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Examination of university students' experiences regarding the university adaptation process

Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi öğrencilerinin üniversite eğitimine yönelik uyum düzeylerinin incelenmesi

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ABSTRACT

This is qualitative study aiming to examine the experiences of university students regarding the adaptation process to the university. 30 university students participated in the study. The data for the study were obtained through semi-structured interviews. According to the results of the study, it is the experiences before the university education that increase the adaptation of the students to the university environment such as career adaptability, educational background, social environment, social skills, openness to experience, parental influence, social activities, knowing the city, and having a different city experience. The experiences before the university education that increase students' adaptation to the university environment include personality traits, social skills, and participation in social activities. Factors originating from the university are social activities, physical facilities, the quality of faculty members, the quality of education, the richness of experience, the quality of the student environment and deep-rooted history. However, the experiences of the students before the university education reduce the adaptation to the university environment such as leaving the family, the education system, city, personality traits, career incompatibility, social life changes, transportation difficulties, limited job opportunities, living with family, and bullying. Factors that reduce students' adaptation to the university environment such as lack of motivation, academic failure, personality traits, expectations, future anxiety, health problems, and low self-perception. Factors originating from the university that reduce adaptation to the university environment such as systemic problems, limited opportunities, physical location, course content, and quality of the cafeteria. Students used resources such as social support, personality traits, problem solving skills,

positive perspective, and social activities while to cope with incompatibility. While students express the gains of university education as self-development, a social environment, different perspectives, knowledge, social skills, recognizing different cultures, and diplom, they state that university education loses time, effort, motivation, money, mental health, a social environment and family ties.

ÖZ

Bu araştırma, üniversite öğrencilerinin üniversiteye uyum sürecine ilişkin deneyimlerinin incelenmeyi amaçlanan nitel bir araştırmadır. Araştırmaya 59 üniversite öğrencisi katılmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla elde edilmiştir. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, öğrencilerin üniversite ortamına uyumunu arttıran üniversite eğitim öncesindeki yaşantıları; kariyer uyumu, eğitim geçmişi, sosyal çevre, sosyal beceriler, deneyime açıklık, ebeveyn etkisi, sosyal faaliyetler, şehri tanıyor olmak ve farklı şehir deneyimine sahip olmaktır. Öğrencilerin üniversite ortamına uyumu arttıran kendisinden kaynaklı faktörler; kişilik özellikleri, sosyal beceriler ve sosyal faaliyetlere katılımdır. Üniversiteden kaynaklı faktörler ise sosyal faaliyetler, fiziksel imkanlar, öğretim üyelerinin kalitesi, eğitim kalitesi, deneyim zenginliği, öğrenci ortamının niteliği ve köklü tarihidir. Bununla birlikte öğrencilerin üniversite ortamına uyumu azaltan üniversite eğitim öncesindeki yaşantıları; aileden ayrılmak, eğitim sistemi, şehir değişikliği, kişilik özellikleri, kariyer uyumsuzluğu, sosyal hayat değişikliği, ulaşım zorluğu, kısıtlı iş olanakları, aileyle yaşamak ve zorbalıktır. Öğrencilerin üniversite ortamına uyumu azaltan kendisinden kaynaklı faktörler; motivasyon eksikliği, akademik başarısızlık, kişilik özellikleri, beklentiler, gelecek kaygısı, sağlık problemleri ve düşük benlik algısıdır. Üniversite ortamına uyumu azaltan üniversiteden kaynaklı faktörler; sistemsel sorunlar, kısıtlı imkanlar, fiziki konum, ders içerikleri ve yemekhane kalitesidir. Öğrenciler uyumsuzlukla başa çıkarken sosyal destek, kişilik özellikleri, problem çözme becerisi, olumlu bakış açısı ve sosyal faaliyetleri gibi kaynaklarını kullanmışlardır. Öğrenciler üniversite eğitiminin kazançlarını kendini geliştirme, sosyal çevre, farklı bakış açıları, bilgi birikimi, sosyal beceri, farklı kültürleri tanıma ve diploma olarak ifade ederken; üniversite eğitiminin kaybettirdiklerini zaman, emek, motivasyon, para, ruh sağlığı, sosyal çevre ve aile bağları olarak ifade etmişlerdir.

INTRODUCTION

People are born with the potential to adapt to changes in their lives (Baltaş & Baltaş, 2000). Adaptation means that a person can have a healthy interaction with himself and his environment and meet his needs by effectively coping with the difficulties he encounters in this process (Ramsey et al., 2007). In another definition, Al-mseidin, Omar-Fauzee and Kaur (2017) explain the concept of adaptation as establishing a balance between the individual's own characteristics and the rules and values brought about by the external environment.

When the literature is examined, it can be seen that many approaches to the concept of adaptation have dealt with it from different angles. According to Freud's psycho-sexual adjustment theory, early childhood experiences are very important for a healthy and harmonious personality development. Needs that are not met and suppressed in a developmental stage negatively affect the next stage and subconscious processes, and conflicts begin to occur.

Therefore, compatible or incompatible behaviors are observed (Erzen, 2018). According to Erikson, each developmental period has its own developmental problems and developmental tasks to be completed. While coping with the process of adapting to these problems, the person benefits from social support resources (Burger, 2006). In the behavioral approach, when the individual has the opportunity to encounter positive reinforcements, correct learning experiences and adaptive behaviors, the possibility of facing negative reinforcement and incorrect learning situations decreases (Serinkaya, 2021). In the phenomenological approach, if the difference between the existing features of the person and the features they want to have is too great, as is the difference between their own evaluations and the evaluations of the social environment towards themselves, adaptation problems can be experienced (Strain & Diefenbacher, 2008).

