REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
HALİÇ UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
MASTER'S WITH THESIS PROGRAMME

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS' ENGAGEMENT ON INSTAGRAM: THE CASE OF FOUNDATION UNIVERSITIES IN ISTANBUL

MASTER'S THESIS

BY
Ahmed Abdulkareem Ahmed AHMED

Thesis Advisor
Asst. Prof. Şahver OMERAKI ÇEKİRDEKCİ

ISTANBUL
April 2024

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MA/MSc THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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THESIS ETHICS STATEMENT

I declare that I completed this study titled “Higher Education Institutions’ Engagement on Instagram: The Case of Foundation Universities in Istanbul” which I present as a (Term Project/ Master’s Thesis/ PhD Thesis / Proficiency in Arts Thesis “Higher Education Institutions’ Engagement on Instagram: The Case of Foundation Universities in Istanbul” from the beginning to the end under the responsibility of my advisor Asst. Prof. Şahver OMERAKI ÇEKİRDEKCİ, that I collected all the data/ samples by myself, I did the experiments or analysis / I had the experiments or analysis done in the related laboratories, that I have fully indicated the information I have received from other resources in the text and bibliography, that I have acted in accordance with the scientific research and ethical rules during the study process, and that I accept any legal consequences if otherwise occurs.

Ahmed Abdulkareem Ahmed AHMED

PREFACE

First, I want to thank my parents and siblings for the support they have given me over the past two years. Without them, I would never have made it this far. My deepest appreciation goes to my sponsor from Haliç Tömer, Mrs. Selma ARSLAN, who was my main supporter throughout my studies at Haliç University. Also, I would like to thank my advisor, Assistant Professor Şahver OMERAKI ÇEKIRDEKCI, who was patient and helpful throughout the entire writing process of my thesis, as well as all the professors for their dedication and efforts over these two years at the Business Administration Department. Thank you to everyone who has become an indissoluble part of my educational success.

April, 2024 Ahmed Abdulkareem Ahmed AHMED

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ABBREVIATIONS

BE : Brand Engagement
CBE : Consumer Brand Engagement
HI : Higher Education
HIEs : Higher Education Institutions
OBEC : Online Consumer Brand Engagement
SMMA : Social Media Marketing Approach
UCG : User-Generated Content
YÖK : Yükseköğretim Kurulu

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ÖZET

INSTAGRAM ÜZERİNDE YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM KURUMLARININ ETKİLEŞİMİ: İSTANBUL'DAKİ VAKIF ÜNİVERSİTELERİ ÖRNEĞİ

Sosyal medyanın hızlı bir şekilde benimsenmesi, iletişim ve iş birliğinde temel değişiklikler meydana getirmiştir. Bu nedenle, yükseköğretim kurumlarının sosyal ağlarda daha aktif bir profil sergilemeleri için kurumsal marka kimliklerini yansıtarak kampüs hayatları, akademik başarıları ve topluluk faaliyetlerini birer ayna olarak kullanmaları gerekmektedir. Bu çalışma, İstanbul'daki vakıf üniversitelerinin Instagram'da etkileşim stratejilerini, özellikle gönderi kategorilerinin içerik analizini araştırmaktadır. İstanbul'daki ilk 20 vakıf üniversitesinde paylaşılan gönderiler, 1 Mayıs 2023'ten 31 Ağustos 2023'e kadar nitel ve nicel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu araştırmayı destekleyen birkaç tema belirlenmiştir: akademik etkileşim, öğrenci etkileşimi, topluluk etkileşimi ve hibrit etkileşim. Akademik etkileşim; akademik röportajlar, programlar ve fakülte başarıları aracılığıyla desteklenmiş olup, entelektüel merakı ve bilgi edinimini teşvik etmektedir. Öğrenci etkileşimi; kulüp çalışmaları, kampüs hayatı, mezuniyet ve başarı törenleri aracılığıyla desteklenmiş olup, kişisel gelişim yollarını desteklemektedir. Topluluk etkileşimi; harcanan burslar ve üniversite-toplum ortaklıklarını teşvik eden sosyal projelerde gösterilmektedir. Hibrit etkileşim; bu temaların birleşimiyle elde edilmiş olup, akademi, toplum ve öğrenci olgusunu birleştirerek tam bir üniversite deneyimi sunmaktadır. Belli bir potansiyele sahip olan öğrencilere kişiselleştirilmiş bilgi sunmanın ve tanıtım günleri ve mezuniyet törenleri gibi en önemli etkinliklerle etkileşimi artırmanın gerekliliği kanıtlanmıştır. Her üniversitenin içerik yaklaşımındaki önemli farklılıkları ve buna bağlı olarak markalaşma ve konumlandırmadaki etkileri vurgulanmıştır. Ancak Instagram'daki içeriklerin altı çizilmiş ve videoların, kullanıcıları etkilemedeki rolünün kritik olduğu belirtilmiştir. Üniversiteler, isimlerini duyurmak ve markalarını ön plana çıkarmak için öğrenci etkileşiminde oldukça önemli bir yere sahip olan görsel malzemeleri, çevrimiçi olarak sürdürmeyi zorunlu kılmaktadır. Bu araştırma, yükseköğretim kurumlarının pazarlanmasında Instagram'ın rolüne dikkat çekerek eğitimin sosyal medya içerisindeki etkileşim stratejilerine yönelik bakış açıları sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Etkileşim, Instagram, Vakıf Üniversiteleri.*

ABSTRACT

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS' ENGAGEMENT ON INSTAGRAM: THE CASE OF FOUNDATION UNIVERSITIES IN ISTANBUL

The fast adoption of social media has brought fundamental changes in communication and collaboration. Thus, higher education institutions have to do a more active profile on social networks, projecting the institutional brand identities of higher education and using them as mirrors and loudspeakers of their campus life, academic life, and community activities. This study investigates the strategies for Instagram engagement by foundation universities in Istanbul, particularly the content analysis of post categories. Posts from the top 20 foundation universities in Istanbul were qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed from May 1, 2023, to August 31, 2023. A number of themes were identified that support this research: academic engagement, student engagement, community engagement, and hybrid engagement. Academic engagement was supported through academic interviews, programs, and faculty achievements that foster intellectual curiosity and knowledge acquisition. Student engagement was supported through campus life, students' club activities, graduation, and achievement ceremonies, which all supported avenues to self-development. Community engagement is illustrated in scholarships that are being spent and in social projects that focus on engendering university-community partnerships. Hybrid engagement, obtained from these themes, is combined with academic, community, and student themes to give a complete university experience. The necessity of delivering personalized information to potential students and increasing engagement with the highest events, such as open days and graduation ceremonies, was proven. The considerable differences in the content approach of each university, with the corresponding impacts on branding and positioning, were underlined. Still, the importance of Instagram content was underscored, although it is shown that videos are crucial in engaging users. The student engagement nature makes visually rich material essential for the university's brand and holding a desirable online presence. This research supports the role of Instagram in higher education marketing by giving insights into effective engagement strategies for prospective research in educational social media marketing.

Keywords: *Engagement, Foundation Universities, Instagram*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this new era, technology develops every year, as social media is considered one of the most used technologies. We see that social media has become widespread in all areas of life, including education and universities. To attract new students, universities should use social media as a source of information and communication for available students and alumni (Peruta and Shields, 2017). One of the social media platforms used worldwide today includes Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram. These platforms allow us to share contents, like videos and photos. Additionally, we can engage with content by liking, commenting on or sharing it and also access information (Zhu, 2019). In response to growing challenges in recent years higher education institutions have been enhancing their business strategies for branding (Pinar et al., 2020). Social media has become a part of the marketing strategies used by higher education institutions (HEIs) to attract new students (Vukic and Vukić, 2019).

Numerous studies have delved into how higher education institutions leverage media for relations evaluating engagement metrics and building university brands through methods like content analysis qualitative analysis or emotional analysis of user engagement rates. Universities administrators and marketers are keen on understanding how consumer engagement on media platforms impacts the recruitment of students. Among media platforms examined Instagram stands out for its potential, for engagement and influence (Saikia and Barman, 2023). Capriotti et al. (2023) suggest that universities' social media engagement is significantly influenced by their publishing strategy, with user-generated content (UCC) being preferred over university-shared content (USC) to increase levels of engagement with followers. Rahman (2019) investigated how academic libraries can effectively use SM for student engagement, and the results of the analysis showed that the topics of posts reported in the library can influence the engagement rate depending on likes and comments from followers.

However, to engage more followers or attract new students, higher education institutions need to develop their brand identity on social media and know the factors that influence brand engagement. According to Yaping et al. (2023), brand image and attributes play a vital and effective role in influencing brand association, and university brand reputation directly affects student loyalty and behavioral intentions that contribute to brand association. Also, SM brand identity can enhance brand engagement by highlighting positive student experiences and engagement. Mahmoud et al. (2021) investigate factors that limit student engagement in SM through qualitative research and show that content-related factors such as poor design, lack of informality, and constant posting during office hours negatively impact student engagement. Therefore, these factors influence different levels of consumer engagement, including communication, interaction, loyalty, and advocacy.

As for the studies related to the participation of higher education institutions on social media, they focused on different universities around the world and focused on SM or Instagram platforms only. However, these studies have not covered the construct of consumer brand engagement in higher education institutions and specifically in a big city like Istanbul via Instagram. According to Higher Education Information Management System (2023), the city of Istanbul itself contains 44 foundation universities, with the number of students in the 2022-2023 academic year reaching 1.137.994 students.

HIEs, through the active use of social media platforms such as Instagram, can enhance student recruitment strategies since they are preferred by prospective students to explore educational opportunities (Vukic and Vukić, 2019). There is a need to know how universities promote themselves on Instagram, who and how they attempt to engagement, how engagement rates vary, and what influences engagement. Therefore, this research attempts to fill this gap by identifying the types of posts and topics used by the top 20 foundational universities in Istanbul.

Given the lack of research on Instagram engagement among foundation universities in higher education institutions in Istanbul, the study aims to investigate the types of posts used by universities and their engagement rate as measured by likes and comments. This research will focus on the following two objectives:

What topics and types of content in Instagram posts effectively attract the audience of the Top 20 Foundation Universities in Istanbul? How does consumer brand engagement, measured through likes and comments, on Instagram posts differ between the top 20 foundation universities in Istanbul? Additionally, what specific content characteristics contribute to these differences?

This research will help address the specific engagement patterns and strategies adopted by foundation universities in Istanbul on Instagram. Additionally, the research provides practical value to higher education institutions in Istanbul by offering insights to academics, marketers, and higher education managers who want to build university marketing tactics and engagement on Instagram.

Due to time constraints, this research only focuses on the top 20 foundational universities in Istanbul, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other sources or types of universities. The data collection period for the research was between May 1 and August 31, 2023, which included open days and promotional activities for foundation universities, but this may not reflect the full range of engagement strategies used throughout the academic year.

In this chapter, the background and context of the study were discussed, followed by the research problem, the research objectives, questions, importance, and finally its limitations. In the second chapter, the literature review of topics related to this research will be discussed, leading to the research gap and then identifying the research questions that this research will answer. In the third chapter, the methodology of this research will be explained through content analysis. In the fourth chapter, the research results will be revealed in detail. In chapter five, the findings will be discussed, followed by the limitations and future work. Finally, Conclusion in chapter six and Recommendations in chapter seven will be discussed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review situates the dynamic relationship between the HEIs and Instagram, particularly in the case of foundation universities in Istanbul. Given that Instagram is an all-important communication and interaction platform, especially among younger age groups, it is essential for higher education institutions engaged in face-to-face interactions and recruitment with their current and prospective students (Del Rocío Bonilla et al., 2020).

The studies point out that the use of Instagram has promoted interaction between higher education stakeholders, indicating its ability to involve stakeholders towards successful implementation (Pekpazar et al., 2021). However, the foundation universities have been blamed of declaring famous programs, drawing in academically weak however economically profiled students, and making meager contributions towards academic research (Bonilla Quijada et al., 2022). The strategic use of social media, such as Instagram, at foundation universities is analyzed using institutional theory, which finds how such organizations create their digital presence within the context of legitimacy and competitive pressures (Sponsler and Wittebort, 2020). Despite this, some issues have been proven, including social media addiction among students, which will lead to poor academic performance (Ao et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the combination of Instagram in e-learning activities will showcase its ability in encouragement student collaboration and improving the general educational experience (Perera et al., 2022). This is in line with strategic goals pursued by foundational universities, which put more emphasis on teaching and instruction while also balancing research and the conduct of public service (Atakan-Duman, 2019).

Overall, the involvement of HEIs in Instagram, especially the foundation universities of Istanbul, stands as a complex mixture of digital strategies and educational aims and problems to maintain academic integrity in the digital age (Rocha et al., 2021; Gözükara, 2015).

2.1.Higher Education Institutions in Turkiye

According to the website of Council of Higher Education - History (2018) Turkey's higher education system was completely reformed in 1981 with the passage of Higher Education Law No. 2547. The system was centralized, with all higher education institutions attached to the Higher Education Board (YÖK). Following the restructure, all higher education institutions were redesigned as universities. Higher education was expanded across the country, admission to higher education became consolidated, and centralized test and university placement methods were introduced. In addition to state institutions, Turkey's first non-profit foundation university began providing public education in 1986. Since 2012, Turkey has had a 12-year obligatory education system separated into three phases – basic, primary, and secondary (Turkish Higher Education System - Study in Türkiye, 2019).

The historical development of Turkish higher education is a complex interplay of several such factors: policy change, globalization, gender parity efforts, and efficacy strategies. The Turkish Higher Education Council, YÖK, has been in the leadership of management universities, thus making a special focus on the strengths of both public and foundation institutions as well (Gürbüz, 2023).

Today, especially due to advances in information technology around the world, educational institutions are undergoing rapid transformation as is the case in all fields. Occupying an important place in a country's national development, the function of scientific institutions to provide high-quality educational and training services is becoming more important in a changing world. This requires the preparation of elaborate strategic plans to ensure quality and future planning to be more important (Arabaci and Şener, 2014).

Foundation universities are very important in Turkish higher education institutions and form a huge number of educational facilities. Out of the 204 universities in all, there are 75 foundation universities and 129 state universities, all coming together to form the core of Turkish educational (Higher Education Information Management System, 2023). However, The foundation universities are

mostly located in the main cities of Turkiye, such as Istanbul, and form an important portion of the educational map of the country (Council of Higher Education, 2024).

Students' choice of foundation universities is influenced by various factors, including institutional perception, educational services offered, and career prospects (Kurt, 2021). The decision-making process includes thoughts such as individual features, academic achievement, and future career aspirations (Esen, 2019). Whereas campus visits are believed significant, other components, such as information from websites, flyers, and graduates, also significantly impact decision-making (Esen, 2019). Further research into the factors affecting the choice and performance of students within foundation universities has been conducted. Other concerns remain about academic and physical infrastructure, student acceptance scores, and the overall quality of education and support services at these universities (Iscan and Balyer, 2019). On the other hand, their customer orientation, individuality among students, and perceptions of prestige and educational value affect their performance and university choice (Iscan and Balyer, 2019; Zengin and Uzut, 2021). Zengin and Uzut (2021) highlight factors like watched acceptability, planning of info and facilities, physical infrastructure, location, and financial factors as having fundamental roles in students' decisions to register in foundation universities. Such results highlight how many-sided students' decision-making processes are and how various institutional factors affect their educational journey in Turkish higher education.

According to Erguvan (2013) foundation universities in Turkey both provide job opportunities and help students stay in the country, which reduces the financial burden in the country and prevents brain drain by offering higher education to students overlooked by state universities. Therefore, foundation universities in Turkiye also face criticism because they prioritize programs with high job opportunities in order to attract more students rather than academic research, which may lead to a qualification gap between their own graduates and state university graduates, and because they do not contribute sufficiently to education. academic research. However, the future of foundation universities is seen as a mixture of opportunities and challenges. In addition, expectations indicate that the quality gap between these institutions is increasing and that organizational and infrastructural problems must be overcome in order to make a more significant contribution to the higher education system.

The question remains how do universities communicate with their audience? How do they create their unique identity? According to Duman et al. (2019), foundation universities in Turkiye use social media to create a unique digital online identity by focusing on academic studies, promotional activities, and public advertisements. This ultimately helps them to excel and adhere to the standards of higher education development by concentrating their interactions on outside stakeholders with public relationships along with attracting interior stakeholders with the subjects of psychological link, society, and also scholastic success, personal colleges can stabilize the demand for competitors and also authenticity together with supply a version for various other establishments that look for to conquer comparable obstacles. The research study likewise recommends that exclusive colleges ought to utilize social media sites strategically to distinguish themselves as well as connect components of their one-of-a-kind identifications along with those that straighten with market requirements which are crucial to obtaining authenticity and also keeping competition in college.

In their study, Gökler and Onay (2020) found that foundation universities in Turkey in active way they use the Instagram among their corporate communication strategies in the university to engage with young people who use social media mostly for entertainment and information purposes. As a result of this study, these universities, aware of the importance of Instagram in communicating with their target audiences and improving their corporate values in society, prioritize conducting their corporate communication activities through Instagram. However, the foundation universities use Instagram for corporate communication, but there are problems in the management of their pages, indicating a need to improve their social media strategies.

In the study conducted by Alcolea Parra et al. (2020) on foundation universities in Spain, the authors discuss that Spanish foundation universities have integrated social media into their communication strategies, and the widespread use of Instagram shows that it tends to attract younger audiences and establish an online presence through visually appealing content. Despite Instagram adoption globally, universities do not have a common strategy or sufficient resources for effective management and planning; if developed, it can lead to concrete actions. Consequently, a more professional approach is required. The study highlights a missed opportunity in using Instagram to

promote research activities: A university’s post about a discovery in neuroscience can demonstrate universities’ ability to showcase academic achievements and attract the attention of a wider audience. The results show that a more professional use of Instagram can be used as an effective corporate communication tool for universities. It can help them stand out from the competition and reach a wider audience.

This shows the importance of social media platforms in higher education, especially Instagram, and how to engage with the consumers as a brand through it in higher education institutions.

2.2.Instagram: A Platform Overview

Instagram, with 1.28 billion daily users, is a popular app where people can upload photographs and videos, add special effects, and subscribe to their followers' postings, making it critical for companies to track their success (Sprinklr Help Center, 2023). According to Yenilmez Kacar (2024), Instagram is a popular social networking site with two primary forms of sharing: the permanent main feed and ephemeral stories. Each mode has a distinct purpose in online self-expression, and users may control content exposure through customizable privacy settings. Comments and likes are important interaction components to consider while developing an online image.

Instagram provides a variety of tools to improve user experience and engagement discussed in the official website of Instagram (Instagram Features, 2024). Reels allows users to make and share interesting videos that showcase their creativity and viral potential. Stories are a casual way to communicate daily happenings, and their fleeting nature fosters a sense of connection. Messenger facilitates private communication among users, establishing intimate bonds. Instagram's purchasing capabilities allow users to explore and purchase directly from their preferred companies and artists within the app. Furthermore, Instagram's content discovery tools choose unique and engaging material and creators based on user preferences and interests, fostering a thriving community (Instagram Features, 2024). Overall, Instagram provides a platform for over 1 billion individuals to create and share content, establishing a global community of innovation and connection (About the Instagram Company, 2024).

2.2.1. Instagram as a Platform for Marketing Purposes

Instagram has evolved into a major marketing tool with a visually appealing means for businesses and organizations to communicate with their audience (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Aires (2020) highlights how Instagram has revolutionized branding techniques, with user participation via tagging and hash tagging impacting firm identity and reputation, in addition hashtags, the "Explore" button, and user-generated content (UGC) enable users to shape and share their identities, so indirectly influencing the perception and reputation of the organizations with which they engage.

Influencers are also essential players in this ecosystem, pushing extensive branding actions among their followers and influencing how organizations are perceived by a wider audience (Aires, 2020). Businesses and organizations, particularly institutions, utilize Instagram to promote their views, cultures, and products through carefully chosen visual photos (Hudson and Thal, 2013). The platform's interactive aspects, such as surveys and Q&As, promote direct audience engagement, resulting in brand loyalty and trust (Smith and Lewis, 2011).

2.3.Brand Engagement

Marketing had all been billboards, prime-time commercials, and wide circulation of brochures-all of them gone. Now in the digital era the field of marketing has expanded to creating dialogues with individual consumers. In result this development leads us to understand the meaning of brand engagement with the customer or consumer. First, we need to define brand as a term.

First, we need to define branding as a term. Sammut-Bonnici (2014), defined branding as consisting of intangible and tangible attributes that aim to build the reputation of a product, service, person, place or institution and create awareness of it or make it recognizable. He also added that the term branding is a long-term strategic process that includes a group of Things from marketing communications to product innovation.

