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## **DETERMINATION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' ALIENATION LEVELS: THE CASE OF ANADOLU UNIVERSITY TOURISM FACULTY**

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### **Abstract**

Alienation may occur towards a person himself, society, workplace or the living environment. The alienation of the individual is an issue that increasingly causes the alienation of the society. Education constitutes one of the dimensions of the alienation. It is crucial both for the literature and executers to determine the alienation levels of students, to investigate the causes of alienation and enhance possible solutions. In this context, a research was conducted during the fall semester of 2017-2018 academic year in order to determine the alienation levels of students studying in different departments of Anadolu University Tourism Faculty. In this study, a quantitative approach was performed, and a descriptive research model was used. Student Alienation Scale was used as a data collection tool and it was investigated whether students' alienation levels differed according to variables such as gender, department, class and income level. In conclusion, it was found that students experience moderate alienation in all subdimension of alienation, namely powerlessness, irregularity, isolation and meaninglessness. Results of this study may help Anadolu University Tourism Faculty management to take precautions to prevent further alienations of students.

Key Words: Alienation, Alienation in education, Undergraduate students, Anadolu University Faculty of Tourism.

### **Introduction**

The quest for discovering and knowing themselves is an inherent property of all humans. Thus, realizing oneself depends on self-knowing and forging a meaning (bond) with then world. However, the "alienation" phenomenon appears as a psychological problem in today's industrialized and technological society, which is defined as humans' living in a meaninglessness because of turning into self-alienated individuals. Alienation generally means person's failure to bind himself with the current world and living in a meaninglessness.

As alienation may be towards oneself, it can also be towards society, state, working place or the living environment, but the individual's alienation gradually causes to society's alienation. Alienation, which appears intellectually in the society at first, leads to one's conflicting with own values and fragmentation of social structure through the society's failure of holding self-values (Şahin, 2013).

Alienation composes one of the social problems, those affect especially current societies in sociologic, technologic, political and economic fields and vary from one culture to another. Educational institutions are the most important social constructions in which human is found from birth. Alienation phenomenon, which can be diversified in consumption, production, professional, political and many other fields, can also be seen in educational institutions which exist to make individuals adopt terminal behavior.

It is generally accepted that alienated students do not appreciate the education provided at schools, in addition, it is known that school education is not meaningful to them and they are in a tendency of receding from school. This alienation pushes the student to failure and decreases identification with school, hence causes the student to move away from academic goals (Finn, 1989, p:123). In other words, alienation may cause serious problems in education. For that reason, identifying the alienation level of students, making educational institutions be aware of this problem and bringing solution suggestions are seen as important steps in educational field.

When then literature is examined, it is seen that the number of studies that search the alienation levels of university students is limited. Therefore, in this study, it is aimed to specify the alienation level experienced by the students of Anadolu University, Faculty of Tourism. Defining if the alienation experienced differentiates according to gender, program, class and monthly income of the students in 3 different departments of the Tourism Faculty (tourism management, tour guiding, gastronomy and culinary arts), is the sub goal of this study. By this means, it is regarded that an awareness can be created about the alienation problem at universities, where are aiming to bring up qualified human resources, and suggestions can be made about the solution ways of this problem.

### **Alienation**

Alienation concept, while having a long historical past, primarily showed up in the field of theology in the 18th century, entered to philosophy with Hegel, and economics and politics with Marx; and became a fundamental subject in many fields with the impact of these thinkers (Ergil, 1978: p.93). Alienation concept was first used by G.W. Friedrich Hegel towards an entity's externalization, while Karl Marx institutionalized the concept through dealing with the dimension of worker, labor and product alienation. Together with that, Durkheim dealt with the alienating side of the division of labor, Simmel of the metropole life, Weber of rationalization and bureaucracy and Marcuse of industry and mass medium. Peter Berger applied a broader point of view and dealt with how human alienate to oneself, as the producer of socio-cultural world, and many other 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers analyzed the concept with regard to fields such as theology, modernization, personalization, existentialism, etc. (Tekin, 2014: p:30).

Ergil (1978, p.95) states that alienation originates in private property and division of labor, and human, who's economic role is determined, is alienated from oneself and others due to the lack of organizing self-work-order and products of labor. With reference to the social fact in the historical process, Marks conducted with the idea that human's alienation has to be understood in order to be free. Property relations in the historical process which caused human to be alienated to oneself, caused the shaping of social structure. He stated that because features that cause the rise of alienation exist in the social structure, such as property relations; in order to sweep alienation away from human life, relations that provide the evolution and existence of social structure need to be understood primarily (Coşkun, 2013: s.121).

