

# An Analysis of Top 500 Webometrics Universities' Slogans with a Specific Focus on Asian Universities

## Asya Üniversiteleri Odaklı Olarak Webometrics'te Yer Alan İlk 500 Üniversitenin Slogan Analizi

Çağla ATMACA, Basak UYSAL

### ABSTRACT

Universities employ various positioning strategies to attract prospective students and academic staff. While some universities publicize their distinctive features via introductory videos, showing facilities and prioritizing academic success, some universities refer to slogans. Although slogans have been studied in different disciplines, they deserve closer attention in the context of higher education. Thus, this study aimed to analyze the slogans of the top 500 universities included in the Webometrics and compare the emerging themes in the slogans of Asian universities and the other continental universities. In the distribution of universities by continents, the highest distribution share belongs to Europe while the lowest distribution share belongs to Africa. As for the Asian universities, it was found out that 78 universities were on the list. There were seven themes with 224 occurrences in the Asian universities' slogans with science (n=57, 25.4%), activism (n=48, 21.4%), comprehensiveness (n=41, 18.3%), faith (n=36, 16.1%), idealism (n=22, 9.8%), comparison (n=14, 6.3%), collaboration (n=6, 2.7%). As for the other continents, there were seven themes with 949 occurrences with science (n=213, 22.4%), activism (n=211, 22.2%), faith (n=165, 17.4%), comparison (n=162, 17.2%), comprehensiveness (n=128, 13.5%), idealism (n=50, 5.2%), collaboration (n=20, 2.1%). The results offered some similarities and differences in the emerging themes of the university slogans among the Asian and the other continent universities. In conclusion, this study added a new dimension to the study of slogans from higher education perspective and demonstrated the importance of slogans for higher education institutions as a positioning strategy. Finally, the findings of this study are expected to offer new paths for higher education institutions to refer to slogans more in order to be recognized at national/international arena, to ensure togetherness and to foreground distinctive features for the benefit of stakeholders.

**Keywords:** Asian universities, University slogans, Webometrics, Theme, Higher education

### ÖZ

Üniversiteler, aday öğrencilerin ve akademik personelin dikkatini çekmek için çeşitli konumlandırma stratejileri kullanır. Bazı üniversiteler tanıtım videoları, imkânlar ve akademik başarıyı ön planda tutarak ayırt edici özelliklerini duyururken, bazı üniversiteler ise sloganlara başvurmaktadır. Sloganlar farklı disiplinlerde çalışılmış olsa da yükseköğretim bağlamında daha yakından ilgiyi hak etmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma Webometrics'te yer alan ilk 500 üniversitenin sloganlarını analiz etmeyi ve Asya üniversiteleri ile diğer kıta

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üniversitelerinin sloganlarında ortaya çıkan temaları karşılaştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Üniversitelerin kıtalara göre dağılımında en yüksek payı Avrupa'ya ait olurken, en düşük pay ise Afrika'ya aittir. Asya üniversiteleri özelinde, listede 78 üniversitenin yer aldığı tespit edilmiştir. Asya üniversitelerinin sloganlarında 224 sıklıkta yedi tema yer almıştır: bilim (n=57, %25.4), aktivizm (n=48, %21.4), kapsamlılık (n=41, %18.3), inanç (n=36, %16.1), idealizm (n=22, %9.8), karşılaştırma (n=14, %6.3), iş birliği (n=6, %2.7). Diğer kıtalarda ise 949 sıklıkta yedi tema yer almıştır: bilim (n=213, %22.4), aktivizm (n=211, %22.2), inanç (n=165, %17.4), karşılaştırma (n=162, %17.2), kapsamlılık (n=128, %13.5), idealizm (n=50, %5.2), iş birliği (n=20, %2.1). Bulgular, Asya ve diğer kıta üniversiteleri arasında üniversite sloganlarının ortaya çıkan temalarında bazı benzerlikler ve farklılıklar sunmuştur. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, yükseköğretim bakış açısıyla slogan çalışmalarına yeni bir boyut kazandırmış ve bir konumlandırma stratejisi olarak yükseköğretim kurumları için sloganların önemini ortaya koymuştur. Son olarak, bu çalışmanın bulgularının, yükseköğretim kurumlarının ulusal/uluslararası arenada tanınmak için sloganlara daha fazla başvurumaları için yeni yollar sunacağı, birlikteliği sağlayacağı ve paydaşlar yararına ayırt edici özellikleri ön plana çıkaracağı düşünülmektedir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Asya üniversiteleri, Üniversite sloganları, "Webometrics", Tema, Yükseköğretim

## INTRODUCTION

Universities refer to different ways to introduce themselves and attract related stakeholders. In this sense, slogans seem only one way of getting recognition for higher education institutions because agreement or disagreement with slogans also matters (Mwamwenda, 1994). Before moving to the rationale and effects of slogans, it seems necessary to make a clear definition. Slogans are defined to be literal doctrines or arguments and of great importance in terms of discourse and practice (Lindsey, 1973). They can be full of rhetorical devices such as alliteration, similes, metaphors, metonymies, or antithesis since prosodic features decorate almost all slogans and cohesive devices such as parallelism, ellipsis and morphological repetition are craftily and skillfully used. Based on the debate between a philosopher and two politicians in Belgium, the slogans were taken as "bits from a speech" (Simon-Vandenberg, 2008).