Apart from these approaches to adaptation, Lazarus (1976) developed a three-dimensional model to explain harmony, claiming that harmony is a multidimensional

concept. According to the medical-biological model, genetic factors affect the person's adaptation process. The second model is called the sociogenic model, and it is stated that the social environment and cultural structure are effective in creating adaptation. Lazarus emphasizes that in the third model (psychogenic model), the individual's experiences are decisive in the face of stressful life events and will affect the level of adaptation. Although the task of starting university education and continuing it successfully has an important place in the lives of young people, the fact that this experience will be experienced for the first time may seem like an important task in terms of adaptation (Dwyer & Cummings, 2011). In this direction, this research deals with the adaptation process of students to university life.

Young people studying at universities are in the period between late adolescence and young adulthood, which is one of the most turbulent periods (Dornbusch, 2000). In this process, the individual encounters more biological, cognitive, social, and educational problems compared to other developmental periods (Swanson, Vaughan, & Wilkinson, 2017). Since university life will be experienced for the first time by young people, the adaptation process can be stormy (Dwyer & Cummings, 2011). When the literature on university adjustment is examined, it is seen that Baker and Siryk (1986) classify the concept of adjustment as academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal/emotional adjustment, and institutional adjustment. Social cohesion is defined as the student's ability to establish a healthy relationship with his environment, to be included in groups, and to participate in various activities. Academic adaptation investigates the educational performance level and motivation level of the student. Personal fit and high self-esteem among students mean high problem-solving and emotion-regulation skills. Institutional compliance defines the student's attachment to the university and the degree of trust. For students, the university experience is not only a step that enables them to achieve academic gain and career goals, but also an important area of life for the individual to leave the family and become autonomous, to make decisions, to create functional solution options for the problems he encounters, to develop positive behaviors, to control emotions, and to develop personality (Pittman & Richmond, 2008). All these gains are interrelated and contribute to the development and adaptation of students. However, while some students can adapt easily to this process, others may have to struggle with adaptation problems due to factors that make it difficult to adapt (Mahmood & Ikbal, 2015).

Factors that make it difficult for university students to adapt in the relevant literature are self-perception, anxiety and depression level (Chen, 2008); current academic situation and career prospects (Bryan, 2014); past educational achievements and childhood experiences (Basow & Gaugler 2017); relationships in the university environment

and especially with faculty members (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005); being dependent on the family and not being able to establish relationships with people outside the family (Anderson, Guan, & Koc, 2016). According to Enochs and Roland (2006), university students' moving to a new city, entering an unfamiliar environment, worrying about getting a job, and uncertainties about the future make it difficult to adapt. According to Amanvermez (2015), adaptation problems may occur in the process of self-discovery of young people, internalizing the rules and values of the social environment and universal values. Similarly, Sevinç-Tunahioğlu (2017) considered university students' alienation from sources of social support (family, friends) and the fact that they take on their own responsibilities in a different academic and social environment as factors that make it difficult to adapt. These problems experienced during university years cause young people to experience feelings of frustration, display rebellious and combative behaviors, and have difficulties in decision-making (Ames et al., 2014). Basow and Gaugler (2017) state that the adaptation process has positive and negative consequences. Accordingly, if the individual has difficulty adapting, his mental and physical health may be adversely affected. However, if this process is resolved more easily, the person's self-belief increases, and a positive perception of life is formed. When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that there are studies on the adaptation process of university students. Accordingly, most of the students have adjustment problems in their first year of university (Mercan & Yıldız, 2011; Wang, Chen, Zhao, & Xu, 2006). They experience problems such as longing for their family (Thurber, Walton, 2012; Chrysikos et al., 2017), accommodation problems, not getting enough food, not getting used to their faculty members and friends (Karahan et al., 2005; Thurber & Walton, 2012; Connolly, Oberleitner, & Guarneri, 2018), inability to pay attention to the lessons. There are studies on topics such as low academic achievement (Rodríguez, Tinajero, & Páramo, 2017; Swanson, Vaughan, & Wilkinson, 2017; Amanvermez, 2015).

Studies on the adaptation process of university students are explained with various theories and models (Bülbül, 2012). According to Pasceralla and Terenzini (2015), studies involving the development and changes of university-age youth are grouped under two main headings. The first of these is aimed at investigating the psychological and social adjustment levels of students. The second is models for the impact of university on students at risk of dropping out (Braxton, Bray & Berger, 2000; Braxton & Hirschy, 2005; Tinto, 2007). According to Tinto's (1975) Student Adaptation Model, all variables (childhood experiences, family relationships, academic background, expectations for the future and university, level of satisfaction with the university and the department, individual characteristics) that affect the adaptation process of the student are worth