Then we need to define engagement. Pal (2023), defined engagement as an act of moral or emotional commitment to an activity, task, or goal. So, in a broad sense, engagement means to attract someone's attention or interest, to involve them in a conversation or activity, and to involve a promise or commitment. However, this engagement does not come to end with personal or professional commitments but

rather devours the attention of the person emotionally and intellectually. Therefore, brand engagement means making the customers think, feel, and act positively toward a brand—like following on social media or recommending products to friends (Eigenraam, 2023).

2.4.Consumer Brand Engagement

Consumer brand engagement is a multifaceted concept that incorporates customers' strong, ongoing connections with brands, including attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors toward the brand (Graffigna and Gambetti, 2015). According to Brodie et al. (2011), consumer brand engagement (CBE) extends beyond routine transactions to encompass brand-related activities and shared experiences that enhance the brand's story and value. Therefore, understanding and encouraging CBE fosters closeness between businesses and customers, increasing customer advocacy and loyalty.

Pansari and Kumar (2017) emphasize that consumer brand engagement results from customers' loyalty through buying, referring, and positive word-of-mouth. In addition, built on trust and satisfaction, CBE depends on consumers' belief in the brand's quality and trustworthiness, as well as positive experiences with the brand. Sheen (2023) emphasizes that consumer brand engagement refers to how people connect with and feel about a brand, which may lead to happiness and fulfillment. However, this relationship is strengthened through interactive demos and customized experiences, which benefit the firm by growing client loyalty and advocacy. According to Roy et al. (2023), consumer brand participation via digital platforms aims to fulfill customers' psychological needs and well-being through thought, emotions, and action. Therefore, emotional attachment and behavioral engagement with the brand have a significant influence on personal happiness and well-being.

In social media context consumer brand engagement encompasses affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Hollebeek (2011) defined the affective consumer brand engagement as an emotional investment a customer makes in specific brand interactions, indicative of how much they care about and feel toward a brand during these interactions. Therefore, this is emotional investment, characterized by positive feelings or passion towards the brand, which reveals the extent of an individual emotional commitment in their interactions with the brand. In addition, passion is a key theme of affective engagement and includes feelings of pride or enthusiasm for being

associated with, or using, the brand—indicating a deep emotional connection. Basically, affective consumer brand engagement is a way through which the brand succeeds in getting to customers on an emotional level, thus forming a deep emotional attachment and not just the practical utility derived from the products or services. However, the emotional attachment can very much influence a customer to make a decision to interact with the brand, like purchasing or even going on social media, since it speaks to how the brand makes them feel instead of the functional aspects of what the brand offers (Jindal et al., 2022).

Hollebeek (2011) defined the cognitive consumer brand engagement as the level of thinking that a customer devotes in relation to the brand during each touchpoint or interaction with the brand. Also, it can refer to attention to the brand, comprehension of what the brand stands for, and retention of information about the brand and its products or services. This is the state in which a customer will put more concentration into the brand-related information in some interactions with a brand, which shows how deeply the customer focuses on and processes information regarding the brand.

According to Hollebeek (2011) the behavioral consumer brand engagement encompasses all the actions taken by a customer towards a brand, from product purchases to recommendations about the brand among friends or even publishing about the brand on social media. It would represent the willingness to commit time and efforts in activities related to the brand. This type of engagement encompasses any physical activity or behavior that a customer may exhibit towards a brand that goes beyond just purchasing the business's products or services. It reflects a customer's willingness to put energy into the brand, expressed in all kinds of engagement and contact.

Bowden and Mirzaei (2021) in their study, concluded that self-brand connections highly drive the behavioral, cognitive, affective, and social consumer engagement taking place within online brand communities and digital content marketing channels. Furthermore, it found that cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement significantly mediates the relationship between self-brand connections and consumer loyalty, particularly within online brand communities as compared to digital content marketing channels. In the same study affective and cognitive engagement were identified as the most powerful factors to intervene in the link between self-brand connections and loyalty within the context of online brand communities; this result

indicated that these types of engagement should be instrumental in building loyalty in such settings.

2.5.Consumer Brand Engagement in Higher Education Institutions

Brand engagement in higher education institutions (HEIs) is a having many facets strategy that ranges from social media rebranding to developing a strong institutional brand that meet up with the changing needs and expectations of university stakeholders (Ulfa et al., 2023). Moreover, the authors examined the social media rebranding tactics such as renaming usernames, enhancing logos, and content types have proven effective in enhancing audience reach and engagement, which is significance for promoting academic programs and increasing admissions to foundation universities.

Marketing tactics, both traditional and digital, cannot be understated for higher education institutions looking to establish brand equity in local and worldwide range (Mammadova, 2023). To achieve the worldwide goal of becoming a world-class university, institutions must use international branding strategies that successfully position them to reach a global audience (Gardiana et al., 2023). Even alumni play a significant role in brand engagement through university brand evangelism, which is enhanced by their identification with the university and its social community (Amani, 2022).

However, the relationship between universities' posting activity on social networks and follower engagement is complex, with increased activity not necessarily leading to greater engagement (Capriotti et al., 2023). Moreover, the impact of social media networks on individual selection and also brand name recognition in the college market is substantial, with variables such as brand name promo together with pupil inspiration playing an important duty in the uniqueness of an HEI's brand name (Brzaković et al., 2022).

Furthermore, global pupils' complete satisfaction with academic experiences plus the school society likewise add to the charm of HEIs emphasizing the requirement for efficient online and also offline advertising and marketing interaction devices (Collins et al., 2022). Interior branding especially amongst mid-level management coupled with scholastic personnel, is crucial for comprehending and also checking out

a college's rebranding project highlighting the relevance of interior risk holder involvement in brand name monitoring method (Clark et al., 2020).

The principle of brand name character in college, defined by characteristics such as resistance, open-mindedness, coupled with regard affects trainees' choices for an academic establishment (Roskosa and Stukalina, 2021). Finally, a holistic approach to branding that integrates various marketing activities and considers different brand-building elements is crucial for meeting the complex needs and expectations of university stakeholders (Roskosa and Stukalina, 2020).

In the higher education the students or the prospective students are the consumer. Therefore, Consumer Brand Engagement CBE in higher education can be defined as the students' interactions with educational institutions via user-generated content (UGC) on platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, which have emerged as critical avenues for educational engagement (Naem and Okafor, 2019). However, technological improvements have enabled students to produce and share unique information about their educational experiences, therefore changing views and engagement with educational brands (Naem and Okafor, 2019). Tunca (2019) explores Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) in higher education, describing it as students' active engagement with and emotional connection to their university. In a result this engagement is essential for recruiting and maintaining students, as well as building trust, dedication, and good word-of-mouth advocacy. Hadi Raharjo et al. (2022) describe consumer brand engagement in higher education as the way students perceive and interact with their educational brand, influenced by the university's brand personality. Therefore, balancing academic integrity with consumer appeal is critical for sustaining active student involvement and creating a pleasant university experience. Understanding CBE is critical for developing a stronger link between students and their university that goes beyond the transactional aspect of education fees (Tunca, 2019).

Moving on to consumer brand engagement’s dimensions, which are emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement, Ruangkanjanases et al. (2022) defined them as follows: emotional engagement as the emotional attachment and feelings that a prospective student develops towards a higher education institution, influenced by social media marketing activities that emphasize the institution's awareness and project a positive image. In contrast, cognitive engagement is the awareness and knowledge

that a potential student acquires about a higher education institution, including its characteristics and the quality of its graduates, as a result of activities on social media. Behavioral engagement, on the other hand, is the amount of time, effort, and energy a prospective student spends reading, interacting, and feeling connected to higher education posts or content, whether done by the institution or the student themselves.

2.6.The Role of Social Media Engagement in Higher Education Institutions

Lottering (2020) highlights universities' rapid utilization of social media platforms to boost student engagement, retention, and recruitment by employing new strategies that appeal to the digital native generation. Increased student participation on social media has educational benefits, such as increased interest in course material, higher academic accomplishment, and enhanced critical thinking. Moreover, online social systems advertise a much more comprehensive and interactive academic atmosphere by permitting pupils to connect with course material and instructors using unique interaction strategies, thus enhancing overall student experience and academic outcomes.

Furthermore, colleges use social media not just to recruit potential students and build a dedicated online community, but also to help overseas students make decisions by using these channels for marketing and engagement (Kumar and Raman, 2020). The evolution of a Social Media Marketing Approach (SMMA) tailored to higher education has had a significant impact on brand equity and potential student involvement, emphasizing the importance of creating compelling, interactive, and educational social media content when communicating the university's brand to prospective students (Ruangkanjanases et al., 2022). However, a gap in the use of social networking platforms by students and instructors has been discovered, emphasizing the significance of colleges developing protocols for incorporating social media into teaching techniques (Mirembe et. all, 2019).

Facebook groups have proven successful in fostering a sense of belonging among prospective students, significantly influencing their decision to accept university offers and thus positively impacting student recruitment (Bunce, 2018). Higher education institutions in Ukraine acknowledge the widespread use of social media for student recruitment and communication, but official websites and alumni

comments continue to be highly trusted sources for prospective students (Datsenko et al., 2020).

Finally, the establishment of social media guidelines based on predictors of enrollment intention underscores the necessity for universities to strategically utilize social media for student recruitment, ensuring that the content is engaging, informative, and meets the informational needs of prospective students (Beesoon and Cant, 2023). Social media platforms are strong tools for universities to distribute updates and actively connect with students, fostering a feeling of community and devotion to the school by highlighting students' co-curricular experiences to a wider audience (Yaping et al., 2023). Furthermore, by promoting good student interactions and experiences on social media, colleges may effectively appeal potential students, using existing students' posts as a type of public endorsement for the institution (Yaping et al., 2023). While universities must have a compelling and distinct social media brand identity, it may also help to recruit new students and retain current ones by instilling a strong feeling of belonging and pride within the student population (Yaping et al., 2023).

Spanjaard et al. (2022) suggests that digital storytelling, like social media activities, is a dynamic style of content production, suggesting that incorporating it into higher education may provide insights into increasing social media consumer engagement among students from a practical standpoint, incorporating digital storytelling into marketing education can significantly increase student engagement by creating interactive and social learning environments, which are essential for understanding complex marketing concepts in a relatable and enjoyable manner. Furthermore, using digital storytelling as an evaluation tool provides an authentic way to test students' understanding and implementation of marketing principles, allowing them to demonstrate their abilities in a creative and engaging way. However, Social media marketing initiatives, including content provided by users and institutions, play a vital role in creating brand equity for higher education institutions by encouraging social brand interaction among students (Perera et al., 2023).

Researchers discovered different forms of Instagram interactions in higher education. Ramadanty and Syafganti (2021) identify four sorts of information provided by Indonesian universities on Instagram: "Event," "Campus Life," "Covid-19 Info," and "Overall info." These sections satisfy the needs of prospective students by giving

information about campus life and crucial updates on events and Covid-19. The range of web content classifications delicately reveals colleges' individuality and also abilities, boosting their charm as well as brand name recognition amongst college organizations (Saikia and Barman, 2023).

Furthermore, Ganjoo et al. (2021) consider the use of Instagram as a method for enhancing trainee involvement in particular on-line academic setups. In addition, instructors utilize Instagram to give weekly course materials such as news headlines, cartoons, and brief quizzes, allowing students to engage with both course content and one another. Therefore, this interactive technique allows students to easily access course materials and connect with classmates outside of the traditional classroom environment. Despite these advantages, students raise concerns about privacy and the usefulness of social networking technologies for learning. This emphasizes the significance of carefully addressing student preferences and concerns when using such technologies in online learning settings.

2.7.Research Gap

While the literature extensively covers general Instagram usage in higher education marketing, there seems to be a gap in the understanding of the distinctive strategies and challenges faced by foundation universities in Istanbul, particularly the top 20 foundation universities in Istanbul. There has been minimal research on the unique role of Instagram features, content kinds, and engagement techniques adapted to the Turkish higher education sector, with an emphasis on foundation universities. Addressing this gap may give useful information for these institutions in optimizing their Instagram presence and engagement tactics.

QR1: What themes and content types in Instagram posts effectively engage the audience of the top 20 foundation universities in Istanbul?

QR2: How does consumer brand engagement, measured through likes and comments, on Instagram posts differ between the top 20 foundation universities in Istanbul? Additionally, what specific content characteristics contribute to these differences?

By addressing these challenges, the study can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Instagram marketing in the context of Istanbul's foundation universities, delivering insights that extend outside the larger higher

education marketing landscape. The research will look at social media trends at Istanbul's top 20 foundation universities.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This research uses a descriptive and exploratory research design to investigate and understand the engagement of the university on Instagram. The two aspects of the research designs are necessary to provide detailed insights about the nuances of Instagram engagement strategies.

3.2. Data Collection and Research Sample

Instagram data was collected from the top 20 foundation universities in Istanbul during the period of the study, from May 1, 2023, to August 31, 2023. This period coincides with the promotional activities conducted by the universities, and especially with the registration open days. Secondary data were collected manually from the official Instagram accounts shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Table of Top 20 Foundation University in Istanbul

No.	University	Instagram Official Account	Followers
1.	Koç University	https://www.instagram.com/kocuniversity/	71.200
2.	Sabanci University	https://www.instagram.com/sabanci_university/	53.500
3.	Acibadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	https://www.instagram.com/acibademuniversitesi/	26.300
4.	Bezm-İ Alem Vakif University	https://www.instagram.com/bezmialemvakifuniv/	16.100
5.	İstanbul Medipol University	https://www.instagram.com/medipolunv/	100.000
6.	Yeditepe University	https://www.instagram.com/yeditepeuniversitesi/	66.600
7.	İstinye University	https://www.instagram.com/istinyeunivedu/	33.600
8.	Özyeğin University	https://www.instagram.com/ozyeginuni/	35.400
9.	Bahçeşehir University	https://www.instagram.com/bahcesehiruniversity/	88.200
10.	Kadir Has University	https://www.instagram.com/khasedutr/	24.000
11.	Biruni University	https://www.instagram.com/biruniuniversitesi/	39.800

Reference: (URAP - Türkiye Özel Sıralaması Sayfası, 2023)

Table 3.1. Table of Top 20 Foundation University in Istanbul (continue)

No.	University	Instagram Official Account	Followers
12.	İstanbul Bilgi University	https://www.instagram.com/bilgiofficial/	71.600
13.	Altınbaş University	https://www.instagram.com/altinbasuni/	25.900
14.	İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	https://www.instagram.com/zaimuniv/	20.800
15.	İbn Haldun University	https://www.instagram.com/ibnhalduni/	12.600
16.	İstanbul Ticaret University	https://www.instagram.com/ticaretedutr/	18.100
17.	İstanbul Arel University	https://www.instagram.com/areledu/	30.900
18.	İstanbul Okan University	https://www.instagram.com/okanuniversitesi/	43.100
19.	İstanbul Aydin University	https://www.instagram.com/iaukampus/	68.600
20.	İstanbul Gelişim University	https://www.instagram.com/igugelisim/	59.900

Reference: (URAP - Türkiye Özel Sıralaması Sayfası, 2023)

During this period, the total number of posts was 2011 in all universities. In Table 3.2. the total number of posts in each foundation university can be seen.

Table 3.2. Table Universities in Istanbul with Total Sample Post

No.	University	Sample Post
1.	Koç University	54
2.	Sabancı University	110
3.	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	35
4.	Bezm-i Alem University	131
5.	Medipol University	218
6.	Yeditepe University	166
7.	İstinye University	38
8.	Özeğin University	38
9.	Bahçeşehir University	43
10.	Kadir Has University	125
11.	Biruni University	157
12.	Bilgi University	54
13.	Altınbaş University	63
14.	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	119
15.	Ibn Haldun University	16
16.	Istanbul Ticaret University	190
17.	Istanbul Areal University	91
18.	Istanbul Okan University	73
19.	Istanbul Aydın University	217
20.	Istanbul Gelişim University	73

3.3. Data Analysis:

In this process of researching, the collected data from the posts was taken through content analysis using the inductive technique. The methodology was reading through all the posts to have an idea of the contents and how it has been presented. The material was then categorized and organized using a methodical methodology.

3.3.1. Initial Exploration:

All posts were thoroughly reviewed to grasp the diversity and scope of the content. Initial observations were made to identify recurring themes and patterns within the posts. Figure 3.1. displays the words most frequently encountered in the collective posts across all universities. It highlights the prevalent terms employed by universities in their promotional content aimed at students.

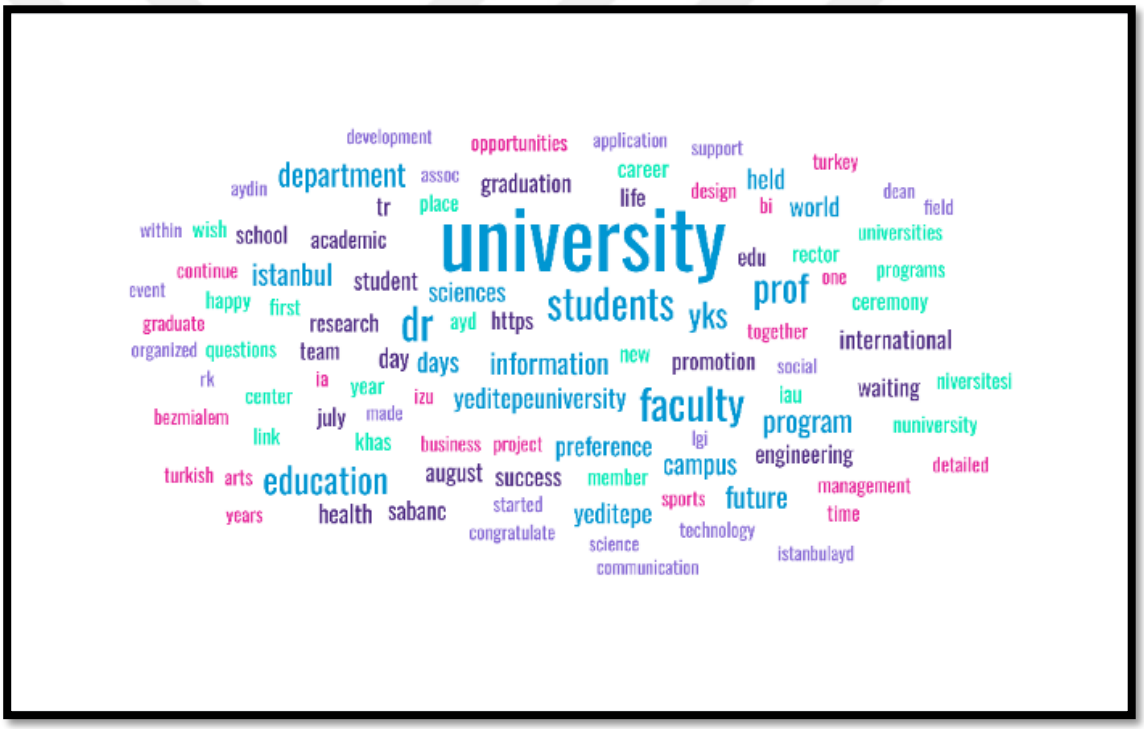

Figure 3.1. Most Used Words in the Top 20 Foundation Universities' Posts

3.3.2. Note-Taking:

A content analysis review was done for each of the posts—very detailed, with notations and key elements recorded in vivid detail, along with salient aspects of each of the posts. Relevant information regarding academic engagement, community engagement, student engagement, or even hybrid engagement, was taken out.

3.3.3. Classification into Themes:

Following the detailed review and the note-taking exercise, the entries for posts were incorporated under a few themes. Made to identify four general themes that the content falls under, that is: academic engagement, community engagement, hybrid engagement and student's engagement (Table 3.3.).

3.3.4. Alignment with Research Questions:

Themes identified are directly related to the research questions and general aims of the research. Such thematic identification helps in generating a framework that will guide the analysis and discussion developed later on.

Table 3.3. Description of Content Categories

Theme	Description
Academic Engagement	The activity will run based on what goes in line with the academic purpose of the institution; that is, interviews on academic matters and programs at the institution, and faculty accomplishments that stimulate intellectual activities and knowledge building.
Community Engagement	This shall underpin the linkage of the educational institutions to the wider community through such activities as scholarship funds and social impact programs with an aim of improving community partnerships.
Hybrid Engagement	Blends any or all of these, such as academic, community, or student activity—or both of the latter two in combination—into the picture to represent a wide variety of contacts and experiences within university life, including things like campus facilities, and cultural events.
Student Engagement	Everything is focused on bringing students into the different aspects of Campus life and personal development whereby they enhance the student experience through events like club occurrences and grad ceremonies.

Table 3.3. summarizes the classification method and shows how postings were distributed among the selected topics. This framework guarantees that the acquired material is organized in a logical and relevant way, allowing for a more concentrated investigation of each topic area in the thesis's succeeding parts.

In the following Table 3.4. we can see each code extracted from each post by content analysis and to which theme it belongs. The total codes that are used were 77 codes to cover all the different content across the whole posts in all the 20 foundation universities.

