

Culture and Globalisation

Evaluation of the Opinion of Incoming Students Participation in the Erasmus Exchange Programme at Selcuk University¹

Seda Cankaya²

Abstract: Erasmus Programme is one of the most visible educational programme which finance by EU. Programme was launched in 1987. For 30 years, EU has funded the Erasmus Programme, which provided over three million students to study or training opportunity in different country. Programme aims to providing new abilities, different experience, meet new culture, improving tolerance and learning different languages etc. Turkey has been a full participant in the Erasmus programme since 2004 with the establishment of National Agency. Selcuk University has participate to this programme since 2005. From 2005 Selcuk University accepted many foreign student from EU countries each semester. The purpose of this study is to analyse the practice of the Erasmus students, share experiences and opinion of the students who came from various countries. The study group consist of 55 foreign students who come to Selcuk University between 2014-2016 academic year. To understand opinion of the student's survey was applied. SPSS software programme was used to analyse the data. The results of the study show that students had positive opinion during their study and they returned back with different experience even they had to encounter some academic problems.

Keywords: Turkey; EU Education Programme; Erasmus

1. Introduction

Erasmus Programme has been implemented in European and Programme Countries. Programme aims to increase the level of tertiary education and empower the European dimension, improve higher education in whole Europe and other third countries. Programme is both supports exchanges of students and staff in higher education. Programme tries to develop theirs skills. Especially students are find

¹ This article is the expanded version of the article presented in "International Conference on Quality in Higher Education" in Sakarya University.

² PhD Candidate, Selcuk University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and Department of Public Administration, Konya Turkey, Address: Maraşal Fevzi Çakmak Mah., Selçuklu/Konya, Turkey, Tel.: +903322234472, Corresponding author: sedacankaya@selcuk.edu.tr.

opportunity to improve their foreign language skills. Beneficiary can share own experience and obtain new knowledge in this process. Both home and host countries can work together to develop their educational systems and encouraging internal cooperation (Erasmus + Programme Guide, 2016). Thanks to Erasmus Programme, higher education institutions can cooperate each other, expand their relations and enable internalization of education. Programme promotes a culture of tolerance and understanding

Erasmus is not only mobility of students but also teaching and research activities. Within the teaching and training staff mobility enable staff to release other institutions system and help to create international contact between universities (European Commission, 2008: 7). Better relations with partner University can contribute to make easy mobility of students.

Selcuk University, which began education in 1975. Now it has 67800 students, 2507 academic staff. With a population of more than 75 thousand people, including academic and administrative personnel and students. Each year 38 115 bachelor degree students 9 519 master degree students and 26 178 two years programme students are educated by Selcuk University. Total number is 73 812 (Selcuk University, 2015).

Today, having 23 faculties, 5 graduate schools, 6 schools, 22 vocational schools, 1 state conservatory it is one of the Turkey's largest university.

2. Objectives of the Erasmus + Programme

As mentioned before Erasmus Programme + is one of the European Union's education programmes in the area of higher education policy. Programme is going to be conducted between 2014 and 2020. Programme is take the place of Lifelong Learning and Youth Programmes. All these programmes are united under an umbrella programme called "ERASMUS PLUS" (Turkish National Agency Website, 2017)

It can be clearly said that programme has to basis objectives. Firstly to support the achievement of a European Area of Higher Education and secondly to reinforce the contribution of higher education and advanced vocational education with the processes of innovation (European commission, 2006)

Programme is planning to contribute to the achievement of:

- *the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy;*
- *the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020);*
- *including the corresponding benchmarks; the sustainable development of Partner Countries in the field of higher education;*
- *the overall objectives of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018);*
- *the objective of developing the European dimension in sport, in particular grassroots sport, in line with the EU work plan for sport;*
- *the promotion of European values in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union (European Commission, 2017).*

Androulla Vassiliou, who is a member of EU Commission mention about Erasmus Programme like; “Erasmus+ Programme enables young people to increase their knowledge and skills abroad. Despite the large part of the budget is going to be spent for individual mobility, Erasmus+ is going to establish partnerships to people’s transition from educational life to business life, modernize the education in the member countries, and support the reforms to improve quality of education” (Euroaktiv, 2013)