Slogans are formed to be exclaimed, intended for public and useful tools for mobilizing people because they have a specific ideology which is reflected via hypothetical propositions and uncovers direction of inferences. In addition, slogans can take the form of abbreviations or presupposition of imperative sentences, and regarded as propaganda and demonstration tools (Nianxi, 2009). The effectiveness of slogans has been witnessed in recent history, not only at universities that are social capital institutions, but also in calls for war and democratic elections. "We can do it", known as the motto of the feminist movement, "Yes we can", identified with Barack Obama, "Make America Great Again" used first in 1980 by Reagan, and "One Hundred Million With One Spirit", used by Japan during the World War II, are the first examples that come to mind. As it is understood from the contents of these slogans, the main purpose of slogans is to bring together.

It is also possible to see the slogans which were preferred during war and election times in the series and movies produced by the media. For instance, a popular sketch in a live comedy series, which humorously criticizes women and finishes with a funny slogan to attract attention to social status of men and women, equal rights, and gender discrimination, was examined with an aim to explain the audience's reception (Lee & Park, 2012). They made some conclusions about the

enjoyment of the audience, and reactions of male and female audience in terms of traditional responsibilities, the power of the media to shape audience perception, gender relations and structural inequalities. In addition, some researchers analyzed the slogans in banners, wall graffiti, audio-visual instruments, chanting, speeches and songs in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, and regarded them as a means to disseminate political complaints and comments. They also propose that slogans have a persuasive effect upon political discourse in the Arab world and shape the Arab intellect political atmosphere to some extent (Al-Sowaidi, Banda, & Mansour, 2015).

Slogans, as an example of external media for advertising various products including household goods have attracted attention and been studied in different disciplines including education in different contexts (Dini, 2018). Their rhetorical and persuasive nature has been under investigation due to social symbols they encode (Denton, 1980). However, the slogans used by higher education appear to need more research for recognition, administration, and educational purposes. Thus, this study aimed to find out the themes of the slogans of the top 500 universities included in the Webometrics and compare the emerging themes in the slogans of Asian universities and the other universities. To this end, the study attempted to cover the number of recurrent themes and remark on the properties of these slogans. In this way, the study comes up with new insights about the nature of slogans, adds an interdisciplinary perspective and sheds light upon an overlooked area in slogans via filling an important niche in the relevant literature.

## REVIEW of LITERATURE

In terms of usage area, some slogans are closely identified with a specific brand name, political view, an important figure, or an organization. In this regard, Kohli, Leuthesser and Suri (2007) revealed the weak link between the slogan and the idea, brand, person, or the view it represented. The authors further suggested that while creating a slogan, one should take into consideration that a slogan should be long-lasting covering both today and tomorrow and have a clear positioning.

After a deep analysis, slogans were reported to be used as an information or justification tool (Reboul, 1974) and they can be

employed for commercial or educational purposes. In this sense, repetition can empower slogans to reach a wider audience and persuade the targeted groups more easily. Repetition of slogans has informative and interactional functions in that repeating the slogan reveals more information about it and forms solidarity among stakeholders (Barton, 1999).

In educational settings, slogans can be used to shape what to teach and how to teach, set a desired context for teaching and guide educators to act over the curricula. Yet, a slogan may sound perfect in theory but fails in practice since they could lie or tell the truth upon their reality and practicality (Reboul, 1974). In a way, slogans can be misleading and cause misunderstanding (Conte, 1991). Thus, American education tends to give importance slogans, and these are called educational slogans which include topical words (Lindsey, 1973).

When we look at the study of slogans in different contexts, we can see different genres and institutions. To illustrate, the slogans of 744 newspapers were analyzed and it was concluded that 75% of them touched upon a key benefit of the newspaper (Ghanem & Selber, 2009). Similarly, slogans of universities reflect a key benefit of the related university to introduce itself at a desired level and attract the attention of prospective students more. At this point, slogans can act as a kind of positioning strategy for universities to attract prospective students (Çatı, Kethüda, & Bilgin, 2016).

Slogans can be used for different purposes in that they can turn into helpful tools for institutions at the time of crisis or change since managers can refer to these slogans as a kind of communication tool to lead their institutions (Lehmberg & Tangpong, 2016). Educational institutions can also benefit from this persuasive aspect of slogans when they are in the process of change or reformation for a more democratic and convincing arrangements. In a similar vein, Gonzales and Pacheco (2012) examined the slogans of Border University to explain the change from a regional and teaching-focused university into a nationally distinguished university. They identified three types of logic in Border University's slogans, namely collective good logic, neoliberal/conservative modernization logic and unquestioned pursuit of an unquestioned kind of excellence logic. The first one focuses on collective goal and social justice, the second one views students as customers and investors of university and the last one reflects Western culture in terms of progress and prestige.