examining. However, since the student's psychological and social adaptation affect each other, they should be investigated together, and the atmosphere and educational quality in the classroom are accepted as important variables that increase the dropout rate (Tinto, 1997). The student adaptation model is one of the most used models and has been updated by Chrysikos, Alexandros, Ahmed, Ejaz, and Ward (2017). It has been determined that the main reasons for not adapting to the school are the inability to feel belonging to the school, the change in the current goals of preschool over time, and the school not responding to expectations. Bean and Eaton's (2000) psychological model focused on the reasons for dropping out of college. Accordingly, students' personal characteristics affect their attitudes and perspectives towards school (Braxton & Hirschy, 2005). Johnson, Wasserman, Yıldırım, and Yonai (2014) stated that the factors that make it easier for students to attend school are academic success, social and psychological adjustment, and interpersonal relationships. Another model, the Anderson model, was introduced in 1985 and has a feature that can be updated in line with today's conditions (Pappas, Giannakos, & Jaccheri, 2016). Accordingly, the number of friends on social media (Gray et al., 2013), socio-economic status and education level of the family (Pruett & Absher, 2015), academic success (Sheilynda, Lim, & Kim, 2015), and accommodation opportunity (Rienties et al., 2012) affect the level of compliance.

In this study, considering the developed models, questions were prepared to ask students about the adaptation of students to life in higher education during the Covid 19 pandemic and the factors affecting it. It is observed that the pandemic process generally affects all social, emotional, and behavioral development areas of individuals, making adaptation difficult (UNICEF, 2020). In addition, young people who are about to enter the labor market are more heavily affected by the Covid-19 pandemic than other groups (OECD, 2020). Based on all these results, it is also intended to examine the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic process on the students participating in this study. For a university-age student, adaptation to the university environment is a significant criterion not only for career acquisition, academic progress, and the healthy development of skills and abilities, but also for the individual's subjective well-being and psychological resilience (Basow & Gaugler, 2017). At the same time, school adjustment increases graduation rates and decreases school refusal and dropout (Woosley & Miller, 2009). For this reason, it may be important to determine the level of adaptation of the students to the university environment, the factors that facilitate and make it difficult to adapt, and to plan and efficiently conduct studies and activities to prevent possible difficulties that may be encountered in this direction, as this will facilitate the academic and social adaptation of the student. In accordance with the purpose of the study, it was conducted with senior undergraduate students at a state university in order to obtain a wide range of data on the adaptation process. In order to evaluate the adaptation process of university students in all aspects, questions were asked to senior university students. Thus, it is thought that it will be easier to identify life events that made adaptation difficult in the past. As a result of the data obtained, it is planned to organize adaptation programs for students who have just started university. However, it is important for the development of adaptation programs to be prepared by the guidance and psychological counseling centers of universities so that the effects of different adjustment levels on different genders, different grade levels, and faculty environments are handled separately. Finally, it is thought that it will contribute to the literature in terms of preparing preventive and crisis-focused intervention programs to be developed for psychological problems that may be encountered and addressing the issue of adaptation.

In this context, this study is aimed at examining the experiences of university students regarding the adaptation process to university. Therefore, the problem question of the research is "What are the opinions of senior university students on the process of adaptation to university?"

METHOD

Model of the Research

This study is a qualitative study created to examine the experiences of university students regarding the adaptation process to the university. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research involves dealing with the opinions of individuals in order to understand and make sense of the events that occur as a result of their experiences in their daily lives. For this reason, the phenomenological approach, which is one of the qualitative research designs, was preferred to examine the views of university students on their experiences of the university adaptation process. In the phenomenological approach, since the experiences of individuals regarding an event or situation are examined in depth, the people participating in the research should have experienced or observed the phenomenon that is the subject of the research (Rolfe, 2006). In this study, to determine the experiences of university students regarding the adaptation process to the university, the experiences of fourth-year university students who have experienced the integration process were examined.

Participants of the Study

The study group for the research consists of university students selected by criterion sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods. Purposeful sampling is the selection of information-rich situations in the context of the purpose of the study in order to conduct in-depth research. Criterion sampling, which is one of the purposive sampling methods, is the creation of the sample from people, events, objects, or situations with qualities determined in

relation to the problem (Büyüköztürk, et al., 2016). While reaching the participants in the research, they were reached through the student heads. Pre-interviews were held with 59 students who applied for the research announcement. Out of 59 students, 30 students from different faculties who met the research criteria and represented the faculties of the university constituted the sample for the study. In this sample, the inclusion criterion for the students participating in the research are that they have been studying at the same university since the first year of the university. However, to provide maximum diversity in the research, it was tried to reach students from various faculties in the university. The students who will participate in the research were reached through the social clubs of the university and the student presidency.

The age range of the students participating in the research is between the ages of 20 and 26, and the average age is 22.47. 15 of the students (50%) are girls, and 15 (50%) are boys. 5 of the students were from the faculty of electricity and electronics (16.7%), 1 from the faculty of shipbuilding and maritime (3.3%), 2 of them from the faculty of construction (6.6%), 4 of them from the faculty of chemistry and metallurgy (13.33%), 5 from the faculty of education faculty (16.6%), 4 of them faculty of sciences and literature (13.33%), 3 of them faculty of machinery (10%), 3 of them faculty of art and design (10%), 1 faculty of business (3.3%), 1 of them are students of the faculty of administrative and economic sciences (3.3%), and 1 of them are students of the faculty of architecture (3.3%). In addition, university students were asked to rate their satisfaction with their university life. 3 of the students (10%) had a low level of satisfaction with their university; 16 (53.33%) of them are satisfied at a medium level, and 11 of them (36.67%) are satisfied at a high level. 7 (23.33%) of the students have a low level of satisfaction, 12 (40%) moderate satisfaction and 11 (36.67%) have a high level of satisfaction. Of the students, 2 (6.6%) reported that their university adjustment level was low, 10 (33.3%) moderate, and 18 (60%) high.