For a better understanding and especially evaluation of alienation, it is a very useful attitude to quote what are the sub-dimensions that reveal alienation. Researchers analyze alienation in four sub dimensions in varying researches. For instance, Çağlar (2012) stated that alienation is composed of

four sub-dimensions, too. *Weakness*, among them, defines the situation in which outer factors such as chance, faith and others' behaviors are influential on the individual, individual's own effect and individual supervision is limited (Elma, 2003). *Normlessness* is the situation of disapproval of the necessity of behaviors that are seen necessary to realize targets (Seeman, 1959). *Solitude* is the situation that occurs when the individual withdraws himself from society or his circle excludes him (Yılmaz and Sarpkaya, 2009). *Meaninglessness* is the situation that students doubt about why they have to attend to the activities at school (Çağlar, 2012). Newman (1981) analyzed alienation under the name of "student alienation" and with a similar tendency stated that student alienation has four sub-dimensions as weakness, meaninglessness, normlessness and solitude. According to that Newman (1981) defends that weakness expresses students' deficiency of personal perception in learning and normlessness defines students' lack of suitable behaviors to rules in fields such as ethics. On the other hand, while meaninglessness is referring to course programs which alienated students believe that they have no relation to their existing and future needs, solitude/isolation indicates departure from friends and teachers, social departure, in other words.

### **Literature**

Alienation and the importance of its reflections on education also pulled the attention of varying researches in the literature. Avcı (2012), embracing alienation as a fundamental problem in education, put emphasis on the reasons of alienation observed on the students in the educational institution and with a conceptual research he tried to state the measures to be taken on individual and institutional basis in order to minimize alienation which has many negative impacts on students. The writer stated that, in order to protect students from the negative effects of alienation, life standards of teachers must be enhanced, schools must be more ergonomic spatially, families must be informed about the reasons and solutions of alienation and social media must pull its weight.

In Şimşek and Akdemir's study (2015), which was done to determine the variables that affect the alienation levels of university students in weakness, meaninglessness and solitude dimensions, student alienation scale was used, and descriptive scanning model was applied on 421 university students. It was discovered that students' genders, department choices, academics, relations with class mates and level of attending to social activities were the factors that are effective on feeling alienation from school. In a similar study conducted in Bozok University in 2014, it was tried to find out if the alienation level of students differed depending on their gender, age, department, family income and purpose of using technology. As a result, it was found out that all of the students were living a middle level of alienation in all weakness, normlessness, solitude and meaninglessness dimensions (Çelik and Babaoğlu, 2017). Table 1 is composed to look at alienation from a broader perspective.

In Table 1, studies made on alienation in education are cited, but it was seen that the number of studies examining alienation over students is limited. One of those limited studies about alienation of students is the one conducted on 875 students in Adıyaman University, Faculty of Education, to find out their alienation level and attitudes towards teaching profession. According to the research, it was concluded that there was a moderately negative relationship between the alienation level and attitudes towards teaching profession (Çağlar, 2013). Another study was made by Çağlar (2012) to develop a tool for the measurement of the alienation feeling of students. Study was conducted on 857 students studying in different departments of Education Faculty in different grades. Structure with four factors was tested within the framework of validity works. Mentioned four factors were utilized in this study, too, in defining the alienation levels of students studying in the Anadolu University, Faculty of Tourism.

Table 1. Studies in the Literature

Author(s)	Release year	Subject	Research method	Sample	Outcome
Yapıcı	2004	Education and alienation	Theoretical approach	–	Educational institutions play an effective role in alienation
Erjem	2005	Alienation concept in education and teacher	Qualitative analysis	20 teachers working in two classical state high schools in Mersin	Teachers experience alienation not in all dimensions and prevalently, but in some dimensions and partially
Yılmaz and Sarpkaya	2009	Alienation in educational organizations and its management	Theoretical approach	–	Changes made in the system and course programs under the name of “reform” increase uncertainty and these negations in education compose the basis for alienation for students, teachers and manager
Ataş and Ayık	2013	Alienation to school in candidate teachers	Quantitative analysis	680 faculty of education students in Atatürk University	Candidate teachers’ genders, department choices, levels of relationship with academics and classmates and frequency of attending to social activities are factors that affect their alienation feeling towards school.
Develioğlu and Tekin	2013	Relationship between characteristics and alienation	Quantitative analysis	539 hotel employees in 18 five star hotels	Meaningful relationships identified between 5 factor characteristics of the employees and different dimensions of alienation.
Karagülle and Çaycı	2014	Socialization and alienation in the web society	Theoretical approach		Structure of digital environments, which is far from reality, makes individual dependent on screens and technology. This situation renders him isolated within crowds and brings together the alienation problem to himself and his circle.
Kale and Nur	2016	Education and social gender from	Theoretical		The fact that individuals do not have equal chances in reaching education but are

