

Organized Social and Cultural Activities in Academic Libraries: A Study from Türkiye

Ali Kavak and Ayşe Feride Kop

abstract: This study aims to examine the effects on users of social and cultural activities organized in academic libraries. In the study, randomly selected users from academic libraries in Türkiye were surveyed and the data obtained were analyzed using a descriptive statistical method. The findings show that library activities have positive effects on the participants, increase the sense of belonging to the library, and facilitate the integration of students into the university community. The study also shows that the activities helped the library to be perceived not only as a place providing information services, but also as a social and cultural center. These results emphasize that academic libraries should give importance to such activities to increase social impact and user satisfaction.

Introduction

Libraries have long been regarded as indispensable centers for knowledge acquisition and dissemination. They have traditionally functioned as repositories of books, journals, and other information resources. In recent years, however, the role of academic libraries has expanded beyond the traditional scope. College and university libraries are transforming into dynamic spaces that foster social cohesion through various community and cultural activities. This transformation reflects the understanding of libraries as multifaceted institutions that contribute to the intellectual and social fabric of culture.

The transformation of libraries into community-centered spaces is not a new phenomenon. Historically, libraries have played key roles in community building and cultural preservation. However, the modern perception of libraries as vibrant gathering spaces has gained momentum in the last few decades. This shift is partly due to technological developments and the changing information needs of users. According to Svanhild Aabø and Ragnar Audunson, public libraries have increasingly taken on

the role of cultural activities by providing meeting points and spaces for public debate, a trend that has also become true for academic libraries.¹

Academic libraries have embraced this expanded role, particularly to meet the diverse needs of academic communities. According to Lisa M. Given and Lianne McTavish, academic libraries are taking a more proactive stance to create opportunities for social interaction and learning outside the traditional academic framework. This includes organizing workshops, seminars, film screenings and cultural exhibitions, which not only enrich the academic environment but also strengthen the sense of community among students, faculty, and staff.²

The social model discussed by Ali Kavak and Hüseyin Odabaş positions libraries as 'third spaces' that provide a vital social function beyond their educational role.³ This model is supported by Jeffrey T. Gayton and Olaf Eigenbrodt who argue that libraries should adapt to changing user needs by adding social spaces and functions.⁴ Joanna Bryant, Graham Matthews and Graham Walton provide empirical evidence of the success of this model in academic settings where open plan spaces facilitate academic and social activities.⁵

As Sema Yıldız suggests, the integration of regular, community-orientated activities supports the social model by promoting lifelong learning and social integration.⁶ This approach is in line with the importance of understanding user needs and preferences, emphasized by Elizabeth Andrews.⁷

In addition to their role as information centers, academic libraries are increasingly taking on roles as social and cultural centers and are organizing a variety of activities to influence the academic units and communities of their affiliated universities. Despite the growing acceptance of these initiatives, there is limited systematic research investigating how such activities are perceived and influenced by users. This study fills this gap by examining the impact of social and cultural activities organized by academic libraries on library users.

In particular, this study examines how activities organized in libraries create a sense of belonging in participants, affect user integration into the library, and change their perception of the library as a social meeting place. In this respect, the study utilizes a systematic questionnaire developed by the researchers, which aims to collect information from the primary source (users). The following research questions were answered using the data obtained from the questionnaire administered to the participants:

- How often do users visit academic libraries and what are their purposes for using the library?
- Are users aware of the social and cultural activities organized by academic libraries and how often do they participate in these activities?
- Which types of social and cultural activities are users interested in?
- Through which channels do users learn about library activities?
- Are users satisfied with library activities?
- Do library activities make users feel closer to the library?
- Are users satisfied with library activities?

By addressing these research questions, the researchers aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role and impact of social and cultural activities in academic libraries.



Given the increasing competition for university students' time and interests, this research is important to measure the adequacy of libraries in meeting students' needs. Today, students have access to a wide range of information and entertainment options both online and offline. Therefore, academic libraries need to keep up to date by offering programs and services that meet the evolving demands and preferences of their users. By examining students' perceptions and experiences of library activities, this study aims to provide recommendations that will contribute to improving the service quality of libraries and strengthening their role as community centers.