Data Collection Tools

The experiences of university students regarding the adaptation process to the university were obtained through semi-structured interviews. The "semi-structured interview" technique was used while examining the experiences of the students regarding the adaptation process. A descriptive analysis was done using the resulting data, and the findings were presented.

There are advantages to interviewing to understand people's experiences about a phenomenon or a situation. In this research, semi-structured interviews were used because of their certain level of standardization and flexibility, eliminating the limitations of tests and questionnaires based on writing and filling, and helping to gain in-depth information on a specific subject (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

Before preparing the questions to be directed at the students, the current information about the adaptation process and the current articles in the related literature were examined, and the topics of the interview were formed. While creating the research questions, questions were prepared by taking into account the characteristics of the developmental period of university students and the literature on named adaptation theories (Bülbül, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2015; Braxton, Bray & Berger, 2000; Braxton & Hirschy, 2005; Tinto, 1975, 2007; Bean & Eaton, 2000; Chrysikos et al., 2007). Based on the objectives of the research, the questions to be asked by the researchers in the interview were planned. In this process, the opinions and information of four field experts (with doctoral degrees who are experts in the field of Psychological Counselling and Guidance) working in the faculties of education in different universities were consulted, and changes were made based on their feedback. With the support of the experts, eleven questions were prepared and used in the interviews. In the preparation of the interview questions developed by the researchers, attention was paid to principles such as the questions being easy to understand, not multidimensional, and not guiding the respondent (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Research questions can be found in the appendix.

Data Collection Process

Before the data collection process began, ethics committee approval was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of a state university. Then, the students who will participate in the research were reached through the social clubs of the university and the student presidency. Before the interview process was started, preliminary interviews were held with each participant, the researchers who would conduct the interview introduced themselves, explained the purpose of the research process to the participants, and the volunteer consent form was filled. In the consent form, information about the purpose of the research and the people who conducted the study was shared, it was stated that the information of the participants would be kept confidential and that they could quit the study at any time. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis. In addition, no information regarding the identity of the students was collected. Interviews were held in individual psychological counseling rooms in the education faculty of the university. During the research process, 30 minutes of individual interviews were conducted with the participants in the research group using semi-structured interview forms. The interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the university students.

Analysis of Data At the stage of summarizing the interview questions according to the themes they reveal, descriptive analysis or content analysis can be used in the analysis of the data (Cansız-Aktaş, 2015). In this study, the data obtained by the semi-structured interview technique were subjected to descriptive analysis. The purpose of descriptive analysis is to bring together the data collected as

a result of interviews and observations in an organized and interpreted way (Creswell, 2002). The themes for the descriptive analysis are formed according to the theoretical basis of the research (Seidman, 2016). The themes in the data were determined according to the conceptual framework and research questions created while examining the literature on the university adjustment process.

The audio recordings of the interviews made for the analysis of the data were listened to and deciphered, and the statements of the participants were noted one by one. To make a descriptive analysis, the data was coded after the deciphering process. After examining the data obtained, dividing it into meaningful sections, transforming what each section conceptually means into meaningful data units (sentences) and coding, the draft themes were organized under categories (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Themes were determined, arranged, and interpreted in line with the research purposes. Direct quotations, which are the most distinctive feature of this approach, are frequently included in the study. The data collected by the semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers were coded separately by each researcher, and then the researchers came together and reached a common consensus by examining the codes comparatively. Coding is the classification of data according to concepts, titles, and themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Coding in qualitative research occurs in three ways. These are "coding according to predetermined concepts," "coding according to concepts extracted from data," and "coding done within a general framework." The coding used within the scope of this research is the coding made according to predetermined concepts. This type of coding consists of the components of the first and the second codes. In this type of coding process, general categories or themes are determined in advance and more detailed codes that can be included under these themes are revealed by examining the data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The questions of the research were prepared based on theories of "adaptation" and these research questions constitute the themes of the research. These themes are 1) experiences before university education, 2) factors originating from students, 3) factors originating from universities, 4) coping resources, 5) gains from university education, and 6) loss of university education.

While performing data analysis, MAXQDA 2022 analysis program was used. MAXQDA is a computer software program that helps researchers to systematically evaluate and interpret qualitative texts (Yakut-Çayır & Sarıtaş, 2017).

Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity in the study, the context to which the data were related was considered, and the data were interpreted in this way. In addition, in the method section of the research, the research model, study group, data collection tool, data collection, and analysis times are reported in detail. However, member checking was taken for the internal validity of the study. Participant confirmation is the confirmation of whether what they want to say is actually expressed by giving the interview recordings to the participants participating in the research. This method is used for internal validity (Holloway & Wheeler, 1996). After the interviews were conducted, the audio recordings were transcribed and each student's own interview was written down and their consent was sent back to them. Thus, the correctness of what the students said was confirmed. None of the students participating in the study requested changes.

The researchers involved in the study played a participatory role in the process. The participant role of the researcher requires spending time in the field, meeting with the participants within the scope of the research, experiencing the experiences of the participants when necessary, and using the perspective and experiences gained in the field in the analysis of the collected data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this direction, it can be said that the researchers in this study took on a participatory role in reaching the 4th grade students studying at the university, informing the students about the study, interviewing the students who would participate in the study, and analyzing the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. In this process, the researchers played an unbiased and objective role so that the research's own assumptions and biases did not affect the data collection and analysis process.

