3	39	29.8
	4 (pre-intern)	30	22.9
	5 (intern)	9	6.8
	Total	131	100

There is no statistically significant difference in Total Satisfaction Scale and its sub-factors in terms of gender variable belonging to students ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, when the Total Satisfaction Scale is analyzed, it is seen that the scores of female students are higher (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Comparison of total satisfaction scale and sub-factors in terms of gender variable belonging to students.**Tablo 3:** Öğrencilerin cinsiyet değişkenine göre toplam memnuniyet ölçeği ve alt faktörlerinin karşılaştırılması

	Female n=40	Male n=91	Test Statistic	p
Assessment of the University's Physical Conditions	47.65±11.16	46.43±13.92	3.796	0.628 <sup>¥</sup>
Evaluation of the University's Infrastructure	33.55±9.31	29.85±10.05	1.433	0.050 <sup>¥</sup>
Evaluation of Courses and Course Contents	37.0±10.29	35.12±11.24	-0.723	0.470 <sup>€</sup>
Evaluation of Lecturer Academic Staff	60.35±16.81	57.02±20.05	-0.710	0.478 <sup>€</sup>
Assessment of University Employees Other than the Lecturer Academic Staff	21.65±5.06	21.87±6.50	-0.543	0.587 <sup>€</sup>
Student Profile Evaluation	19.57±8.34	18.27±6.83	-0.639	0.523 <sup>€</sup>
Total Student Satisfaction Scale	57.08±12.31	54.18±14.74	-0.727	0.467 <sup>€</sup>

\*p<0.05, ¥Independent-Samples T Test, € Mann Whitney-U test

In the Total Satisfaction Scale and its sub-factors, there is no statistically significant difference between the longest lived place variables of the students (Table 4). However, students who live in rural areas for a long time have higher scores of Total Satisfaction Scale.

**Table 4:** Comparison of the total satisfaction scale and its sub-dimensions in terms of the longest lived place variable of the students.**Tablo 4:** Öğrencilerin en uzun süre yaşadıkları yer değişkenine göre toplam memnuniyet ölçeği ve alt boyutlarının karşılaştırılması.

Group Variable	Urban n=113	Rural n=18	Test Statistic	p
Assessment of the University's Physical Conditions	46.33±12.77	49.77±15.17	-0.826	0.409 <sup>€</sup>
Evaluation of the University's Infrastructure	30.38±9.85	34.77±9.96	-1.756	0.081 <sup>¥</sup>
Evaluation of Courses and Course Contents	35.68±11.16	35.77±9.89	-0.174	0.862 <sup>€</sup>
Evaluation of Lecturer Academic Staff	57.71±19.18	60.05±19.12	-0.679	0.497 <sup>€</sup>
Assessment of University Employees Other than the Lecturer Academic Staff	21.61±6.06	23.05±6.21	-0.894	0.371 <sup>€</sup>
Student Profile Evaluation	18.76±7.41	18.11±6.85	-0.362	0.717 <sup>€</sup>
Total Student Satisfaction Scale	54.67±14.27	57.54±12.70	-0.682	0.495 <sup>€</sup>

\*p<0.05, ¥ Independent-Samples T Test, € Mann Whitney-U test

Comparison of total satisfaction scale and sub-factors in terms of class are presented in Table 5. There is a statistically significant difference in terms of Physical Conditions, Courses and Course Contents, Academic Staff and Total Satisfaction Scale in terms of year variable belonging to students. In the Total Satisfaction Scale, first-year students' scores are higher and fifth-year students' scores are lower. There is a statistically significant in terms of Total Satisfaction Scale Score first-year students from other years.

There is a statistically significant positive relationship among all sub-factors. The highest relationship was observed between 'Course Contents/Physical Condition' and 'Employees Other than the Lecturer Academic Staff /Physical Condition'. The lowest one was observed between Student Profile Evaluation and Academic Staff (Table 6). The relationship between the sub-factors is given below;

**Table 5:** Comparison of total satisfaction scale and sub-factors in terms of class variable belonging to students.**Tablo 5:** Öğrencilerin sınıf değişkenine göre toplam memnuniyet ölçeği ve alt faktörlerinin karşılaştırılması.