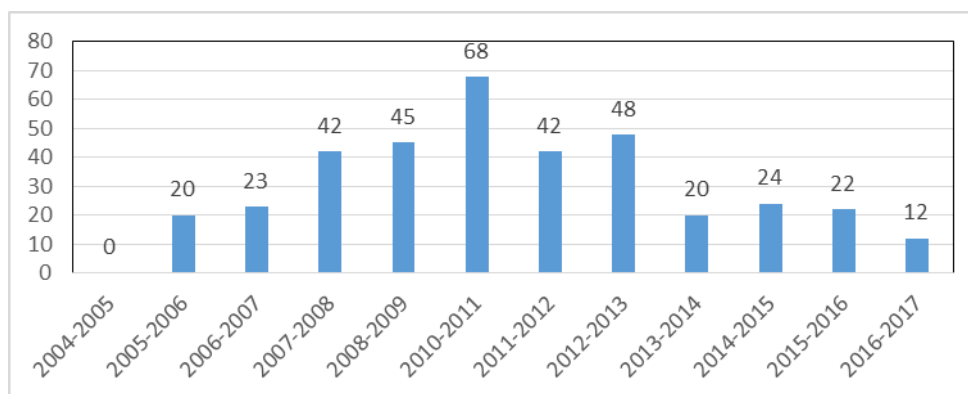
3. Erasmus Programme in Selcuk University

Since 2004, Selcuk University is a part of Erasmus Exchange Programme. Students and academic/administrative staff can benefit from this programme during the academic year. University has over 500 agreement with 27 European Union countries such as Spain, Portugal, Poland, Holland, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Romania, Hungary etc. Students come to Selcuk University mostly from Spain, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, and Italy

Since 2004, Selcuk University is a part of Erasmus Exchange Programme. Students and academic/administrative staff can benefit from this programme during the academic year. University has over 500 agreement with 27 European Union countries such as Spain, Portugal, Poland, Holland, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Romania, Hungary etc. Students come to Selcuk University mostly from Spain, Poland, Romania, Lithuania and Italy.

As you see in the graphic, Selcuk University has started to accept incoming students since 2005-2006 Academic year. Number of students is going to up till 2010-2011 academic year. But then is starting to going down. Of course there is many reason of this decrease, but the main reasons of this decrease can explain the increase of the number of universities which started to benefit Erasmus programme. And second of the reason can be say that Terrorism across all Europe and especially in Turkey cause the number of students to decrease.

Table 1. Number of Erasmus Incoming Students since 2004-2005 Academic Year



This study will try to evaluate opinion of the students about Selcuk University and try to explain what the motivation for the students while choosing Selcuk University. This study will contribute to understand student's satisfaction about Selcuk University. And give advice for new coming student in the future.

Education Process of Incoming Students

Process starts after the home institution finish the election. The election type is differ from the university. Some university only evaluate grant point average and language score, other universities also evaluate interview score beside all these.

After finalize the election, Erasmus coordination office of home university nominate students to host university. This nomination is include detail of students such as name, e mail, gender, department etc. After getting the nomination, host university contact directly with the students, give necessary information and send the official documents such as Application Form and Learning Agreement. After filled Application Form by students, Host university send acceptance letter which

include period of study.

After students received the acceptance letters, they have to prepare and send the Learning agreement contact with departmental coordinator of home and host university. Students has to take minimum 30 ECTS credits for each semester. All courses should be written on Learning Agreement. It helps recognition of student's studies after they return. After starts the mobility orientation week organize by Erasmus office. The aim of the orientation week to make easy adaptation of student in new environment.

Giving necessary information about Host University is also important point of this meeting. Students inform about campus life, city and residence permit. Erasmus coordination office generally organize city tour, Welcome dinner and various event. Erasmus coordination office help student's problems during their stay. Students have opportunity to change (delete and add), their courses with some reason. Before student leave, Erasmus coordinator office of Host University provide certificate of attendance and Transcript of Records.

4. Method

Surveys were made with the use of questionnaires. Total number of students are 55.

This students come to Selcuk University within Erasmus exchange programme. Data were collected over the period 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 academic year.

A questionnaire was implemented to evaluate satisfaction, feeling, attitudes, opinion, expectation, and knowledge of the incoming students who came from different countries to Selcuk University framework of the Erasmus + Programme. 25 students were from the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, 17 students were from the Faculty of Engineering, 5 students were from Faculty of Letter, 8 students were from Faculty of Agriculture. Scale was formed as Not at all (1), Bad (2), Good (3), Very Good (4), Excellent (5).

One question is grading scale from 1 to 3 which evaluates the level of satisfaction of their Erasmus stay in Selcuk University. Scale was formed as a quite pleased (1), pleased (2), not pleased (3).

One question is grading scale from 1 to 3 which evaluates student's opinion, if they would like to come again or not.

One question is grading scale from 1 to 3 which evaluates to student's opinion, if they would recommend to the others to participation Erasmus at Selcuk University come.

The Student's Personal Data

Most of the students who attend the survey is female, single and aged between 21 and 25. They mostly have been abroad before and their language skill is good enough.

