

User Expectations and Opinions Related to Campus Wayfinding and Signage Design: A Case Study of Kastamonu University

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Abstract : A university campus resembles an independent city that is spread over a wide area. Campuses that incorporate thousands of new domestic and international users at the beginning of every academic period also host scientific, cultural and sportive events, in addition to embodying regular users such as students and staff. Wayfinding and signage systems are necessary for the regulation of vehicular traffic, and they enable users' to navigate without losing time or feeling anxiety. While designing the system or testing the functionality of it, opinions of existing users or likely behaviors of typical user profiles (personas) provide designers with insight. The purpose of this study is to identify the wayfinding attitudes and expectations of Kastamonu University Kuzeykent Campus users. This study applies a mixed method in which a questionnaire, developed by the researcher, constitute the quantitative phase of the study. The survey was carried out with 850 participants who filled a questionnaire form which was tested in terms of construct validity by using Exploratory Factor Analysis. While interpreting the data obtained, Chi-Square, T- Test and ANOVA analyses were applied as well as descriptive analyses such as frequency (f) and percentage (%) values. The results of this survey, which was conducted during the absence of systematic wayfinding signs in the campus, reveals the participants expectations for insertion of floor plans and wayfinding signs to indoors, maps to outdoors, symbols and color codes to the existing signs and for the adequate arrangement of those for the use of visually impaired people. The fact that there is a direct proportional relation between the length of institution membership and wayfinding competency within campus, leads to the conclusion that especially the new comers are in need of wayfinding signs. In order to determine the effectiveness of campus-wide wayfinding system implemented after the survey and in order to identify the further expectations of users in this respect, a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher and assessments of 20 participants are compiled. Subjected to content analysis, this data constitute the qualitative dimension of the study. Research results indicate that despite the presence of the signs, the participants experienced either inability or stress while finding their way, showed tendency to receive help from others and needed outdoor maps and signs, in addition to bigger-sized texts.

Keywords : environmental graphic design, environmental perception, wayfinding and signage design, wayfinding system

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