Table 3.4. Codes and Themes

No	Code	Themes
1	Academic Interviews	Academic Engagement
2	Academic Programs	Academic Engagement
3	Academic Recognition	Academic Engagement
4	Advice To Students	Student Engagement
5	Appreciation Of Art On Campus	Student Engagement
6	Campus Aesthetics And Environment	Student Engagement
7	Campus Events	Student Engagement
8	Campus Facilities	Hybrid Engagement
9	Campus Life Experience	Student Engagement
10	Career And Alumni Engagement	Hybrid Engagement
11	Championships	Student Engagement
12	Club Activities	Student Engagement
13	Collaboration Between Universities	Hybrid Engagement
14	Condolences	Community Engagement
15	Creativity And Innovation	Student Engagement
16	Cultural Events	Hybrid Engagement
17	Curiosity And Exploration	Student Engagement
18	Digital Expression And Interaction	Student Engagement
19	Donation And Aid Campaigns	Community Engagement
20	Emoji	Student Engagement
21	Encouragement For Active Living	Student Engagement
22	Encouraging Participation	Student Engagement
23	Exam Date	Student Engagement
24	Faculty Achievements	Academic Engagement
25	Faculty Spotlights	Academic Engagement
26	Fairs	Student Engagement
27	Friendship	Student Engagement
28	General Information	Hybrid Engagement
29	Graduation Ceremonies	Student Engagement
30	Health Advice	Student Engagement
31	Humorous Reflection	Student Engagement
32	Hybrid Content	Hybrid Engagement
33	Important Announcements	Hybrid Engagement
34	Information About Registration	Student Engagement
35	Institutional Information	Hybrid Engagement
36	Institutional Promotion	Hybrid Engagement
37	Interactive Question	Hybrid Engagement

Table 3.4. Codes and Themes (continue)

No	Code	Themes
38	Interviews About The Registration	Hybrid Engagement
39	Involvement With The Community	Community Engagement
40	Lifestyle Advice	Student Engagement
41	Love For Reading	Student Engagement
42	National Celebrations	Hybrid Engagement
43	News In The Media	Hybrid Engagement
44	Nostalgia For Friends	Student Engagement
45	Official Holidays	Hybrid Engagement
46	Open Days	Hybrid Engagement
47	Opening Ceremony	Hybrid Engagement
48	Organized Scientific Event	Academic Engagement
49	Philosophical Reflection	Student Engagement
50	Positive Outlook	Student Engagement
51	Positive Outlook And Motivation	Student Engagement
52	Positive Start To The Week	Student Engagement
53	Projects Abroad	Hybrid Engagement
54	Reflection On The Year	Student Engagement
55	Reflections And Insights Shared By Alumni	Hybrid Engagement
56	Research	Academic Engagement
57	Scholarship Funds	Hybrid Engagement
58	Seasonal Greeting	Student Engagement
59	Seasonal Reflection	Student Engagement
60	Self-Reflection And Motivation	Student Engagement
61	Seminars	Academic Engagement
62	Special University Events	Student Engagement
63	Sports Events	Student Engagement
64	Student Experience	Student Engagement
65	Students' Achievements	Student Engagement
66	Students' Reflections	Student Engagement
67	Students' Testimonials	Student Engagement
68	Success Wishes	Student Engagement
69	Technological Festival	Hybrid Engagement
70	University Slogan	Hybrid Engagement
71	Visits Made And Visitors Accepted	Hybrid Engagement
72	Vlogs And YouTube	Hybrid Engagement
73	Weather Commentary	Student Engagement
74	Webinars	Academic Engagement

Table 3.4. Codes and Themes (continue)

No	Code	Themes
75	Weekend Greeting	Student Engagement
76	Welcome Activities	Student Engagement
77	Welcome To Summer	Student Engagement

3.3.5. Examples from posts

Here are examples of coding for some posts from different universities. For instance, Koç University features an image post accompanied by the caption:

"Even though I found myself at Koç University without a desire to be here, it didn't take long for a deep bond to form. From the first day, a love was kindled within me. Every detail here awakened a sense of excitement. I explored each faculty, each corner, drawing an invisible map from memory. On colder days, when spirits were low, I sought refuge in the SNA's glass area, my eyes captivated by the snow-dressed landscape. As spring unfurled, I'd walk around my favorite corners of the school. To clear my head, the gym would become my haven, a dance floor where worries were whirled away. Some nights, the foggy tendrils of stress drew me to the area in front of the library, where witnessing the breaking dawn scatter the shadows in my mind felt very special with each passing second. Even in quarantine, I'd frequently leave my dwelling, to trace my path to the West campus, each step was precious. Over these five years, Koç University never pushed me away, but rather, it enveloped me, a reassuring embrace in every moment.

*H*****, Psychology & Media and Visual Arts"*

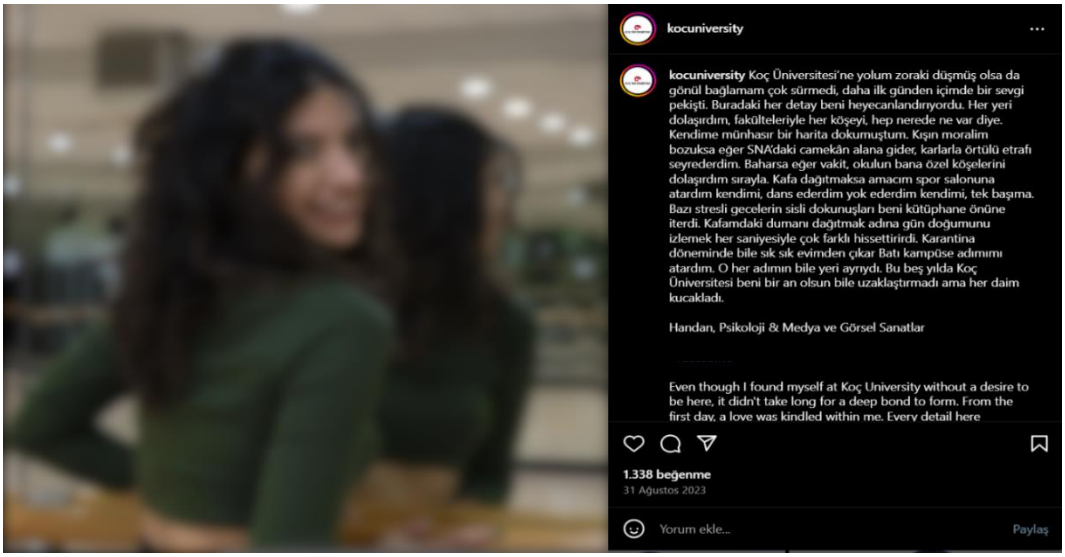

Figure 3.2. Example post from Koç University ("Koç University," 2023)

This example is a student testimonial, reflecting a student's experience, thus falling under the theme of student engagement.

Another example from Sabancı University features a sidecar post accompanied by the caption:

"Our university's 21st term undergraduate and 24th term graduate graduation ceremonies were held on our Tuzla campus. Sabancı University Founding Chairman of the Board of Trustees Güler Sabancı, Sabancı University Rector Yusuf Leblebici and faculty members attended the ceremony where a total of 1008 students graduated from the Faculties of Engineering and Natural Sciences, Arts and Social Sciences and Management Sciences."

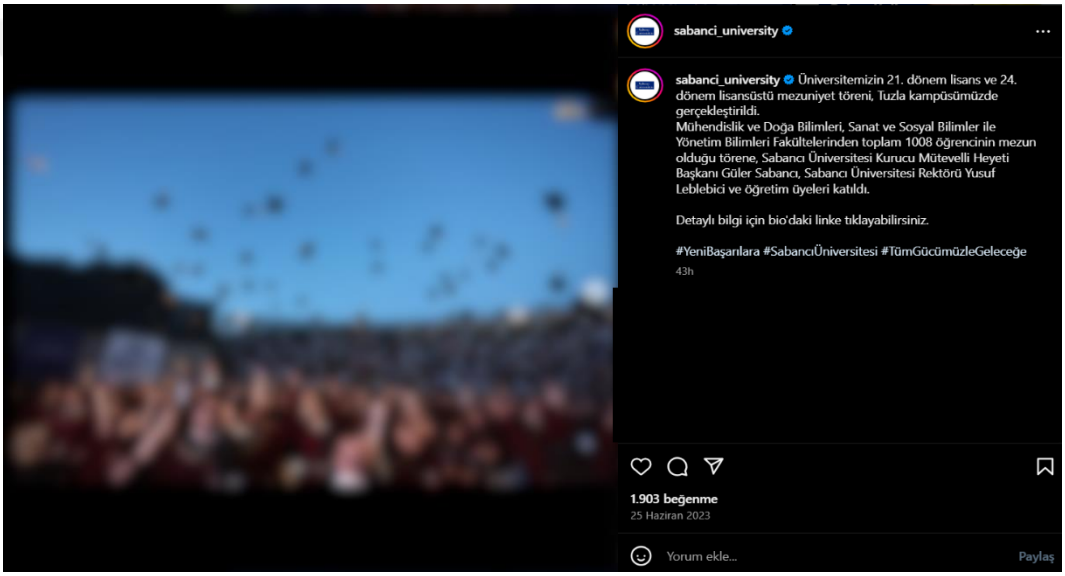

Figure 3.3. Example post from Sabancı University ("Sabancı University," 2023)

This example is a graduation ceremony, reflecting a campus engagement, thus falling under the theme of student engagement.

Another one from Medipol University features a video post accompanied by the caption:

"We welcome all prospective students to our Introduction Days until August 8th 🏫📚😎"

Figure 3.4. Example post from Medipol University ("Medipol University," 2023)

This example is a about open day thus falling under the theme of hybrid engagement.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Themes

After analyzing each post for all universities manually, the theme of each post was obtained. The results were edited and formed using the Microsoft Excel program; results that are visually presented in Figure 4.1.

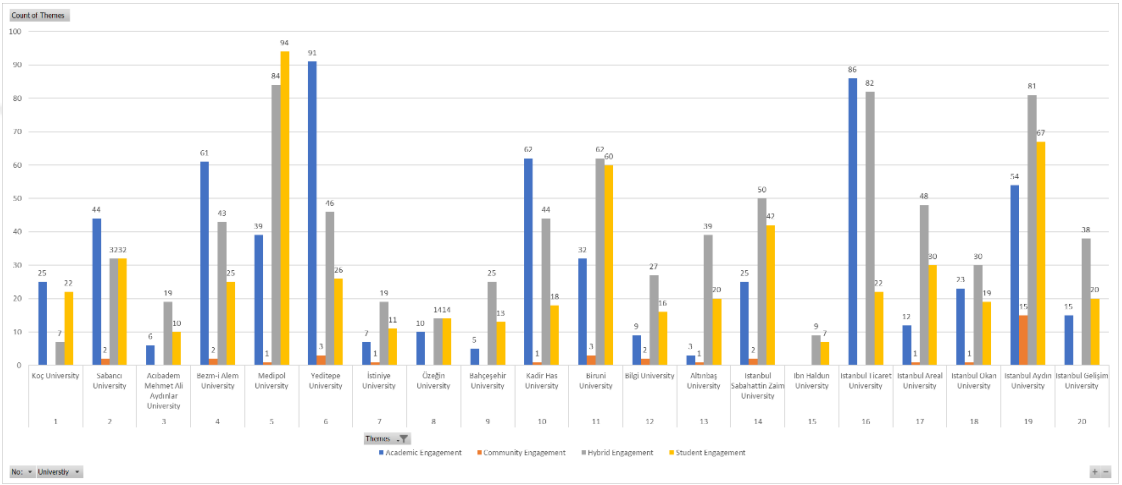

Figure 4.1. Number of Post for Each Theme in Each University

In figure 4.1. several striking findings emerge from engagement themes across various universities: student Engagement is the overarching theme in most of the universities; Medipol University reaches the highest number of posts on that subject, with 94 posts in detail, while the next highest comes from Istanbul Aydın University, which has 67 posts. In this view, Hybrid engagement emerges, with Medipol University leading once again by having 84 posts, standing out as truly dedicated to hybrid approaches towards the engagement of the students. The variation was also noticeable in the community engagement category, where Istanbul Aydın University has the highest number of posts (15 posts). Academic engagement is present across all universities but generally exhibits low counts compared to other themes. Overall, such findings suggest a diversity of engagement strategies among universities, with a rather obvious tilt toward student-centric approaches and a growing interest in hybrid engagement strategies.

On the other hand, when the total number of posts for each theme is observed, 609 posts are about academic engagement, 35 posts about community cngagement, 799 posts about hybrid engagement, and 568 posts about student engagement, as shown in figure 4.2.

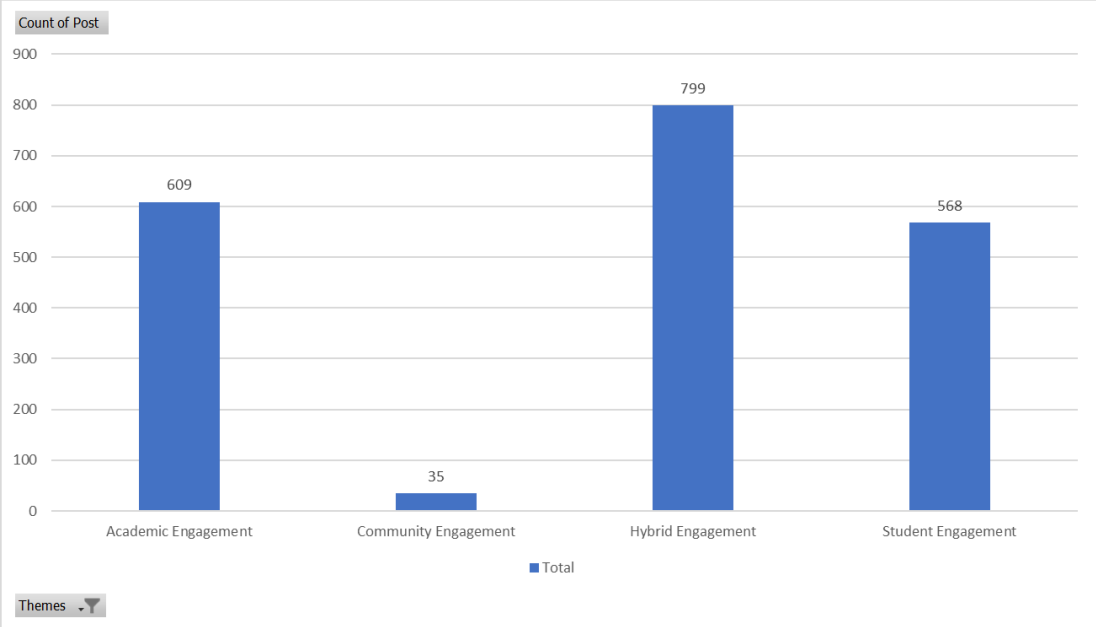

Figure 4.2. Number of Post for each Theme

Figure 4.3. provides an overview of the four themes for the total likes per post. Hybrid engagement emerges as the top theme of activity and gets around 39% of the total likes, whereas only 799 posts exist. Student engagement follows closely behind, collecting almost 43% of the total likes with 568 posts and displaying a high average of 915.73 likes per post. Academic engagement, for its part, is strong, representing just 16% of the total likes and 609 posts, though there is a very decent average of 347.25 likes per post. Conversely, community engagement is represented by only 2% of the total likes and includes 35 posts, still displaying moderate levels of engagement to attain an average of 43.20 likes per post. In summary, hybrid and student engagements come first in terms of total likes and percentage contribution to the discourse, hence their superior performance in terms of participation. Academic and community engagement contribute but are relatively low, at 16% and 2%, respectively.

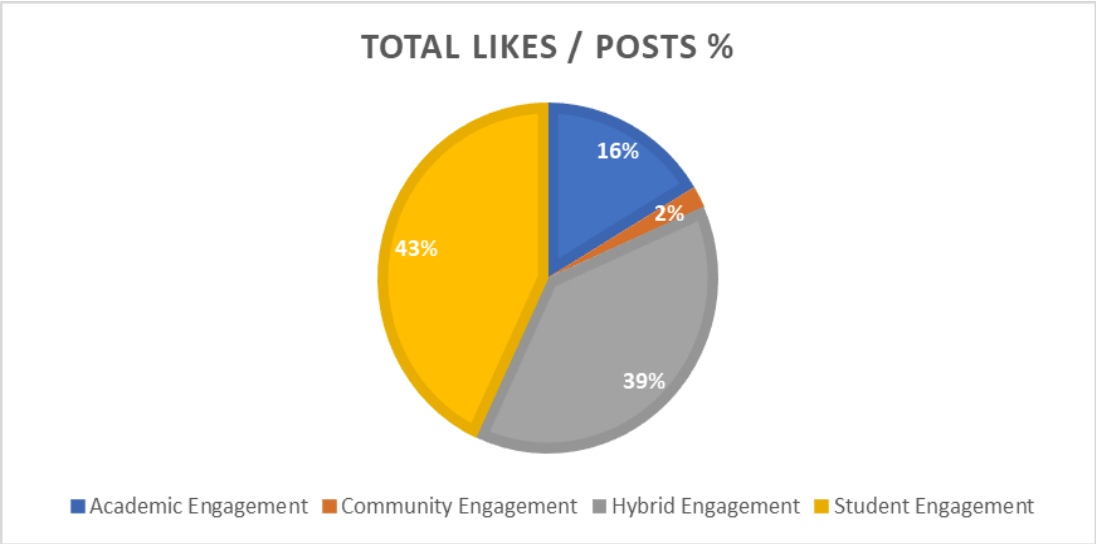

Figure 4.3. Total likes / Posts in all the themes

In comparison, in figure 4.4. the theme that has come out to dominate across all four themes, with 49% of the total comments across 568 posts, is student engagement, making an average of 22.20 comments per post. Community Engagement follows closely behind and stands for 21% of the total comments with 35 posts, meaning the average number of comments per post is 9.46, which clearly indicates quite strong interaction within the community. The hybrid Engagement and academic Engagement themes also contribute meaningfully, accounting for 20% and 10% of the total comments, respectively, with an average of 9.03 and 4.68 comments per post. There's a general observation: student engagement scores much higher when it comes to the total number of comments and percentage of engagement, while community engagement has the highest average of comments per post, even with fewer posts. These also fall below the set engagement criteria threshold, with hybrid and academic engagement contributing meaningfully to the discourse.

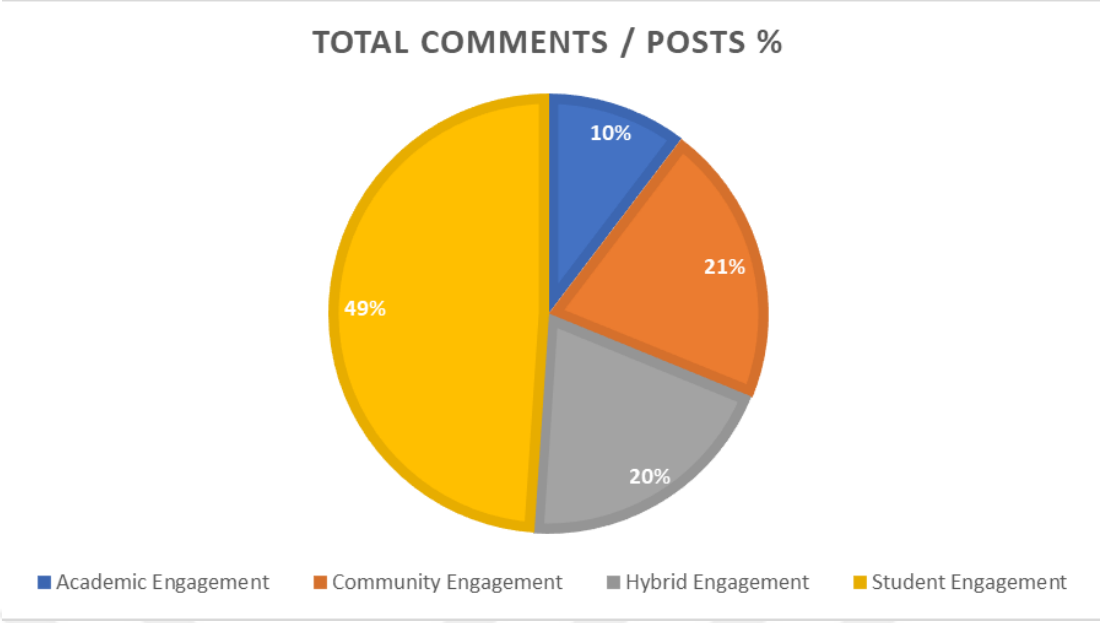

Figure 4.4. Total Comments / Posts in all the themes

Let move now to see the results and the analyses of each theme separately.

4.1.1. Academic Engagement

The posts dealing with the academic activities inside the campus or academic achievements fall under this theme. Figure 4.5. displays the words most frequently encountered in the collective posts across all universities in the academic engagement theme.