%52.7 (29) of all students were male, 47, 3 (26) of all students were female. Students came from Spain, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Germany, and Italy.

5. Finding and Comments

As you see in the first figure there is tried to evaluate student's satisfaction level at Selcuk University. The questions are about academic quality of education, courses, competencies and expertise of the teachers, variety of courses, course contents, improving your knowledge and skills, Turkish language course (content, methodology), and Erasmus staff.

The findings belonging to the questions as follow, only 7.3% (4 students) of all students opinion are negative, and % 92.8 (51 students) of all students opinion are positive. Most of the students are not satisfied with academic quality of education.

Language can be a quite important problem for students who are study in abroad. Same department of students participate in courses that they are not able to understand (Lipowski, 2012, p. 1). Because courses are not taught in English by teachers.

The finding regarding questions of courses taught in English is not too bad. Because only %20 (11 students) all students opinion are negative. %80 (44 students) of all students stated that they had no trouble about courses taught in English. And %20 (11 students) of all students don't see enough variety of courses. And the rest %80 (44 students) of all see enough.

As we mention before aims of the Erasmus + programme are improve knowledge and skills, provide new abilities, different experience and meet new cultures. Finding regarding this issue is showed that %89.1(49 students) of all students opinions served this aim. %89.1 (49 students) of all student though that they

improved their knowledge and skills while took part in Erasmus +Programme at Selcuk University.

Erasmus + programme enables people to meet new culture. One of the main cultural item is language. Erasmus students who come to study at Selcuk University can find opportunity to join free Turkish language course. Students opinion about Turkish class is differ. While %21.8 (12 students) of all students are not satisfied, %78.2 (43 students) of all students are satisfied.

Erasmus coordination office provides a link between students and department coordinator. Also Erasmus Office contact with the home institution to successfully complete the process of the mobility. The opinions of student's regarding the satisfaction about the Erasmus staff before, during and after the mobility are positive. No one students have negative idea. 100% (55 students) of all students are satisfied.

It is demonstrated in figure 1, the lowest score was received about courses. One of the reason could be that teacher are not able to give lecturer as an English language. Some departments have only Turkish class and students has to take project in order to pass the classes. The variety of courses didn't appear very high in relation to other statements. %20 (11 students) of all students thought it was not satisfaction factor for them.

	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Bad</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Academic quality of education</i>	-	7,3	40,00	25,5	27,3
<i>Courses taught in English</i>	10,9	10,9	38,2	38,2	18,2
<i>Variety of courses</i>	12,7	7,3	36,4	27,3	16,4
<i>Improving your knowledge and skills</i>	-	10,9	23,6	36,4	29,1
<i>Turkish language course (content, methodology)</i>	10,9	10,9	20,0	34,5	23,6
<i>Erasmus staff</i>	-	-	10,9	40,0	49,1

Figure 1. How satisfied were you with the followings at Selcuk University?

At the second figure we tried to understand student's motivating reasons for participating Erasmus mobility at Selcuk University. Some factors such as cultural experience, practice of foreign language, living abroad, wonder about Turkey, meeting new people and career plans are assessed by students. We understood from the result to gain cultural experience positively motivating students to come Selcuk University Turkey has own traditional culture compering

with the western countries. Therefore students generally prefer to Turkey in order to meet new culture and experience. %100 (55 students) of all students choose Turkey to gain cultural experience. Career plans motives seem to be less important for the students when they chose Selcuk University.

Factors such as living abroad and gaining cultural experience, practice of foreign language, wondering about Turkey meeting new are motivate students to choose Turkey as a destination. Career plans didn't appear very high when it compared with other factors. %7.3 (4 students) of all students don't think that Erasmus in Turkey don't contribute to their career development. Nonetheless %92.7 (51 students) of all students thought it was an important motivation factor for them.

	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Bad</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Cultural experience</i>	-	-	12,7	38,2	49,1
<i>Practice of foreign language</i>	-	1,8	25,5	36,4	36,4
<i>Living abroad</i>	-	-	21,8	34,5	43,6
<i>Wonder about Turkey</i>	-	-	10,9	29,1	60
<i>Meeting new people</i>	-	-	27,3	27,3	45,5
<i>Career Plans</i>	-	7,3	38,2	21,8	32,7

Figure 2. Please rank the factors which motivated you to participation Erasmus at Selcuk University?