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the view of Marxist Theory	approac h	subject to same examination, exhibits educational gap.
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## Method

Descriptive research model is used in this study, which adopts quantitative research approach. During the research period, it was analyzed with *Student Alienation Scale*, if alienation showed any meaningful difference according to students' gender, department, grade and monthly income variables.

## Population and Sample

The population of the research is composed of 831 undergraduate students studying in Anadolu University, Faculty of Tourism, in the fall term of 2017-2018 school year. But, because of time limitation, sampling was implemented. According to the sampling calculation formula (Ural and Kılıç, 2013: p.47), it was determined that the sample representing a limited population composed of 831 students was 260. Convenience sampling was applied in gathering data. Sample of the research was composed of 283 students in total, studying at Tourism Management, Tour Guiding and Gastronomy and Culinary arts departments of Anadolu University, Faculty of Tourism.

## Data Collection Tool and Data Collection

Survey technic is used in order to reach descriptive data for defining students' alienation levels. In the research, *Student Alienation Scale*, developed by Çağlar (2012) was used to measure the alienation perceptions of 283 students studying at Anadolu University, Faculty of Tourism. Student Alienation Scale is of a 5 point Likert type, valued between "1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). The scale is composed of four sub-dimensions of alienation, which are "weakness" (6 items), "normlessness" (4 items), "solitude" (5 items) and "meaninglessness" (5 items) and 20 statements. An additional personal information form was included in the scale in order to find out the demographic features of the students and to measure if these features make up a meaningful difference on alienation.

For the validity of the scale, interviews with three field experts were made and positive feedback was received from them about the convenience of questions to the purpose of the research. Data were collected during fall semester of 2017-2018 school year at the Faculty of Tourism and students were reached at places such as canteen, holding bay and yard. Filling of the surveys took about 5 minutes in average for each student and in the existence of incoherent questions, the problem was overcome with the help of the researchers.

## Data Analysis and Findings

SPSS 22. And AMOS packages were utilized in the analysis of the data. Descriptive analysis, T test and ANOVA were used in the analyses of the data gathered for the measurement of students' perceptions towards alienation. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient about the four sub dimensions of the scale were calculated as "weakness" (,79), "normlessness" (,75), "solitude" (,76) and "meaninglessness" (,76). In the scale wide calculation, coefficient was found as 0,86. As a result of the analysis, internal consistency coefficient was calculated as 0,81 and this value proved the scale to be highly confidential (Kalaycı, 2010).

Average, median, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis values are used to find out if the data distribution was normal in the research. Each dimension of alienation was tested according to the

results of the analysis and it was discovered that measures of central tendency are close to each other, skewness and kurtosis value as are between +1 and -1 (Table 2). It is accepted that data meets the normalcy criteria if aberrations from normalcy are either between +1 and -1 (Kalaycı, 2010) or +1,5 and -1,5 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). Under the light of these information, the research was continued with parametric tests.

Table 2. Findings about the normal distribution of alienation dimensions

	<b>Weakness</b>	<b>Normlessness</b>	<b>Solitude</b>	<b>Meaninglessness</b>
<b>Average</b>	2,0	2,96	2,82	3,06
<b>Median</b>	2,50	3,00	2,80	3,00
<b>Standard deviation</b>	0,79	0,81	0,57	0,98
<b>Skewness</b>	0,50	0,01	0,16	0,15
<b>Kurtosis</b>	0,29	-0,34	0,23	0,68

### Findings on Students' Demographic Features

It is seen that the number of male and female participants is close to each other. Considering the departments of the students, it is seen that most of them are registered to Gastronomy and Culinary Arts departments, which is followed by Tourism Management and Tour Guiding. Number of students at the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades are close to each other but the number of students at the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is lesser compared to the others. Finally, when the students' monthly incomes are analyzed, it is seen that the numbers which have an income less than 500 TL, 501-800 TL, 801-1200 TL and 1201 and over are close to each other (Table 3).

