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Research Article

A Qualitative Study on Management Information Systems Faculty Members' Perceptions of Accreditation in Türkiye

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the accreditation of universities and programs has gained special importance worldwide and in our country, and higher education institutions have set various accreditation targets. Accreditation, which documents the compliance and quality of an institution or program with specific standards, includes an audit process that evaluates and approves the compliance of the institution or program with national or international standards. Although a successful accreditation process depends on many factors, one of the obstacles is the lack of ownership and support by faculty members and even resistance to accreditation. The fact that accreditation processes are new in Management Information Systems (MIS) departments in Türkiye and that no MIS department with international program accreditation has been evaluated using program-specific criteria reveals the importance of measuring MIS faculty members' perceptions toward accreditation. The primary purpose of this study is to determine the current status evaluations of MIS bachelor programs in Türkiye, examine the perceptions and perspectives of faculty members regarding accreditation, and reveal the problems encountered in the process. Within the scope of the research, in-depth interviews were conducted with 11 faculty members working in the MIS department in Türkiye using a semi-structured interview form. The questions in the interview form were divided into three categories: perception and perspective on accreditation, Accreditation of MIS programs, problematic areas encountered during the accreditation process, and the benefits of accreditation. Comparisons between participants were presented, and a descriptive analysis of the categories was performed. The findings revealed that faculty members have a positive perspective on the accreditation process regarding quality education, continuous improvement, and process management. However, documentation, monitoring of processes, and the associated workload are seen as difficulties in accreditation. Therefore, university administrators must make necessary arrangements to handle paperwork and routine data collection. Staff members and faculty members should be able to focus on their primary activities, such as increasing the quality of teaching and producing high-impact research.

Keywords: Accreditation, higher education, management information systems, qualitative analysis

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1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of the higher education system significantly impacts a society's economic and social welfare. Countries with weak higher education systems have an economy that is intensive to agriculture and physical production and a relatively low level of welfare. In contrast, countries with strong higher education have industries and service sectors based on data and information (Prendergast et al., 2001). The purpose of higher education has radically changed over the past 30 years because of globalization, technological advancements, economic dynamics, shifts in the business landscape, and various other factors. Beyond scientific studies and producing science, universities must graduate individuals that companies, the public, and society need based on market dynamics and expectations and offer them to the market. For most universities, the luxury of doing science for its sake has disappeared, and the necessity of doing science and applying it to society and companies has emerged. Considering these developments, accreditation can be defined as the determination of professional education standards and the evaluation of compliance with these standards. Thanks to accreditation, it is possible to assure the public and relevant administrations that accredited program graduates have the education and skills to enable them to work in the appropriate field. Accreditation, in its simplest definition, involves reviewing the quality of higher education institutions and programs (CHEA, 2024). Many accredited programs benefit from a well-designed evaluation and assessment process that collects meaningful data. These data offer insights into the achievement of program objectives and guide decisions on improvement. (Oudshoorn et al., 2018).

Accreditation has also been gaining importance in our country, and the increasing competition in higher education has made accreditation a necessity. In July 2024, the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) ended universities' evening education programs. The rapidly increasing number of universities in the last 30 years has melted the accumulated student potential due to the increase in educational opportunities abroad, and quality, not quantity, has now come to the fore for Turkish higher education. Due to the labor market's supply-demand imbalance and business demands, training qualified graduates is essential for universities' survival and continued operation. Accredited universities are approaching this goal and are becoming an elite group. For this reason, institutions and organizations that manage this issue, primarily the umbrella organization Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC), have been established and continue their work. The authorization and recognition of accreditation agencies in Türkiye is the responsibility of THEQC. MÜDEK, Türkiye's first national accreditation agency in higher education, was established in 2002 under the "Engineering Evaluation Board" name to evaluate engineering undergraduate programs (Tantekin Ersolmaz, 2018). Today, 24 accreditation bodies carry out evaluation processes in different fields, are registered by THEQC, and whose registration period continues (YÖKAK, 2024). In addition, universities and programs pursuing internationalization have carried out activities and continue to receive international accreditation.

Many elements and factors contribute to the success of accreditation. The main areas of focus are faculty members, students, senior management support, processes, curriculum, physical spaces, and financial resources. An institution that wants to be accredited should be able to demonstrate that it is ready to a certain extent for all these factors. In this context, this study aims to conduct a general accreditation readiness assessment for MIS Departments, whose numbers have increased rapidly in Türkiye in the last 10 years but have never received program accreditation at the international level, and to examine the perceptions and perspectives of faculty members, who are the most important and unfortunately the most problematic factors for accreditation. This study also aims to determine the accreditation criteria and current status evaluations for MIS programs and to reveal the problems encountered along with the benefits of accreditation. The research has the following sub-objectives within the scope of this aim;

1. General determination of the accreditation status of MIS departments in Türkiye
2. Accreditation options for MIS departments in Türkiye
3. Prominent elements, obstacles, and supporting elements in the process
4. Determination of faculty members' perceptions and perspectives on accreditation
5. Determination of faculty members' MIS program accreditation evaluations
6. Evaluation of the current status of the program in line with the ABET accreditation criteria
7. Discussion of problematic areas regarding accreditation and the benefits that accreditation offers