Literature Review

Today's libraries are undergoing a significant transformation from mere repositories of information to social and cultural centers. This new functionality emphasizes the ability of libraries to increase their interaction with communities and respond to the diverse needs of users.

Libraries are strengthening their place in the community as social and cultural centers. Bryant, Matthews and Walton, in their study of Loughborough University Library, noted that the open plan areas of libraries are popular for both academic and social activities. This study emphasizes the capacity of libraries to create environments that support collaborative and individual learning.⁸ Similarly, Kavak and Odabaş state that libraries expand their role in the community by providing social, cultural and educational services as 'third spaces'.⁹

Eigenbrodt and Gayton also emphasize the need for libraries to create spaces that encourage social interaction.¹⁰ Gayton, in particular, argues that traditional library use is declining with the increasing use of electronic resources, but that spaces for social functions can offset this trend.¹¹ Michelle Demeter, Rachel Besara, Gloria Colvin, and Bridgett Birmingham discuss the advantages and disadvantages of libraries' events, depending on whether they are large-scale or small-scale, and argue that these events need to be balanced in order to appeal to different user groups. Large-scale events provide opportunities for broad participation and long-term interaction, while small-scale events offer a more intimate and personalized environment.¹² In this context, the design of library spaces is an important element in supporting social and academic interactions.

Libraries' efforts to increase community engagement are directly related to the variety of activities they offer and their strategies for creating social spaces. Adebowale Jeremy Adetayo, Florence Onyeisi Otonekwu and Olabisi Fadeke Adesina emphasize that libraries can increase interaction among students by offering social spaces and activities.¹³ Andrews provided insights into the challenges of attracting participants to library events, showing that innovative marketing efforts do not always lead to the desired participation. Since students and faculty are often busy with other commitments, it is important to take a strategic approach to increase attendance at events.¹⁴ Yıldız states that public libraries play a critical role as spaces for lifelong learning and social integration. She argues that regular events are important in attracting users and suggests that libraries should organize community-oriented activities.¹⁵

Innovative services and activities play an important role in enriching the user experience of libraries. Huriye Çolaklar stated that the development of innovative



services by university libraries in Türkiye creates a strong sense of belonging among users.¹⁶ Viktoriia Dobrovolska, Lyudmila Cherednyk, and Yuliia Hunchenko state that virtual exhibitions, online tours and other digital activities make libraries socio-cultural centers.¹⁷ The study by Lucía Camargo-Rojas shows that academic libraries 'initiatives to promote recreational reading positively affect students' academic performance and sense of belonging to the university.¹⁸

Katie Teresa Kukiolczynski, and Yan Quan Liu emphasized that the number of programmers and events organized in public libraries has steadily increased in recent years, highlighting the capacity of these events to bring communities together and promote social cohesion.¹⁹ Armando Vimrcati, Aldo Pirola, and Ece Dünder, in "Come! I'll See You in the Library," noted how activities such as theatre, visual arts and storytelling encourage social interaction. Such activities increase users' interaction with the library by diversifying the services that libraries offer.²⁰

Studies focusing on their role in education have highlighted the importance of libraries' support for students. Irene Lopatovska, and Mariana Regalado investigated how students use library spaces for academic and non-academic activities. The environments provided by libraries for such activities strengthen student interaction and the bond with the library.²¹ Tara Brady, Camille Salas, Ayah Nuriddin, Walter Rodgers, and Mega Subramaniam stated that makerspace activities in libraries encourage creativity.²² Similarly, Tammy Woodward and Sarah Timm argue that financial literacy programmers meet a broad community need.²³

Community events, combined with libraries' social responsibility projects, increase user engagement. Herb Landau and Heather Sharpe emphasize that events such as art auctions held in public libraries increase community engagement. Such events expand the social functions of libraries and strengthen the commitment of users to the library.²⁴

In conclusion, the literature on the social, cultural and educational roles of libraries reinforces the indispensable position of these institutions in modern societies. The diversification of services and activities offered by libraries increases users' interaction with the library and contributes to their academic and social development. This literature provides a valuable framework for better understanding the evolution of libraries and their importance in society.

