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Balıkesir University Faculty of Medicine First Year Student Recognition Survey

Balıkesir Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Birinci Sınıf Öğrenci Tanıma Anketi

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Objective: Discussions on the quality and nature of medical education in our country have been ongoing for years. This study, conducted in 2022, aims to evaluate the socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of first-year students at Balıkesir University Faculty of Medicine, their level of satisfaction with the faculty, and their thoughts and suggestions regarding physical conditions, ease of communication with instructors, and transportation.

Materials and Methods: A total of 146 students who completed their first year in the 2021–2022 academic term participated in the study, including 77 (52.7%) females and 69 (47.3%) males. The questionnaire consisted of 34 questions: 25 on sociodemographic characteristics, 5 on physical and social conditions of the faculty, and 4 on students' opinions about education.

Results: The mean age of the participants was 19.29 years. Among them, 46 students (%31.5) had placed Balıkesir University Faculty of Medicine among their top five choices during the university entrance exam. Accommodation preferences included 72 (49.3%) students in private dormitories, 39 (26.7%) in public dormitories, 19 (13%) with family and 16 (11%) in rented apartments. Regarding their reasons for choosing medicine, 63 students (43.2%) identified it as their ideal profession, while 40 (27.4%) cited prestige, financial gain, and job security.

Conclusion: The most common complaint among students was the inadequacy of transportation to the medical school, followed by a lack of social activities and insufficient educational materials. It is believed that evaluating students' concerns and expectations will help improve medical education and that conducting such surveys regularly would be a beneficial practice.

Keywords: Medical Students, Medical Education, Career Choice.

Amaç: Ülkemizde tıp eğitiminin niteliği ve nasıl olması gerektiği üzerindeki tartışmalar uzun zamandır devam etmektedir. Bu çalışma 2022 yılında yapılmış olup, Balıkesir Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi 1. Sınıf öğrencilerinin sosyoekonomik ve kültürel durumlarının, öğrencilerin fakülte memnuniyet düzeyinin, fiziki koşullar, öğretim elemanları ile iletişim rahatlığı, ulaşım gibi durumlar hakkındaki düşüncelerinin ve önerilerinin değerlendirilmesi hedeflenmektedir.

Gereç ve Yöntem: Çalışmaya 2021-2022 eğitim yılını bitiren 1.sınıf öğrencileri katılmıştır.77'si (%52,7) kız, 69'u (%47,3) erkek olmak üzere toplamda 146 öğrenci ile çalışma gerçekleştirilmiştir. Öğrencilere 25'i sosyodemografik özellikler, 5'i tıp fakültesinin fiziksel ve sosyal koşulları, 4'ü eğitim öğretim konusunda öğrenci görüşleri ile ilgili olmak üzere toplamda 34 sorudan oluşan anket yapılmıştır.

Bulgular: Öğrencilerin yaş ortalaması 19,29'dur. Öğrencilerden 46'sının (%31,5) üniversite sınavında ilk beş tercihi içerisinde Balıkesir Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi'nin yer aldığı görülmüştür. Öğrencilerin 72'sinin (%49,3) özel yurtta kaldığı, 39'unun (%26,7) devlet yurdunda kaldığı, 19'unun (%13) ailesinin yanında ve 16'sının (%11) kiralık evde kaldığı saptanmıştır. Öğrencilerin 63'ünün (%43,2) tıp fakültesi tercih sebebinin doktorluğu kendisine ideal meslek olarak görmesi, 40'ının (%27,4) tercih sebebinin saygınlık, maddi getiri ve iş garantisini düşünmesi olduğu saptanmıştır.

Sonuç: Öğrencilerin ortak en büyük yakınmalarının tıp fakültesine ulaşım sorunları üniversitedeki sosyal etkinlikler konusunda yetersizlik ve ders materyalleri açısından eksiklik olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Daha verimli tıp eğitimi verme amacı doğrultusunda öğrencilerin sorun ve beklentilerinin incelenmesinin yararlı olacağı ve düzenli aralıklarla öğrencilerden bilgi alınacak çalışmalar yapılmasının bu amaç doğrultusunda yerinde bir uygulama olacağı düşünülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tıp Fakültesi Öğrencileri, Tıp Eğitimi, Meslek Seçimi.