Slogans are stated to be persuasive in nature but what counts more is real application of what the slogan says. In other words, slogans become meaningful when they are applied. In this regard, a research study about the effect of slogans on teacher education concluded that active involvement of stakeholders is required for improving reflective practices of student teachers (Zeegers, Russell, & Smith, 2004). Since students, academicians, public officers, and other staff are among the customers of universities, the slogan of a university reflects its philosophy and culture. Like other institutions, universities need slogans for marketing and advertising purposes since the aim is to be attractive and distinctive (McKnight & Paugh, 2017).

After analyzing the process of slogan formation at Western Illinois University, Bauerly and Tripp (1997) claimed that there are some steps to be followed while creating a slogan. These steps are finding out enrolment profile and image of the university among the related stakeholders, brainstorming of top administrators, academic, non-academic, and administrative staff, students, screening possible slogans (among the top five alternatives suggested by administrators and another five top alternatives by students) and selecting the final slogan by top administrators. Finally, in higher education context, Uysal and Atmaca (2016) conducted a qualitative study upon the university slogans of 193 universities in Turkey as one of the Asian countries and found out that 102 of them had slogans while 91 of them did not have any slogans. Additionally, the university slogans mostly focused on future (n=26), scientificity (n=21), and universality (n=20), respectively.

In light of the relevant literature, it can be said that slogans have attracted the attention of many researchers in different fields such as politics (Baker, 2016; Doucette, 2015; Lee, 2020; Simon-Vandenberg, 2008), international advertising (Hornikx, van Meurs, & de Boer, 2010), presidential campaign (King, 2017), union marketing (Bailey, Price, Esders, & McDonald, 2010), business identity (Lehmberg & Tangpong, 2016; Verboven, 2011), disability (Barton, 1999), education (Clarke, 2016; Gonzales & Pacheco, 2012; Heidingsfelder, 2014; Reboul, 1974; Uysal & Atmaca, 2016), teacher education (Zeegers, Russell, & Smith, 2004), road transport (Aycan & Aycan, 2014; Ulum & Bada, 2016), political discourse analysis (Al-Sowaidi, Banda, & Mansour, 2015), waste management (Grosso, 2016) and travel research (Zhang, Gursoy, & Xu, 2017). Although there are research studies about slogans in various fields, higher education seems to lack a thorough understanding of slogans. Based on this niche in the relevant literature, the current paper aimed to find out and compare slogan themes of the universities included in the Webometrics. Thus, the present study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- 1- What are the recurrent themes found in the slogans of the Asian universities included in the Webometrics?
- 2- What are the recurrent themes found in the slogans of the universities in the other continents included in the Webometrics?
- 3- Are there any differences between the two groups of universities in terms of the occurrence and rank of the slogan themes?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study aims to analyze the slogans of the top 500 universities according to the Webometrics criteria and compare the universities found in the Asian continent and the other continents in terms of the themes of these slogans. Therefore, the current study employed descriptive research design since the aim was to systematically describe a situation, namely the themes found in university slogans.

## Procedures

The researchers got the official permission and approval from the Ethical Committee of the university where the study was conducted. The ethics committee document related to this research was obtained from Pamukkale University Social Sciences and Humanities Research and Publication Ethics Committee, dated 04.12.2020 and numbered 11-8. Then, purposeful sampling was used to identify the universities to be analyzed for their slogan usage since the list of universities included in the Webometrics was taken as the criterion (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-CSIC, Retrieved on 15.05.2020, from [http://www.webometrics.info/en/About\\_Us](http://www.webometrics.info/en/About_Us)). It was thought to serve the aim of the study in terms of comparing slogans of different universities in different countries, adding an international value to the study, and increasing the generalizability of the findings. With these purposes in mind, the researchers decided to focus on the top 500 universities included in the Webometrics.

Since webometrics is supported by an academic institution, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-CSIC, which is one of the first basic research organizations in Europe and includes about 126 centers in Spain, and university ranking variables are transparent, measurable, and dynamic, it was chosen as the data collection area in this study CSIC is attached to the Ministry of Education and mainly aims to promote scientific research. (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-CSIC, Retrieved on 15.05.2020 from [http://www.webometrics.info/en/About\\_Us](http://www.webometrics.info/en/About_Us)).

The name of these universities, the country and continent they are in, their native language(s) and their slogans – if existed- were coded on an Excel document. While searching for the slogans, the researchers visited the websites of these universities as well as their social networking sites. The short-term slogans created for specific activities or programs were not taken into consideration. The slogans found on the websites of the universities were detected and considered for the analyses. There were no changes or interventions about the symbols or different languages in that the researchers found the English version of the Latin slogans and checked whether the same English version of the slogan appeared in the English version of the university's homepage or website. If a university has no slogan or has two slogans, it was written down as well and all the details and symbols were noted. After the top 500 universities were visited online and their slogan preferences were recorded, the analysis procedures began.