Table 3. Students' demographic features

<b>Demographic variables</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Per cent (%)</b>
Gender	Female	123	45,7
	Male	146	54,3
Department	Tourism Management	86	32,0
	Tour Guiding	62	23,0
	Gastronomy and Culinary Arts	121	45,0
Grade	1st	83	30,9
	2nd	64	23,8
	3rd	46	17,1
	4 <sup>th</sup>	76	28,3
Monthly income	<=500 TL	75	27,9
	501-800 TL	60	22,3
	801-1200 TL	73	27,1
	>=1201 TL	61	22,7

### Findings about Differences

According to then independent t-test results, weakness dimension of alienation differs according to the gender of the student. This difference comes from the fact that men live more alienation at the

weakness dimension compared to women. Other three dimensions of alienation, normlessness, solitude and meaningfulness does not differ according to the gender of students (Table 4).

Table 4. T-test about the alienation level of students according to gender

Dimension	Gender	N	Average	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	t	P
Weakness	Female	122	2,46	0,68	266	-2,60	<b>0,01*</b>
	Male	146	2,71	0,85			
Normlessness	Female	123	2,89	0,71	267	-1,13	0,26
	Male	146	3,00	0,50			
Solitude	Female	123	2,84	0,62	267	0,62	0,53
	Male	146	2,80	0,78			
Meaninglessness	Female	122	2,99	0,95	265	4,99	0,29
	Male	145	3,12	0,99			

\* $p < ,05$

It is discovered via ANOVA that monthly income creates a meaningful difference at the alienation level of students. Those students which have incomes between  $\leq 500$  TL and  $\geq 1201$  TL experience more alienation at the meaningfulness dimension. Those students which have incomes between 501-800 TL and 801-1200 TL experience less alienation at the meaningfulness dimension. Students alienation levels at weakness, solitude and normlessness dimensions does not differentiate according to the income levels (Table 5).

Table 5. Students' level of alienation according to monthly income

Dimension	Monthly income	N	Average	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	F	p
Weakness	$\leq 500$ TL	70	2,42	0,72	3	2,33	0,07
	501-800 TL	60	2,55	0,79			
	801-1200 TL	72	2,69	0,78			
	$\geq 1201$ TL	61	2,37	0,84			
Normlessness	$\leq 500$ TL	75	2,87	0,79	3	1,65	0,17
	501-800 TL	60	2,90	0,77			
	801-1200 TL	73	2,92	0,80			
	$\geq 1201$ TL	61	3,16	0,89			
Meaninglessness	$\leq 500$ TL	74	3,00	0,89	3	4,09	<b>0,01*</b>
	501-800 TL	59	2,86	0,93			
	801-1200 TL	73	2,97	1,05			
	$\geq 1201$ TL	61	3,43	0,95			
Solitude	$\leq 500$ TL	75	2,84	0,57	3	2,41	0,06
	501-800 TL	60	2,88	0,52			
	801-1200 TL	73	2,87	0,54			
	$\geq 1201$ TL	61	2,64	0,61			

\* $p < ,05$

Again, it is found out with ANOVA that students' alienation level doesn't differentiate due to department and grade varieties. It is generally concluded that students experience medium level of alienation in all sub-dimensions of alienation, which are weakness, solitude, meaningfulness and normlessness.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Existing study is conducted to deal with the alienation phenomenon experienced in educational institutions and to define the alienation level of experienced by students at the university level. In the study, it is concluded that university students in general experience medium level alienation in all sub-dimensions of alienation, namely weakness, meaninglessness, normlessness and solitude. This result shows to be similar with the previously conducted researches (Çelik and Babaoğlu, 2017; Coşkun and Altay, 2009).

Considering each dimension of alienation, it is concluded that university students' weakness levels vary according to their gender. According to this result, male students experience more alienation at the weakness dimension compared to female students, but normlessness, solitude and meaninglessness dimensions do not differ according to gender. This outcome can be explained with the fact that implications at the educational institutions are not student-centered, in other words, lesson teaching methods cannot be restored to a student-level, activities and students' active participation to educational process are not performed commensurately. There are also researches which reveal that students' alienation level differs according to gender and male students experience more alienation compared to female students (Uzun, 2006; Ataş, 2012; Polat et al. 2015). On the other hand, the literature also includes researches that conclude that female students experience more alienation compared to male students (Bayhan, 1995).