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INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of medical education in our country is to protect public health and to train competent physicians who can meet the needs of society and provide adequate healthcare services (Vatansever & Özcan, 2018). The medical training process begins with admission to medical school and continues throughout a physician's career; however the foundation of this journey is laid during undergraduate education (Kılıç & Sayek, 2001). This period must be planned with clear, achievable, and measurable objectives (Sayek & Kılıç, 2000). Efforts to improve the quality of medical education have been ongoing since the early 1980's (World Federation for Medical Education, 1988). The 1988 Edinburgh Declaration proposed significant reforms, including creating a suitable educational environment, aligning content with national needs, promoting active and multidisciplinary education, integrating theory with clinical practice, and adopting a holistic approach to student selection (Sayek & Kılıç, 1997).

Choosing a profession is one of the most important factors influencing a person's life. For young individuals, this decision-making process is often difficult (Ciftci et al., 2011). In our country, students are generally expected to make this decision during high school. Many factors play a role in this process, including interests, values, gender, socioeconomic status, family, and environment. Furthermore, the social and cultural value of a profession can influence career preferences (Brown, 2002).

Despite the long and challenging nature of its educational pathway, medicine remains a highly preferred and respected profession among young people in Turkey (Aydın et al., 2021).

Most medical students aim to take the Medical Specialty Exam (TUS) after graduation and start residency training to become specialists (Kaya et al., 2023). Those who do not pursue specialization may work as general practitioners, take administrative or managerial roles, or work in the pharmaceutical or medical device industry. In recent years, another popular option has been to pursue a medical career abroad (Şimşek, 2021).

This study was conducted within the ongoing debate over medical education and aims to evaluate the medical education provided at Balıkesir University Faculty of Medicine through the perspectives of first-year students. By gaining insights through student feedback, the study seeks to better understand new medical students and improve the efficiency and relevance of their education throughout their medical training and professional careers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross-sectional study was conducted among 146 first year medical students during the 2021-2022 academic year. The study was carried out after obtaining approval from the relevant ethics committee (Approval number: 2022/04). Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of 34 questions in total: 25 items related to sociodemographic characteristics, 5 items evaluating the physical and social conditions of the medical faculty and 4 items evaluating students' opinions about the education and training process. The questionnaire consisted of 31 multiple-choice questions and 3 open-ended questions.

Inclusion Criteria:

- First-year medical students enrolled in the faculty during the study period.
- Students who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Incomplete or incorrectly completed questionnaires.
- Participants who refused to provide informed consent.

Questionnaire responses were collected anonymously and entered into statistical software for analysis. The collected data

allowed for the evaluation of students' sociodemographic characteristics, their perceptions of the faculty's physical and social environment, and their opinions about the educational process.

This structured approach enabled comprehensive data collection and facilitated a detailed analysis of medical students' views on their educational environments and experiences.

Statistical analysis and ethical aspects

Statistical analysis of the data was performed using SPSS 20.0 software. A total of 146 students were included in the study. The questionnaire consisted of 34 questions in total: 25 sociodemographic characteristics, 5 questions about the physical and social conditions of the medical faculty and 4 questions regarding student opinions on the education and training process. 31 of the questionnaire questions were multiple-choice and 3 were open-ended. The normality of continuous variables was evaluated using the Shapiro–Wilk test. Continuous variables showing a normal distribution were expressed as mean ± standard deviation, while variables not showing a normal distribution were expressed as median (25th–75th percentile). Categorical variables were presented as numbers and percentages (%). For comparisons between two groups, the independent samples t-test was used for continuous variables showing a normal distribution and the Mann–Whitney U test was used for continuous variables not showing a normal distribution. In cases where more than two groups were compared, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) or Kruskal–Wallis test was applied. Relationships between categorical variables were evaluated using the Chi-square test or Fisher's exact Chi-square test if the expected number of cells was insufficient. Relationships and group differences among responses to survey questions were analyzed using appropriate statistical tests. In all statistical analyses, a p-value <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

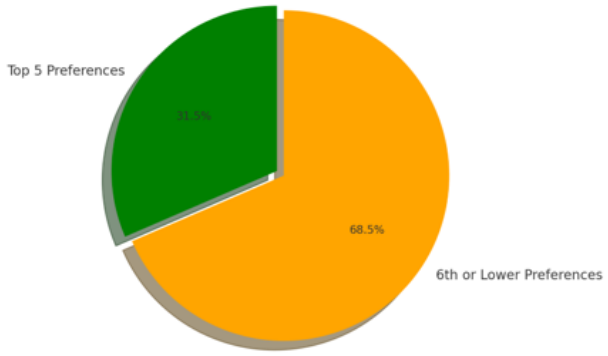
A total of 146 students participated in the study, including 69 males (47.3%) and 77 females (52.7%). Table 1 presents the high school types from which the students graduated. Among the participants, 71 students (48.6%) graduated from science high schools, 67 (45.9%) from Anatolian high schools, 2 (1.4%) from Imam hatip high schools, and 2 (1.4%) from vocational health high schools (Table 1).