Questionnaire of Figure 3 tried to evaluate student's opinion after mobility. It is clearly understood, before students came opinion of the %14, 6 (8 students) of all students were negative about Turkey and after they come, it changed positively. %85 (47students) of all students though that Turkey was much better than they was expecting. All students agreed that Erasmus experience at Selcuk University contributed to their personal development. %7.3 of all students are think that Erasmus don't contribute to their career development. And quite number of students accept that contribution of Erasmus programme to their career development. But it is demonstrated that personal development seems to appear more efficient for the students than career development.

	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Bad</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Turkey was much better than I was expecting</i>	5,5	9,1	14,5	12,7	58,2
<i>Erasmus contributed to my personal development</i>	-	-	27,3	27,3	45,5
<i>Erasmus contribute to my career development</i>	5,5	1,8	34,5	23,6	34,5

Figure 3. After I experienced Erasmus in Turkey

Figure 4 aims at analysing the level of satisfaction about offering facilities. Selcuk University has one of the first Erasmus house in Turkey. Erasmus house provides accommodation to incoming students and staff for affordable price. It is located in the campus. Erasmus incoming students are quite pleased to stay all together in this house. %78.2(43 students) of all students are satisfied from this facilities. %21.8 (12 students) of them don't satisfied from Erasmus house during their stay in Konya. One of the main reason that make students unsatisfied is internet connection. Students mostly mentioned about this problem during their stay.

General idea of students about library is positive. Only %12.7 (7 students) of all students don't satisfied from this facilities.

Konya is one of the most conservative, religious city in Turkey. Before come, most of students have known this tradition. Student's life, social and cultural activities don't look like western university's life. Therefore the first impression after arriving to Konya was often negative. But it was changing during their study in Turkey. On the one hand some of student's didn't keep up with this life after they come, On the other hand most of people accept this feature as a cultural structure and they had various memories after they returned. Erasmus student network which is mostly consist of outgoing Erasmus students organise a trip and some event to offer good time for them. Generally students didn't have any problems with adaptation to living in Konya/Turkey. Only %12.8 (7 students) of all students stated that they don't satisfied.

Turkey is the safest and most stable country for students, when compared other countries in the region. As we understood from the result, students opinion about Turkey are support this idea. %96.4 (53 students) of all students thought that Turkey as a safe country. Most of student have been many touristic places all

around Turkey and some Middle East countries such as Kuwait and Israel by hitchhiking. Hitchhiking is one of the cheapest way of travelling for them. In addition most of students stated that it's safest way for travelling in Turkey and around.

All students have opportunity to eat student's cafeteria. Cafeteria provides students both lunch and dinner. IT cost 2 TL (~50 cent). Students get fun with cheapest and traditional meal at cafeteria. It can be seen from the result. All students are satisfied from restaurants.

Almost all students are satisfied with computer service and medical service. Selcuk University has hospital near the Erasmus house 1 in the campus. Students has opportunity to get easily to hospital when they need it.

The student's opinion about internet service can easily see from the result. %29.1 (16 student) of all students are not satisfied.

	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Ba d</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Erasmus House</i>	-	21,8	36,4	16,4	25,5
<i>Library</i>	-	12,7	36,4	34,5	16,4
<i>Social and Cultural Activities</i>	5,5	7,3	43,6	20,0	23,6
<i>Security</i>	-	3,6	30,9	21,8	43,6
<i>Restaurants</i>	-	-	25,5	43,6	30,9
<i>Computer Centre</i>	-	1,8	47,3	30,9	20,0
<i>Medical Services</i>	-	-	41,8	32,7	25,5
<i>Internet Services</i>	1,8	27,3	43,6	16,4	10,9

Figure 4. Level of satisfaction about facilities at Selcuk University

Figure 5 showed that how much assistance/support students received from their personal and academic environment. As we understood, Turkish friends, Erasmus friends, friends outside, teacher and Erasmus staff support students. From the questions, we found out that our students are very well informed from their environment in every aspect. Students didn't encounter any problem in adaptation of education system and culture. They contacted easily with their coordinator and teacher. Only %12.7 (7 students) of all students stated that department coordinator don't support them.

Especially Turkish students who took part in Erasmus exchange programme were help to make them easy in adaptation to Konya. They try to help them any problem that they encounter during their stay in Konya.

	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Bad</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Turkish friends at Selcuk</i>	-	-	14,5	43,6	41,8
<i>Erasmus friends</i>	-	-	27,3	25,5	47,3
<i>Friends outside</i>	-	-	16,7	50,0	33,3
<i>Teachers</i>	-	-	-	40,0	67,3
<i>My department coordinator</i>	-	12,7	10,9	41,8	34,5
<i>Erasmus Staff</i>	-	-	7,3	41,8	51

Figure 5. How much assistance/support you received from your personnel and academic environment?

