

STUDENTS' CRITERIA IN SELECTING A GRADUATE PROGRAM: PRELIMINARY DATA FROM GREECE

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Education in Greece



- European Academia and the Bologna Process
 - ▣ Establishment of a quality assurance framework
- Current educational framework & pending changes in the Constitution on education
 - ▣ Implications

- What constitutes University quality?

Recent Past Research



- Objectives
 - ▣ What constitutes a quality University from students' perspective
 - ▣ Identify choice criteria in selecting an institution
- Methodology
 - ▣ International and diverse samples
 - ▣ Quantitative and qualitative

Findings



- Students' educational needs are as important as their social and employment needs

Lopez, 2005

- Females

- safety, cost, recreational activities, accessible faculty, infrastructure

- Males

- flexible schedules, availability of diverse sports team, entertainment and friends' advice

Joseph et al., 2005

Findings (cont.)



- Sample of mature students
 - ▣ Future rewards (employment), cost and time for completion of studies and facilities or resources

Davies & Williams, 2001

- Sample of high school students
 - ▣ Career development linked to earning capacity after graduation, influence by parents and the social life associated with an institution

Moogan & Baron, 2003

Findings on Postgraduate Programs



- program accreditation
- location of the institution
- reputation of the institution and of the postgraduate program
- financial considerations
- availability of facilities as well as social environment
- structure of the program
- faculty attitude

Donaldson & McNicholas, 2004

Current Objectives



- Investigate whether quality criteria are amongst the determining factors for students' choice of a postgraduate university degree in Greece
- Examine what factors in general are part of such a decision process among students

Methodology



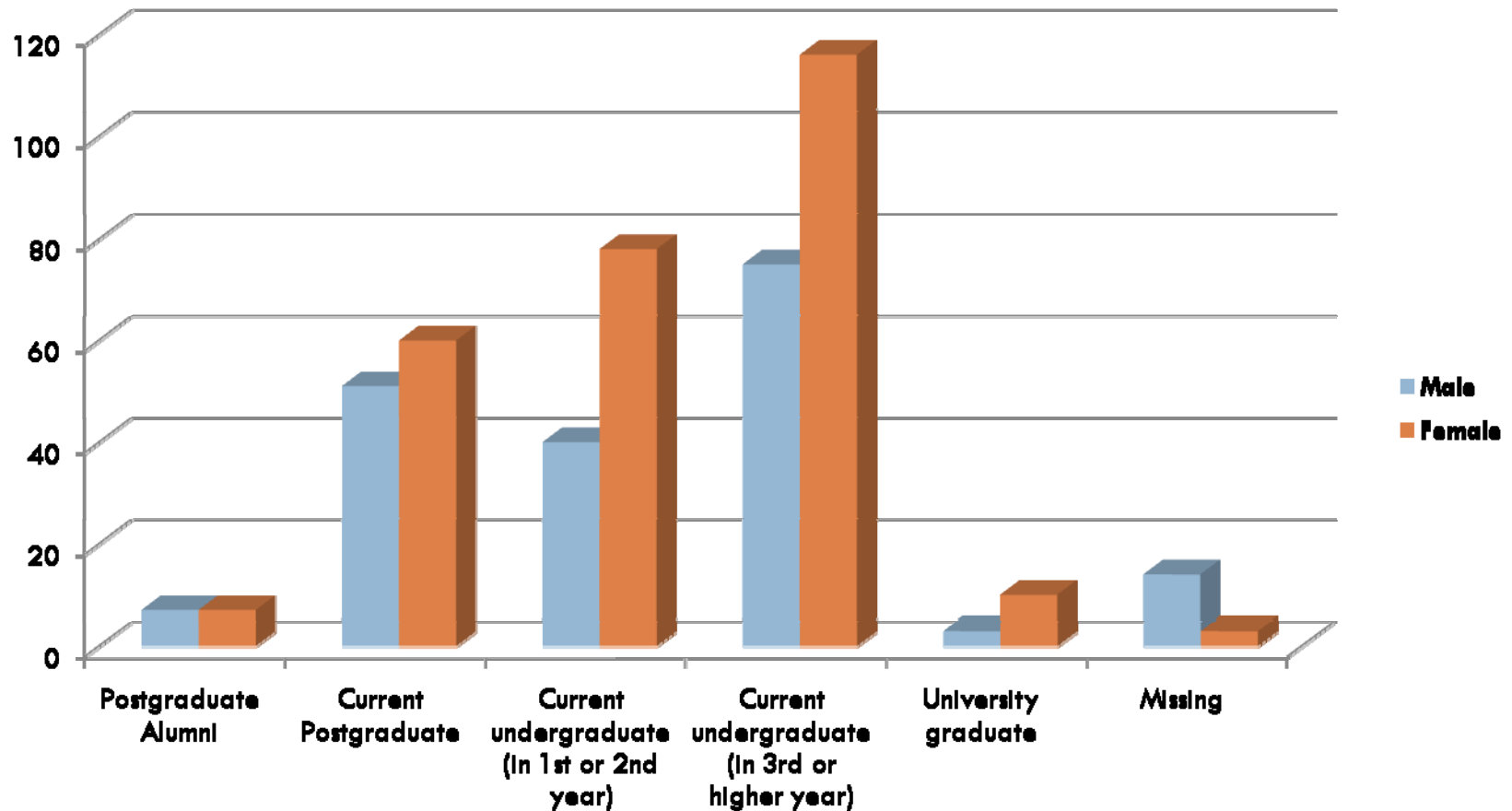
- Survey
 - ▣ primarily in Greek (96.1 %)
- Use of a convenience sample
 - ▣ Data collected during Spring-Summer 2007
 - ▣ 71% of sample was students from 5 of the existing 22 Greek public universities
- 461 participants
- Overall response rate (55.74%)