Table 1. High School Types of Students

High School Type	Frequency	Percentage
Science High School	71	%48.6
Anatolian High School	67	%45.9
Imam Hatip High School	2	%1.4
Vocational Health High School	2	%1.4

It was found that 62 students (42.5%) were admitted to Balıkesir University Faculty of Medicine on their first attempt at the university entrance exam, while 84 students (57.5%) were admitted on their second or later attempts. Additionally, 46 students (31.5%) had placed Balıkesir University Faculty of Medicine within their top five preferences, while 100 students (68.5%) had selected it as their sixth or lower preference. As shown in Figure 1. No statistically significant relationship was found between high school type and being admitted on the first attempt ($p = 0.55$).

Figure 1. Distrubituon of Students' Preference Ranking for BAUN Faculty of Medicine



The results also showed that 19 students (15%) had families residing in Balıkesir, 32 (21.9%) had families in neighboring provinces, 91 (62.3%) had families in provinces not neighboring Balıkesir and 4 (2.7%) had families living abroad.

Table 2 summarizes the educational levels of the students' mothers. A total of 33 mothers (22.6%) were primary school graduates, 17 (11.6%) had completed middle school, 30 (20.5%) were high school graduates, 52 (35.6%) were university graduates, 7 (4.8%) had master's degrees and 7 (4.8%) were illiterate (Table 2).

Table 2. Educational Level of Students' Mothers

Education Level	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Illiterate	7	%4.8
Primary School Graduate	33	%22.6
Middle School Graduate	17	%11.6
High School Graduate	30	%20.5
University Graduate	52	%35.6
Master's Degree	7	%4.8

Table 3 presents the educational level of the students' fathers. Among them, 19 (13%) were primary school graduates, 12 (8.2%) had completed middle school, 34 (23.3%) were high school graduates, 71 (48.6%) were university graduates and 10 (6.8%) had a master's degree (Table III).

Table 3. Educational Level of Students' Fathers

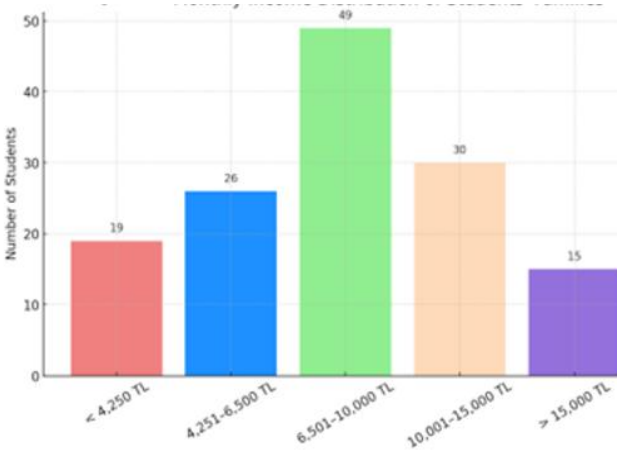
Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Primary School Graduate	19	%13
Middle School Graduate	12	%8.2
High School Graduate	34	%23.3
University Graduate	71	%48.6
Master's Degree	10	%6.8

Regarding accommodation, 72 students (49.3%) stayed in private dormitories, 39 (26.7%) in public dormitories, 19 (13%) lived with their families and 16 (11%) resided in rented apartments.

When asked about their mothers' employment status, 33 students (22.6%) reported that their mothers worked in the public sector, 24 (16.4%) in the private sector, 6 (4.1%) were retired and 82 (56.2%) were not employed. As for their fathers, 57 students (39%) stated that their fathers worked in the public sector, 44 (30.1%) in the private sector, 30 (20.5%) were retired and 13 (8.9%) were unemployed.