2. QUALITY AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education institutions are vital for equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary for a sustainable future. (Lozano et al., 2013). Although many higher education institutions contribute positively to sustainable development, a more profound and comprehensive transformation is necessary (Caeiro et al., 2020). Universities face ongoing challenges from rapid advancements in information and communication technologies, the growing diversity

of students, and the shift toward a knowledge society (Al Shobaki and Naser, 2017). Along with these changing challenges, stakeholders also demand better university results regarding research, teaching, employability, and social access (Frasquet et al., 2012; Angulo-Ruiz, 2016). Students prefer high-quality and qualified educational services to help them develop their careers (Mpinganjira, 2011). In today's competitive and innovative educational landscape, universities must focus more on meeting stakeholders' expectations. However, the globalization of professions and the mobility of professionals create a need for institutions to provide qualifications recognized in the international labor market and enable the comparability of academic standards (Hernes and Martin, 2008). The expansion, privatization, and globalization of higher education are increasing the need to ensure quality (Kumar et al., 2020). Quality assessment has long been a focus for higher education institutions and is increasingly crucial to their success (Van Vught and Westerheijden, 1994; Mursidi et al., 2020). The pressure to improve academic programs and increase graduate employability leads to a greater emphasis on quality in the higher education sector (Hijazi, 2016).

Quality in higher education is a multifaceted concept that is examined in various dimensions. According to Harvey and Williams (2010), quality in educational programs is conceptualized in different ways, such as meeting specified standards, being fit for purpose, or being transformative. Welzant et al. (2011) suggested four broad conceptualizations of quality in higher education (purposeful, transformative, exceptional, and quality as accountability) and several quality indicators to evaluate each of these broad conceptualizations. While the definitions in the literature focus primarily on processes, policies, or actions, they emphasize quality aspects related to accountability and continuous improvement (Welzant et al. (2011). Harvey and Knight (1996, p.97) presented the ultimate quality goal that higher education should pursue: "the need to invest in continuous improvement of the quality of the student experience through staff development, innovation in teaching and learning, research and scholarship."

Accreditation is a widely used mechanism to assess and ensure the quality of higher education institutions (Harvey, 2004; Sanyal and Martin, 2007; Eaton, 2015; Blanco-Ramirez, 2015). Accreditation is based on an external evaluation process to check the achievement of specific quality standards (Van Berkel and Wijnen, 2010). Accreditation in higher education can be considered the formal verification of quality assurance compliance by control bodies (Lundquist, 1997). Accreditation affects many aspects of academic reputation and internationalization, research and innovation, teaching quality, and employability (Kumar et al., 2020).

2.1. Accreditation and Management Information Systems Departments in Türkiye

Considering the field of informatics with the first working computer in 1947 and the first commercially sold computers in the 1950s, the emergence of Information Systems as a discipline for the application of information processing technologies to businesses and competitive advantage did not exist until the late 1960s (Ceccucci and White, 2008). MIS is a system that manages data, processes, and people in organizations. It mainly contributes to the managerial aspects of the organization (King 1978). As a discipline, MIS deals with computer science, management science, operations research, psychology, sociology, and economics research to develop information systems and produce solutions to real business problems (Laudon and Laudon 2014). The foundation of MIS is organization, management, and technology (Kroenke 2012; Laudon and Laudon 2014). Management information systems, which was included in the curriculum as a course in Türkiye, was later included as a department by the decision of the CoHE. Following the department's opening under the name of "Business Informatics" at Marmara University in 1991, Boğaziçi University established the first department under the name of MIS in 1995 (Coşkun and Alma, 2018). While education in this field is gathered under a standard name, Business Informatics, in German-speaking countries, there is no single standard name in English-speaking countries. In parallel with the different intensities of subjects related to information and communication technologies and business administration, it is seen that the teaching programs are generally named "Business Information

Technology," "Computer Information Technology," "Business Computing," "Business Informatics," "Information Systems," "Management of Information Systems," "Management of Business Systems," and these branches are divided into sub-branches within themselves (Akpınar, 2011). At the Higher Education Executive Board meeting dated 11.03.2020, the names and contents of undergraduate departments/programs with the same content but different names in higher education institutions were reviewed and simplified. As a result of this study, the departments previously named "Business Information Management," "Business Informatics," "Technology and Information Management," and "Management Science and Information Systems" were gathered under the name of "Management Information Systems" to be implemented as of the 2020 Higher Education Institutions Exam (YKS). MIS is an interdisciplinary field of study that exists at the intersection of many other disciplines, such as business, industrial engineering, computer engineering, informatics, mathematics, and statistics (Bensghir, 2002).