The Questionnaire



- Development of the questionnaire based on past research
 - ▣ 57 closed-ended items
 - ▣ 2 open-ended questions
- Structure
 - ▣ Demographic questions
 - ▣ Ratings of significance of selection criteria for university/
program

Respondents Profile: Student Status & Gender



Respondents Profile: Educational Background



Number of postgraduate students	Postgraduate degree	Frequency	Percent
Current OR Past			
	MBA	40	8.6
	Logistics	41	8.9
	Other	26	5.6
	<i>Total</i>	107	23.1
Prospective			
	Indecisive	80	17.4
	PR/advertising/communication studies/marketing	59	12.8
	MM & C/journalism	21	4.6
	MBA/economics/finance	44	9.6
	Other	112	24.3
	<i>Total</i>	316	68.7
Missing		38	8.2
		Total	461 100.0

Respondents Profile: Employment Status & Gender



	Male	Female	Total	Percent
Employed	71	98	169	37.0
Unemployed	107	177	284	62.0
<i>Missing</i>			8	1.7
Total			461	100.0

Factor Analysis



- **Social Life**
 - ▣ Social activities; social networking; student diversity; friendly environment; extracurricular activities; accessible dining facilities; clean facilities
- **University Quality**
 - ▣ University prestige; university reputation; reputation of program; faculty reputation; access to business networking; employment and advancement; university ranking; program of studies; employability; university faculty
- **Advice**
 - ▣ Friends' advice; family's advice; faculty teaching effectiveness
- **Financial Considerations**
 - ▣ reasonable cost; no cost; financial considerations; available scholarships; accessible by public transportation; geographic proximity
- **University Size**
 - ▣ Number of student body; number of students in class; number of alumni

Descriptive Statistics of Factors



	M	SD	Median	Mode	Skew ^a	Kurt ^b
Quality	1.96	0.73	1.80	2.00	13.10*	14.71*
Financial Considerations	2.60	1.04	2.33	2.00	6.19*	-0.85
Advice	2.76	0.93	2.67	3.00	2.08*	-0.44
University Size	2.98	1.19	2.67	2.00	4.30*	-1.48
Social Life	3.18	1.05	3.29	3.00	0.30	-2.08*

Note. N=461. For all items above, the lower the number, the more important the factor is to the rater (1 = most important, 6 = most unimportant).