It is determined in the research that students' meaninglessness levels differ according to their monthly incomes. Accordingly, students with the lowest and highest monthly incomes experience more alienation. It can be regarded that low-income students find school and educational life meaningless because of heading to work life and high-income students because of nightlife. Nevertheless, students' weakness, solitude and normlessness levels do not change according to their monthly income. A similar result was revealed by Uzun's study (2006) concluding that students with lower socio-economic levels experience more alienation. However, in the previous researches which took family income as a variable (Çelik and Babaoğlu, 2017; Ataş, 2012; Coşkun and Altay, 2009; Çelik, 2005), it was concluded that the alienation levels of students' do not differentiate according to the family income level.

It is discovered that weakness, normlessness and solitude levels of students make no difference according to department and grade variables. However, in other researches it was concluded that students' alienation levels differed according to their departments (Çelik and Babaoğlu, 2017; Bayhan, 1995). On the other hand, there is also a research which stated that the alienation level of students varies according to the grade levels of students. Accordingly, alienation feeling increases as the grade proceeds. This situation can be associated with students' experiences. In the first years of school, the absence of enough experience to make a healthier evaluation of the instructors and the environment may cause students to have more optimistic feelings. As the grade proceeds, this optimistic feelings may be replaced by alienation because they obtain experience that will avail them to make healthier evaluations (Çağlar, 2013).

Students exercise alienation at the weakness level more compared to other dimensions. This may be indicating that students are not happy with their schools. According to the weakness dimension, students don't believe that the knowledge they get from school does not improve them. On the other hand, students do not feel lucky to be educated at the school where they are and believe that the knowledge they get don't make any contribution to understand and interpret life. In the normlessness dimension, on the other hand students experience alienation at the medium level. According to this result, students, at the medium level, think that disciplinary regulations at school are strict and pour themselves into something in the classes not to get bored. Similarly, students experience medium



level of alienation at the solitude dimension and believe that their school mates are selfish and do not trust them. Alienation at the meaninglessness level is experienced at lower levels by students, compared to other dimensions. Hereunder activities at school doesn't feel meaningless to students and they willingly go to school.

Although the research results show consistency with the results of previous researches, it also has similarities and differences in some respects. Handling of alienation at education in a broader way is important for the educational life of students. For that reason, alienation's relationship with the students' age, relations with friends and instructors, attendance to school activities and course success must also be studied. Looking to alienation phenomenon from a broader perspective is important to understand the source of the problem and develop solutions. With reference to the findings of this research, suggestions such as creating more room for social activities for students, working on teamwork for the development of friendship relations and contribute them to develop their friendships and implementing group activities such as hobby clubs which strengthen sharing between students can be made to the faculty management.

### **Biographical Notes**

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**Appendix-1. Question Form**

<i>The purpose of this survey is to determine the alienation levels of Anadolu University Tourism Faculty students. By carefully reading the following statements, indicate your level of agreement by marking the appropriate rating option (X) in front of each statement. Please, do not leave any statement blank.</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>S1.</b> I don't know who to trust.	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S2.</b> I believe that the information I obtained from this school has improved	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S3.</b> If I knew that I would not fail the course, I would not work for courses.	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S4.</b> In order to complete the school, I feel that I have to do many things even if I do not find correct	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S5.</b> I feel so lonely at school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S6.</b> I can make more effective decisions thanks to what I learn at school.*	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S7.</b> I think that my school mates are selfish people who only think about themselves.	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S8.</b> I feel lucky for being in this school.*	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S9.</b> I feel greater confidence in myself as I spend more time at school. *	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S10.</b> I find compulsory attendance to classes unnecessary.	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S11.</b> I trust in my school mates.*	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S12.</b> I cannot find a friend at school these days, who can understand me and share my problems	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S13.</b> I think that the regulations about school discipline are very strict.	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S14.</b> I continue to school not willingly but because the conditions necessitate	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S15.</b> Although many practices at school are meaningless for me, I have to endure to graduate.	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S16.</b> I think that the knowledge gathered from school have important contribution to understand and interpret life.*	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S17.</b> I think that school restricts my freedom.	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S18.</b> I am bored to death in the class unless I find something to entertain myself.	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S19.</b> I find the rules at school meaningless.	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>S20.</b> I think that being successful at this school matters.*	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>Gender:</b> Female ( ) - Male ( ) <b>Monthly income:</b> _____ <b>Department:</b> Tourism Management( ) – Tourism Guidance ( ) – Gastronomy and Culinary Arts ( )					