Family income distribution was as follows: 19 students (13%) reported a monthly family income below 4,250 TL; 26 (17.8%) between 4,251–6,500 TL; 49 (33.6%) between 6,501–10,000 TL; 30 (20.5%) between 10,001–15,000 TL and 15 (10.3%) above 15,000 TL. It is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Monthly Income Distribution of Students' Families

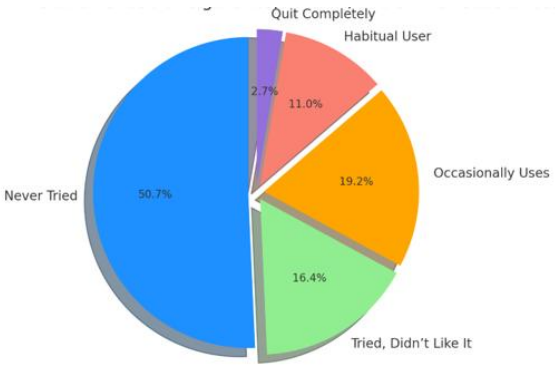


In terms of students' own monthly expenses during university, 24 (16.4%) spent 0–1,500 TL, 53 (36.3%) spent 1,501–2,500 TL, 39 (26.7%) spent 2,501–3,500 TL and 27 (18.5%) spent 3,501 TL or more.

Bursary status revealed that 82 students (56.2%) did not receive any financial aid, 11 (7.5%) received a scholarship from a private institution only, 43 (29.5%) received only government scholarships, 7 (4.8%) received both government and private scholarships and 3 (2.1%) received support from the BAUN Foundation.

Substance use data showed that 16 students (11%) had a habit of using substances such as cigarettes or alcohol, 74 (50.7%) had never tried any, 24 (16.4%) had tried but did not continue, 28 (19.2%) used occasionally and 4 (2.7%) had quit completely. As shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Students' Use of Cigarettes, Alcohol and Similar Substances



Among the participants, 64 students (43.8%) reported eating breakfast regularly in the mornings, while 82 (56.2%) did not. Additionally, 40 students (27.4%) engaged in regular physical exercise, whereas 106 (72.6%) did not (Table 4).

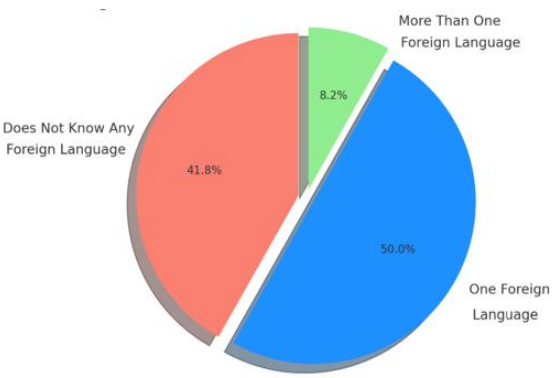
Table 4. Breakfast and Exercise Habits of Students

Habit	Frequency	Percentage
Eats Breakfast Regularly	64	%43.8
Does Not Eat Breakfast	82	%56.2
Exercises Regularly	40	%27.4
Does Not Exercise	106	%72.6

A total of 90 students (61.6%) stated that they had participated in at least one social, scientific or artistic activity since starting medical school, while 56 (38.4%) had not participated in any such activities. When asked about daily screen time (phone, tablet, computer), 36 students (27.4%) reported using digital devices for 0–3 hours per day, 86 (58.9%) for 4–7 hours and 24 (16.4%) for 8 hours or more.

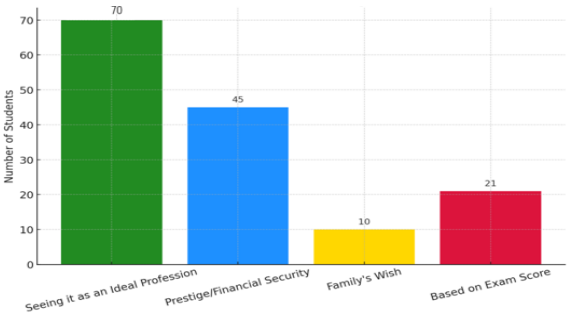
Regarding foreign language proficiency, 73 students (50%) reported knowing one foreign language, 12 (8.2%) knew more than one language and 61 (41.8%) reported not knowing any foreign language. It is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Students' Foreign Language Proficiency