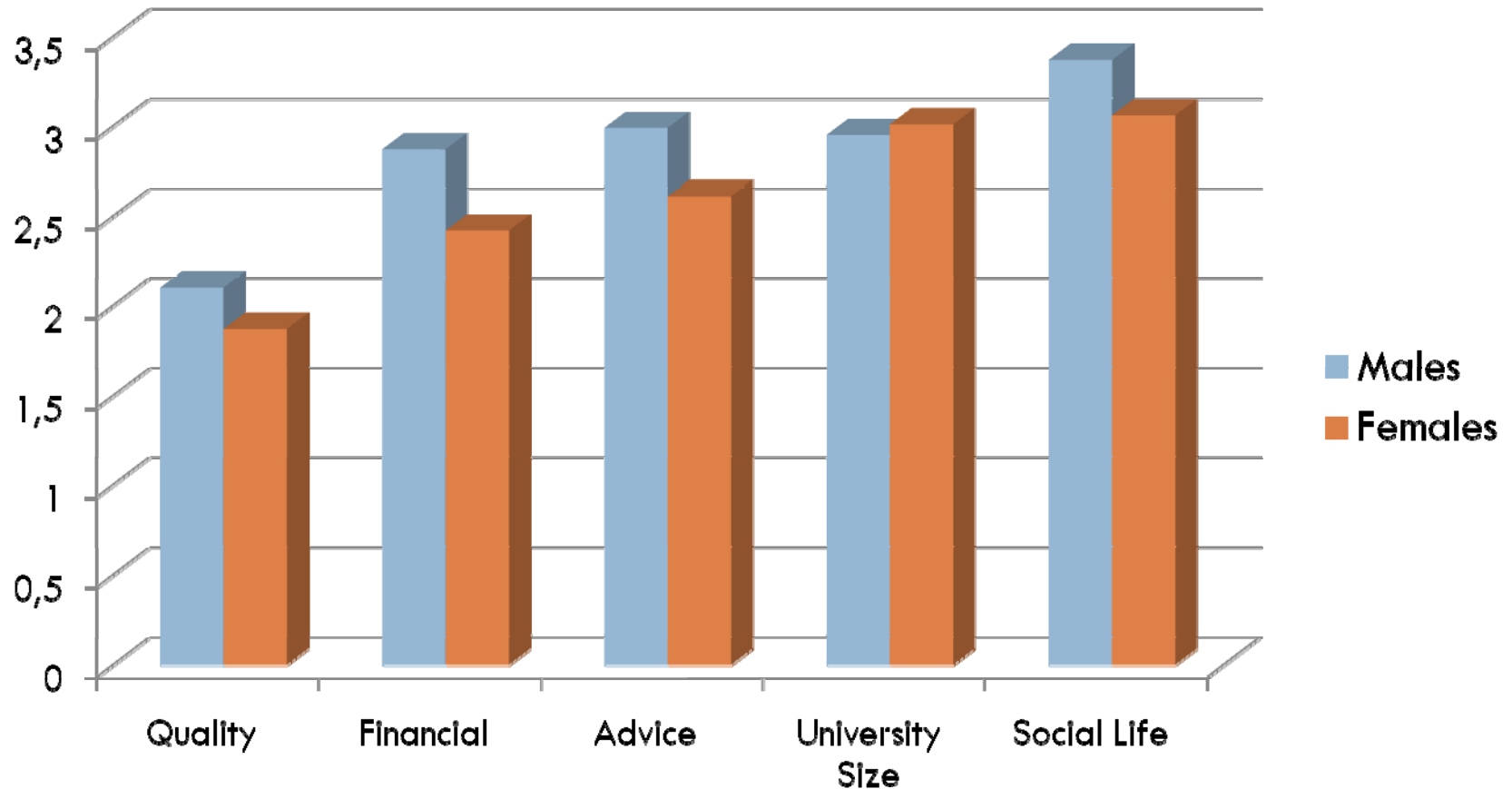
The entire range of the scale (1 to 6) was used for all items.

*There is significant skewness or kurtosis in these items at a significance level of $\alpha \leq .05$.