To ensure reliability in the study, they first analyzed the data individually, and then the researchers came together and came to a common consensus by examining the codes comparatively. In addition, the clear determination of the roles of researchers in the research process is another measure taken to increase the reliability of the research. In this study, researchers also took an active role as implementers of data collection tools. In this process, they gave information about the scope and purpose of the research to the university students who participated in the research. Again, in order to ensure the reliability of the research, four faculty members with doctoral degrees, who are experts in their field of Psychological Counselling and Guidance in faculties of education faculties at different universities were shown the themes and it was determined that the themes they put forth and the themes put forward by the researchers overlapped. However, the control of the themes and codes was made by each researcher separately to ensure the reliability of the data in the analysis (Creswell, 2016). In addition, the researchers reviewed and checked the data obtained from the interviews at different times by the researchers to ensure their reliability. It is calculated by using the formula Similarity: Confidence/Percentage of Agreement = Consensus / (Agreement + Disagreement) X100, which is the consensus among the coders. The consensus among coders should be at least 80% (Özdemir & Avcı, 2019). In this study, the percentage of agreement was determined to be 95%.

FINDINGS

In this study, it is aimed to examine the experiences of university students regarding the university adaptation process. Considering the purpose of the research and the interview questions, the opinions of students were analyzed under six predetermined main themes. The identified themes are listed as follows: 1) experiences before university education, 2) factors originating from students, 3) factors originating from the university, 4) coping resources, 5) gains from university education, and 6) loss of university education. These themes were framed with sub-categories and codes in line with the purposes of the research.

In accordance with the ethical principles of qualitative research, the names of the students participating in the research were not included, and each student was quoted in the form of (T). Statements quoted from the interviews with the findings were included, and thus, it was tried to reach the essence of the students' university adaptation experiences and ensure reliability.

Experiences Before University Education on Adjusting to University

The first theme that emerged as a result of the interviews conducted to examine the experiences of university students regarding the adaptation process to the university "Experiences Before University Education." The theme of experiences before university education consists of two categories, factors that increase and decrease compliance. The findings regarding the codes of this theme, category and categories are presented in Table 1.

As can be seen in Table 1, the students participating in the study expressed their pre-university life experiences that increased their adaptation to the university environment such as career adaptation, educational background, social environment, social skills, openness to experience, parental influence, social activities, and knowing the city and having a different city experience. In addition, the students expressed their pre-university life experiences as being separated from the family, the education system, city change, personality traits, career incompatibility, social life change, transportation difficulties, limited job opportunities, living with the family, and bullying, which reduces adaptation to the university environment.

Table 1. Experiences before university education

Theme and Codes	Example Sentences	f
Increasing Adaptation		
Career compatibility	I think that the fact that I chose my department voluntarily contributed to my adaptation.	9
Educational background	I saw that I was able to realize the successes, projects, and assignments I started in my previous education life as I wanted and visualized in my head.	6
Social environment	The presence of my circle of friends increased my harmony.	5
Social skills	It was effective for me to have strong communication and make friends quickly.	5
Openness to Experience	I am open to most things and hungry for experimentation. I try to try everything, the club, and the environment.	4
Parent Effect	It is effective that my family raised me as an individual, respecting my preferences and wishes, without making me dependent on them.	4
Social Activities	I am not interested in many sports, school clubs, and class representation.	4
Know the City	Since I live in Istanbul and live in this environment, this transition period has been very soft.	3
Different City Experience	Because of my father's job, I have lived in many different cities before.	3
Reduces Harmony		
Leaving family	Being separated from my family negatively affected my harmony.	7
Education system	Every moment is passed with exams, it is different from the education system in high school.	5
City change	Coming from Muğla to Istanbul is very difficult in terms of culture and getting used to people.	4
Personality	Being a more introverted person reduced my adjustment.	2
Career mismatch	Although I loved mathematics in high school, I could not meet my university expectations. My department is very abstract, not applied.	2
Social life change	Being away from our circle of friends affects the change of social life.	2
Difficulty of transportation	Traveling 1.5 hours to come to school and therefore getting up early in the morning.	1
Limited job opportunities	Not being able to find a job to make a living affects negatively.	1
Living with family	Living with family while studying reduces my adjustment.	1
Tyranny	I struggled because I was bullied at school.	1

Student-Based Factors on Adjusting to University

The second theme, which emerged as a result of the interviews conducted to examine the university students' experiences of the university adaptation process, was discussed as "Factors Originated from Students." The theme of factors originating from the student consists of two categories, factors that increase and decrease compliance. The findings regarding the codes of this theme, category, and categories are presented in Table 2.

As seen in Table 2, the participants stated that the factors that increase their adaptation to the university environment are personality traits, social skills, and participation in social activities. In addition, the students stated that the factors that reduce their adaptation to the university environment are lack of motivation, academic failure, personality traits, expectations, future anxiety, health problems, and low self-perception.

University-Based Factors on Students' Adaptation to University

The third theme, which emerged as a result of the interviews conducted to examine the university students' experiences of the university adaptation process, was discussed as "Factors Originating from the University." The theme of factors originated at the university and consists of two categories: factors that increase and decrease compliance. The findings regarding the codes of this theme, category and categories are presented in Table 3.