Method

Research Model

This study was conducted using the survey model to examine the effects on library users of social and cultural activities organized in academic libraries. The survey model is a research design that aims to describe the current situation and systematically reveal the opinions and attitudes of the participants.²⁵ This model is suitable for collecting data from a large group of participants and analyzing these data to determine general trends and relationships.

Working Group

The participants of this study consist of individuals who use academic libraries in Türkiye. The study group was selected through random sampling and included library users

from various universities. This wide range of participants provides a comprehensive perspective on the activities at different academic libraries. In total, 596 library users (307 women and 289 men) comprised the study group. This group was asked through a questionnaire survey to evaluate the services and activities of academic libraries. The participants' responses reflect the views and experiences of library users at various universities, increasing the generalizability of the study's findings.

The higher education system in Türkiye has undergone rapid growth and transformation in recent years. As of 2024, there are 208 universities in the country and over 7 million students are studying in these universities. This research includes students studying at associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels at universities in cities (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Samsun, Kırıkkale, Erzurum, Eskişehir, Muğla, Antalya, Adana, Konya, and so on) selected from different regions of Türkiye and in which the researchers are located. This selection aims to reflect the geographical and cultural diversity of Türkiye.

An important feature of the higher education system in Türkiye is the coexistence of public and foundation universities. Both types of universities are represented in this study. Seventy-three percent of the participants were from state universities and 27 percent were from foundation universities. This distribution is in line with the general university distribution in Türkiye. In addition, 26 percent of the participants were associate degree students, 58 percent were undergraduate students and 16 percent were graduate students. In terms of academic disciplines, 48 percent of the participants are studying in social sciences, 34 percent in science and engineering, 18 percent in health sciences.

Data Collection Tool and Analysis Management

The researchers developed a questionnaire to collect data about participants' library activities. The questionnaire development process was guided by the literature review and expert opinions. The questionnaire form was first tested in a pilot study with a group of 103 students and finalized after necessary corrections were made.

In the questionnaire, there are 11 selected questions to collect demographic information of the participants—how often and for what purposes they use the library, whether they are aware of library activities, how often they participate in these activities, what kind of social and cultural activities they are interested in, and how they evaluate the effects of the activities on their sense of belonging to the library and perception of the library as a social meeting place (see Appendix). The collected data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. In the analysis process, descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used to reveal the general profiles and library usage habits of the participants. Descriptive analyses were conducted to answer the research questions, and the findings obtained through these analyses were used to examine the participants' perceptions of library activities in detail.

Ethical Principles and Limitations

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical rules and approval was obtained from the ethics committee of the university where the researchers worked. Voluntary participation of the participants was ensured, and their anonymity was protected. The data were used only for research purposes and were not shared with third parties. While



preparing the questionnaire form, the personal rights of the participants were respected, and care was taken not to collect sensitive information.

The limitations of this study include the limited generalizability of the data obtained since the sample is limited to certain universities. In addition, the data obtained through the questionnaire are based on the subjective evaluations of the participants and this may affect the objectivity of the findings.

This methodological framework aims to systematically examine the effects on library users of social and cultural activities organized in academic libraries and to reveal how these activities shape user experiences.

Results

Frequency and Purpose of Users' Visits to The Library

The researchers sought to determine how often, and for what purpose, individuals visit the library. The data in Table 1 and Table 2 present the reported frequency of visits and the purpose of using the library. These data can help to identify the levels of participation and potential reach of library activities.