^aStandard error of skewness is .114.

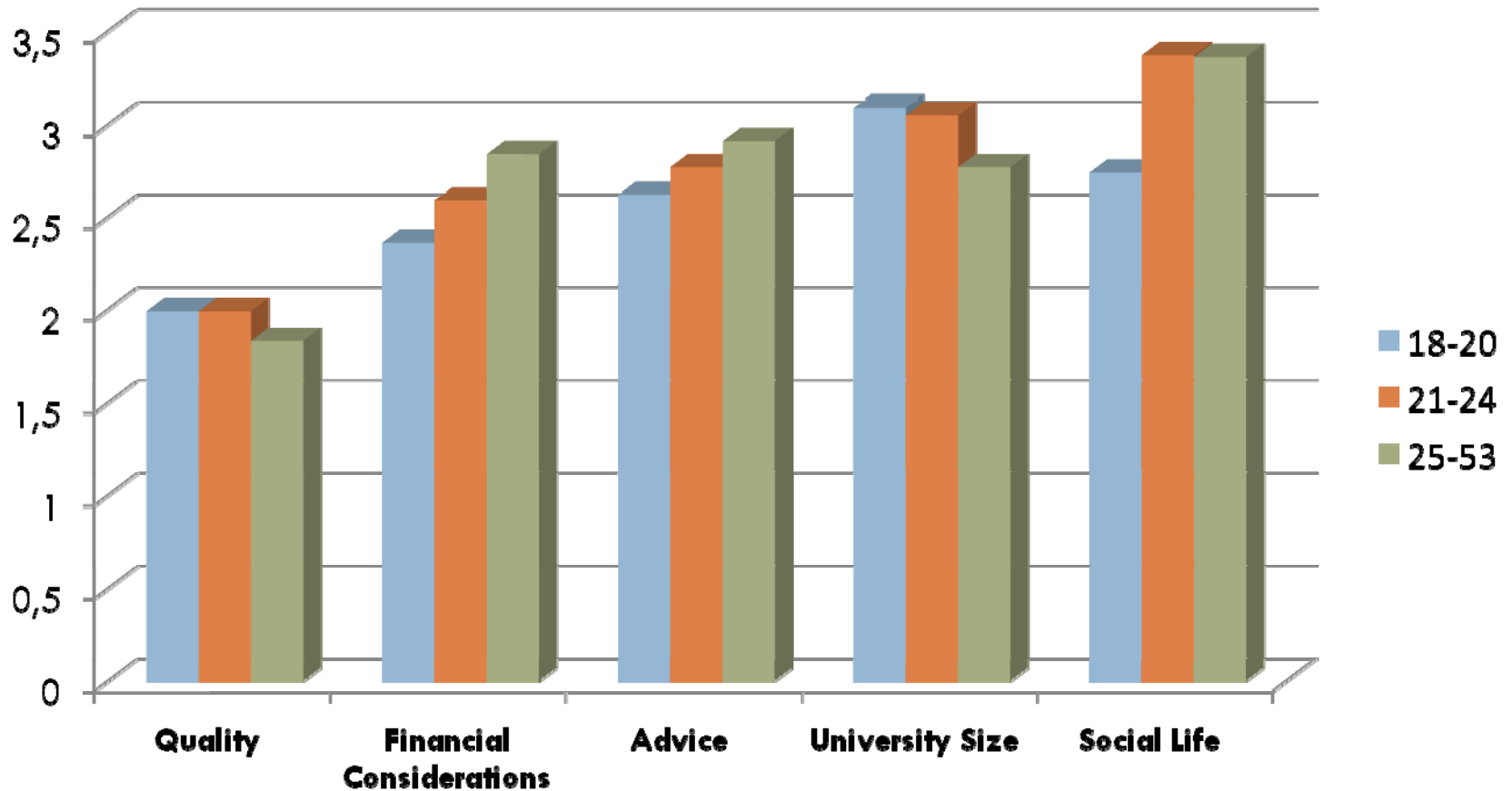
^bStandard error of kurtosis is .227.