Figure 4.5. Most Used Words in the Top 20 Foundation Universities' Posts for Academic Engagement

Moving to the results of this theme figure 4.6. illustrates the distribution of posts among various universities in the realm of academic engagement. Yeditepe University leads with the highest number of posts (91), while Ibn Haldun University trails with zero posts.

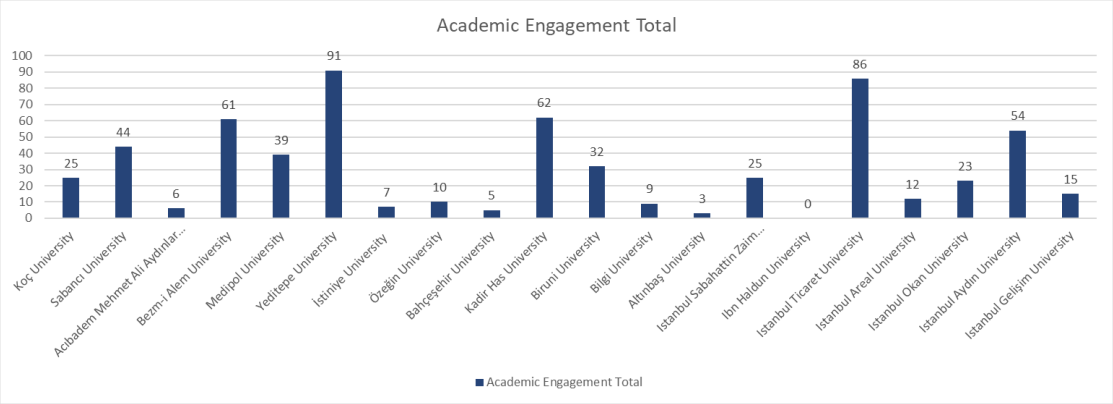

Figure 4.6. Number of Academic Engagement Posts for each University

Figure 4.7. delves into the content format preferences of 20 foundation universities.

Image Format: Istanbul Ticaret University leads significantly with 74 posts, followed by Bezm-i Alem University with 21 posts, and Istanbul Aydın University also with 21 posts. On the other hand, Bahçeşehir University, Ibn Haldun University, Altınbaş University, and Özeğin University have no posts in this format.

Sidecar Format: Yeditepe University stands out by having 39 posts, followed by Bezm-i Alem University with 27 posts. Other universities are also in noticeable mode in this format. Universities such as Koç University, Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University, and Altınbaş University have zero posts in this format.

Video Format: Kadir Has University emerges with 46 posts, Yeditepe University has 41 posts, and Sabancı University has 27 posts. A few universities, like Istanbul Ticaret University, Ibn Haldun University, and Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University, have zero posts in this format.

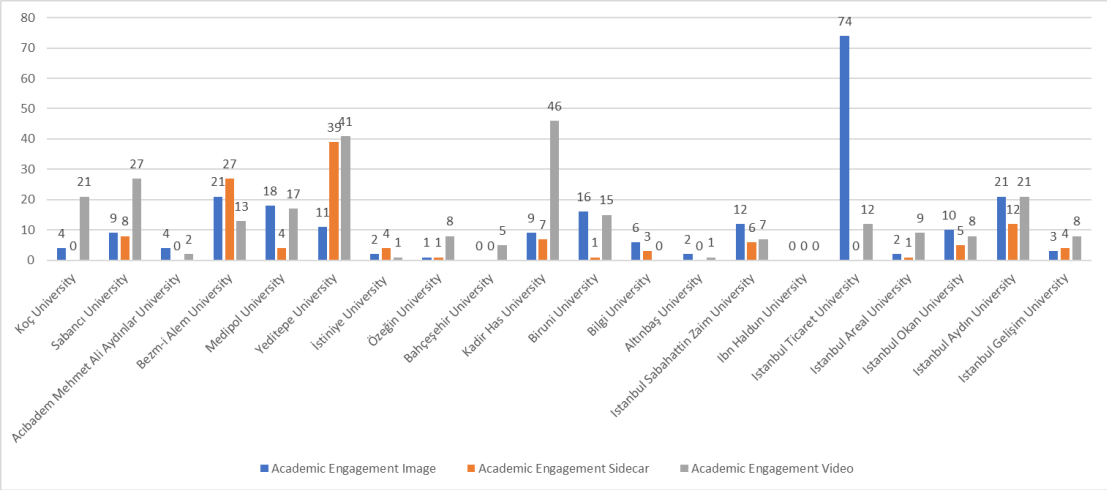

Figure 4.7. Number of Academic Engagement Posts for each Format

Figure 4.8. provides an overview of the total posts for each format across all the universities in academic engagement, highlighting the video format as the most prevalent (43%), followed by images (37%), and sidecars (20%).

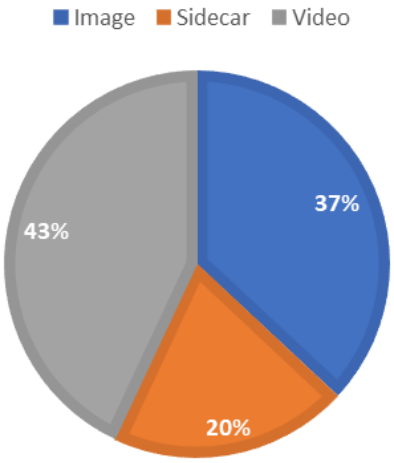

Figure 4.8. Overview of the Content Format Distribution in the Academic Engagement Theme

Moving to Figure 4.9. which examines the percentage of average likes per post for each format in the top 20 foundation universities, we see that the sidecar format holds the top position in nine universities. The video format follows closely, securing the second position among eight universities. Meanwhile, the image format lags behind at two universities.

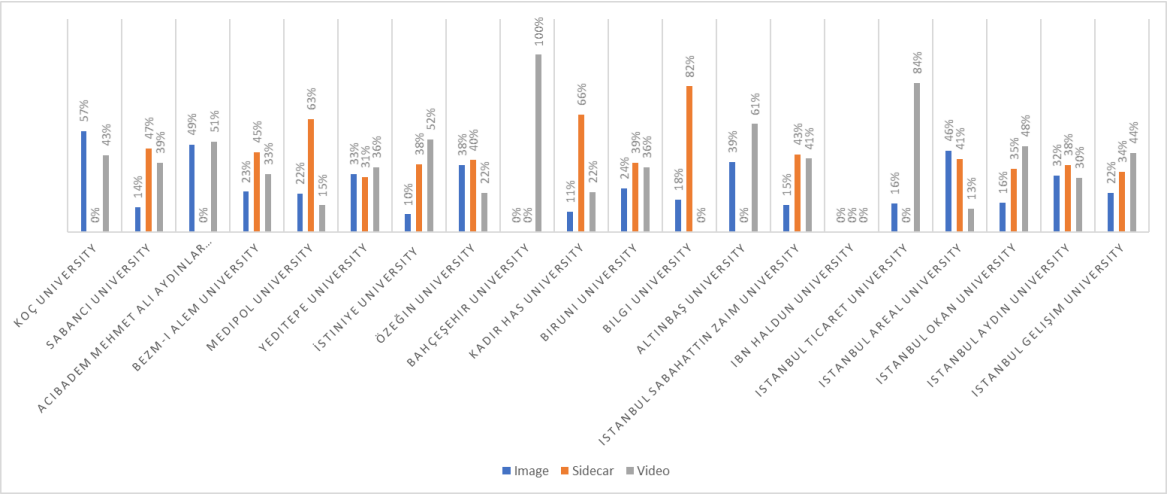

Figure 4.9. The Percentage Average of Likes per Post for Academic Engagement

Table 4.1. indicates the preferred format of academic theme among the followers based on the percentage average number of likes per post. The followers of Koç University and Istanbul Arel University were more active in engagement with image format posts, whereas followers at Sabancı University, Bezmi Alem University, Medipol University, Özeğin University, Kadir Has University, Biruni University, Bilgi University, Istanbul Sabahttin Zaim University, and Istanbul Aydın University went more for sidecar format posts. The rest of the universities, except Ibn Haldun University, where there were no posts related to this theme, liked to show engagement with a video format post.

Table 4.1. The Percentage of Average Likes per Post for Academic Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Koç University	57%	0%	43%	100%
2	Sabancı University	14%	47%	39%	100%
3	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	49%	0%	51%	100%
4	Bezm-i Alem University	23%	45%	33%	100%
5	Medipol University	22%	63%	15%	100%
6	Yeditepe University	33%	31%	36%	100%
7	İstinye University	10%	38%	52%	100%
8	Özeğin University	38%	40%	22%	100%
9	Bahçeşehir University	0%	0%	100%	100%
10	Kadir Has University	11%	66%	22%	100%
11	Biruni University	24%	39%	36%	100%
12	Bilgi University	18%	82%	0%	100%
13	Altınbaş University	39%	0%	61%	100%

Table 4.1. The Percentage of Average Likes per Post for Academic Engagement (Continue)

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
14	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	15%	43%	41%	100%
15	Ibn Haldun University	0%	0%	0%	0%
16	Istanbul Ticaret University	16%	0%	84%	100%
17	Istanbul Areal University	46%	41%	13%	100%
18	Istanbul Okan University	16%	35%	48%	100%
19	Istanbul Aydın University	32%	38%	30%	100%
20	Istanbul Gelişim University	22%	34%	44%	100%

In table 4.2. we notice that Medipol University boasts the highest average likes per post (3179.75) for the sidecar format, followed by Bahçeşehir University with 2312.6 likes per post. Also, Medipol University has the highest average likes per post (5018.03), and Altınbaş University has the lowest average likes per post (263.50).

Table 4.2. Average Likes per Post for Academic Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	total
1	Medipol University	1086.22	3179.75	752.06	5018.03
2	Bahçeşehir University	0.00	0.00	2312.60	2312.60
3	Biruni University	477.06	761.00	710.33	1948.40
4	Koç University	987.50	0.00	750.19	1737.69
5	Özeğin University	530.00	569.00	308.00	1407.00
6	Istanbul Gelişim University	288.33	446.00	583.25	1317.58
7	Bilgi University	216.67	984.67	0.00	1201.33
8	Istanbul Aydın University	372.38	442.92	357.29	1172.58
9	Istanbul Areal University	448.50	403.00	130.00	981.50
10	Istanbul Okan University	158.70	341.20	462.88	962.78
11	İstinye University	76.50	293.50	400.00	770.00
12	Kadir Has University	87.44	505.57	172.02	765.04
13	Sabancı University	106.11	354.88	294.70	755.69
14	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	110.83	315.00	299.14	724.98
15	Yeditepe University	233.91	221.15	261.51	716.58
16	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	305.75	0.00	316.50	622.25
17	Bezm-i Alem University	105.95	209.89	152.38	468.23
18	Istanbul Ticaret University	42.73	0.00	221.50	264.23
19	Altınbaş University	103.50	0.00	160.00	263.50
20	Ibn Haldun University	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Figure 4.10. provides an overview of the total average likes per post for each format across all the universities as a total in academic engagement, highlighting the sidecar format as the most prevalent (43%), followed by video (30%), and image (27%).

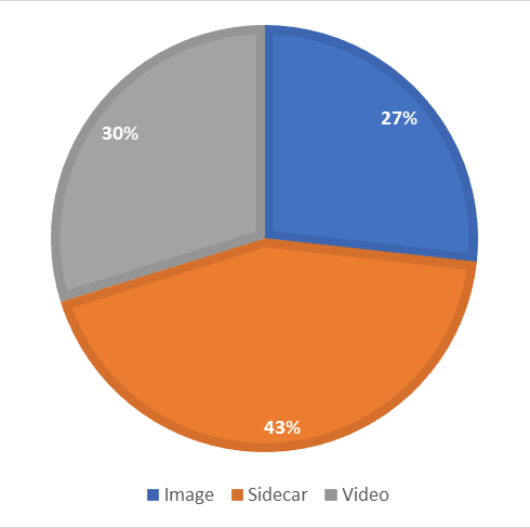

Figure 4.10. Overview of The Average Likes Per Post Content Format Distribution in The Academic Engagement Theme

Moving to Figure 4.11. which examines the percentage of average comments per post for each format in the top 20 foundation universities, we see that the image format holds the top position in eight universities. The Sidecar format follows closely, securing the second position in six universities. Meanwhile, the video format lags behind at five universities.

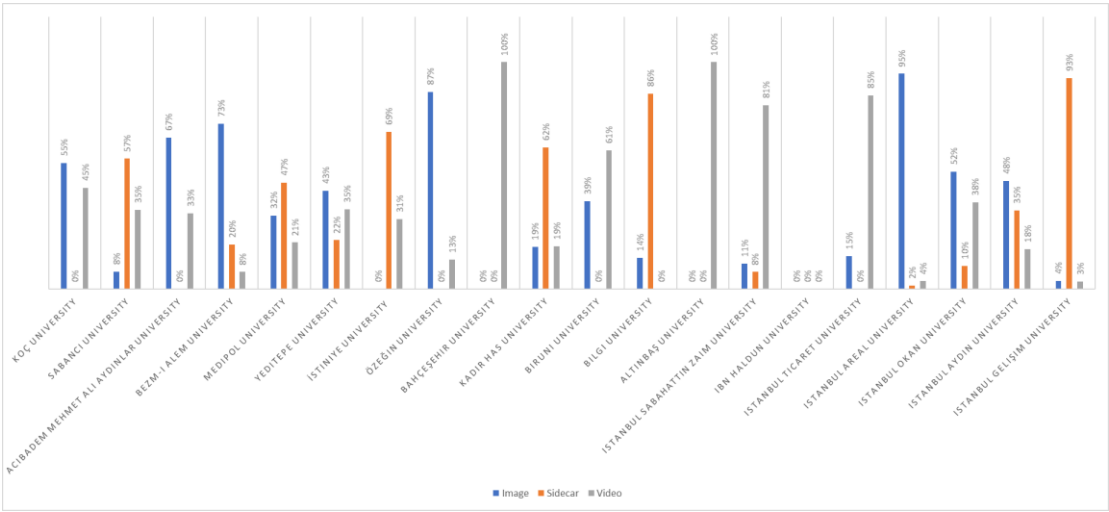

Figure 4.11. The Percentage Average of Likes per Post for Academic Engagement

Table 4.3. indicates the preferred format of academic theme among the followers based on the percentage average number of comments per post. The followers

of Koç University, Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University, Bezm-i Alem University, Yeditepe University, Özeğin University, Istanbul Areal University, Istanbul Okan University, and Istanbul Aydın University were more active in engagement with image format posts, whereas followers at Sabancı University, Medipol University, İstinye University, Kadir Has University, Bilgi University, and Istanbul Gelişim University went more for sidecar format posts. The rest of the universities, except Ibn Haldun University, where there were no posts related to this theme, liked to show engagement with a video format post.

Table 4.3. The Percentage of Average Comments per Post for Academic Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Koç University	55%	0%	45%	100%
2	Sabancı University	8%	57%	35%	100%
3	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	67%	0%	33%	100%
4	Bezm-i Alem University	73%	20%	8%	100%
5	Medipol University	32%	47%	21%	100%
6	Yeditepe University	43%	22%	35%	100%
7	İstinye University	0%	69%	31%	100%
8	Özeğin University	87%	0%	13%	100%
9	Bahçeşehir University	0%	0%	100%	100%
10	Kadir Has University	19%	62%	19%	100%
11	Biruni University	39%	0%	61%	100%
12	Bilgi University	14%	86%	0%	100%
13	Altınbaş University	0%	0%	100%	100%
14	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	11%	8%	81%	100%
15	Ibn Haldun University	0%	0%	0%	0%
16	Istanbul Ticaret University	15%	0%	85%	100%
17	Istanbul Areal University	95%	2%	4%	100%
18	Istanbul Okan University	52%	10%	38%	100%
19	Istanbul Aydın University	48%	35%	18%	100%
20	Istanbul Gelişim University	4%	93%	3%	100%

In table 4.4, We notice that Istanbul Gelişim University boasts the highest average comments per post (161.00) for the sidecar format, followed by Istanbul Areal University with 60.00 comments per post. Also, Istanbul Gelişim University has the highest average comments per post (173.08), and Altınbaş University has the lowest average likes per post (2).

Table 4.4. Average Comments per Post for Academic Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Istanbul Gelişim University	6.33	161.00	5.75	173.08
2	Istanbul Areal University	60.00	1.00	2.22	63.22
3	Medipol University	17.11	24.75	10.82	52.68
4	Bahçeşehir University	0.00	0.00	25.40	25.40
5	Istanbul Okan University	12.20	2.40	9.00	23.60
6	Koç University	9.50	0.00	7.62	17.12
7	Istanbul Aydın University	5.95	4.33	2.19	12.48
8	Özeğin University	10.00	0.00	1.50	11.50
9	Bilgi University	1.50	9.33	0.00	10.83
10	Yeditepe University	2.73	1.36	2.22	6.31
11	Bezm-i Alem University	3.71	1.00	0.38	5.10
12	Biruni University	1.81	0.00	2.87	4.68
13	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	3.00	0.00	1.50	4.50
14	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	0.50	0.33	3.57	4.40
15	Sabancı University	0.33	2.50	1.52	4.35
16	Istanbul Ticaret University	0.51	0.00	3.00	3.51
17	İstinye University	0.00	2.25	1.00	3.25
18	Kadir Has University	0.56	1.86	0.57	2.98
19	Altınbaş University	0.00	0.00	2.00	2.00
20	Ibn Haldun University	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Figure 4.12. provides an overview of the total average comments per post for each format across all the universities as a total in academic engagement, highlighting the sidecar format as the most prevalent (54%), followed by image (29%), and video (17%).

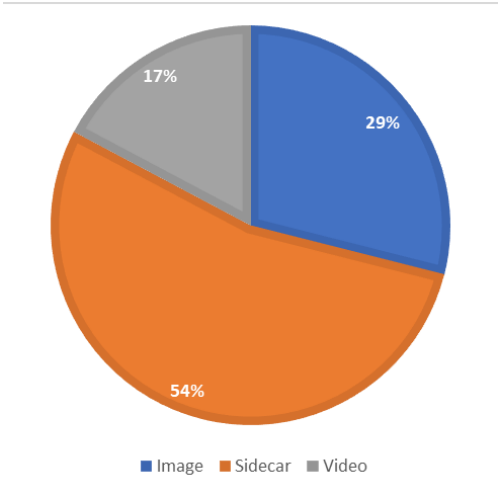

Figure 4.12. Overview of the average comments per post Content Format Distribution in the Academic Engagement Theme

Engagement in Academic Theme: To measure the engagement rate for the academic engagement theme, we need to apply the following formula to the analyzed data:

$$\frac{Likes + Comments}{Total\ Followers} \times 100$$

We get the results shown in Table 4.5. which emphasize that Bezm-i Alem University has the highest engagement rate (62%), and Altınbaş University has the lowest (1%). Also, Medipol University has the highest engagement rate in image format (20%). Bezm-i Alem University has the highest engagement rate in the sidecar format (35%), whereas Kadir Has University has the highest engagement rate in the video format (33%).

Table 4.5. Total Engagement Rate for Posts in The Academic Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total Engagement
1	Bezm-i Alem University	14%	35%	12%	62%
2	Kadir Has University	3%	15%	33%	51%
3	Biruni University	19%	2%	27%	48%
4	Medipol University	20%	13%	13%	46%
5	Yeditepe University	4%	13%	16%	33%
6	Istanbul Ticaret University	18%	0%	15%	33%
7	Istanbul Aydın University	12%	8%	11%	30%
8	Koç University	6%	0%	22%	28%
9	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	6%	9%	10%	26%
10	Sabancı University	2%	5%	15%	22%
11	Istanbul Okan University	4%	4%	9%	17%
12	Istanbul Gelişim University	1%	4%	8%	13%
13	Bahçeşehir University	0%	0%	13%	13%
14	Özeğin University	2%	2%	7%	10%
15	Istanbul Areal University	3%	1%	4%	8%
16	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	5%	0%	2%	7%
17	Bilgi University	2%	4%	0%	6%
18	İstinye University	0%	4%	1%	5%
19	Altınbaş University	1%	0%	1%	1%
20	Ibn Haldun University	0%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 4.13. provides a summary of the total engagement from all the university in academic engagement, highlighting the video format as the most engaged format by (48%), then comes by sidecar (26%), and image (26%) equally.

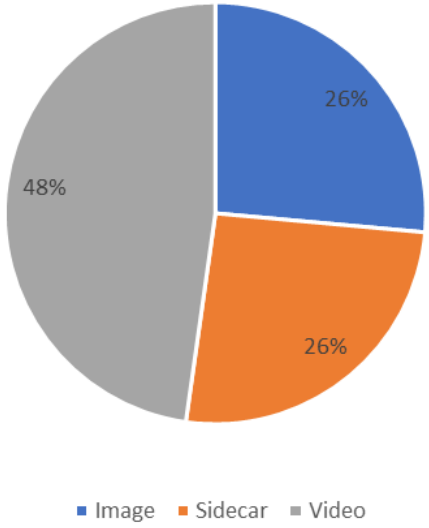

Figure 4.13. The total engagement in Content Format Distribution in the Academic Engagement Theme

Finally, it is important to examine the engagement rates over the specified duration from May to August. Figure 4.14. illustrates that the engagement rate slopes reach their peaks during July across most universities. This trend reflects the heightened interest in obtaining information about the universities during open days and registration periods.