The data on the frequency of library visits show that most of the participants visit the library regularly. While 37.37 percent of the participants visit the library several times a month, 26.26 percent visit the library several times a week. While 8.08 percent visit the library every day, 19.69 percent visit the library every few months. The proportion of study participants who reported that they never visit the library is 8.58 percent. These data show that there is a wide range of users who regularly participate in library activities at universities and that the potential reach of these activities is wide.

When users' purposes for going to the library are analyzed, it is seen that the most common one is to study (24.04 percent). This is followed by preparing for exams (18.35 percent) and doing research (16.51 percent). Other academic activities such as reading books (12.84 percent) and using computer and internet services (8.62 percent) are also important purposes of library use. Social purposes such as socializing (4.95 percent) and participating in activities (5.51 percent) were mentioned at lower rates. Libraries are also used or intended to be used for leisure (8.26 percent) and for a variety of other and personalized activities, such as group work and project meetings, consulting with staff, and language studies (0.92 percent). The survey also collected other participants' opinions regarding the purposes for which they use the library and suggestions for further improvement of library services.

These data suggest that academic libraries not only fulfill students' academic needs but also provide an important space for social interaction and personal development. The frequency of the study participants' library visits reveals that users regularly access library activities and that these activities potentially appeal to a wide range of users. In addition to serving the academic needs of students, such as study and research, libraries also play an important role through social activities and other activities. These findings highlight the need for academic libraries to tailor their programs and services to the needs and preferences of their users.



Table 1.

Reported frequency of visits to the academic libraries

How often do you visit the academic libraries?	Frequency	Percent (%)
Every day	48	8.08
Several times a week	156	26.26
Several times a month	222	37.37
Every few months	117	19.69
I never go	51	8.58
Total	594	100.00

Table 2.

Purposes of using the academic libraries.

For what purposes do you use the library?	Frequency	Percent (%)
Studying	393	24.04
Conducting research	270	16.51
Preparation for exams	300	18.35
Reading a book	210	12.84
Socialising	81	4.95
Attending activities	90	5.51
To benefit from computer and internet services	141	8.62
Spending your free time	135	8.26
Other	15	0.92
Total	1635*	100.00

* Since it is a multiple-choice question, the total number is greater than the number of participants as a result of the participants marking more than one option.

Level of Awareness of and Participation in Library Activities

Study participants were asked about their awareness of the social and cultural activities organized by the academic libraries and how often they participate in these activities. The data collected for this research question are presented in Table 3. Awareness and participation rates are important for evaluating the effectiveness of event promotion strategies and identifying potential barriers to participation.



Table 3.

Level of awareness and participation in academic libraries activities

Articles	Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Are you aware of the social/cultural activities organized in your academic libraries?	Yes	520	87.54
	No	74	12.46
	Total	594	100.00
How often do you attend activities in your academic libraries?	Never participated	85	14.31
	I rarely participate	166	27.95
	Sometimes I participate	147	24.75
	I usually participate	112	18.86
	I always attend	84	14.14
	Total	594	100.00

When the data in Table 3 are analyzed, it is seen that most of the respondents (87.54 percent) are aware of the social and cultural activities organized by the academic libraries. This shows that the libraries' promotional strategies are generally effective. However, it should be noted that approximately 12.46 percent of the respondents were not aware of the activities. It may be useful to review the promotion channels for these users or to investigate alternative methods.

In terms of the frequency of participation in the library activities, 27.95 percent of the participants rarely participated, and 24.75 percent sometimes participated. However, 18.86 percent of the study participants usually attended, while 14.14 percent stated that they always did. On the other hand, 14.31 percent stated that they never participate in library social and cultural activities. These data suggest that a significant portion of users do not regularly participate in library activities. To increase participation rates, the content and format of activities should be revised in accordance with user interests and expectations, and event promotion should be improved. It is also important to investigate why some users never attend events and to identify and eliminate potential barriers. These barriers may arise from factors such as event timing, location, content or lack of promotion.