Group	1	2	3	4	5	Test Statistic	p
Variable	n=19	n=34	n=39	n=30	n=9		
Assessment of the University's Physical Conditions	51.89±13.55 <sup>a</sup>	49.70±10.98 <sup>ab</sup>	47.15±13.81 <sup>ab</sup>	40.80±12.53 <sup>b</sup>	43.66±12.78 <sup>ab</sup>	3.015	.021 * <sup>Δ</sup>
Evaluation of the University's Infrastructure	34.89±10.06	30.11±7.13	30.61±10.74	29.93±11.86	31.11±8.13	0.894	.470 <sup>Δ</sup>
Evaluation of Courses and Course Contents	42.84±8.97 <sup>a</sup>	35.02±9.58 <sup>b</sup>	35.87±11.48 <sup>b</sup>	32.93±12.06 <sup>b</sup>	31.55±8.1 <sup>b</sup>	15.158	.004 * <sup>ψ</sup>
Evaluation of Lecturer Academic Staff	70.89±16.60 <sup>a</sup>	59.38±17.45 <sup>b</sup>	56.35±17.80 <sup>b</sup>	54.0±19.64 <sup>b</sup>	46.55±23.17 <sup>b</sup>	13.571	.009 * <sup>ψ</sup>
Assessment of University Employees Other than the Lecturer Academic Staff	24.15±6.44	22.91±4.80	21.10±6.51	20.46±5.98	20.22±7.08	6.955	.138 <sup>ψ</sup>
Student Profile Evaluation	21.21±8.75	18.55±6.16	19.35±7.75	17.03±7.18	16.22±5.82	4.200	.380 <sup>ψ</sup>
Total Student Satisfaction Scale	63.86±13.55 <sup>a</sup>	56.02±11.52 <sup>b</sup>	54.66±15.18 <sup>b</sup>	50.69±13.85 <sup>b</sup>	49.17±12.71 <sup>b</sup>	15.222	.004 * <sup>ψ</sup>

\* $p < 0.05$ , <sup>Δ</sup> One-Way ANOVA, <sup>ψ</sup> Kruskal Wallis Test

There is a statistically significant relationship positively of 64.3% between University Infrastructure and Physical Condition positively.

**Table 6:** Relationships between students' total student satisfaction scale and sub-factors.**Tablo 6:** Öğrencilerin toplam memnuniyet ölçeği ile alt faktörleri arasındaki ilişkiler.

n=131		Assessment of the University's Physical Conditions	Evaluation of the University's Infrastructure	Evaluation of Courses and Course Contents	Evaluation of Lecturer Academic Staff	Assessment of University Employees Other than the Lecturer Academic Staff	Student Profile Evaluation
Evaluation of the University's Infrastructure	r	0.643**					
Evaluation of Courses and Course Contents	r	0.689**	0.657**				
Evaluation of Lecturer Academic Staff	r	0.598**	0.580**	0.631**			
Assessment of University Employees Other than the Lecturer Academic Staff	r	0.689**	0.572**	0.609**	0.639**		
Student Profile Evaluation	r	0.446**	0.454**	0.460**	0.416**	0.432**	
Total Student Satisfaction Scale	r	0.849**	0.803**	0.843**	0.860**	0.792**	0.615**

There is a statistically significant relationship in the positive direction with between Courses and Course Contents/ Physical Conditions (68.9%) and Courses and Course Contents/ Infrastructure (65.7%).

There is a statistically significant relationship in the positive direction with between Academic Staff/ Physical Conditions (59.8%), Academic Staff/ Infrastructure (58.0%) and Academic Staff/ Courses and Course Contents (63.1%).

There is a statistically significant relationship in the positive direction with between Administrative Staff/ Physical Conditions (68.9%), Administrative Staff/ Infrastructure (57.2%), Administrative Staff/Courses and Course Contents (60.9%) and Administrative Staff/ Academic Staff (63.9%).