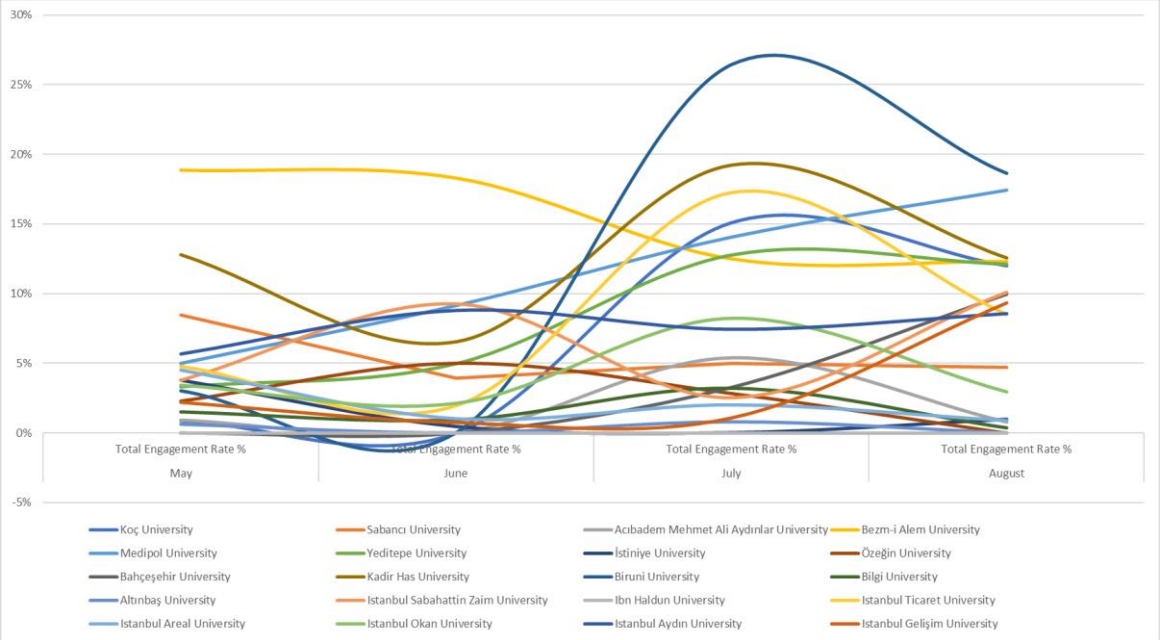

Figure 4.14. Engagement Rate Between May to August in Academic Engagement Theme

4.1.2. Community Engagement

The posts dealing with community activities inside and outside the campus, scholarships, donations, and aid campaigns fall under this theme. Figure 3.15. displays the words most frequently encountered in the collective posts across all universities in community engagement theme.

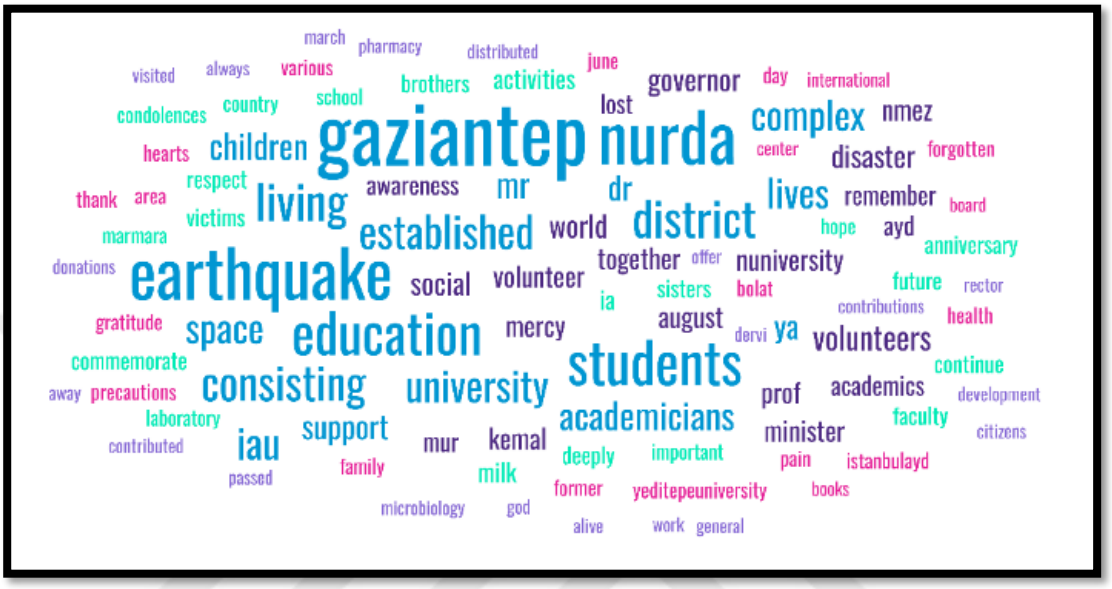

Figure 4.15. Most Used Words in the Top 20 Foundation Universities' Posts for Community Engagement

Moving to the results of this theme figure 4.16. Illustrates the distribution of posts among various universities in the theme of community engagement. We notice that the theme of community engagement through the university almost zero. While only Istanbul Aydin University leads with 15 posts followed by Biruni University and Yeditepe University 3 posts.

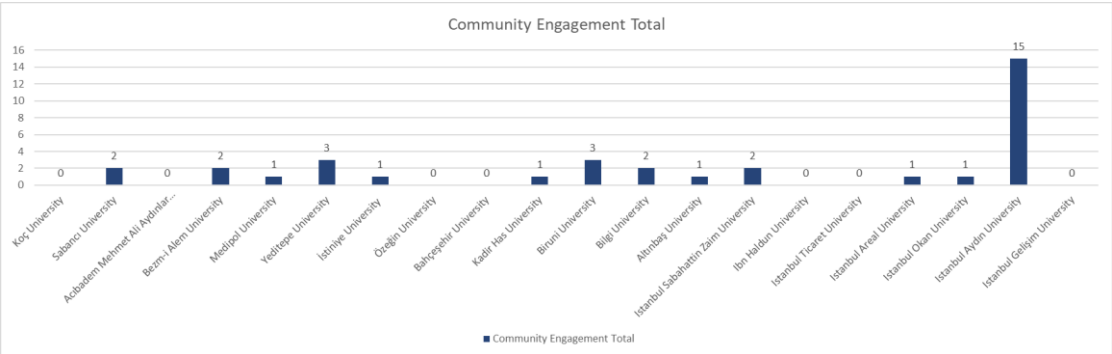

Figure 4.16. Number of Community Engagement Posts for each University

Figure 4.17. delves into the content format preferences of 20 foundation universities.

Image Format: Yeditepe University and Biruni University lead with 3 posts, followed by Sabancı University, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, and Istanbul Aydın University with 2 posts, Bezm-i Alem University, Medipol University, Kadir Has University, Bilgi University, Altınbaş University, and Istanbul Areal University with one post. On the other hand, the other universities have no posts in this format.

Sidecar Format: Istanbul Aydın University stands out by having 12 posts, followed by Bezm-i Alem University, and Bilgi University with 1 post. The other all universities have zero posts in this format.

Video Format: İstinye University, Istanbul Okan University, and Istanbul Aydın University with one post for each, and the rest of the universities have zero posts in this format.

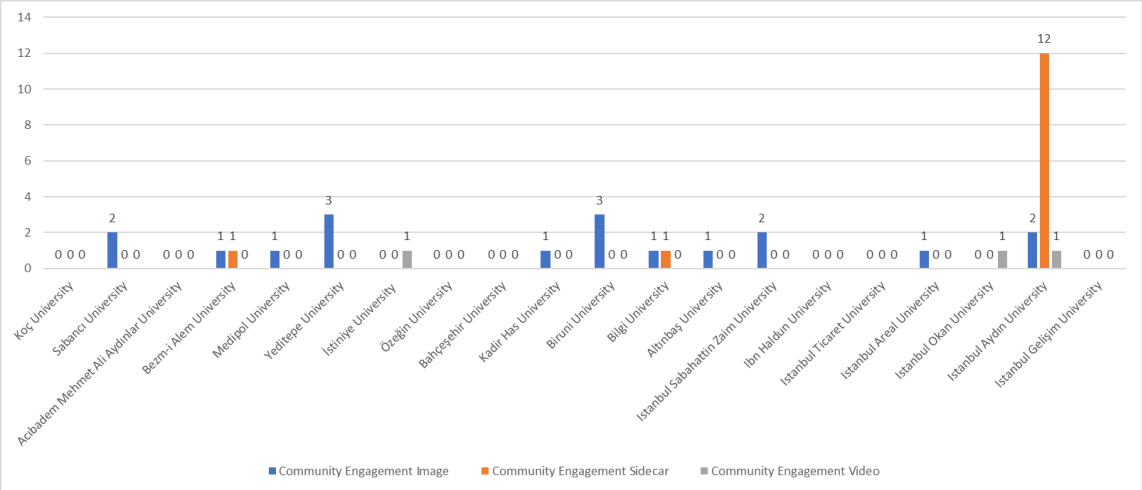

Figure 4.17. Number of Community Engagement Posts for each Format

Figure 4.18. provides an overview of the total posts for each format across all the universities in community engagement, highlighting the sidecar format as the most prevalent (47%), followed by images (43%), and video (10%).

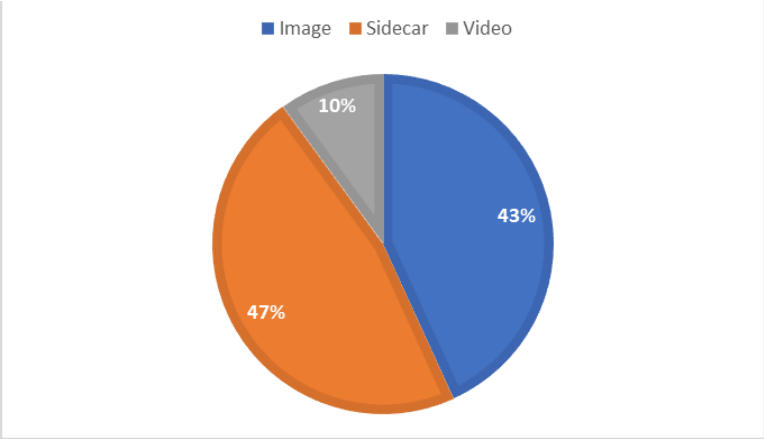

Figure 4.18. Overview of the Content Format Distribution in the Community Engagement Theme

Moving to Figure 4.19. which examines the percentage of average likes per post for each format in the top 20 foundation universities, we see that the image format holds the top position in nine universities. The sidecar format follows, in second position in two universities. Meanwhile, the video format lags behind in two universities.

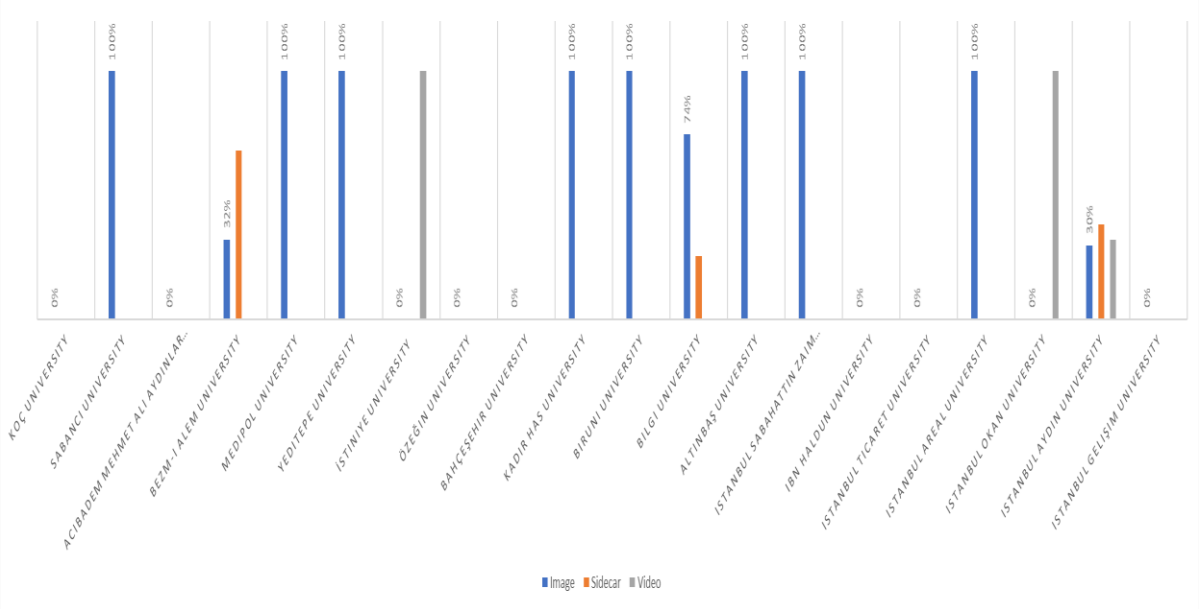

Figure 4.19. The Percentage Average of Likes per Post for Community Engagement

Table 4.6. indicates the preferred format of community theme among the followers based on the percentage average number of likes per post. The followers of Sabancı University, Medipol University, Yeditepe University, Kadir Has University, Biruni University, Bilgi University, Altınbaş University, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, and Istanbul Areal University were more active in engagement with image format posts, whereas followers at Bezmi Alem University and Istanbul Aydın

University went more for sidecar format posts. Lastly, the followers of İstinye University and Istanbul Okan University were more active in engaging with video format. The rest of the universities have no posts in the community engagement theme.

Table 4.6. The Percentage of Average Likes per Post for Community Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Koç University	0%	0%	0%	0%
2	Sabancı University	100%	0%	0%	100%
3	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	0%	0%	0%	0%
4	Bezm-i Alem University	32%	68%	0%	100%
5	Medipol University	100%	0%	0%	100%
6	Yeditepe University	100%	0%	0%	100%
7	İstinye University	0%	0%	100%	100%
8	Özeğin University	0%	0%	0%	0%
9	Bahçeşehir University	0%	0%	0%	0%
10	Kadir Has University	100%	0%	0%	100%
11	Biruni University	100%	0%	0%	100%
12	Bilgi University	74%	26%	0%	100%
13	Altınbaş University	100%	0%	0%	100%
14	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	100%	0%	0%	100%
15	Ibn Haldun University	0%	0%	0%	0%
16	Istanbul Ticaret University	0%	0%	0%	0%
17	Istanbul Areal University	100%	0%	0%	100%
18	Istanbul Okan University	0%	0%	100%	100%
19	Istanbul Aydın University	30%	38%	32%	100%
20	Istanbul Gelişim University	0%	0%	0%	0%

In table 4.7. We notice that, Sabancı University boasts the highest average likes per post (1944.50) for the Image format followed by Medipol University with (1776.00) likes per post for the Image format. Also, as a total Bilgi University has the highest average likes per post with (2247.00) and Altınbaş University has the lowest with average likes per post (83.00).

Table 4.7. Average Likes per Post for Community Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Bilgi University	1672.00	575.00	0.00	2247.00
2	Sabancı University	1944.50	0.00	0.00	1944.50
3	Istanbul Aydın University	543.50	698.92	586.00	1828.42
4	Medipol University	1776.00	0.00	0.00	1776.00
5	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	923.50	0.00	0.00	923.50
6	Yeditepe University	814.00	0.00	0.00	814.00
7	Biruni University	649.00	0.00	0.00	649.00
8	Bezm-i Alem University	190.00	402.00	0.00	592.00
9	Kadir Has University	527.00	0.00	0.00	527.00
10	Istanbul Okan University	0.00	0.00	423.00	423.00
11	Istanbul Areal University	334.00	0.00	0.00	334.00
12	İstinye University	0.00	0.00	143.00	143.00
13	Altınbaş University	83.00	0.00	0.00	83.00
14	Koç University	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
15	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
16	Özeğin University	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
17	Bahçeşehir University	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
18	Ibn Haldun University	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
19	Istanbul Ticaret University	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
20	Istanbul Gelişim University	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Figure 4.20. provides an overview of the total average likes per post for each format across all the universities as a total in community engagement, highlighting the image format as the most prevalent (45%), followed by sidecar (35%), and video (20%).

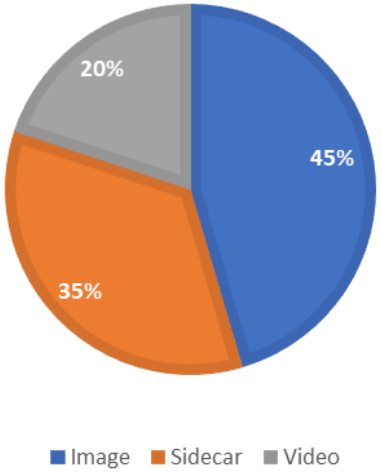

Figure 4.20. Overview of the average likes per post Content Format Distribution in the Community Engagement Theme

Moving to Figure 4.21. which examines the percentage of average comments per post for each format in the top 20 foundation universities, we see that the image format holds the top position in eight universities. The video format follows in the second position at three universities. Meanwhile, the percentages for Image and Sidecar formats at Bezmi Alem University are fifty for each.

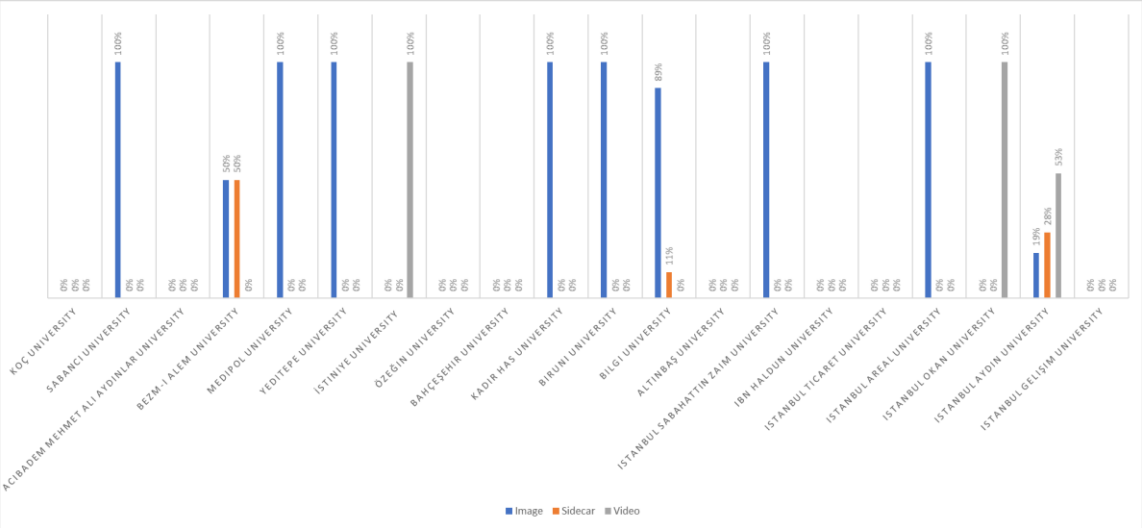

Figure 4.21. The Percentage Average of Likes per Post for Community Engagement

Table 4.8. indicates the preferred format of academic theme among the followers based on the percentage average number of comments per post. The followers of Sabancı University, Bezm-i Alem University, Medipol University, Yeditepe University, Kadir Has University, Biruni University, Bilgi University, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, and Istanbul Areal University were more active in engagement with image format posts, whereas followers at Bezm-i Alem University went fifty for each in sidecar format with image format posts. However, the followers liked to show engagement with video format posts at İstinye University, Istanbul Okan University, and Istanbul Aydın University. Where there were no posts related to this theme among the rest of the universities.

Table 4.8. The Percentage of Average Comments per Post for Academic Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Koç University	0%	0%	0%	0%
2	Sabancı University	100%	0%	0%	100%
3	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	0%	0%	0%	0%
4	Bezm-i Alem University	50%	50%	0%	100%
5	Medipol University	100%	0%	0%	100%
6	Yeditepe University	100%	0%	0%	100%

Table 4.8. The Percentage of Average Comments per Post for Academic Engagement (continue)

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
7	İstinye University	0%	0%	100%	100%
8	Özeğin University	0%	0%	0%	0%
9	Bahçeşehir University	0%	0%	0%	0%
10	Kadir Has University	100%	0%	0%	100%
11	Biruni University	100%	0%	0%	100%
12	Bilgi University	89%	11%	0%	100%
13	Altınbaş University	0%	0%	0%	0%
14	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	100%	0%	0%	100%
15	Ibn Haldun University	0%	0%	0%	0%
16	Istanbul Ticaret University	0%	0%	0%	0%
17	Istanbul Areal University	100%	0%	0%	100%
18	Istanbul Okan University	0%	0%	100%	100%
19	Istanbul Aydın University	19%	28%	53%	100%
20	Istanbul Gelişim University	0%	0%	0%	0%

In table 4.9. We notice that Sabancı University boasts the highest average comments per post (61.00) for the image format, followed by Istanbul Areal University with 40.00 comments per post. Also, Sabancı University has the highest average comments per post (61.00), and Biruni University has the lowest average likes per post (0.3).