## Data Analysis

Content analysis which could be employed to analyze documents (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013) and is a qualitative research method (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012) with a systematic examination of the content for revealing patterns, themes, or biases (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001) was applied to code and categorize the emerging themes (Dörnyei, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 2017; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). While analyzing the slogan data, the researchers built a taxonomy of the emerging themes and followed a zigzag pattern, moved

back and forth due to the iterative nature of the qualitative data analysis. They identified some keywords that represented the underlying idea in a slogan and counted these emerging themes to find out their frequency. Therefore, summative content analysis, which is concerned with counting and comparisons of keywords or content based on the interpretation of the underlying context, was used in the qualitative data analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Two researchers were involved in data analysis to lessen the subjectivity of the findings. Both researchers followed a zigzag pattern while interpreting and categorizing the slogans in that they moved back and forth while analyzing a new slogan item by considering the previous one and compared each slogan against each other in line with the coming flow of data. The coders constantly compared a slogan item with the old ones and new ones to be consistent while forming the emerging categories (Glaser & Strauss, 2017; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Each coder analyzed the slogans separately without previously defined criteria. Both coders jointly published an article about university slogans and thus were informed about the relevant literature and research results in order not to miss important points or end up with irrelevant results.

Since one of the aims was to reveal the themes, the coders first categorized the data separately and emerging themes, repeatedly checked their categories for intra-rater reliability and compared their findings together via face-to-face meetings for inter-rater reliability. Due to the bottom-up nature of qualitative analysis, the coders both passed through certain stages to reach and offer a general framework. In other words, they went through initial, focused, and thematic coding stages to reach the themes and categories as in Figure 1 (Kolb, 2012).

The coders separately analyzed the slogans and came up with draft forms. Three weeks later, they made some revisions and gave the final shape to their own work for the sake of ensuring intra-rater reliability. Furthermore, after a quarter (25%) of the total number of slogans were analyzed, they had a meeting and compared their emerging themes to find out the agreement

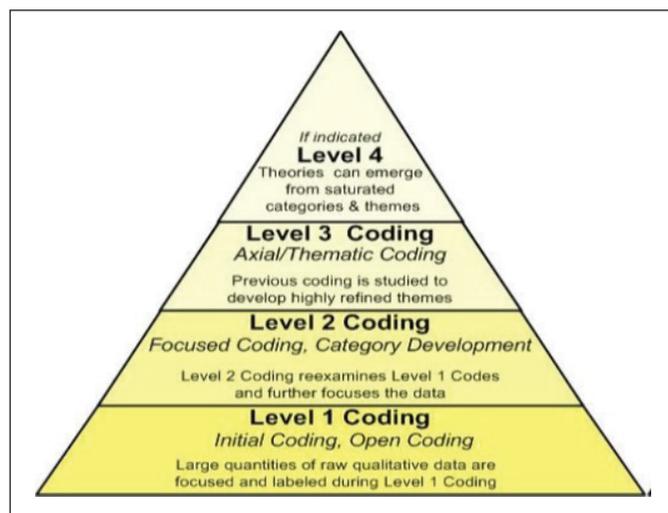
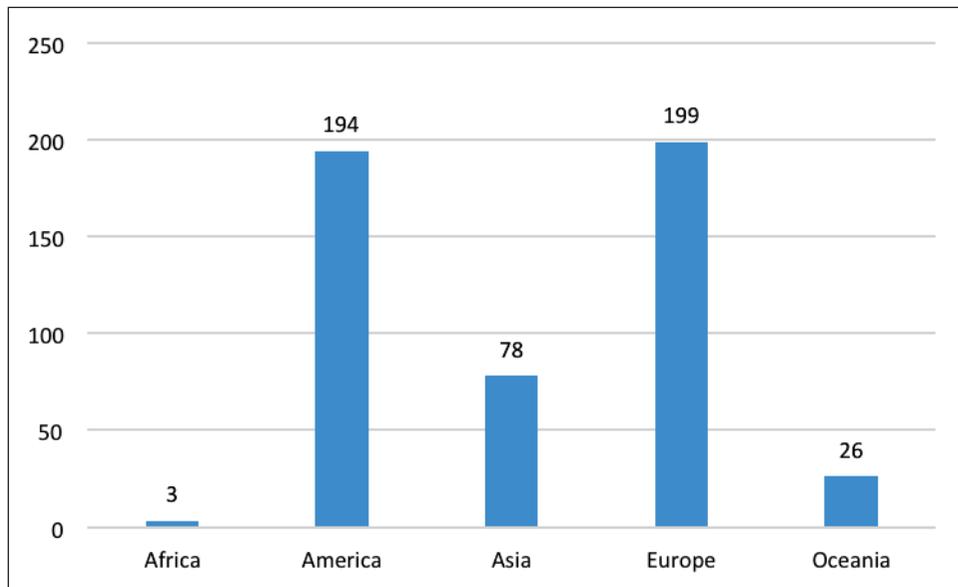
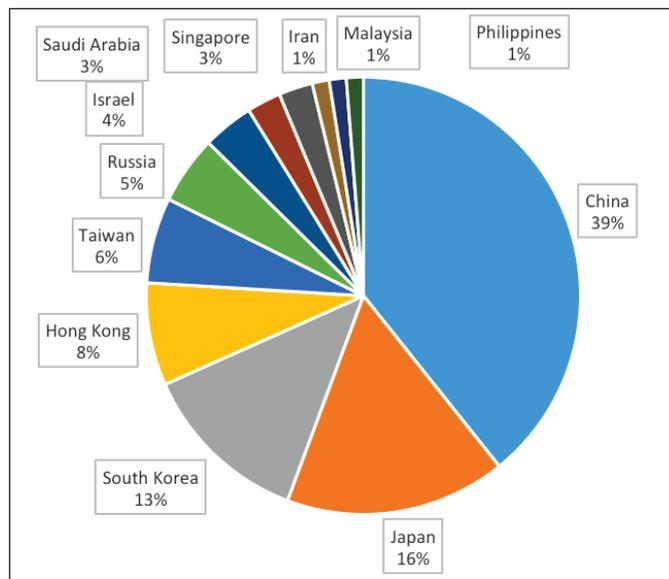