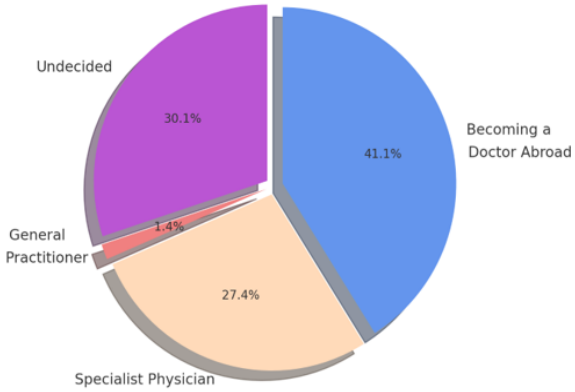
In terms of reasons for choosing medical school: 70 students (48%) said they viewed being a physician as their ideal profession, 45 (30.8%) cited prestige, financial gain, and job security, 10 (6.8%) stated it was because their families wanted it, 21 (14.4%) based their choice on their university entrance exam score. As shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Reasons for Choosing Medical School



As for post-graduation career goals: 60 students (41.1%) aimed to work as physicians abroad, 40 (27.4%) planned to become medical specialists, 2 (1.4%) intended to work as general practitioners, 44 (30.1%) had not yet decided. It is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Students' Career Goals After Graduation



When asked about deficiencies in the medical faculty: 128 students (87.6%) reported insufficient transportation services, 91 (62.3%) pointed to a lack of educational materials, 91 (62.3%) also mentioned a lack of social activities, 88 (60.2%) cited overcrowded classrooms, 42 (28.7%) considered the exam system inadequate.

Regarding the adequacy of transportation to the medical faculty, only 2 students (1.4%) found it sufficient, while 144 (98.6%) considered it insufficient.

Lastly, when asked about the quality of medical education: 48 students (32.9%) found their education sufficient, 21 (14.4%) found it insufficient, 77 (52.7%) were undecided.

In addition, 98 students (67.1%) stated they could easily communicate with instructors, 16 (11%) said they could not and 32 (21.9%) were undecided.

Only 39 students (26.7%) were members of a student club or organization, while 107 (72.3%) were not.

DISCUSSION

In recent years, discussions concerning the quality of medical education have intensified both in Turkey and globally. According to Aldridge & Rowley and Martensen et al., student satisfaction with their educational institution is a multifactorial construct that includes variables such as the quality of education, physical infrastructure, opportunities for hands-on training, and social, cultural and recreational amenities, along with individual factors (Aldridge & Rowley, 1998; Martensen et al., 2000). Similarly, several studies emphasize the necessity of establishing standardized criteria for medical education to facilitate program evaluation and enable comparisons among institutions (Leinster, 2003). Providing a qualified environment for education and research is critical for improving the overall quality of higher education (Kavak, 2011).

In this context, the present study aimed to evaluate the socioeconomic and cultural profiles of first-year students at Balıkesir University Faculty of Medicine, their levels of satisfaction with the faculty and their opinions and suggestions regarding factors such as infrastructure, faculty communication and transportation services.

Among the students who listed Balıkesir

University Faculty of Medicine within their top five preferences, a higher proportion stayed with their families (73.7%) or in public dormitories (30.8%). Conversely, those who listed the school as their sixth or lower preference were more likely to stay in private dormitories (80.6%) or rented apartments (62.5%). This statistically significant difference ($p < 0.01$) suggests that students who choose a university close to their hometown or family may be more likely to live with family or in state housing, while those placed farther from home opt for private accommodation.

Students from families with a monthly income of 4,250 TL or less were more likely to receive government scholarships (68.%), while those from higher income brackets (10,001–15,000 TL and above 15,000 TL) were less likely to receive any scholarship support, at rates of 83.3% and 73.3%, respectively. This statistically significant finding ($p<0.03$) highlights a strong association between income level and financial aid status, demonstrating that students from lower-income families benefit more from government-funded scholarships.

Breakfast is considered one of the most important meals of the day, as it supports energy levels and cognitive function throughout the day. Research shows that breakfast is often the most skipped meal among students, which may be attributed to living away from family and difficulties waking up early (Bayrak et al., 2010). In a study by Mazıcıoğlu, students living with their families were found to have more regular breakfast habits compared to those staying in dormitories (Mazıcıoğlu & Öztür, 2003). Similarly, our study yielded comparable results: the highest rate of regular breakfast consumption (78.9%) was observed among students living with their families. This suggests that a family environment supports healthier eating routines. In contrast, students living in rented apartments had the lowest rate of regular breakfast (12.5%), with the majority (87.5%) not having breakfast regularly. Among public dormitory residents, 56.4% reported eating breakfast regularly, while this rate was 34.7% for those in private dormitories. This finding may indicate that breakfast services are more structured and accessible in public dormitories, whereas private facilities may lack adequate support. Overall, accommodation type was found to be significantly associated with breakfast habits ($p < 0.01$), with family-living students having an advantage and apartment residents being at higher risk for irregular habits.