From a strategic perspective, these findings emphasize that academic libraries should continue their promotional efforts but should also investigate and address the factors that inhibit participation. Possible strategies may include conducting needs assessments to better understand the interests of the academic community, accommodating diverse schedules by offering activities at different times, and using targeted communication and feedback mechanisms to increase the perceived value of activities.

Although the high rate of awareness of social and cultural activities in academic libraries is a positive indicator, additional studies should be carried out to identify ways to increase participation rates. The goal of this increase should not be an absolute percentage, but rather to strengthen the library's role in the community and increase the value offered to users. Efforts to increase attendance rates should make efficient use of available resources and balance potential benefits with costs. In this regard, libraries can conduct a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis when planning events and assess the long-term sustainability of increased attendance.

Types of Activities of Interest in Libraries

Table 4 presents data that addresses the question of what type of social and cultural activities library users are interested in. Understanding user preferences for specific types of activities can help tailor event programming to user interest.

The data in Table 4 show that author or artist meetings (13.66 percent), interviews and panels (13.44 percent) and science and technology interviews (12.72 percent) are among the most preferred activities. Sustainability and environmental activities (10.62 percent) and art exhibitions or photography workshops (9.75 percent) are also among the highly preferred activities.

Table 4.
Types of social and cultural activities that library users are interested in

Which types of social and cultural activities are you interested in at the library?	Frequency	Percent (%)
Author / Artist Meetings	378	13.66
Interviews and Panels	372	13.44
Science and Technology Talks	352	12.72
Sustainability and Environmental Activities	294	10.62
Art Exhibitions / Photography Workshops	270	9.75
Seminar / Service training	222	8.02
Film Screenings and Discussions	222	8.02
Music / Theatre Performances	198	7.15
Workshop	164	5.92
Chess / Board Games Tournaments	150	5.42
Writing Workshops	134	4.84
Other	12	0.43
Total	2768*	100

* Since it is a multiple choice question, the total number is greater than the number of participants as a result of the participants marking more than one option.



On the other hand, users show less interest in seminars or in-service training (8.02 percent), film screenings and discussions (8.02 percent), music or theatre performances (7.15 percent), workshops (5.92 percent), chess or board games tournaments (5.42 percent) and writing workshops (4.84 percent). Activities with low interest such as yoga and meditation classes, storytelling activities, and project activities are included in the "Other" category.

These data show that the types of events that users are most interested in are author and artist meetings, interviews and panels, and science and technology interviews. This may be due to the overlap of these activities with users' academic pursuits and personal interests. It may also reflect users' expectations of academic libraries as centers of intellectual and cultural interaction. The library's unique location on campus may make such activities attractive to users seeking opportunities for learning and interaction outside the classroom. In addition, other events offered across campus may also influence users' preferences and make the library a special venue for such specific events.

These findings highlight the importance of user feedback in the planning of library activities and will contribute to the creation of more targeted and effective programs based on users' interests.

Channels for Learning About Library Activities

The data in Table 5 present user responses related to the research question, "Through which channels do users learn about library activities?" Understanding the most effective communication channels is important for improving event promotion and increasing attendance.

Table 5.
Channels for learning about library activities

Which of the following channels do you use to learn about library activities?	Frequency	Percent (%)
Library website	258	16.73
Related social media pages	288	18.68
Poster-brochures	324	21.01
Friends	288	18.68
E-mail/SMS notifications	300	19.46
Library staff	66	4.28
Other	18	1.17
Total	1542*	100.00

* Since it is a multiple-choice question, the total number is greater than the number of participants as a result of the participants marking more than one option

The data show that users learn about library activities primarily through posters and brochures (21.01 percent), e-mail or SMS notifications (19.46 percent) and social media (18.68 percent). Communication with friends (18.68 percent) also stands out as an important source of information. The library website (16.73percent) and library staff (4.28 percent) are among the less preferred channels.

These results reveal the importance of library management's use of multiple channels for event promotion. In addition to traditional methods such as posters and brochures, e-mails and SMS, social media seems to have an increasing role. In addition, the influence of friends' circles in disseminating event information should not be ignored.