Gender Analysis



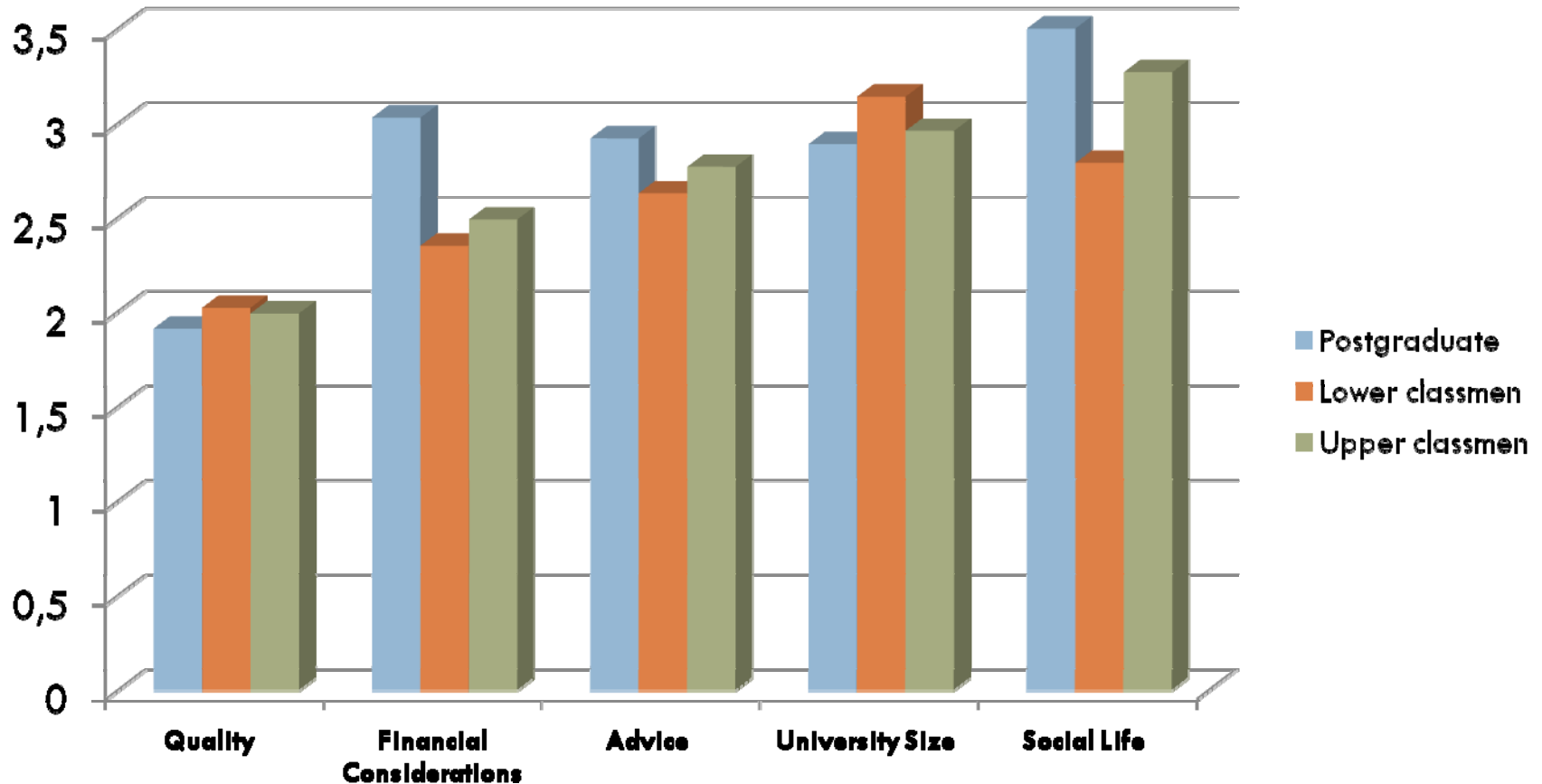
Lower ratings refer to higher significance attributed to the factor