Regarding participation in extracurricular activities, 72.2% of students living in private dormitories and 73.7% of those staying with family reported engaging in social activities, compared to only 35.9% of those in public dormitories. The stricter rules and limited flexibility in public dormitories may be a contributing factor to lower participation rates. These findings suggest that accommodation type plays a determining role in access to and involvement in social activities and the association was found to be statistically significant ($p<0.01$).

Effective communication between students and instructors plays a vital role in comprehension and academic success. A study conducted with second-year students at Gazi University Faculty of Medicine reported that strong in-class and out-of-class communication with faculty members significantly improved students' understanding of course material (Gözil et al., 2006). Another study at Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine found that female students were significantly more likely to communicate with faculty compared to their male counterparts ($p = 0.02$) (Yalçınoğlu et al., 2012). Our findings were consistent with the literature: while 58% of male students reported being able to communicate comfortably with faculty, this rate was 75.3% among female students. This statistically significant difference ($p<0.03$) suggests that gender may be an influential factor in academic communication experiences, with female students feeling more at ease in such interactions.

Among students with the lowest monthly expenses (0–1,500 TL), the majority resided in public dormitories (41.7%) or lived with their families (45.8%). In contrast, students who

reported higher monthly spending (2,501–3,500 TL and above 3,500 TL) were mostly those living in private dormitories or rented apartments. Specifically, 70.4% of students staying in private dormitories reported spending more than 3,500 TL per month. The chi-square test revealed a statistically significant relationship ($p < 0.01$) between students' accommodation types and their monthly expenses.

There was also a significant correlation between students' monthly expenditures and their family income levels. As family income increased, so did the students' personal spending. This association between income level and personal spending was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that economic background plays a role in financial behavior during university life.

When examining daily screen time, students from families with a monthly income above 15,000 TL had the highest proportion (26.7%) of those using mobile devices (phones, tablets, etc.) for 8 hours or more per day. In contrast, none of the students from families earning less than 4,250 TL reported using devices for more than 8 hours a day. The findings suggest a positive association between higher family income and increased screen time, which is consistent with a study conducted at Pamukkale University Faculty of Medicine. That study found that students from higher-income families had greater access to tablets and phones from a young age, which may have led to long-standing habits of screen use (Ergin et al., 2013). In our study, the relationship between family income and screen time was statistically significant ($p < 0.031$).

Artistic, athletic, and cultural activities not only contribute to socialization but also play a vital role in personal development, enhancing interpersonal skills and inspiring creative initiatives both during medical education and later in professional life (Gültekin & İrgil, 2001). A study conducted at Uludağ University Faculty of Medicine found that female students had a lower participation rate in extracurricular activities compared to male students. However, our study revealed the opposite: a higher proportion of female students (74.0%) participated in social activities compared to male students (47.8%). This difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that in our sample, female students were more socially engaged than their male counterparts.

Physicians and medical students, as core elements of the healthcare system, have recently shown a growing tendency to emigrate and pursue their careers abroad. Many future doctors have shifted their focus from local residency training to foreign language education and international licensing exams, a trend increasingly highlighted in both media and academic research (Harman Yıldız & Özer, 2024). Over the years, medical students' career aspirations have changed, with many now aiming for international careers rather than limiting themselves to opportunities within Turkey. While pull factors such as higher income, advanced career prospects, and better living standards abroad are influential, push factors like diminished professional prestige and dissatisfaction with domestic systems also play a role (Filiz et al., 2022).

In a 2001 study at Karadeniz Technical University, 77.5% of medical students aimed to pass the TUS exam and become specialist physicians (Yarış et al., 2001). Similarly, in a 1994 study at Ankara University, 92.8% of students reported the same career goal (Bakır, 1994). In contrast, our study found that 39.7% of students wished to pursue their medical careers abroad. Among male students, 47.8% preferred to become physicians overseas, whereas 36.4% of female students preferred to specialize within Turkey. This statistically significant difference ($p < 0.035$) suggests that gender plays a role in shaping post-graduation career goals, with male students more frequently targeting international careers and female students leaning toward domestic specialization.