Table 4.9. Average Comments per Post for Community Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Sabancı University	61.0	0.0	0.0	61.0
2	Istanbul Areal University	40.0	0.0	0.0	40.0
3	Istanbul Aydın University	4.0	5.8	11.0	20.8
4	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	19.5	0.0	0.0	19.5
5	Bilgi University	16.0	2.0	0.0	18.0
6	Kadir Has University	4.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
7	Yeditepe University	3.7	0.0	0.0	3.7
8	Bezm-i Alem University	1.0	1.0	0.0	2.0
9	Medipol University	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
10	Istanbul Okan University	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.0
11	İstinye University	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
12	Biruni University	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3
13	Koç University	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
14	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 4.9. Average Comments per Post for Community Engagement (continue)

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
15	Özeğin University	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
16	Bahçeşehir University	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
17	Altınbaş University	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
18	Ibn Haldun University	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
19	Istanbul Ticaret University	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20	Istanbul Gelişim University	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Figure 4.22. provides an overview of the total average comments per post for each format across all the universities as a total in community engagement, highlighting the image format as the most prevalent (58%), followed by sidecar (22%), and video (20%).

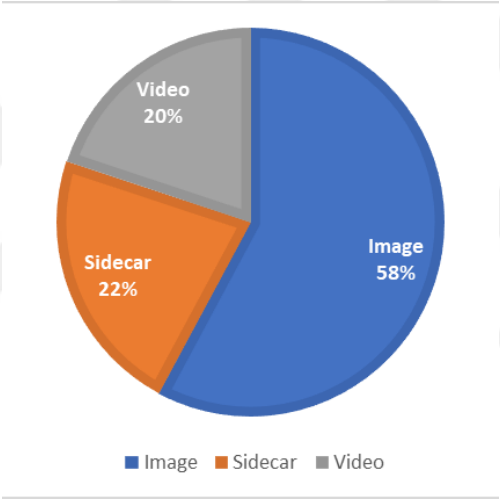

Figure 4.22. Overview Of The Average Comments Per Post Content Format Distribution In The Community Engagement Theme

The Engagement in the Community Theme: To measure the engagement rate for the community engagement Theme, we need to apply the following formula to the analyzed data:

$$\frac{Likes + Comments}{Total\ Followers} \times 100$$

We obtain the results shown in Table 4.10. which emphasize that Istanbul Aydın University has the highest engagement rate (15%) and Istanbul Okan University has the lowest (1%). Also, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University has the highest engagement rate in image format (9%). Istanbul Aydın University has the highest engagement rate in the sidecar format (12%), whereas Istanbul Aydın University and Istanbul Okan University have a 1% rate in the video format.

Table 4.10. Total Engagement Rate for Posts in The Community Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total Engagement
1	Istanbul Aydın University	2%	12%	1%	15%
2	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	9%	0%	0%	9%
3	Sabancı University	7%	0%	0%	7%
4	Biruni University	5%	0%	0%	5%
5	Bezm-i Alem University	1%	3%	0%	4%
6	Yeditepe University	4%	0%	0%	4%
7	Bilgi University	2%	1%	0%	3%
8	Kadir Has University	2%	0%	0%	2%
9	Medipol University	2%	0%	0%	2%
10	Istanbul Areal University	1%	0%	0%	1%
11	Istanbul Okan University	0%	0%	1%	1%
12	İstinye University	0%	0%	0%	0%
13	Altınbaş University	0%	0%	0%	0%
14	Koç University	0%	0%	0%	0%
15	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	0%	0%	0%	0%
16	Özeğin University	0%	0%	0%	0%
17	Bahçeşehir University	0%	0%	0%	0%
18	Ibn Haldun University	0%	0%	0%	0%
19	Istanbul Ticaret University	0%	0%	0%	0%
20	Istanbul Gelişim University	0%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 4.23. provides a summary of the total engagement from all the universities in community engagement, highlighting the image format as the most engaged format by (67%), then comes by sidecar (29%), and video (4%).

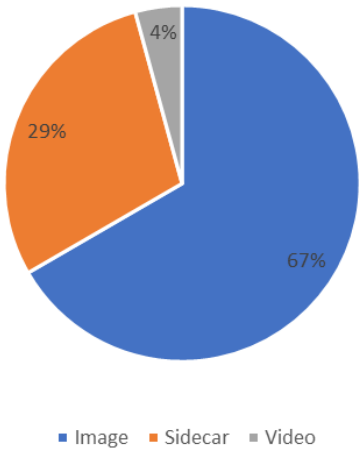

Figure 4.23. The total engagement in Content Format Distribution in the Community Engagement Theme

Finally, it is important to examine the engagement rates over the specified duration from May to August. Figure 4.24. illustrates that the engagement rate slopes reach their peaks between May and June across most universities, then start to decrease until we can see the minimum engagement in July. This trend reflects the heightened interest in obtaining information about the universities during open days and registration periods and focusing on another theme like academics, students, or hybrid engagement through June and August.

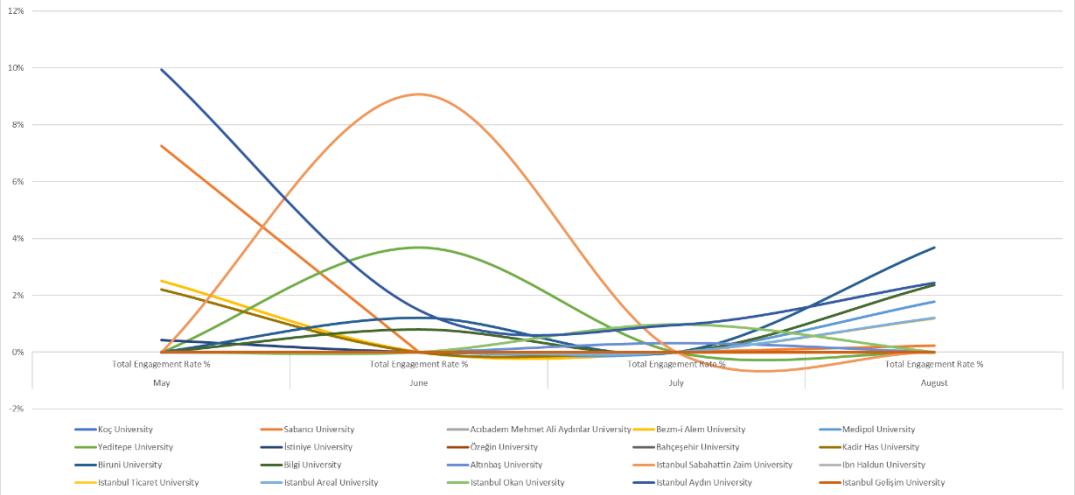

Figure 4.24. Engagement Rate Between May to August in Community Engagement Theme

4.1.3. Hybrid engagement

Posts dealing with different content themes and hybrid activities fall under this theme. Figure 3.25. displays the words most frequently encountered in the collective posts across all universities in the hybrid engagement theme.

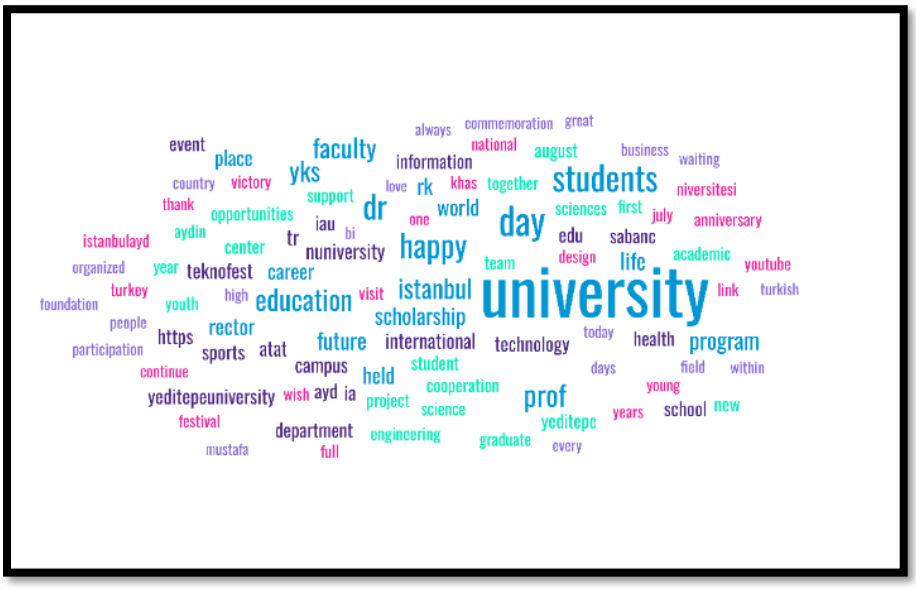

Figure 4.25. Most Used Words in the Top 20 Foundation Universities' Posts for Hybrid Engagement

Moving to the results of this theme figure 4.26. illustrates the distribution of posts among various universities in the realm of hybrid engagement. Medipol University comes first with the highest number of posts (84), while Koç University comes end with 7 posts.

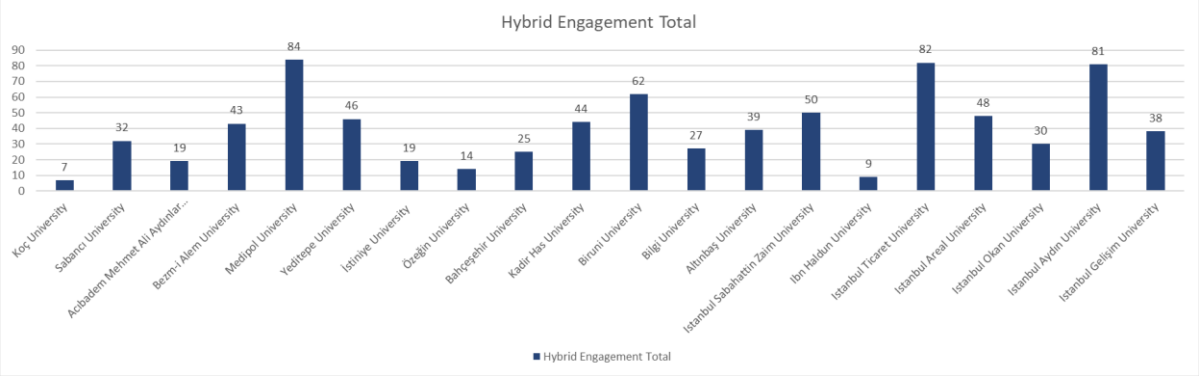

Figure 4.26. Number of Hybrid Engagement Posts for each University

Figure 4.27. delves into the content format preferences of 20 foundation universities.

Image Format: Istanbul Ticaret University leads with 62 posts, followed by Biruni University with 33 posts, Medipol University with 28 posts, and Bilgi University with 24 posts, while we can notice Koç University with 3 posts and Özeğin University have no posts in this format.

Sidecar Format: Yeditepe University stands out by having 22 posts, followed by Istanbul Ticaret University and Istanbul Aydın University with 15 posts. Whereas Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University, Özeğin University, and Istanbul Ticaret University have zero posts in this format.

Video Format: Aydın University leads with 48 posts, followed by Medipol University with 45 posts, and Biruni University with 29 posts. and the university with the university with the lowest number of posts is Bilgi University, with one post in this format.

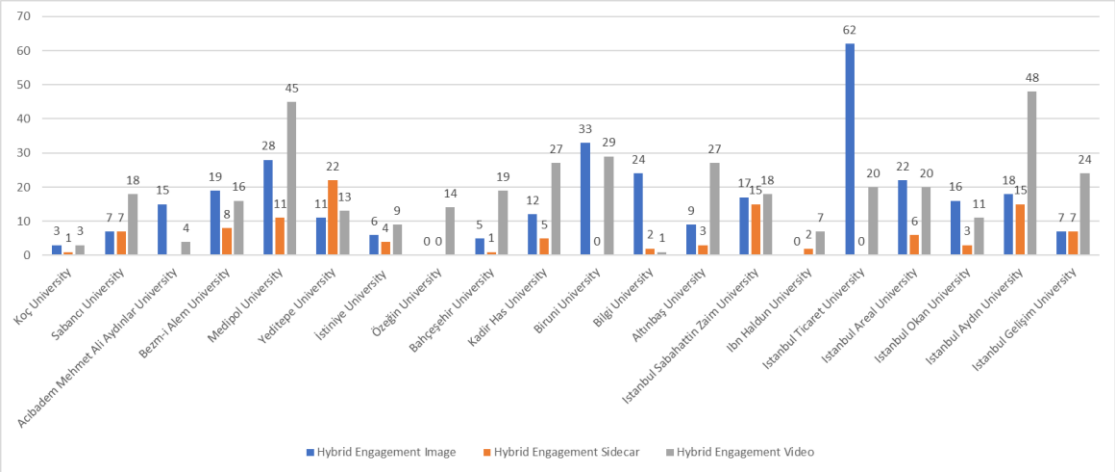

Figure 4.27. Number of Hybrid Engagement Posts for each Format

Figure 4.28. provides an overview of the total posts for each format across all the universities in hybrid engagement, highlighting the video format as the most prevalent (47%), followed by images (39%), and sidecar (14%).

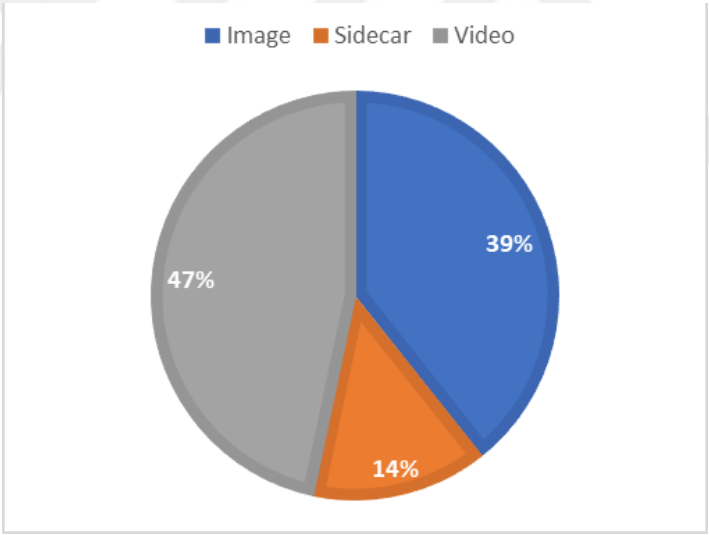

Figure 4.28. Overview of the Content Format Distribution in the Hybrid Engagement Theme

Moving to Figure 4.29. which examines the percentage of average likes per post for each format in the top 20 foundation universities, we see that the video format holds the top position in ten universities. The sidecar format follows, in second place in 7 universities. Meanwhile, the image format lags behind at three universities.

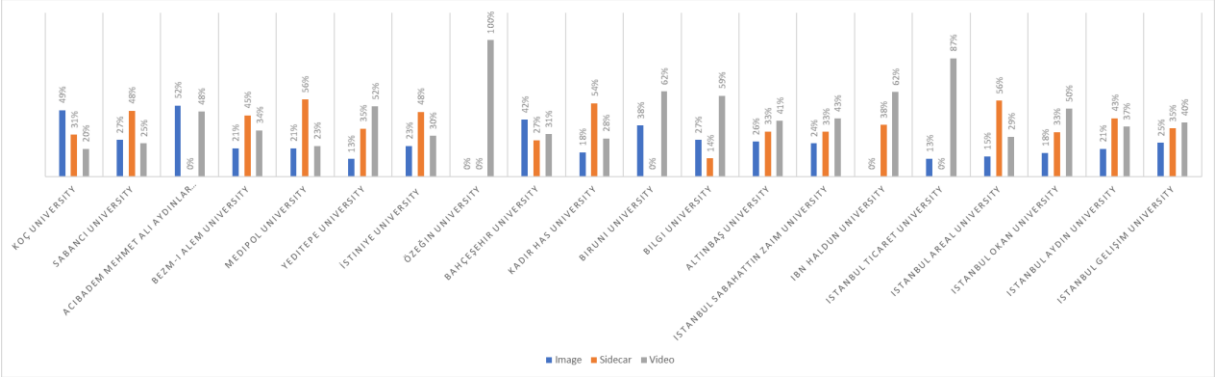

Figure 4.29. The Percentage Average of Likes per Post for Hybrid Engagement

Table 4.11. indicates the preferred format of hybrid theme among the followers based on the percentage average number of likes per post. The followers of Koç University, Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University, and Bahçeşehir University were more active in engagement with image format posts, whereas followers at Sabancı University, Bezmi Alem University, Medipol University, İstinye University, Kadir Has University, Istanbul Areal University, and Istanbul Aydın University went more for sidecar format posts. Lastly, the followers of Yeditepe University, Özeğin University, Biruni University, Bilgi University, Altınbaş University, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Istanbul Okan University, and Istanbul Gelişim University were more active in engagement with video format.

Table 4.11. The Percentage of Average Likes per Post for Hybrid Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Koç University	49%	31%	20%	100%
2	Sabancı University	27%	48%	25%	100%
3	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	52%	0%	48%	100%
4	Bezm-i Alem University	21%	45%	34%	100%
5	Medipol University	21%	56%	23%	100%
6	Yeditepe University	13%	35%	52%	100%
7	İstinye University	23%	48%	30%	100%
8	Özeğin University	0%	0%	100%	100%
9	Bahçeşehir University	42%	27%	31%	100%
10	Kadir Has University	18%	54%	28%	100%
11	Biruni University	38%	0%	62%	100%
12	Bilgi University	27%	14%	59%	100%
13	Altınbaş University	26%	33%	41%	100%
14	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	24%	33%	43%	100%
15	Ibn Haldun University	0%	38%	62%	100%

Table 4.11. The Percentage of Average Likes per Post for Hybrid Engagement (continue)

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
16	Istanbul Ticaret University	13%	0%	87%	100%
17	Istanbul Areal University	15%	56%	29%	100%
18	Istanbul Okan University	18%	33%	50%	100%
19	Istanbul Aydın University	21%	43%	37%	100%
20	Istanbul Gelişim University	25%	35%	40%	100%

In table 4.12. We notice that Koç University boasts the highest average likes per post (2412.67) for the image format, followed by Medipol University with 2891.27 likes per post for the Sidecar format, and for the video format, Bilgi University leads with 1828.00 likes per post. Also, as a total, Bahçeşehir University has the highest average likes per post (5134.48), followed by Medipol University with 5118.74 average likes per post, and Istanbul Ticaret University has the lowest average likes per post (457.87).

Table 4.12. Average Likes per Post for Hybrid Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Bahçeşehir University	2141.80	1382.00	1610.68	5134.48
2	Medipol University	1073.71	2891.27	1153.76	5118.74
3	Koç University	2412.67	1522.00	1012.00	4946.67
4	Bilgi University	832.33	418.50	1828.00	3078.83
5	Yeditepe University	283.55	761.23	1110.08	2154.85
6	İstinye University	478.00	1008.00	635.67	2121.67
7	Sabancı University	550.29	980.00	497.83	2028.12
8	Istanbul Okan University	337.38	626.67	955.18	1919.22
9	Istanbul Aydın University	363.72	759.40	651.08	1774.21
10	Istanbul Gelişim University	417.57	594.71	664.83	1677.12
11	Biruni University	625.00	0.00	1038.17	1663.17
12	Kadir Has University	224.17	669.20	348.19	1241.55
13	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	302.71	408.87	527.72	1239.29
14	Istanbul Areal University	155.55	577.83	303.75	1037.13
15	Altınbaş University	237.44	306.00	378.59	922.04
16	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	430.93	0.00	395.00	825.93
17	Ibn Haldun University	0.00	270.00	440.57	710.57
18	Özeğin University	0.00	0.00	629.43	629.43
19	Bezm-i Alem University	109.89	236.50	178.81	525.21
20	Istanbul Ticaret University	61.02	0.00	396.85	457.87

Figure 4.30. provides an overview of the total average likes per post for each format across all the universities as a total in hybrid engagement, highlighting the sidecar format as the most prevalent (43%), followed by video (35%), and image (22%).