There is a statistically significant relationship in the positive direction with between Student Profiles/ Physical Conditions (44.6%), Student Profiles/ Infrastructure (45.4%), Student Profiles/ Courses and Course Contents (46%), Student Profiles/ Academic Staff (41.6%) and Student Profiles/ Administrative Staff (43.2%).

There is a statistically significant relationship in the positive direction with between Total Student Satisfaction Scale/ Physical Conditions (84.9%), Satisfaction Scale/Infrastructure (80,3%), Satisfaction Scale/ Courses and Course Contents (84.3%), Satisfaction Scale/ Academic Staff (86%), Satisfaction Scale/ Administrative Staff (79.2%) and Satisfaction Scale/ Student Profiles (61.5%).

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It has been demonstrated that there is a strong relationship between student satisfaction and academic performance in undergraduate education. Considering this strong relationship, it is thought that student satisfaction should be determined and evaluated in the educational environment (14).

According to other studies, the satisfaction averages of the students by gender are not statistically significant, but the satisfaction scores of the female students are higher than the male students (19, 33-34). It was observed that female students had higher satisfaction scores in this study. This difference observed in the satisfaction levels of students studying under the same conditions shows the effect of the gender variable in terms of the evaluation of the phenomenon. This situation is thought to be due to the influence of many variables, such as students' ages, the high school they graduated from, and their economic status.

Elliott and Shin (2002) (8) has presented the results of the satisfaction' level of nursing students. According to the results obtained first and second years students have higher satisfaction scores than third and fourth years students. On the contrary, in the study carried out, while the satisfaction scores of the first-year students were at the highest level, the scores of fifth-year students were lower. It was observed that the total satisfaction scores decreased towards the upper years. It may be thought that the reason for this is excessive-class hours and the curriculum intensity.

In the study investigating the satisfaction levels of faculty of education students regarding the educational services provided to them, it was observed that the students' satisfaction levels generally increased in three consecutive years. In the study, data was collected from the students in the sample for three consecutive years (9). In this study, it was determined that student satisfaction decreased in upper grades. It is thought that this difference arises from the methods used in data collection.

It is also known that teaching efficiency has a positive effect on student satisfaction (5). In the current study, a similar relationship was observed between the average values of 'Total Student Satisfaction Scale' and 'Evaluation of Courses and Course Contents'. In addition, in order to increase satisfaction, it is necessary to pay attention to physical elements (University's Physical Conditions and University's Infrastructure) (7). Veterinary students have found accessing central university support systems challenging due to geographical isolation on some veterinary campuses (26). It was observed that the main building of the faculty where the current study was carried out was not isolated from the campus and that students did not have difficulty accessing the central university support systems.

Every higher educational institution has adopted some form of student evaluation. Because this mechanism is a part of a way for quality assurance (30). Elliott and Healy (2001) (18) has demonstrated that students were most satisfied with 'academic advising' and 'instructional effectiveness' and least satisfied with 'safety and security'. Similarly, in this study, it has been determined that the satisfaction of first-year from academic staff is the highest. However, this situation decreased in the upper years. Especially the total student satisfaction scale of freshman, it showed similar to other studies (8). In the other study, it has shown that academicians' expertise is the most factor among all the variables (19). Besides the relationship between student satisfaction and academic performance is known to be high. Teaching efficiency has a positive effect on satisfaction and suggest (5, 14, 16).

Considering that there is no study about the satisfaction level of veterinary medical students in our country, the results of this study provide veterinary educators with new insight into some factors. It is known that veterinary medical

students in other countries experiencing the same or different. While this process, it has been observed that they have stress, depression, and anxiety (24, 25, 27, 28).

It is thought that the data obtained in the study can be compared with the satisfaction levels of students of veterinary faculties in different countries. In the future, it may be useful for the meeting of students' willingness to be satisfied with the educational services received. It is thought that future studies will contribute to the impact of the pandemic process on students by detecting changes in student opinions after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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### Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

### Authors' Contributions

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