As seen in Table 3, the participants expressed the factors that increase the adaptation to the university environment as social activities, physical facilities, quality of faculty members, quality of education, richness of experience, quality of the student environment, and deep-rooted history. On the other hand, the students expressed the factors originating from the university that reduce the adaptation to the university environment as systemic problems, limited opportunities, physical location, course contents, and the quality of the cafeteria.

Resources for Coping with Maladjustment

The fifth theme, which emerged as a result of the interviews conducted to examine the experiences of university students regarding the adaptation process to the university, was handled as "coping resources". Five of the students participating in the study stated that they did not experience incompatibility, and seven of them stated that they could not cope with incompatibility. The findings regarding the codes for the "coping resources" theme obtained from the remaining 18 students are presented in Table 4.

As can be seen in Table 4, the participants who were able to cope with incompatibility expressed their coping resources as social support, personality traits, problem solving skills, positive perspective, and social activities.

Gains of University Education

The sixth theme, which emerged as a result of the interviews conducted to examine the university students' experiences of the university adaptation process, was discussed as "Gains of University Education." The findings related to the theme of the gains of university education and the codes are presented in Table 5.

As seen in Table 5, the participants expressed the benefits of university education as self-development, social environment, different perspectives, knowledge, social skills, recognizing different cultures, and a diploma.

Table 2. Factors originated from the student

Theme and Codes	Example Sentences	f
Increasing Adaptation		
Personality characteristics	Being open to criticism, understanding and extrovert increased my harmony.	21
Social skills	My good communication skills helped me to establish good relations with my friends and increased my harmony.	16
Participation in social activities	I gained a lot of media experience by participating in clubs and events.	3
Reduces Adaptation		
Lack of motivation	My lack of attention to lessons, the length of my schooling, my low desire for school.	8
Academic failure	The fact that I didn't study and failed the class reduced my compliance.	6
Personality characteristics	I am an introverted person; I had a problem with adaptation because I was left behind in social environments.	5
Expectations	The university that I dreamed of before I came to school and the school's possibilities do not match.	3
Future anxiety	I have not experienced psychological problems because I have anxiety about my future plans.	2
Health problems	I had health problems such as not being able to sleep, so I was inconsistent.	1
Low self esteem	I couldn't adapt to the environment because I felt worthless.	1

Table 3. Factors originated from university

Theme and Codes	Example Sentences	f
Increasing Adaptation		
Social activities	With the campus environment being very lively, many conferences, events, and student clubs, I got used to the school more quickly and gained an environment.	13
Physical facilities	Our campus has a beautiful landscape and exterior architecture. Especially the middle garden is a reason that makes me love this school.	9
Quality of faculty members	Our academics, who do their classes properly and show their difference with their interest in students, facilitate this harmony.	7
Education quality	The educational opportunities offered by the university, such as laboratories, gave me the quality of education I expected and increased my compliance.	6
Wealth of experience	It provided me with a richness in terms of its opportunistic environment and the environments where I could learn and social resources.	3
The nature of the student environment	I think that the student profile who prefers our school because of its academic position is generally people who are open to harmony and communication. In this sense, our university offers a harmonious life.	2
Rooted history	Our university is one of the oldest and most developed universities.	2
Reduces Adaptation		
Systemic problems	The inadequacy of the web page, the difficulties experienced in adding courses and the prerequisites of the courses, the intensity of the exam system.	10
Limited opportunities	The unconscious support of social, artistic, and cultural activities by the school, the thought that it is supported. Inability of students to choose their own social activity options, lack of options.	8
Physical location	The suppression of clubs and societies trying to operate by narrow-minded people who are not related to the arts.	5
	The location and geographical structure of the campus did not give me the university atmosphere I expected.	
Course contents	Due to the difficulty of the course content, I could not adap	2
Dining hall quality	The poor food in the cafeteria decreased the level of compliance.	2

Table 4. Resources for coping with Maladjustment

Theme and Codes	Example Sentences	f
Social support	I was able to cope with the people I love by sharing my problems and making friends.	11
Personality characteristics	I have a structure that can make friends and adapt in a very short time. However, I was able to persevere without giving up to adapt.	4
Problem solving skill	I sat and thought and analyzed about my present and my future. I made some decisions about what I need to do to get to good places. I thought about the pros and cons of these decisions and put them into practice.	4
Positive perspective	I have dealt with inconsistencies by thinking that life goes on and trying to see the good in things that seem discordant.	3
Social activities	I coped by joining clubs, creating new activities and interests.	2

Losses of University Education

The seventh theme, which emerged as a result of the interviews conducted to examine the university students' experiences of the university adaptation process, was discussed as "The Losses of University Education." 11 of the students who participated in the research stated that university education did not lose anything. The findings regarding the themes of university education lost and the codes obtained from the remaining 19 students are presented in Table 6.