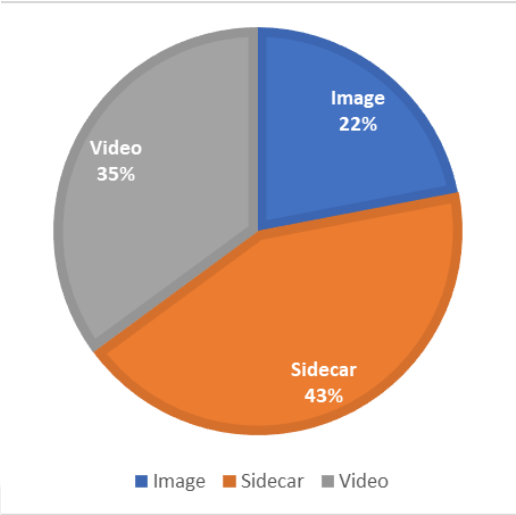

Figure 4.30. Overview of the average likes per post Content Format Distribution in the Hybrid Engagement Theme

Moving to Figure 4.31. which examines the percentage of average comments per post for each format in the top 20 foundation universities, we see that the video format holds the top position in 10 universities. The Sidecar format follows in the second position in 7 universities. Meanwhile, the image format is only available in 3 universities.

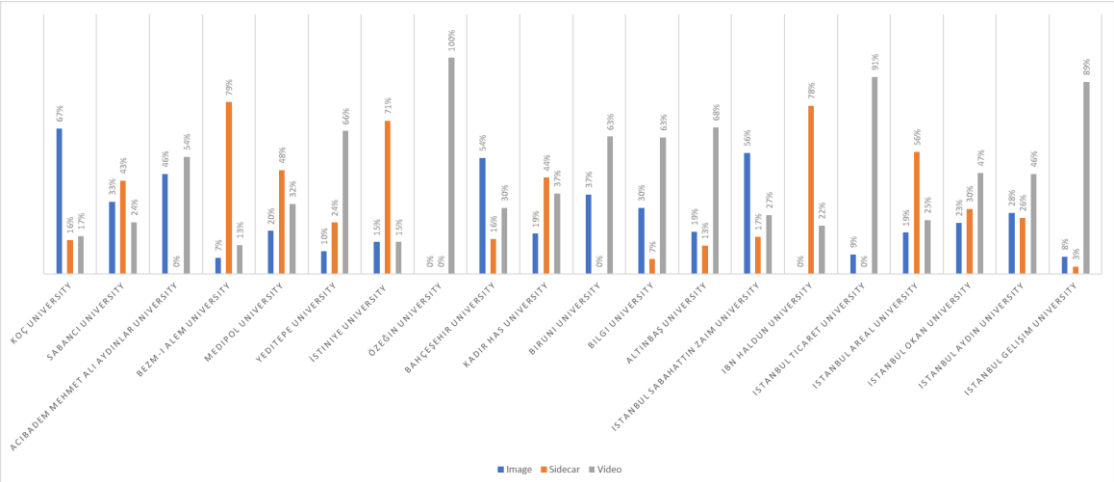

Figure 4.31. The Percentage Average of Likes per Post for Hybrid Engagement

Table 4.13. indicates the preferred format of Hybrid theme among the followers based on the percentage average number of comments per post. The followers of Koç University, Bahçeşehir University, and Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University were more

active in engagement with image format posts, whereas followers at Sabancı University, Bezm-i Alem University, Medipol University, İstinye University, Kadir Has University, and Ibn Haldun University were more active in engagement with Sidecar format posts. However, the followers liked to show engagement with video format posts in Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University, Yeditepe University, Özeğin University, Biruni University, Bilgi University, Altınbaş University, Istanbul Ticaret University, Istanbul Okan University, Istanbul Aydın University, and Istanbul Gelişim University.

Table 4.13. The Percentage of Average Hybrid per Post for Hybrid Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Koç University	67%	16%	17%	100%
2	Sabancı University	33%	43%	24%	100%
3	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	46%	0%	54%	100%
4	Bezm-i Alem University	7%	79%	13%	100%
5	Medipol University	20%	48%	32%	100%
6	Yeditepe University	10%	24%	66%	100%
7	İstinye University	15%	71%	15%	100%
8	Özeğin University	0%	0%	100%	100%
9	Bahçeşehir University	54%	16%	30%	100%
10	Kadir Has University	19%	44%	37%	100%
11	Biruni University	37%	0%	63%	100%
12	Bilgi University	30%	7%	63%	100%
13	Altınbaş University	19%	13%	68%	100%
14	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	56%	17%	27%	100%
15	Ibn Haldun University	0%	78%	22%	100%
16	Istanbul Ticaret University	9%	0%	91%	100%
17	Istanbul Areal University	19%	56%	25%	100%
18	Istanbul Okan University	23%	30%	47%	100%
19	Istanbul Aydın University	28%	26%	46%	100%
20	Istanbul Gelişim University	8%	3%	89%	100%

In table 4.14. We notice that Koç University boasts the highest average comments per post (51.7) for the image format, followed by İstinye University with 41.8 comments per post for the sidecar format, while Istanbul Gelişim University boasts the highest average comments per post (54.2) for the video format. However, Bahçeşehir University has the highest average comments per post (87.6), and Bezm-i Alem University has the lowest average likes per post (1.4).

Table 4.14. Average Comments per Post for Hybrid Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Bahçeşehir University	47.0	14.0	26.6	87.6
2	Koç University	51.7	12.0	13.3	77.0
3	Istanbul Gelişim University	4.9	2.0	54.2	61.0
4	İstinye University	8.7	41.8	8.7	59.1
5	Medipol University	11.0	26.6	17.9	55.6
6	Bilgi University	15.9	3.5	33.0	52.4
7	Istanbul Areal University	7.0	20.8	9.2	37.0
8	Yeditepe University	2.7	6.2	17.4	26.3
9	Istanbul Okan University	4.9	6.3	9.8	21.1
10	Sabancı University	6.3	8.1	4.5	18.9
11	Istanbul Aydın University	4.7	4.3	7.8	16.8
12	Özeğin University	0.0	0.0	15.4	15.4
13	Istanbul Ticaret University	0.9	0.0	9.1	9.9
14	Ibn Haldun University	0.0	5.5	1.6	7.1
15	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	3.2	0.0	3.8	7.0
16	Biruni University	2.4	0.0	4.2	6.6
17	Kadir Has University	1.0	2.4	2.0	5.4
18	Altınbaş University	1.0	0.7	3.5	5.1
19	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	2.4	0.7	1.2	4.3
20	Bezm-i Alem University	0.1	1.1	0.2	1.4

Figure 4.32. provides an overview of the total average comments per post for each format across all the universities as a total in hybrid engagement, highlighting the video format as the most prevalent (46%), followed by sidecar (32%), and image (22%).

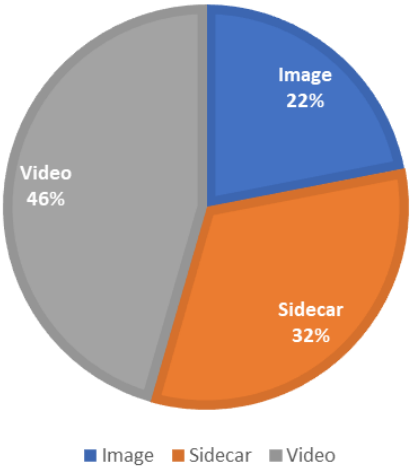

Figure 4.32. Overview of the average comments per post Content Format Distribution in the Hybrid Engagement Theme

Engagement in the Hybrid Theme: To measure the engagement rate for the community engagement Theme, we need to apply the following formula to the analyzed data:

$$\frac{Likes + Comments}{Total\ Followers} \times 100$$

We obtain the results shown in Table 4.15, which emphasize that Biruni University has the highest engagement rate (128%), and Koç University has the lowest (17%). Also, Biruni University has the highest engagement rate in image format (52%). Medipol University has the highest engagement rate in the sidecar format (32%), whereas Biruni University again has the highest engagement rate in the video format (76%).

Table 4.15. Total Engagement Rate for Posts in The Hybrid Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total Engagement
1	Biruni University	52%	0%	76%	128%
2	Medipol University	30%	32%	53%	115%
3	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	25%	30%	46%	100%
4	Istanbul Aydın University	10%	17%	46%	72%
5	Istanbul Ticaret University	21%	0%	45%	66%
6	Kadir Has University	11%	14%	39%	65%
7	Yeditepe University	5%	25%	22%	52%
8	Altınbaş University	8%	4%	40%	52%
9	Bahçeşehir University	12%	2%	35%	49%
10	Istanbul Areal University	12%	12%	20%	43%
11	Bezm-i Alem University	13%	12%	18%	43%
12	Istanbul Okan University	13%	4%	25%	42%
13	Istanbul Gelişim University	5%	7%	29%	41%
14	İstinye University	9%	12%	17%	38%
15	Sabancı University	7%	13%	17%	37%
16	Bilgi University	28%	1%	3%	32%
17	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	25%	0%	6%	31%
18	Ibn Haldun University	0%	4%	25%	29%
19	Özeğin University	0%	0%	26%	26%
20	Koç University	10%	2%	4%	17%

Figure 4.33. provides a summary of the total engagement from all the universities in hybrid engagement, highlighting the video format as the most engaged format (55%), then comes by image (28%), and sidecar (18%).

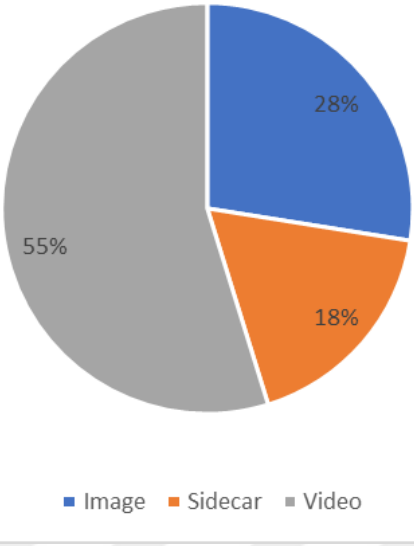

Figure 4.33. The total engagement in Content Format Distribution in the Hybrid Engagement Theme

Finally, it is important to examine the engagement rates over the specified duration from May to August. Figure 4.34. illustrates that the engagement rate curves reach their peaks between on July across most universities. This trend reflects the heightened interest in obtaining information about the universities during open days and registration periods.

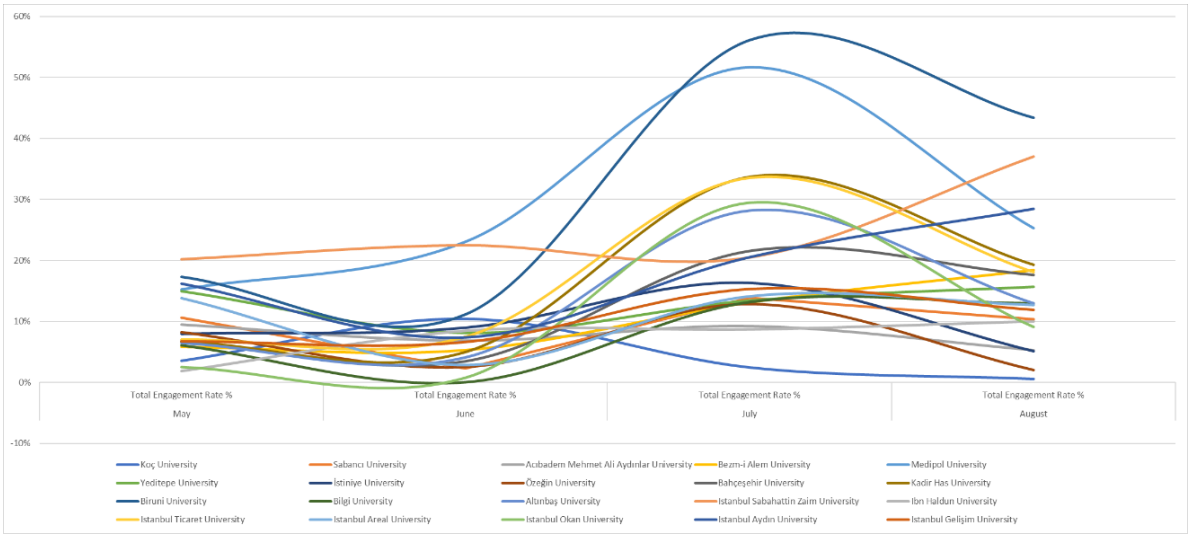

Figure 4.34. Engagement Rate Between May to August in Hybrid Engagement Theme

4.1.4. Student engagement

The post that deals with student activities, campus life, club activities, and graduation ceremonies falls under this theme. Figure 3.35. displays the words most frequently encountered in the collective posts across all universities in student engagement.

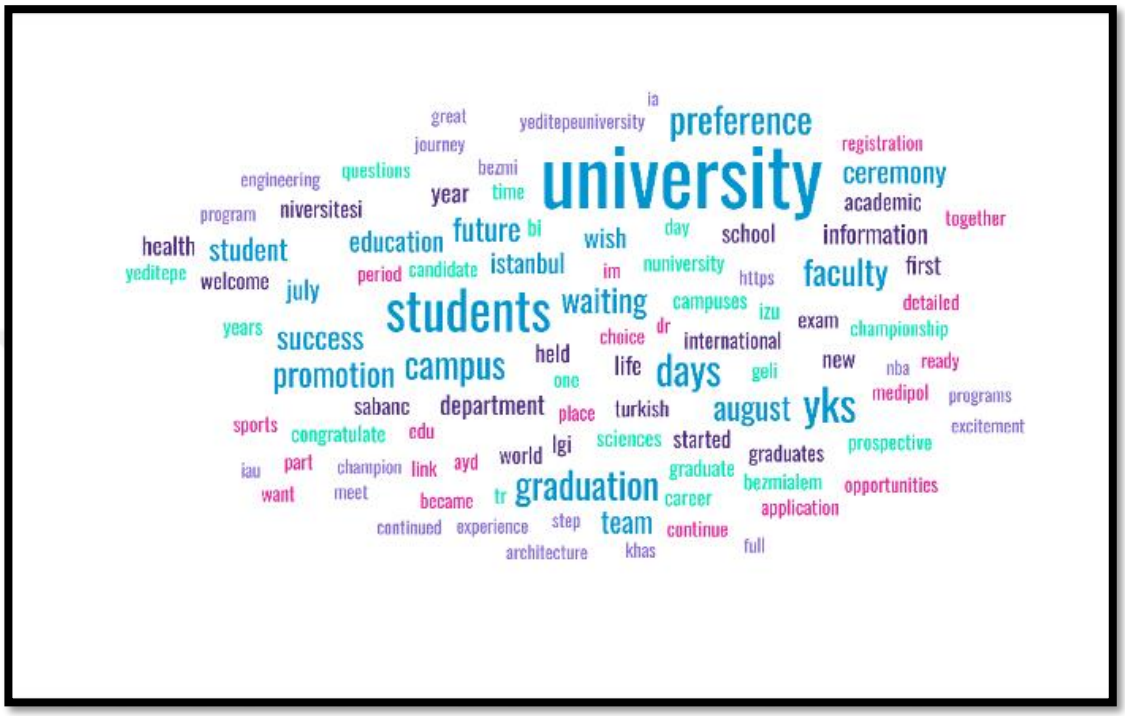

Figure 4.35. Most Used Words in the Top 20 Foundation Universities' Posts for Student Engagement

Moving to the results of this theme figure 4.36. Illustrates the distribution of posts among various universities in the realm of student engagement. Medipol University leads with the highest number of posts (94), while Ibn Haldun University trails with 7 posts.

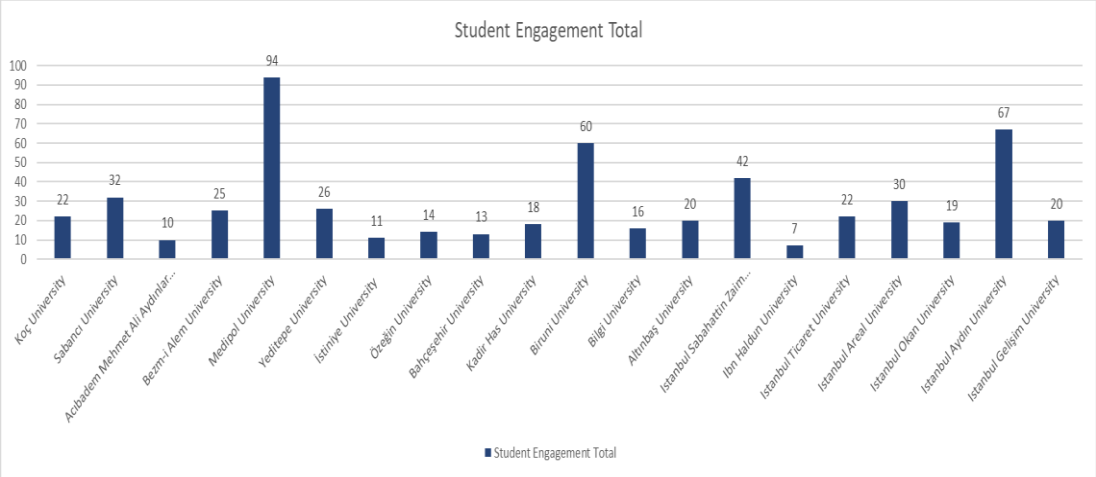

Figure 4.36. Number of Student Engagement Posts for each University

Figure 4.37. delves into the content format preferences of the top 20 foundation universities in Istanbul.

Image Format: Medipol leads with 48 posts, followed by Biruni University with 23 posts, Istanbul Aydın University with 19 posts, and Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University with 18 posts, while we can notice Ibn Haldun and Özeğin University have no posts in this format.

Sidecar Format: Medipol University stands out by having 30 posts, followed by Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University and Istanbul Aydın University with 22 posts. Whereas Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University, Ibn Haldun University, and Istanbul Ticaret University have one post in this format.

Video Format: Biruni University leads with 32 posts, followed by Istanbul Aydın University with 26 posts, Bezmi Alem University with 20 posts, and Bilgi University with zero posts in this format.

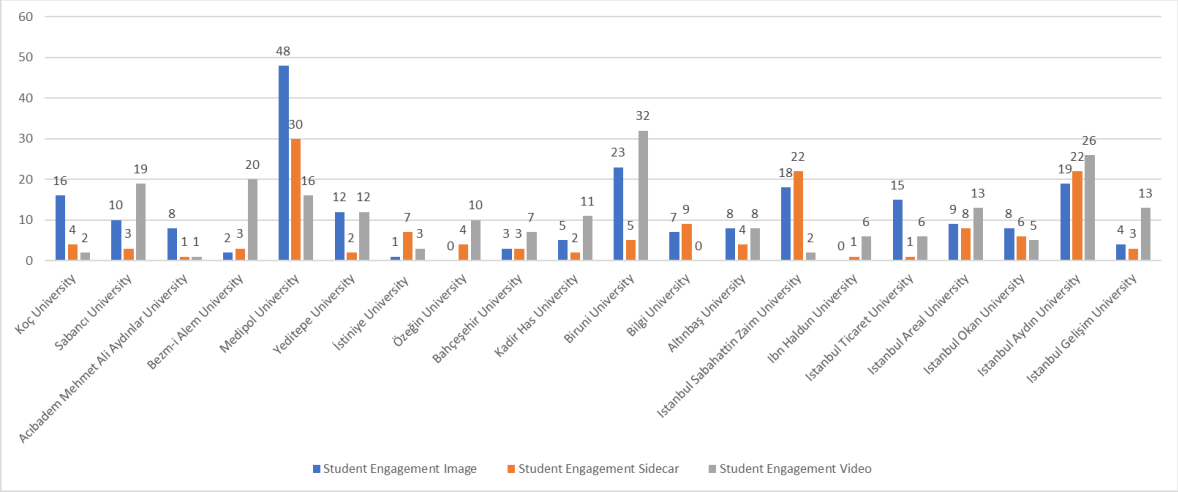

Figure 4.37. Number of Student Engagement Posts for each Format

Figure 4.38. provides an overview of the total posts for each format across all the universities in student engagement, highlighting the image format as the most prevalent (38%), followed by video (37%), and sidecar (25%).

Figure 4.38. Overview of the Content Format Distribution in the Student Engagement Theme

Moving to Figure 4.39. which examines the percentage of average likes per post for each format in the top 20 foundation universities, we see that the sidecar format holds the top position in ten universities. The video format follows, in second place among nine universities. Meanwhile, the image format lags behind at one university.

Figure 4.39. The Percentage Average of Likes per Post for Student Engagement

Table 4.16. indicates the preferred format of the student theme among the followers based on the percentage average number of likes per post. The followers of Kadir Has University were more active in engagement with image format posts, whereas followers at Koç University, Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University, Özeğin University, Bahçeşehir University, Bilgi University, Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul Areal University, Istanbul Okan University, Istanbul Aydın University, and

Istanbul Gelişim University went more for sidecar format posts. Lastly, the followers of Sabancı University, Bezm-i Alem University, Medipol University, Yeditepe University, İstinye University, Biruni University, Altınbaş University, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, and Istanbul Ticaret University were more active in engagement with video format.