Figure 1: Coding level pyramid.



**Figure 2:** The distribution of the top 500 universities by continents.



**Figure 3:** Distribution of the Asian universities by countries.

levels according to the inter-rater formula (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the first round, the inter-rater reliability formula was found to be 80% and the coders detected the disagreed categories. They, then, discussed upon some linguistic expressions which may cause differences or ambiguity.

After the first meeting, the coders continued to analyze the rest of the slogans and when all of the slogans (100%) were analyzed separately, they held the second meeting where the inter-rater reliability was calculated again. In the second round, the inter-rater reliability was found to be 90%. Both rounds indicated a high level of agreement between the coders as 70% agreement is regarded to be minimal ideal level for inter-rater reliability. However, both coders held a detailed discussion about the 10% disagreed points and what to do with these slogans till there was a complete agreement.

### Study Materials

In this study, the slogans of the top 500 universities indexed according to the Webometrics criteria (The ranking web of world repositories, as of 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2018) were analyzed. It was found out that a high majority of these universities (n=454, 90.8%) had slogans while a small number of them (n=46, 9.2%) did not have any slogans. It was also seen that some universities used the same slogans as “Let there be light” and “VERITAS”. The distribution of the top 500 universities by continents is displayed in Figure 2.

As can be seen in Figure 2, the highest frequency belongs to European universities (n=199, 39.8%) and this is followed by America (n=194, 38.8%), Asia (n=78, 15.6%), Oceania (n=26, 5.2%) and Africa (n=3, 0.6%). Asian universities appear to closely follow American and European universities and thus they are understood to have a high potential and China has recently overtaken the United States in having the largest postsecondary system in the world (Altbach, 2004). For this reason, Asian universities were centered in the study.

When the funding patterns of universities were examined, it was seen that the distribution in the other continental universities was as follows: 85% public, 14% private, 1% royal. As for the universities in the Asian continent, the distribution was as in the following: 70% public, 16% national, 11% private, 3% autonomous.

Next, the distribution of the Asian universities was investigated. 78 out of 500 universities were found in the Asian continent and the distribution of these universities by countries is displayed in Figure 3.

According to Figure 3, the highest distribution percentage belongs to China (39%) whereas the lowest distribution belongs to Iran (1%), Malaysia (1%) and Philippines (1%). Such a distribution might have resulted from both the quantity and quality of higher education institutions in these countries in terms of

their academic qualities and achievements according to the Webometrics criteria. Accordingly, the slogans of the universities with a higher rate will be presented and exemplified.

## RESULTS

The findings upon the emerging themes in the slogans of the Asian and the other continent universities are given in the following parts.

### Emerging Themes in the Slogans of the Asian Universities

When the themes were specifically analyzed for the Asian universities, there emerged seven themes with 224 occurrences as is seen in Figure 4. These themes and their frequencies are as follows: science (n=57, 25.4%), activism (n=48, 21.4%), comprehensiveness (n=41, 18.3%), faith (n=36, 16.1%), idealism (n=22, 9.8%), comparison (n=14, 6.3%), collaboration (n=6, 2.7%). The country of the university and its rank in the Webometrics are given in the parentheses near the relevant slogans.

According to Figure 4, science ranks first in Asian continental universities as in the other continental universities:

“Science is the clear learning of truth and enlightenment of the mind” (Russia, 236).

“Towards a Global Knowledge Enterprise” (Singapore, 57).

Activism ranks second in the Asian universities as in the other continental universities:

“Those Who Can, Teach” (Hong Kong, 130).

“Rest not a moment from learning” (Iran, 442).