Library management should use these multiple channels effectively to increase event participation and develop communication strategies that are appropriate for their target audiences. For example, since the use of social media is more common among young people, activities can be promoted more actively on these platforms. It is also important that library staff actively promote activities and inform users. The use of multiple communication channels and the tailoring of these channels to target audiences will enable library activities to reach a wider audience and increase participation.

Satisfaction of Users with Library Activities

In this section, the answer to the research question "Are users satisfied with library activities?" is explored. The data that address this research question are presented in Table 6. Understanding the satisfaction levels of users is important to evaluating the quality of activities and the extent to which the activities respond to user needs.

Table 6.
Level of satisfaction with library activities.

What is your general level of satisfaction with the activities in libraries?	Frequency	Percent (%)
I'm not satisfied at all	89	17.49
Somewhat satisfied	158	31.04
I am very satisfied	262	51.47
Total	89	17.49

More than half of the 509 library users (51.47 percent) who participated in library activities stated that they were “very satisfied” with the activities organized in the academic libraries. However, 31.04 percent of the participants stated that they were “somewhat satisfied” with the activities. The fact that 17.49 percent of the participants stated that they were ‘not at all satisfied’ with the activities organized in academic libraries indicates that there are some problems in terms of user satisfaction. This finding suggests that library administrations should review their event planning, conduct detailed research to better understand user needs, and develop user-oriented approaches to increase satisfaction levels. The activities should be reviewed continuously in order to improve the activities and appeal to a wider user base.

Library Activities Bring Users Closer to The Library

Table 7 presents data related to the question of whether library activities make attendees feel closer to the library. Understanding whether users’ participation in activities strengthens their ties with the library is important for evaluating the social and cultural impact of library activities.

Table 7.
The effect of library activities on users’ feeling of relationship to the library

Does participating in social/cultural activities in the library make you feel closer to the library?	Frequency	Percent (%)
Definitely yes	315	61.89
Partially	186	36.54
No	8	1.57
Total	509	100.00

61.89 percent of the study participants stated that the library activities “definitely” made them feel closer to the library. In addition, 36.54 percent of the participants stated that the activities made them feel “somewhat” closer to the library. These data suggest that the library activities had a positive impact on most of the participants (98.43 percent) and helped them feel a closer connection to the library. The activities make users feel that the library is not only an academic resource center, but also a social and cultural center.

On the other hand, only 1.57 percent of the participants stated that library activities did not make them feel close to the library. However, the views of this small group should be considered, and activities should be organized to appeal to all users.

In conclusion, social and cultural activities organized by the academic libraries significantly increase the feeling of closeness of most users to the library and emphasize that the library is not only an information center, but also a social and cultural center. Therefore, it is recommended that the library management give importance to event planning and continuously improve the activities according to user feedback.

The Effect of Library Activities on Social Integration

This section addresses the question of whether library activities affect students' sense of belonging (see Table 8). These data are important in terms of evaluating the impact of library activities on student social integration to the library and university.

Table 8.

The effect of library activities on students' adjustment to the library and the university

Articles	Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Does participating in library activities positively affect your sense of belonging to the library?	It affects at a high level	229	44.99
	Slightly affecting	217	42.63
	It does not have an impact	48	9.43
	No opinion	15	2.95
	Total	594	100.00
Do the activities in the library facilitate students' integration and sense of belonging to the university?	It facilitates at a high level	241	47.35
	It makes it a bit easier	194	38.11
	It does not make it easier	35	6.88
	No opinion	39	7.66
	Total	594	100.00

The data show that 44.99 percent of the study participants stated that library activities "highly affected" their sense of belonging and 42.63 percent stated that they "somewhat affected" it. These results show that library activities positively affect the sense of belonging to the library for most users (87.62 percent).

Similarly, 47.35 percent of the participants stated that library activities "highly facilitated" the integration of new students into the university community, while 38.11 percent stated that the activities "somewhat facilitated" integration. This suggests that library activities contribute significantly to students' adaptation to university life.