Age Analysis



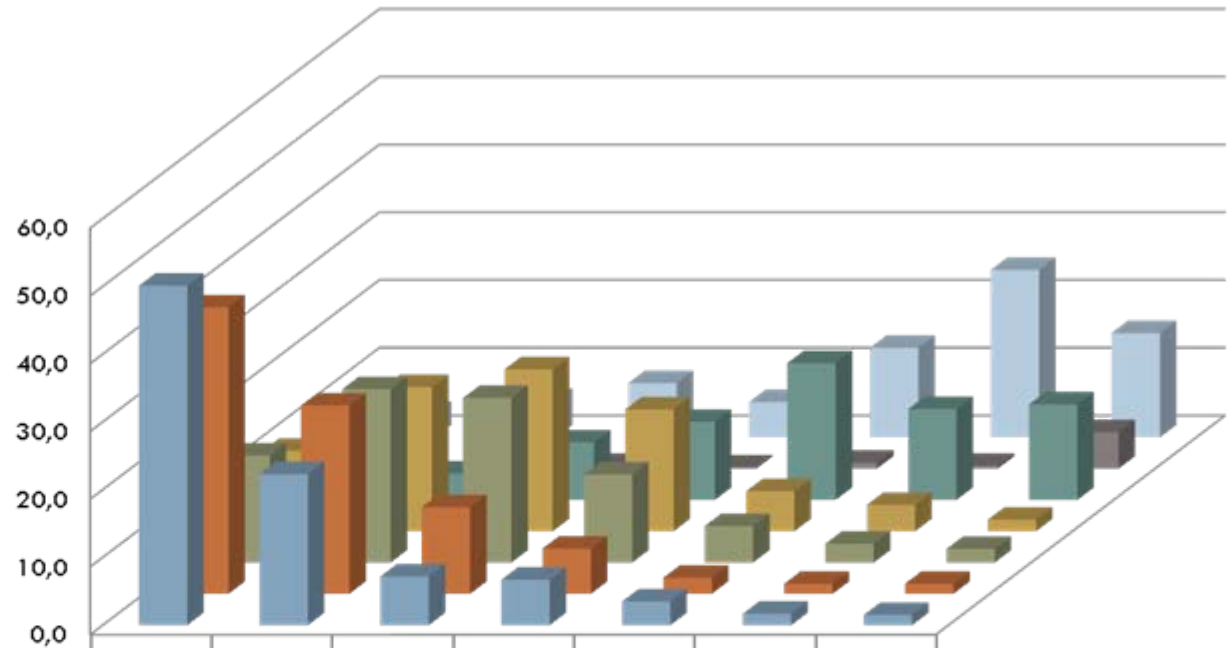
Lower ratings refer to higher significance attributed to the factor

Student Status Analysis



Lower ratings refer to higher significance attributed to the factor

Priority Ranking Assignment of Items



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
personal preference	50,1	22,3	7,2	6,7	3,5	1,7	1,5
market demand for it	42,3	27,8	12,8	6,7	2,4	1,5	1,5
ability to handle subject matter	15,8	25,6	24,3	13,0	5,4	2,8	2,0
perception of it being rigorous/challenging	11,9	21,3	23,9	18,0	5,9	3,9	1,7
perception of it being really easy	2,2	3,9	8,5	11,5	20,2	13,4	14,1
additional factors (other)	1,5	0,7	0,4	0,2	0,9	0,4	5,4
others' expectations of me	3,5	5,4	8,0	5,2	13,2	24,7	15,4

Strengths & Limitations



□ Strengths

- ▣ Relatively large sample
- ▣ Respondents from diverse geographical areas
- ▣ Factor Analysis of the questionnaire
- ▣ Development of a questionnaire tailored to Greek educational reality

□ Limitations

- ▣ Sample of convenience
- ▣ Preliminary research

Implications of the study



- First study to look at the selection criteria for postgraduate studies by students in Greece
- Development of a questionnaire that may be adjusted and used in a series of studies to shed more light on the matter
- Data may be used by university administrators to
 - create academic environments analogous to students' expectations
 - form the basis for recruiting strategies of a desired profile of students.