Comprehensiveness ranks third in Asian universities and fifth in the other continental universities:

“Dedication to Public Interests, Acquisition of All-round Capability, Aspiration for Progress with Each Passing Day” (China, 350).

“The ocean is exclusive because it embraces hundreds of rivers” (China, 286).

Faith ranks fourth in Asian universities and third in the other continental universities:

“The truth is my light” (South Korea, 77).

“Read! In the name of your Lord Who created” (Saudi Arabia, 497).

Idealism ranks fifth in the Asian universities and sixth in the other continental universities.

“Wisdom and virtue” (Hong Kong, 97)

“Virtue, Knowledge, Truth, Originality” (China, 218).

Comparison ranks sixth in Asian universities and fourth in the other continental universities.

“Best Education, Best Research, Best Community” (Japan, 437).

“Better University, Better Future” (China, 215).

Collaboration ranks in the last place both in the Asian universities and in the other continental universities.

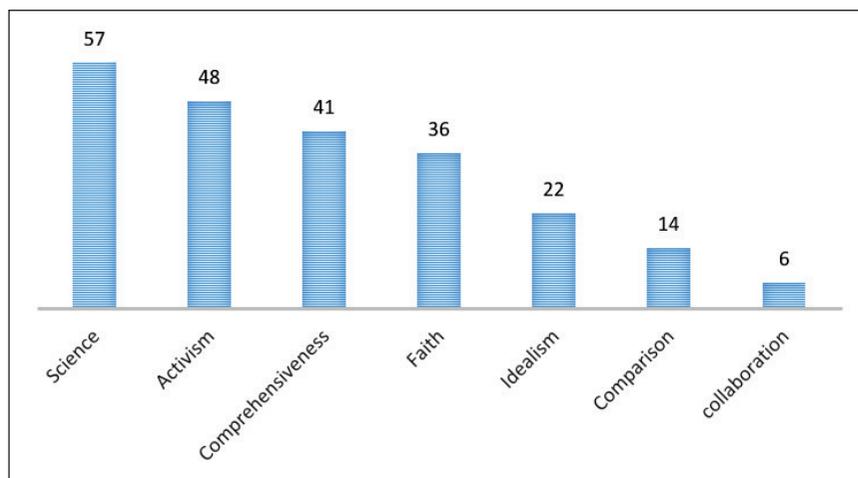
“Integrity - Freedom – Cooperation” (Japan, 430).

“Each Of Us Defines All Of Us” (Taiwan, 156).

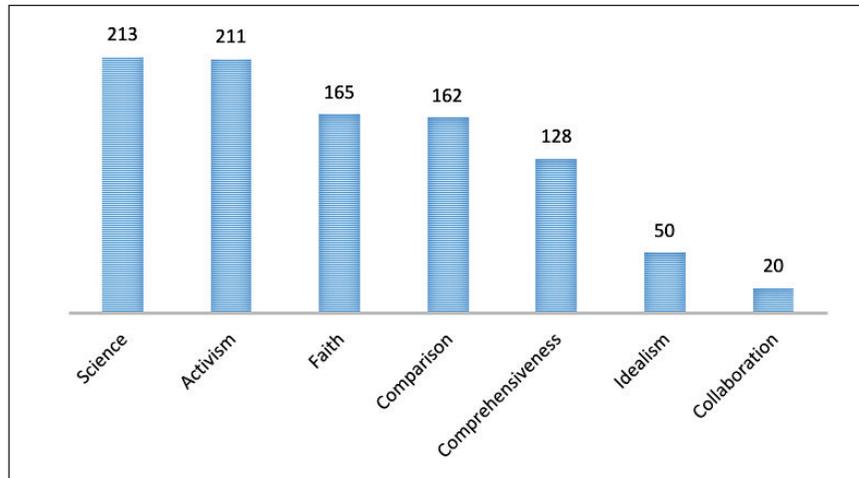
### Emerging Themes in the Slogans of the Universities Found in the Other Continents

According to Figure 5, there are seven themes with 949 occurrences. These themes and their frequencies are as in the following: science (n=213, 22.4%), activism (n=211, 22.2%), faith (n=165, 17.4%), comparison (n=162, 17.2%), comprehensiveness (n=128, 13.5%), idealism (n=50, 5.2%), collaboration (n=20, 2.1%).

The theme of science takes part in the study as a theme. It is represented by the categories such as education, discovery, innovation, mind, art, progress, creativity, expertise, discipline, and it is the most frequently occurring theme with 213 occurrences among the other continent universities. Again, the country of the university and its rank in the Webometrics are given in the parentheses near the relevant slogans. Also, it



**Figure 4:** Emerging themes in the slogans of Asian universities.



**Figure 5:** Emerging themes in the slogans of universities in the other continents.

should be noted that the slogans are given as they are without making any changes in their spelling, punctuation, or any other orthographic features.

“Letters, Science, Art” (USA, 76).

“High Tech, Human Touch” (Holland, 207).

“JANUARY, FEBRUARY, CANCER, APRIL” (Austria, 453).