Table 4.16. The Percentage of Average Likes per Post for Student Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Koç University	28%	57%	15%	100%
2	Sabancı University	13%	31%	56%	100%
3	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	15%	59%	26%	100%
4	Bezm-i Alem University	12%	29%	60%	100%
5	Medipol University	13%	37%	51%	100%
6	Yeditepe University	18%	40%	41%	100%
7	İstinye University	13%	40%	47%	100%
8	Özeğin University	0%	66%	34%	100%
9	Bahçeşehir University	26%	41%	33%	100%
10	Kadir Has University	40%	37%	23%	100%
11	Biruni University	28%	28%	44%	100%
12	Bilgi University	40%	60%	0%	100%
13	Altınbaş University	22%	37%	41%	100%
14	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	17%	33%	50%	100%
15	Ibn Haldun University	0%	58%	42%	100%
16	Istanbul Ticaret University	31%	18%	51%	100%
17	Istanbul Areal University	21%	49%	30%	100%
18	Istanbul Okan University	25%	41%	35%	100%
19	Istanbul Aydın University	28%	36%	36%	100%
20	Istanbul Gelişim University	10%	49%	41%	100%

In table 4.17. we notice that Koç University boasts the highest average likes per post (1698.31) for the image format, followed by Koç University with 3450.00 likes per post for the Sidecar format, while for the video format, Sabancı University leads with 3121.16 likes per post. Also, as a total, Bahçeşehir University has the highest average likes per post (6284.76), followed by Koç University with (6080.81) average likes per post, and Bezm-i Alem University has the lowest average likes per post (532.02).

Table 4.17. Average Likes per Post for Student Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Bahçeşehir University	1622.67	2583.67	2078.43	6284.76
2	Koç University	1698.31	3450.00	932.50	6080.81
3	Sabancı University	715.30	1754.00	3121.16	5590.46
4	Medipol University	557.23	1630.30	2236.25	4423.78
5	Biruni University	1051.22	1038.00	1625.50	3714.72
6	Yeditepe University	663.50	1453.50	1496.17	3613.17
7	Istanbul Gelişim University	324.25	1664.67	1403.85	3392.76
8	Bilgi University	1110.14	1674.33	0.00	2784.48
9	Istanbul Okan University	666.63	1094.00	934.20	2694.83
10	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	388.00	1580.00	692.00	2660.00
11	Özeğin University	0.00	1607.50	830.40	2437.90
12	İstinye University	291.00	874.14	1017.67	2182.81
13	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	306.78	596.73	919.00	1822.51
14	Kadir Has University	672.40	627.50	385.82	1685.72
15	Istanbul Aydın University	440.21	580.45	570.15	1590.82
16	Istanbul Areal University	296.22	675.00	412.92	1384.15
17	Altınbaş University	277.13	468.25	527.63	1273.00
18	Ibn Haldun University	0.00	487.00	351.33	838.33
19	Istanbul Ticaret University	164.40	96.00	275.33	535.73
20	Bezm-i Alem University	63.00	151.67	317.35	532.02

Figure 4.40. provides an overview of the total average likes per post for each format across all the universities as a total in student engagement, highlighting the video format as the most prevalent (40%), followed by sidecar (38%), and image (22%).

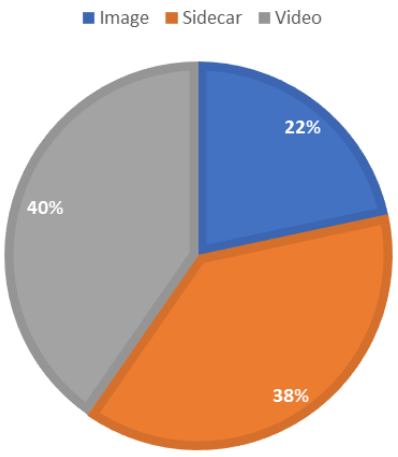

Figure 4.40. Overview of the average likes per post Content Format Distribution in the Student Engagement Theme

Moving to Figure 4.41. which examines the percentage of average comments per post for each format in the top 20 foundation universities, we see that the video format holds the top position in 11 universities. The image format follows in the second position in 7 universities. Meanwhile, the Sidecar format is only available at 2 universities.

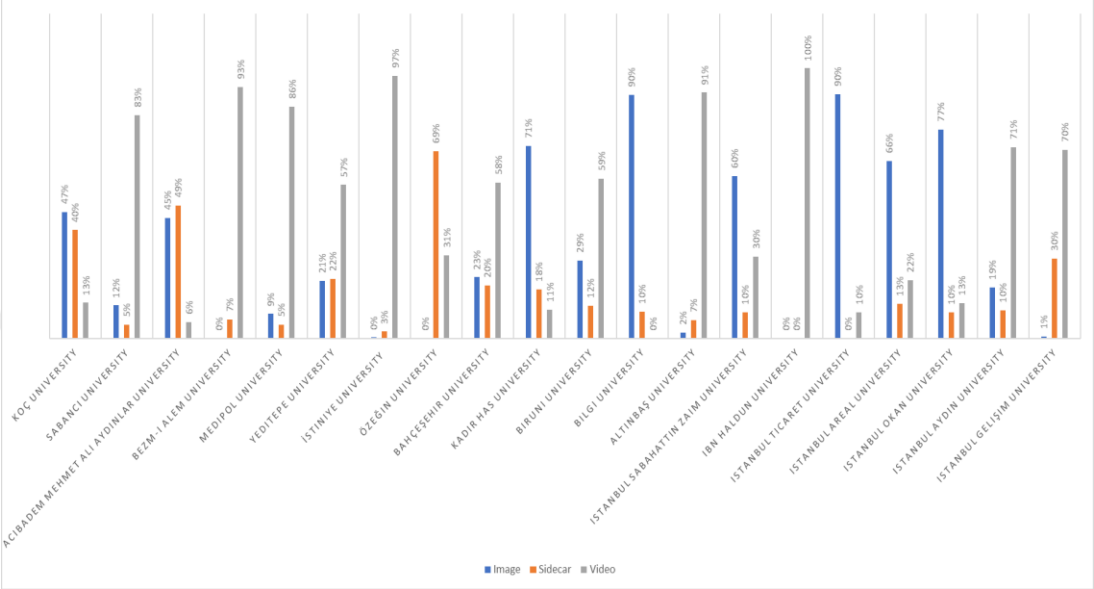

Figure 4.41. The Percentage Average of Comments per Post for Student Engagement

Table 4.18. indicates the preferred format of the student theme among the followers based on the percentage average number of comments per post. The followers of Koç University, Kadir Has University, Bilgi University, Istanbul Sabahttin Zaim University, Istanbul Ticaret University, Istanbul Areal University, and Istanbul Okan University were more active in engagement with image format posts, whereas followers at Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University and Özeğin University were more active in engagement with Sidecar format posts. However, the followers liked to show engagement with video format posts at Sabancı University, Bezm-i Alem University, Medipol University, Yeditepe University, İstinye University, Bahçeşehir University, Biruni University, Altınbaş University, Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul Aydın University, and Istanbul Gelişim University.

Table 4.18. The Percentage of Average Comments per Post for Student Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	Koç University	47%	40%	13%	100%
2	Sabancı University	12%	5%	83%	100%
3	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	45%	49%	6%	100%

Table 4.18. The Percentage of Average Comments per Post for Student Engagement (continue)

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
4	Bezm-i Alem University	0%	7%	93%	100%
5	Medipol University	9%	5%	86%	100%
6	Yeditepe University	21%	22%	57%	100%
7	İstinye University	0%	3%	97%	100%
8	Özeğin University	0%	69%	31%	100%
9	Bahçeşehir University	23%	20%	58%	100%
10	Kadir Has University	71%	18%	11%	100%
11	Biruni University	29%	12%	59%	100%
12	Bilgi University	90%	10%	0%	100%
13	Altınbaş University	2%	7%	91%	100%
14	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	60%	10%	30%	100%
15	Ibn Haldun University	0%	0%	100%	100%
16	Istanbul Ticaret University	90%	0%	10%	100%
17	Istanbul Areal University	66%	13%	22%	100%
18	Istanbul Okan University	77%	10%	13%	100%
19	Istanbul Aydın University	19%	10%	71%	100%
20	Istanbul Gelişim University	1%	30%	70%	100%

In table 4.19. we notice that Bilgi University boasts the highest average comments per post (83.43) for the image format, followed by Istanbul Gelişim University with 30.33 comments per post for the Sidecar format, while İstinye University boasts the highest average comments per post (271.33) for the video format. However, İstinye University has the highest average comments per post as a total (279.62), and Ibn Haldun University has the lowest average likes per post (2.67).

Table 4.19. Average Comments per Post for Student Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
1	İstinye University	1.00	7.29	271.33	279.62
2	Bahçeşehir University	30.33	26.33	77.29	133.95
3	Medipol University	10.46	5.87	98.38	114.70
4	Istanbul Okan University	83.25	10.50	14.00	107.75
5	Istanbul Gelişim University	0.75	30.33	71.38	102.47
6	Sabancı University	12.00	5.00	81.05	98.05
7	Bilgi University	83.43	9.22	0.00	92.65
8	Istanbul Areal University	38.56	7.50	12.69	58.75
9	Koç University	23.00	19.75	6.50	49.25

Table 4.19. Average Comments per Post for Student Engagement (continue)

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total
10	Yeditepe University	10.17	10.50	27.17	47.83
11	Altınbaş University	1.00	3.00	40.00	44.00
12	Istanbul Aydın University	7.16	3.91	26.73	37.80
13	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	20.78	3.36	10.50	34.64
14	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	14.50	16.00	2.00	32.50
15	Istanbul Ticaret University	18.60	0.00	2.00	20.60
16	Biruni University	5.70	2.40	11.72	19.81
17	Özeğin University	0.00	11.00	4.90	15.90
18	Bezm-i Alem University	0.00	1.00	13.20	14.20
19	Kadir Has University	9.80	2.50	1.45	13.75
20	Ibn Haldun University	0.00	0.00	2.67	2.67

Figure 4.42. provides a summary of the total average comments per post for each format across all the universities as a total in student engagement, highlighting the video format as the most prevalent (60%), then comes by image (29%), and video (11%).

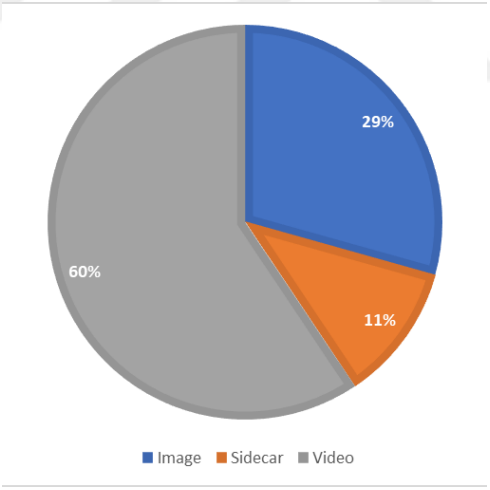

Figure 4.42. Overview of the average comments per post Content Format Distribution in the Student Engagement Theme

The Engagement in the Student Theme: To measure the engagement rate for the student engagement Theme, we need to apply the following formula to the analyzed data:

$$\frac{Likes + Comments}{Total\ Followers} \times 100$$

We obtain the results shown in Table 4.20, which emphasize that Biruni University has the highest engagement rate (206%), and Ibn Haldun University has the lowest (21%). Also, Biruni University has the highest engagement rate in image format (61%). Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University has the highest engagement rate in the sidecar format (63%), whereas Biruni University again has the highest engagement rate in the video format (132%).

Table 4.20. Total Engagement Rate for Posts in The Student Engagement

No:	University	Image	Sidecar	Video	Total Engagement
1	Biruni University	61%	13%	132%	206%
2	Sabancı University	14%	10%	114%	137%
3	Medipol University	27%	49%	37%	114%
4	Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	28%	63%	9%	101%
5	Koç University	39%	19%	3%	61%
6	Istanbul Aydın University	12%	19%	23%	54%
7	Istanbul Areal University	10%	18%	18%	45%
8	Bezm-i Alem University	1%	3%	41%	45%
9	Yeditepe University	12%	4%	27%	44%
10	Istanbul Gelişim University	2%	8%	32%	43%
11	Özeğin University	0%	18%	24%	42%
12	Istanbul Okan University	14%	15%	11%	40%
13	Kadir Has University	14%	5%	18%	37%
14	Altınbaş University	9%	7%	18%	33%
15	Bilgi University	12%	21%	0%	33%
16	Bahçeşehir University	6%	9%	17%	32%
17	İstinye University	1%	18%	12%	31%
18	Istanbul Ticaret University	15%	1%	9%	25%
19	Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University	12%	6%	3%	21%
20	Ibn Haldun University	0%	4%	17%	21%

Figure 4.43. provides a summary of the total engagement from all the universities in student engagement, highlighting the video format as the most engaged format by (48%), then comes sidecar (27%), and image (25%).

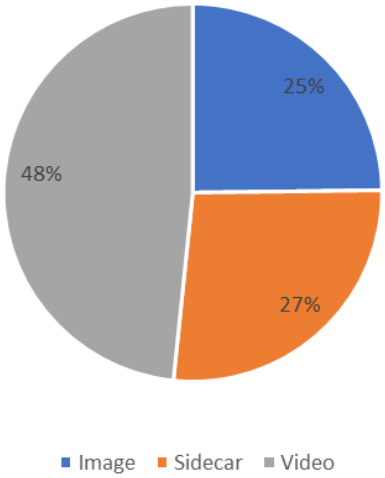

Figure 4.43. The Total Engagement In Content Format Distribution In The Student Engagement Theme

Finally, it is important to examine the engagement rates over the specified duration from May to August. Figure 4.44. illustrates that the engagement rate curves reach their peaks between June and July across most universities. This trend reflects the heightened interest in obtaining information about the universities during open days and the graduation ceremonies that occur in June.

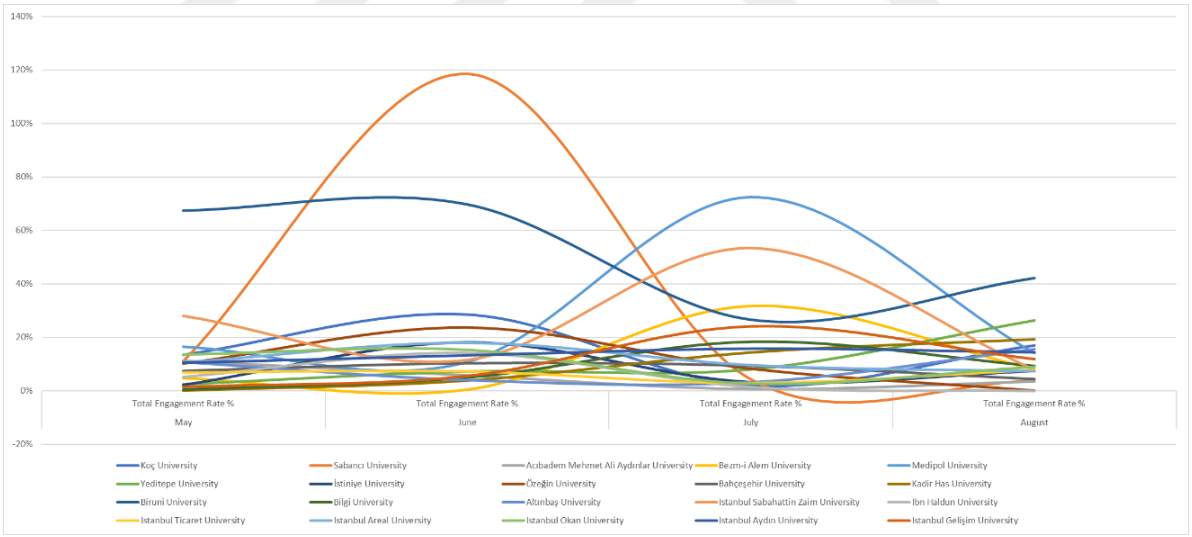

Figure 4.44. Engagement Rate Between May to August in Student Theme

5. DISCUSSION

This research aims to investigate themes and content types in Instagram posts that effectively engage the audiences of Istanbul's top 20 foundation universities, focusing on variations in engagement via likes and comments and the recognition of specific content characteristics that contribute to these variations. Content during promotional activities and registration open days is particularly emphasized, suggesting that timely and event-related posts may be among the effective strategies for engaging audiences. However, establishing social media guidelines based on predictors of enrollment intention highlights the importance of creating engaging, informative content that meets prospective students' informational needs.

Addressing Research Questions:

Research Question 1 (QR1): What themes and content types in Instagram posts effectively engage the audience of the top 20 foundation universities in Istanbul within the context of higher education marketing?

Academic Engagement: Posts about faculty achievements and academic programs engage the audience with scholarly pursuits of knowledge. These findings align with Bonilla Quijada et al. (2022) mention that academic-related posts drive engagement.

Student Engagement: Campus life, guidance, club activities, and graduation moments are some content types that drive much attention. This conclusion can be based on the results of Ramadanty and Syafganti (2021), who concluded that depicting campus dynamism is effective.

Hybrid Engagement: Posts that give an integrated experience in combining academic, community, and student engagement capture a big audience. Medipol University is a huge exponent of this strategy, which indicates its popularity and effectiveness in higher education marketing.

Community Engagement: Although much less frequent, posts featuring scholarships and social impact projects further promote the relationship with the community. This has potential and manifests a strategic gap for universities.

Visual Content: Preference to images or sidecar formats in an academic theme underpins the importance of visual content to the level of engagement. Ulfa et al. (2023) also support this finding, indicating the power of visual communication in fostering engagement.

Research Question 2 (QR2): How does engagement, measured through likes and comments, vary in Instagram posts among the top 20 foundation universities in Istanbul, and what specific content characteristics contribute to these variations?

Engagement varies across different universities based on several content characteristics; however, the time of posts is among the best-contributing factors. Posts during promotional events and registration open days see higher engagement, proving that content relevance and timing matter in determining engagement. This is further supported by the results of Bonilla Quijada et al. (2022), where it was established that strategic timing matters a lot in determining engagement.

Bonilla Quijada et al. (2020) found that photo posts drive more engagement than video posts. Ramadanty and Syafganti (2021) identified content strategies that drive engagement across universities, underlining campus life and event content. A study by Ulfa et al. (2023) identified the influence of posting frequency and time on engagement. Bonilla Quijada et al. (2020) and Bondarenko et al. (2020) stressed the excellent quality of visual content and strategic use of ICT tools.

Given the success of hybrid and student engagement strategies, universities must continue to develop communication methods that combine traditional approaches with new digital ones. Policies must promote a balanced form of academic and community engagement, allocating resources to facilitate hybrid learning technologies.

The limitations of this study were that it focuses only on the top 20 foundation universities in Istanbul, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions or types of universities. Data collection is confined to a specific period (01.05.2023 to 31.08.2023), which may not capture the full range of engagement strategies used throughout the academic year. The analysis does not account for the algorithms of

Instagram that affect post visibility and engagement, which could provide a skewed understanding of what content truly engages the audience.

Future works for this research:

1. Find out the influence of different times and days on engagement rates—that is, when most audiences are active and responsive to content.
2. Investigate how the Instagram algorithm affects the visibility and interactivity of the content in the study and, thus, derive strategy accordingly.
3. Interview students and staff and conduct surveys as to what their preference and view are with respect to the kind of content posted by the university on Instagram, in order to add some qualitative dimension to the analysis on engagement.
4. Future research can explore further engagement strategies and performance of same through different social media platforms, namely: Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.
5. Long-term impact of the social media participation on the university's reputation and student enrollments with concrete outcomes for institutions.
6. The themes and kinds of the most shared to know what type of theme and what type of post's format is preferred by the audience to share.
7. Test several different quantities of hashtags depending on the nature of the posts to see what impact this has on engagement.

6. CONCLUSION

Across content types, images, sidecars, and video this paper examines the varying forms of interactivity that the top 20 foundation universities in Istanbul have with students on Instagram. Emphasis is placed on academic, community, and student engagement. Therefore, the results indicate some more significant levels of engagement for universities than others. This suggests differences in ways Instagram might be effectively used as a university engagement tool. Engagement peaks at the most crucial times, especially open days and graduation ceremonies, which seem to be important in sparking interest and connection in the platform. In addition, this study worded this potential as, "Instagram harbors tremendous potential to connect organizations with their communities." It is able to make a valuable contribution to the debate surrounding the platform, although it would need more rigorous research in order to establish impact other than just the quantitative metrics 'likes' and 'comments'.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Universities should continue to develop and expand their hybrid engagement strategies to include a wider range of activities that cater to the academic, social, and personal development needs of students. It is recommended that universities also focus on increasing community engagement activities, as these were found to be less common, to strengthen the relationship between the university and the surrounding community. Lastly, use both Turkish and English in the caption to increase the engagement ratio through the contribution of the international students, since most of them may not be able to understand the content in Turkish.

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