Although a study from Cumhuriyet University found a statistically significant relationship between foreign language proficiency and attitudes toward brain drain ($p < 0.05$) (Filiz et

al., 2022), our study did not find such an association (p = 0.378). This suggests that language skills alone may not be a decisive factor in students' attitudes toward working abroad.

Nationwide research among medical students in Turkey shows that smoking rates vary between 16.4% and 25.6%, with male students consistently reporting higher usage than females (Özcebe et al., 2014). Similar findings have been reported in studies from Japan and Iran, where approximately 20% of medical students smoke, with higher prevalence among males (Tamaki et al., 2010). Our findings align with this literature: 18.8% of male students and 3.9% of female students reported using cigarettes or alcohol. This gender-based difference was statistically significant (p = 0.007). Likewise, a 2021 study at Balıkesir University also found that male students smoked significantly more than females (p = 0.031) (Kuzucuoğlu, 2021).

Although some studies report higher smoking rates among students who do not live with their families (e.g., those staying in dorms or shared housing) (Boyacı et al., 2003), our findings did not support this. In our study, there was no statistically significant relationship between smoking habits and accommodation type (p = 0.328), suggesting that living situation may not be a strong determinant of smoking behavior among our sample.

Career choice is a complex and uncertain process, especially for students in the university selection phase. Factors such as expected income, job satisfaction, stability and perceived prestige all play important roles (Athanasou, 2003). While some studies (e.g., in the U.S.) argue that parental influence is minimal in career decisions (Bregman & Killen, 1999), others highlight it as a key determinant. For instance, a U.S. college study found that family and friends were major influencers, while job availability and income were secondary. Similarly, a study from Lagos, Nigeria found that the top three factors in choosing a medical career were: joy in helping others (91%), interest in medicine (90%) and parental influence (84%). A study from the University of Manchester emphasized job opportunities, use of personal skills and genuine interest as primary motivators for choosing medicine.

In our study, 70% of students whose mothers were unemployed stated that their reason for choosing medicine was "because my family wanted it," while 45.5% of those whose mothers worked in the public sector reported choosing medicine as their "ideal profession." This statistically significant finding (p <0.015) suggests that maternal employment status may influence students' motivation, with unemployed mothers having more direct influence on career choices and public-sector mothers fostering autonomous decisions.

Similarly, paternal employment status also affected students' motivations. Children of fathers working in the public sector were more likely to report parental influence, while those with fathers in the private sector cited personal aspirations (idealism) as the main reason for choosing medicine. This relationship was highly statistically significant (p 0.001).

While many universities build on-campus dormitories to support student comfort, safety, and engagement, our study revealed that regardless of housing type, almost all students (98.6%) identified insufficient transportation to the faculty as their most significant concern.

Limitations

This study has some limitations. It was conducted in a single center with a limited sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Because of the cross-sectional design, causal relationships between variables could not be determined.

In addition, the data were collected using a self-reported questionnaire, which may have caused recall bias or social desirability bias. The qualitative information obtained from open-ended questions was also limited. Future studies with larger samples, multiple centers and longitudinal designs are recommended.

CONCLUSION

The decline in interest and participation in cinema, theater, sports and other artistic activities may negatively affect students' academic success. Therefore, it is recommended that university administrations increase the number of accessible social events and encourage the establishment of student clubs and organizations, providing them with adequate institutional support.

A notable portion of the students reported having no foreign language proficiency. Considering that English is the most commonly used language in international scientific literature, the medical school administration should consider offering language courses or support programs. This would contribute positively to students' academic and professional development.

The most common motivation among students for choosing medical school was the desire to be beneficial to society, coupled with feelings of compassion and a commitment to humanistic values. Sustaining these motivations is essential. Thus, offering academic, career and psychological support throughout their education may help guide them in their future planning while preserving these core values.

Despite high levels of dissatisfaction with physical conditions such as overcrowded classrooms and insufficient course materials, medical school quotas in Turkey continue to increase without due consideration for institutional capacity. This trend risks exacerbating existing problems and further undermining the quality of education.

The most widely reported concern among students was the inadequacy of transportation to the medical school. University administrators should prioritize this issue and consider collaborating with Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality and other relevant authorities to improve public transportation options. This would enable students to reach the faculty more easily and positively impact their academic experience.

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