A small group (9.43percent) stated that library activities did not affect their sense of belonging, while 6.88 percent thought that the activities did not facilitate student integration into the university.



These data suggest that library activities play an important role in both strengthening existing users' sense of belonging and enabling new students to integrate more easily into the university community. By providing students with opportunities to socialize and connect beyond their academic studies, activities increase their sense of belonging and commitment to the university. Therefore, if the library administration maintains and improves these activities, it will positively affect the social and cultural climate of the university.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of social and cultural activities organized in university libraries on user experience. Data were collected through surveys with randomly selected users from university libraries in Türkiye and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings showed that library activities had positive effects on the participants, increased their sense of belonging to the library, and facilitated the integration of students into the university community. In addition, library activities contributed to the perception of academic libraries not only as places providing information services but also as social and cultural centers. These results emphasize that university libraries should give importance to such activities, which in turn may enhance the libraries' social functions and user satisfaction.

These findings are largely in line with the concepts mentioned in the existing literature. For example, researchers such as Yıldız; and Kavak and Odabaş emphasized the importance of the role of libraries as social and cultural centers. In addition, studies by Andrews; and Demeter, Besara, Colvin, and Birmingham highlight the importance of regular and varied activities to increase users' participation in activities.²⁶

This study makes the case that university libraries should pay more attention to social and cultural activities and that such activities are effective in increasing user satisfaction and loyalty to the library. Libraries should diversify their activities by considering the needs and interests of their users and effectively publicize their activities. In addition, the quality and diversity of activities should be improved through receiving regular user feedback.

Recommendations

Practical and Practical Recommendations

The findings of this study show that social and cultural activities organized in academic libraries have positive effects on students. The study's researchers offer several practical recommendations for library managers and university administration:

- Event diversification: Diverse library activities can appeal to a wider range of students. Organizing various activities such as author meetings, interviews, workshops, film screenings can increase participation by appealing to different interests.
- Effective promotion strategies: It is important to use different communication channels in the promotion of activities. Announcing activities using various



methods such as social media, e-mail or SMS notifications, posters and brochures can be more effective in reaching students. Especially, the effective use of social media can increase awareness among younger library users.

- Special programs for new students: Special programs and orientation activities should be organized to facilitate the integration of new students into the university and the library. Such activities can help students adapt more quickly to both the library and university life.
- Evaluation of student feedback: Collecting and evaluating student feedback after organized activities is important to improve the quality of the activities. Feedback can provide valuable information for understanding the needs and expectations of students and can guide the planning of future activities.
- The role of library staff: The active role of library staff in the promotion and organization of activities creates a library environment that is closer and more accessible to students. Staff guiding students and encouraging participation in activities can increase participation rates.
- Long-term impact analyses: Monitoring and evaluating the long-term impact of activities on students plays an important role in the development of library policies. In this way, the lasting effects of activities on student achievement and satisfaction can be determined.

These practical strategies can contribute to making academic libraries a more attractive and useful social space for students. Going beyond their role of providing access to information, libraries are seen to play an important role in the integration of student communities and the adaptation of individuals to university life.

Recommendations for Future Work

The findings of this study can inform library administrators and policy makers to evaluate the effectiveness of social and cultural library activities and enable the library leaders to better align future programs with user needs and preferences. This research will also contribute to the ongoing debate about the changing role of academic libraries and their potential as social and cultural centers and will pave the way for further research in this area.

Future research that examines the long-term effects of library activities and their impact on different demographic groups could contribute to further improvement of library services and programming. In addition, more in-depth analyses of the content and types of activities could be conducted to inform development of programs that are more relevant to student needs.

Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of academic libraries as social centers and demonstrates the potential of library services to enhance user experience and engagement. The researchers aimed to examine the effects of social and cultural activities organized in academic libraries on users. The findings show that library activities have positive effects on the participants and increase their sense of belonging to the library. It was



also concluded that these activities facilitate the integration of students into the library and the university community.