As seen in Table 6, the participants stated that university education lost their time as time, effort, motivation, money, mental health, social environment, and family ties.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION

In this study, it is aimed to examine the experiences of university students regarding the adaptation process to the university. In the study, pre-university life, the characteristics of the individual, and the characteristics of the university

Table 5. Gains of university education

Theme and Codes	Example Sentences	f
Self-development	I think that education has given me the ability to think more calmly and maturely in the face of good or bad events, it has made me a more qualified person in social and cultural terms, it has improved my self-sufficiency in being an individual and many other similar features.	19
Social environment	My education life allowed me to establish invaluable relationships and added unique people to my life.	10
Different perceptions	It opened my horizons and changed my perspective on the world and problems. By giving me a vision, it made me not see life only within the limits of my own life.	10
Knowledge	Motorcycles coming from outside are very expensive, but I can build my own motorcycle with the knowledge provided by the training I have received. In addition, a lot of information I learned within the scope of my department makes my life easier.	8
Social skill	I gained the ability to express myself, the ability to discuss difficult issues such as politics, and effective communication skills. I can express myself easily and am understood correctly. I build healthier relationships.	7
Getting to know different cultures	It allowed me to interact with the culture of a different city, with people from different beliefs, views, and lifestyles.	5
Diploma	My education has given me a diploma that shows what my profession is.	1

Table 6. Losses of university education

Theme and Codes	Example Sentences	f
Time	I think I lost my teenage years and time because I read a section that I didn't like.	10
Work	Today, if we think that a group of people make money by establishing blogs or channels through social media or various internet accounts, or they make a certain career, I think that our efforts are in vain, and our efforts are a loss.	7
Motivation	It reduced my enthusiasm, my love for my branch and my desire to practice the profession.	5
Money	I see the money I spent on my department as a loss.	3
Mental health	I think that I lost my psychology due to future anxiety, stress, feelings of inadequacy and anxiety.	3
Social environment	Due to the intensity of the lessons and homework, I lost my friends.	2
Family ties	I can say that I lost my family if we think that my family ties have weakened because I have been away from my family and that we often clashed.	2

were discussed first as factors that increase students' university adjustment. According to the first finding of the study, the participants stated that factors such as career adaptability, educational background, social environment, social skills, openness to experience, parental influence, social activities, getting to know the city and having a different city experience before university increased their adaptation to the university environment. In this study, factors arising from the students themselves that increase adaptation to the university environment were identified as personality traits, social skills and participation in social activities. Factors arising from the university were identified as social activities, physical facilities, quality of faculty members, quality of education, richness of experience, quality of student environment and long-established history. The findings obtained in this study support the results of studies on the adjustment of university students. In the related literature, there are studies revealing that the quality education, teaching staff, and the physical facilities of the university before starting the university positively affect the adaptation of the students at the university (Arulampalam, Naylor, & Smith, 2004; Di Pietro & Cutillo, 2007; McKenzie & Schweitzer, 2001; Bülbül, 2012; Bülbül & Guvendir, 2012; Sevinç & Gizir, 2014). However, having sufficient social support resources, establishing positive relationships with faculty staff, and administrators, receiving parental support under all conditions, participating in various socio-cultural activities, being courageous in entering new environments, having high self-awareness and motivation, strong communication, and friendship are all necessary. Having personality traits such as high skills in relationships is also among the factors that increase the level of adjustment at university (Cutrona & Russell, 1987; Duru, 2008; Eker, Arkar, & Yıldız, 2001; Jackson, Weiss, Lundquist, & Hooper, 2001; Neville, Heppner, & Wang, 1997; Peplau & Perlman, 1982; Russell & Carroll, 1999; Watson & Clark, 1992; Weiss, 1973; Ting, 1997; Sertel, Yıldırım ve Akyol, 2017). From these results, it is possible to say that the results of the studies on the adjustment of university students show parallelism with each other.

According to the second finding obtained from this study, the students expressed their pre-university life experiences as being separated from the family, the education system, city change, personality traits, career incompatibility, social life change, transportation difficulties, limited job opportunities, living with the family, and bullying, which reduces adaptation to the university environment. According to the results of this study, the students stated that the factors that reduce their adaptation to the university environment are lack of motivation, academic failure, personality traits, expectations, future anxiety, health problems, and low self-perception. They stated that the factors originating from the university that reduce the adaptation to the university environment are systemic problems, limited opportunities, physical location, course contents, and the quality of the cafeteria. In the related literature, there are studies examining the factors that reduce the adjustment level of university students, and the results of the studies are consistent with each other. Accordingly, the student's emotional outbursts, having an extremely introverted and tense structure, low motivation level, having a negative perspective, shyness, timidity in relations with the opposite sex, low ability to make friends and express oneself, and negative attitudes towards the courses reduce their adaptation to university. It is believed that problems such as exhibiting an unfamiliar attitude towards the university environment, having communication problems with faculty members, being dissatisfied with the university and the department, not being able to take advantage of opportunities such as accommodation and nutrition, being strange to the social and cultural environment, feeling worthless and having low self-esteem reduce the level of adaptation of students. There are studies on the subject (Adams, 2014; Aslan & Güven, 2010; Aspinwaill & Taylor ,1992; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987; Boulter, 2002; Ertem, 2002; İkiz & Otlu, 2015; Karahan et al., 2005; Mert & Çetiner, 2018; Renaud & Byers, 2001; Wang et al., 2006; Yao, Han, Zeng & Guo, 2013). Unlike the results of this study, the factors that reduce adjustment include the student's being in a disadvantaged group, single-parent upbringing, sibling conflicts, conflicts within the family, frequent family relocations for various reasons, city changes, school changes, unhealthy parental attitudes, and parental separation. Healthy separation, lack of personal independence, intense longing for family (Allison & Furstenberg, 1989; Borrine, Handal, Brown, & Searight, 1991; Brett, 1982; Cicirelli, 1996; Hetherington, 1999; Hoffman & Weiss, 1987; Kenny & Donaldson, 1991; Lapsley, Rice, & Fitz-Gerald, 1990; Lopez, Campbell, & Watkins, 1988; Lussier, Deater-Deckard, Dunn, & Davies, 2002; Norford & Medway, 2002; Rich & Scovel, 1987; Kaba ve Keklik, 2016; Şimşek, 2013; Serinkaya, 2021). In this context, it can be stated that personal and university-based factors that reduce the adjustment of university students support each other. However, it can be said that the environmental factors that reduce university adjustment differ according to the research group in the study.