In this study, the theme of activism is represented by the categories of theory-practice unity, movement, freedom, encouragement, invitation, success, leadership, quality, challenge, social commitment, change, discipline, and impact. Activism, which supports 21<sup>st</sup> century universities to prioritize the feasibility theme, ranks second in the average of the other continental universities.

“By means knowledge and hard work” (Australia, 62).

“Let the journey begin” (Canada, 96).

“Become a game changer” (Finland, 234)

“forward together” (South Africa, 467).

Faith is in the third place with 165 occurrences. The slogans under the theme of faith generally proceed on the belief of Christianity and sometimes remind holy books.

“The word of the Lord is a light for our feet” (Holland, 98).

“For the greater glory of God” (USA, 461).

The other categories which are found under the theme of faith are optimism, imagination, perseverance, autonomy, patriotism, trust, humanity, and love:

“Humanity to serve mankind” (UK, 489)

“For Church, For Texas” (USA, 422).

Comparison ranks fourth as a theme that include superiority, permanence, locality, ownership, originality, competition, power categories.

“BE BOUNDLESS FOR WASHINGTON/FOR THE WORLD” (USA, 7).

“ONE OF THE BEST” (Finland, 89).

With the categories of globalism, permanence, future, unity multiculturalism, multidiscipline, depth and width, comprehensiveness ranks fifth:

“I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study”. (USA, 6).

“As a Tree Through the Ages” (Canada, 19).

“Nourishing mother of the studies” (Italy, 117).

Idealism, which aims to reach the ideal with morality, virtue, and thought elements, ranks sixth:

“Let all come who by merit most deserve reward” (UK, 20).

“Add to your faith virtue and to virtue knowledge” (USA, 327).

Finally, collaboration ranks seventh as a theme:

“United We Stand, Divided We Fall” (USA, 110).

“TOGETHER, WE GO GREATER” (USA, 32).

## DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

### Discussion of Major Findings

This study aimed to reveal emerging themes in the slogans of top 500 universities included in the Webometrics and compare the emerging themes in the slogans of the Asian universities and the other continent universities.

When we look at distribution of the universities according to their funding types, it is seen that public universities have a predominant distribution in both groups compared to private universities. The absence of private education sector in countries like Singapore is a factor that should be considered when interpreting the rates. However, India, named as one of the regional giants (Altbach, 2004), is not included on the list. Jalal (2013) associates this situation as: “It is worthwhile to mention here that low ranking of Indian universities in the world is due to having poor values of some important web indicators including research publication.”

Looking at the general picture, the same themes took place in different rankings in both groups. While it is possible to explain the similarity between the rankings with the Western academic model, according to one view, "All Asian universities began as foreign implants and have played a central role in how academic institutions have developed." (Altbach, 2004). For this reason, it is possible to say that Western originated university culture has spread slogans.

Although Asia is not traditionally accepted as a leader in research and innovation in the Western sense (Altbach, 2004), when we look at the slogans, it is seen that the science theme is in the first place among the Asian universities as in other continental universities. In a study conducted by Uysal and Atmaca (2016) about the universities in Turkey, which is an Asian country, the theme of science was in the second place while the theme of future was in the first place. This situation can be explained by the difference between the age of Western sense of universities and the average age of the universities in Turkey.

In this study, even though science ranks first in both groups, the way categories were used are different from each other. For the East, information is the one requested. In this sense, it is known that the word "educator" whose Arabic equivalent is "muallim" is used for teachers in the sense of a person who has knowledge about education, discipline, wisdom and learning, and the word "learner" whose Arabic equivalent is "talebe" is used for students in the sense of a person who demands learning. That a culture which accepts lifelong learning as a principle does not include the invitation theme can be interpreted with the madrasah culture, master-apprentice relationship and "Learn from the cradle to the grave" principle. It is also possible to see this search in the slogans of universities with Far Eastern culture. The slogans "Improve Oneself, Promote Perseverance, Seek Truth" and "Make Innovations" (China, 208) are examples of the search for knowledge and truth.

In a feasibility-based global world, the activism theme ranks second in both groups. Asian universities' understanding of knowledge, based on pragmatic workforce, is reflected in slogans such as "Absorb the new to look far ahead, and work pragmatically" (Taiwan, 229), "Endure Toil, Cherish Thrift, Work Hard and Love the Country" (China, 409). Comprehensiveness ranks third in the Asian universities while it ranks fifth in the other continental universities. Comprehensiveness in the Asian universities' slogans is more prominent compared to faith. In the faith theme, both religions - Islam and Christianity - have an influence on the Asian universities while in the Western universities this is in the direction of Christianity. As in the example of "The truth is my light (South Korea, 77)", the influence of Christianity on the Asian universities can be explained by the missionary activities in the region.

Even though the range of religious action is wider, the theme of faith ranks lower in the Asian universities compared to the other continental universities. As a keyword, truth was evaluated under the faith theme. However, unlike the perception of truth in the other continental universities, in Asian universities, it is

seen that the word is used in the meaning of "truth beyond reality". It is possible to say that the ontological approach which dominates Eastern mysticism and seeks the truth beyond what is visible is effective in this perspective.

