

Factors Influencing University and Department Choice Among Students in Turkey: A Comprehensive Analysis

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Abstract

This study investigates the factors shaping students' university and department preferences in Turkey. Employing a survey method, data were systematically collected from 1,055 participants, comprising final-year high school students and first-year university students. To ensure representativeness, the sample was balanced across gender, education level, program type, school type, geographical diversity, ISCED-F 2013 education fields, and SEGE 2022 socio-economic levels. Data were gathered through an interview form designed in two versions—one for high school and one for university students—developed based on expert feedback and refined through a pilot study. The form consisted of two sections: the first addressed demographic characteristics and information about the high school attended, while the second included open-ended and multiple-choice questions on the departments students wished to study, their reasons for these preferences, and the factors influencing their decisions. Multiple-choice responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while open-ended responses and "other" options were subjected to content analysis. Consistency among researchers in the thematic coding was assessed, and discrepancies were resolved to finalize the themes. The analysis revealed the factors affecting students' department choices, the factors affecting university choices, the information sources they consulted. The findings provide a multidimensional perspective on the academic, personal, and environmental influences guiding students' university decision-making.

Keywords

Factors influencing university choice, department selection, student preferences.

Funding Information

Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknolojik Araştırma Kurumu (TÜBİTAK) – The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye.

The Field of Social Sciences and Humanities, Grant/Award Number: 123K890.

The 3005 – Innovative Solutions Research Projects Support Program.