At the Figure 6, we wanted students to compare academic quality of home and host institutions %14, 5(8 students) of all Erasmus students believed that their academic quality was better at their home university. %23, 6 (13 students) of all Erasmus students stated that academic quality was better at the host university. A significant proportion of students %58, 2 (32 students) thought that academic quality was equivalent, When compared with host and home university.

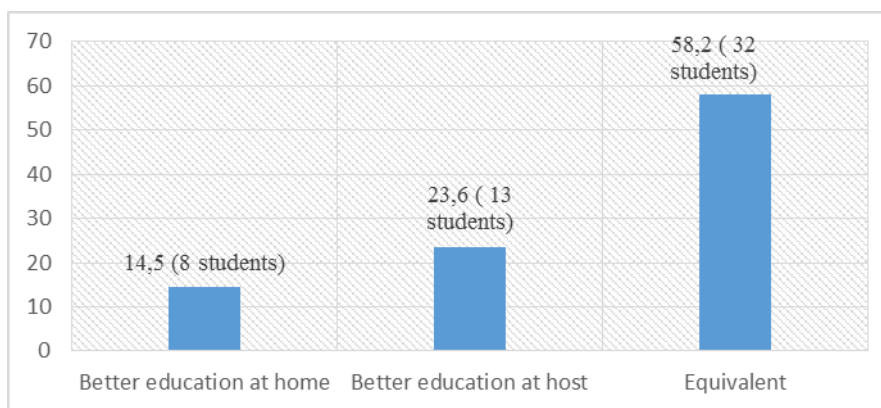


Figure 6. When comparing the education system between the home university and the host University, how did you find the latter?

They were asked to students that what extent they pleased to study at Selcuk University. %53.7 (29 students) of all students stated that they were quite pleased. Only 3 students didn't pleased during their study at Selcuk University.

Finally they were asked students “If you had the chance to decide again about my Erasmus place, I would have prefer to study at Selcuk University”. Most of the students wants to come back as Erasmus students. Also many students would like to recommend to the other friends to participation Erasmus at Selcuk.

6. Conclusion

This article aimed to analyse motivation of Erasmus students, who came to study one or two semester at Selcuk University. It also give us information, why students choose to study at Selcuk University. Motivation factors of the students are changeable. The most main reasons for choosing Selcuk University were to live abroad, wonder about Turkey and cultural experience. Other factors are also obtained high rating.

In general we understood from the findings:

- Incoming Erasmus students have positive opinion about Selcuk University. Even though, students don't encounter any trouble during their stay, some factors especially courses are effect negatively their opinion about Selcuk University. Therefore to come up with this problem, courses thought English should be flexible and variety of courses should be increased by teachers.
- Students were most satisfied with the student cafeteria and medical services. Least satisfiying factors were courses, social and cultural activities and internet services at the dormitory. Erasmus coordination office and theachers should cooperate together and orrganise an event for students. In addition Turkish students can get involved personally with the students to increase motivation. To solve internet problem in Erasmus House, Officers should reinform and press to authorities until make a progress.
- Students easly contact with the turkish friends, erasmus friends, friends outside, theacher and erasmus staff. All this people help students in the adaptation process.
- Students opinion about Turkey changed positively after finalize the mobility.
- Students' most important motives for going abroad were meet new culture and people.
- Students would like to come again Selcuk university Because of good memories.

- Students recommend Selcuk University to other students.

7. References

European Commission (2016). Erasmus + Programme Guide, version 2.

Selcuk University (2015). <http://www.selcuk.edu.tr/>.

Endes, Y. Zühal, (2015). Overseas Education Process Of Outgoing Students Within The Erasmus Exchange Programme. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Volume 174, pp. 1408–1414 Paris.

EU Commission What are the objectives and important features of the Erasmus+ Programme?<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:327:0045:0068:en:PDF> (17.07.2017).

Euroaktif (2013). Erasmusa Katilim Rekor Kirdi, 9 Temmuz. <http://www.euractiv.com.tr/6/article/erasmusa-katilim-rekor-kirdi-028081> (Accessed: 25.12.2013).

Euroaktif (2013). Erasmus AB butcesinin kazananlari Erasmus+ ve Ufuk.

Erasmus + Programme, <http://www.ua.gov.tr/programlar/erasmusprogram%C4%B1> 17.07.2017.

Berg, Vera (2014). Evaluation of the Outcome of European Students-Teachers' Participation in the Erasmus Exchange Programme (2008-2011). A Survey of Students' Knowledge, Thoughts and Feelings before and after their Erasmus Exchange. *Journal of the European Teacher Education Network* 2014, Vol. 9, 33-45.