The findings of the study reveal that academic libraries not only provide access to academic resources but also play an important role as a social and cultural center. To enhance student awareness of events, library managers must learn what communication channels work best to reach their students. Most of the study participants stated that the activities organized in the library increase their sense of belonging to the library, and the library is perceived as a social meeting place. Social and cultural events enable the library to be perceived as an integral part of university life and an important social meeting place for students. It was also found that these events facilitated the integration of new students into the university community. By providing students with opportunities to socialize and connect beyond their academic studies, the events increased their sense of belonging and commitment to the university. This suggests that library events have a positive impact not only on library use but also on the overall university experience.

Ali Kavak is assistant professor in the Department of Information and Document Management, Kirikkale University in Kirikkale, Türkiye, e-mail: alikavak@kku.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0001-5329-2420.

Ayşe Feride Kop is principal librarian in the Department of Library and Documentation, Samsun University in Samsun, Türkiye, e-mail: ayseferide.kop@samsun.edu.tr, ORCID: 0009-0007-1331-8412.

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Appendix

User Satisfaction Survey on Social and Cultural Activities in Academic libraries

Dear Participant,

I would like to ask you about your experiences of social and cultural activities at the academic libraries and how you feel about them. For the purposes of this study, the term "library activities" refers to any activities, workshops, or programs that go beyond the library's traditional role of providing books and study space. These activities can include a variety of organizations such as author talks, book clubs, craft workshops, cultural activities, etc.

The aim of the study is to understand how such activities affect users' sense of belonging to the library and the university community, and how they facilitate students' integration into the university community.

During the survey, I would like to remind you that you have the right to refuse to answer my questions and that you can end the survey at any time. If you have any questions before completing the survey, you can contact me at ...@...edu.tr. mail?

Thank you in advance for your contribution.

Questions:

- (1) Gender?
 - a) Female
 - b) Male
- (2) How often do you visit the academic libraries
 - a) Every day
 - b) Several times a week
 - c) Several times a month
 - d) Every few months
 - e) I never go
- (3) For what purposes do you use the library? (You can tick more than one option.)
 - a) Studying
 - b) Conducting research
 - c) Preparation for exams
 - d) Reading a book
 - e) Socializing
 - f) Attending activities
 - g) To benefit from computer and internet services
 - h) Spending your free time
 - i) Other (please write).....)
- (4) Are you aware of the social/ cultural activities organized in your academic libraries?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No



- (5) How often do you attend activities in your academic libraries?
- Never participated
 - I rarely participate
 - Sometimes I participate
 - I usually participate
 - I always attend
- (6) Which types of social and cultural activities are you interested in at the library? (You can tick more than one option.)
- Author / Artist Meetings
 - Interviews and Panels
 - Science and Technology Talks
 - Sustainability and Environmental Activities
 - Art Exhibitions / Photography Workshops
 - Seminar / Service training
 - Film Screenings and Discussions
 - Music / Theatre Performances
 - Workshop
 - Chess / Board Games Tournaments
 - Writing Workshops
 - Other (please write)
- (7) Which of the following channels do you use to learn about library activities? (You can tick more than one option.)
- Library website
 - Related social media pages
 - Poster-brochures
 - Friends
 - E-mail / SMS notifications
 - Library staff
 - Other (please write)
- (8) What is your general level of satisfaction with the activities in libraries?
- I'm not satisfied at all
 - Somewhat satisfied
 - I am very satisfied
- (9) Does participating in social / cultural activities in the library make you feel closer to the library?
- Definitely yes
 - Partially
 - No
- (10) Does participating in library activities positively affect your sense of belonging to the library?
- It affects at a high level
 - Slightly affecting

- c) It does not have an impact
 - d) No opinion
- (11) Do the activities in the library facilitate students' integration and sense of belonging to the university?
- a) It facilitates at a high level
 - b) It makes it a bit easier
 - c) It does not make it easier
 - d) No opinion

Notes

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