"Seek Truth and Make Innovation" (China, 218)

"Seek the truths from facts" (Taiwan, 229)

Though idealism is a Western term, concepts such as wisdom and virtue were used as frequently as in the slogans of the Asian universities like the ones in the Western universities. However, the Asian universities are in the sixth place while the other continental universities are in the fourth place in terms of comparison and competition. The theme of comparison, which constitutes the sixth rank, is not entirely based on determining one's own position relative to another but is sometimes represented by some proverbs such as "The pen is mightier than the sword" (Japan, 289). At this point, the difference in the perception of competition can be explained with a literary interpretation by leaving the academic perspective for a moment - but never forgetting the main frame. Therefore, fiction is different for the East and the West, and the equivalent of the word comparison differs even though university slogans are a universal concept.

Collaboration was the least common theme in the slogans. In a geography, which is based on family and community as the building block of the society rather than the logic of the competition and which grounds on social progress with total quality management and Asian-like production style systems, the finding that challenge and competition themes were not encountered can be interpreted in this way.

Considering the slogan patterns preferred by different universities for using similar slogans, it is seen that these word groups have been molded long before and have a cultural or religious dimension ontologically. As to the frequently preferred themes, it has been observed that these themes are mostly consistent with the view that sees the university as social capital in the 21<sup>st</sup> century approach where cognitive knowledge is emphasized.

### Comparison with the Relevant Literature

In the relevant literature, it was indicated that there were some differences between public and private universities in terms of their positioning strategies in that while public universities were found to give more priority to the internationalization, academic achievement, and rooted history strategies, private universities were found to give more priority to the strategies of scholarship, dormitory facilities, and job opportunities. However, physical, social, and sporting facilities were the common strategies used by both types of universities (Çağrı, Kethüda, & Bilgin, 2016). In a similar vein, some universities with different status like public, private, flagship, space-grant, land-grant, sea-grant, national, royal, sun-grant, research or free/autonomous/independent were displayed to employ slogans in their positioning and recognition strategies in this study.

In parallel with Nianxi (2009), some of the analyzed slogans were in the form of abbreviations or imperative sentences while some of them included time expressions like “today” or “tomorrow” (Kohli, Leuthesser, & Suri, 2007).

Some universities claimed to be “the best” through superiority or comparison expressions, which may stem from the fact that they like to show their quality and success and to persuade their future students, academicians, and visitors. However, it cannot be claimed that extremity in a slogan always yields positive impression on the part of the stakeholders because it can be counter-productive (Zhang, Gursoy, & Xu, 2017). As the dataset suggests, slogans can be used for educational purposes using imperatives (Reboul, 1974). However, it should be noted that the context-bound nature of slogans should be taken into consideration to sound more realistic and applicable (Grosso, 2016).

In the relevant literature, repetition of slogans is another issue for persuading target groups and increasing togetherness among stakeholders (Barton, 1999; Kohli, Leuthesser, & Suri, 2007) in addition to the tendency to use English versus local languages for slogans (Hornikx, van Meurs, & de Boer, 2010). These issues were similar to the findings of this study since the majority of slogans were written in English (n=397) and some slogans referred to repetition.

In comparison with Uysal and Atmaca (2016), a number of similarities and differences were detected. For instance, their study found out that 102 out of 193 universities possessed slogans while 91 of them did not have any slogans. The current study echoes this finding by revealing that most of the Webometrics-indexed universities (n=454, 90.8%) were found to possess slogans while a small number of them (n=46, 9.2%) did not have any slogans; however, in this study the percentage of the universities with slogans was found to be higher. As to the emerging themes of the slogans, in their study, the most commonly employed themes were future (n=26), scientificity (n=21), and universality (n=20), respectively. However, in the current study, science was the most recurrent theme. In this regard, the theme of science occupied an important rank in both studies.

All in all, slogans can be employed for different purposes and interpreted as a type of positioning strategy for universities to attract prospective students, academicians, administrative and visitors (Çatı, Kethüda, & Bilgin, 2016; Uysal & Atmaca, 2016), as a communication tool to lead higher education institutions (Lehmberg & Tangpong, 2016), a quiet revolution to refer to the big changes (Gonzales & Pacheco, 2012), a reflection of the philosophy and culture of the university (Zeegers, Russell, & Smith, 2004), and finally a tool to become attractive, reflective, and distinctive (McKnight & Paugh, 2017).

#### Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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#### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Both authors contributed equally to all stages of this study, including literature review, data collection, data analysis, interpretation and reporting.

#### CONFLICT of INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

#### ETHICAL STATEMENT

The authors declare that all procedures performed in this study were in accordance with the ethical standards of commission of the university where the study was conducted. The ethics committee document related to this research was obtained from Pamukkale University Social Sciences and Humanities Research and Publication Ethics Committee, dated 04.12.2020 and numbered 11-8.

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