According to the third finding obtained from this study, the participants expressed their sources of coping with incompatibility as social support, personality traits, problem-solving skills, positive perspective, and social activities. Similarly, in studies on the adjustment of university students, to cope with the adjustment problem, students should plan leisure activities, be open to new relationships and participate in various activities and courses to acquire new skills, be accepting of the problems experienced, divide the current performance into functional problem-solving techniques. It is stated that traits such as being able to obtain parent and family support, having high levels of psychological well-being and psychological resilience, and having healthy self-development are used as coping resources. Accordingly, it can be said that university students have a high ability to cope with problems in a healthy way. Unlike this study, there are studies that show that the mechanism used by students who have difficulties adapting to university is usually escapism. Accordingly, students think that they cannot actively cope with adaptation, do not believe that they are in control, and do not take responsibility. For this reason, unsolvable adjustment problems can cause mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression in young people (Dyson & Renk, 2006; Heiman, 2004; Bülbül & Acar-Güvendir, 2014).

According to the fourth finding obtained from this research, the students participating in the research expressed the benefits of university education as self-development, social environment, different perspectives, knowledge, social skills, recognizing different cultures, and diploma. In the related literature, various studies have been found on the benefits of university education, and it is seen that the findings of the study show parallelism. Accordingly, students have the opportunity to reach their dream job through university, to provide material and moral satisfaction, to be autonomous from the family and gain the skills of living alone, to have the chance to meet and make friends with many people from various cultures and cities, and to have a flexible and more positive mindset. It has been revealed that they have gained many benefits, such as developing, gaining a lot of experience about their profession and social life, and providing a higher level of psychological resilience (Ceyhan, 2006; Consolvo, 2002; Karahan et al., 2005; Kenyon & Koerner, 2009; Sürücü & Bacanli, 2010). In this context, it can be said that the university students participating in the study have a positive perspective on university education and that they gain from various aspects.

According to the final result obtained from this research, the students who participated in the research stated that university education lost time, effort, motivation, money, mental health, the social environment, and family ties. Similarly, studies have shown that the negative aspects of university education are as follows: wasting financial resources and

time, disappointment as a result of not meeting expectations in terms of both education and social life, feeling of loneliness as a result of conflicts of interest, decreased social interaction and deterioration of mental health (Baker & Sirky, 1984; Gizir, 2005; Hillman, 2005; Lammers et al., 2008; Mert & Çetiner, 2018; Ryback & McAndrew, 2006; Sevinç & Gizir, 2014; Tognoli,2003). In this context, it is possible to say that as a result of the difficulties and negativities encountered in university life, students are disappointed and see it as a loss.

In this study, the factors that decrease and increase the adjustment of university students, the mechanisms of coping with the adjustment problem, and the gains and losses of university education are compared with the studies in the related literature. Based on the results of the research, it is possible to say that the academic, social, and psychological support of young people in university life will positively affect the adaptation process. Özbay (1977) emphasizes that as a prerequisite for providing student personality services in a healthy way, it is necessary to identify students' problems and to meet their needs for their personal and professional development. For this purpose, it is thought that it will contribute to the solution of students' personal-social, academic, and educational problems by making use of the psychological counseling and guidance unit of the universities and the dean of students. In addition, preventive and developmental activities can be planned and activities can be organized to facilitate students' adaptation. In this direction, peer guidance activities can be carried out for students to share their knowledge and experiences (Aladağ, 2009). Various activities, courses, symposiums, seminars, in-service trainings, etc. can be organized to bring students and faculty members together. It may be useful for the university to allocate a budget in line with the needs in order to organize organizations.

Implication of Study

This study has limitations. It was carried out by recruiting students at a state university in Istanbul with a qualitative research method. Repeating this study with a different sample and different research methods will make generalization easier. In future studies, only first year university students can be included in the study, and a longitudinal study can be organized in order to follow the adaptation processes. However, the lack of cultural sensitivity of the study is also a limitation. In future research, intercultural studies can be conducted with university students from different cities and countries by ensuring that students from different cultures are sensitive to diversity.

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Semi-Structured Interview Questions

What are the factors in your life before university education that increase your adaptation to university life?

What are the factors in your life before university education that reduce your adaptation to university life?

What are the factors that increase your adaptation to university life?

What are the factors caused by you that reduce your adaptation to university life?

What are the university-related factors that increase your adaptation to university life?

What are the university-related factors that reduce your adjustment to university life?

What are the factors that increase your adaptation to university life, originating from your lecturers?

What are the factors that reduce your adaptation to university life, originating from your lecturers?

How did you deal with non-adherence to university life?

What did getting a university education give you?

What did you lose by getting a university education?