In higher education, accreditation is usually given at the institution and college levels, while some accrediting

organizations provide accreditation at the level of individual schools/programs (Hilton, 2003). MIS departments can be established within different faculties and schools. In the world, Information Systems (IS) programs in computing and engineering schools usually apply for ABET accreditation. In contrast, the most common accreditations for business schools are AACSB and EQUIS (Leidig and Salmela, 2021). Founded in 1932 as the Engineers' Council for Professional Development (ECPD), ABET is an engineering organization focused on education, accreditation, regulation, and professional development for engineering professionals and students in the United States. It changed its name to ABET in 1980. In 2001, ABET established the Computing Accreditation Commission with the assistance of the Computer Science Accreditation Board to accredit Computing Programs (ABET, 2024). Almost every engineering program in the United States is accredited by ABET (MacKinnon et al., 2012). The long-standing indecision of AACSB regarding IS content has motivated the creation of specific BS accreditation standards by ABET, the agency responsible for accrediting computer science and engineering programs (Hilton et al., 2004). ABET is an organization that accredits programs in computing, engineering, and engineering technology, as well as applied and natural sciences. The ABET Commission on Computing Accreditation (CAC) accredits computer science, information systems, information technology, cybersecurity, and other computing programs, primarily in the United States and more than 20 countries worldwide. For a program to be accredited by ABET, it must meet ABET criteria, which focus on what students learn, whether the curriculum, faculty, and facilities are appropriate, and whether the program meets quality standards to produce graduates who will enter and succeed in the global workforce as educated professionals (Oudshoorn et al., 2018).

2.2. Accreditation Status of Management Information Systems Departments in Türkiye

The idea of accreditation for MIS programs in Türkiye is still very new. Unfortunately, there is no MIS program accredited by an international accreditation agency that accredits information systems programs in Türkiye, and it is seen that the general awareness level of MIS on this issue is very low. However, as of October 31, 2022, Sakarya University Faculty of Business Administration and as of February 21, 2023, Özyeğin University Faculty of Business Administration received AACSB accreditation (Sakarya University, 2024; Özyeğin University, 2024). AACSB was established in 1916 as the "American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business" to provide accreditation to business schools in North America. It began its work by accepting the first standards in 1919 (AACSB, 2023). AACSB business accreditation is provided as institutional accreditation or business unit accreditation. In institutional accreditation, all business degrees are included in the scope of the AACSB accreditation review unless excluded (AACSB, 2023, p.12). According to current AACSB data, more than 1,900 member institutions and more than 1,000 accredited schools are located in more than 100 countries. Since MIS programs are also available within the scope of the Sakarya University Faculty of Business Administration and Özyeğin University Faculty of Business Administration, these MIS programs also have AACSB accreditation. Another international accreditation agency is the AQAS. The organization performs accreditation processes for program accreditation and system accreditation in all disciplines provided by higher education institutions (Zayachuk and Yamelynets, 2021). The basic idea of program accreditation by AQAS is to assess whether the program is conducted by the "European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG) while ensuring that the curriculum meets current academic standards. However, it has developed its criteria and indicators based on ESG, which allows focus on relevant indicators of teaching and learning processes (AQAS, 2024). The first international institution to become a member of AQAS is Istanbul Gelişim University (IGU) from Türkiye. In 2017, some IGU programs were accredited based on ESG. The IGU MIS undergraduate program was also accredited in 2018 within the framework of the criteria until September 2024 (Istanbul Gelişim University, 2024). When national accreditation is examined, the "Social, Humanities and Basic Sciences Accreditation and Rating Association" (STAR) was established in 2020 to present the evaluation and accreditation activities of "Business Administration, International Trade, Management Information Systems, Economics, Finance, Banking, Labor Economics, Public Administration, Political Science, and International Relations Undergraduate Programs in the Republic of Türkiye and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (STAR, 2024). The STAR accreditation agency, authorized by THEQC, has accredited more than 70 undergraduate programs in 26 different institutions for 2 years, 3 years, 4 years, or 5 years. Atatürk University, Başkent University, Istanbul Beykent University, and Karadeniz Technical University MIS undergraduate programs have STAR accreditation on a program basis.

2.3. Faculty Members' Perceptions of Accreditation

Faculty members play an important role in the accreditation process to ensure academic integrity and self-regulation (Alstete, 2004). The accreditation process enables faculty to review program data and design while advocating for

effective practices (Gilbert, 2010). Alstete (2004) noted that most faculty members entering higher education do not anticipate participating in activities such as planning, organizing, or managing accreditation. This creates a conflict between faculty expectations and accreditation requirements. Faculty members fulfill various roles, such as serving on committees for curriculum development and evaluation, which are directly tied to the accreditation process (Rhodes, 2012). Accrediting organizations want the curriculum to be structured to have a lasting impact on students (Rhodes, 2012). Faculty members must create meaningful learning experiences while fulfilling accreditation requirements in the curriculum (Lewis, 2016). Many studies are in the literature to determine faculty members' perceptions of accreditation. Ceccucci and White (2008) conducted a study to determine the attitudes and interests of IS faculty members regarding ABET accreditation. They concluded that ABET accreditation is slowly gaining popularity, and the most important reason for targeting it is the perceived quality that it brings to a program. Wilson-Hail et al. (2019) aimed to examine faculty members' perceptions of the CAEP process when accrediting teacher education programs. According to the research results, faculty members believe that the national accreditation process is important for status and prestige, but they question whether it helps with the necessary systematic changes. In addition, faculty members perceive accreditation as a disadvantage when accreditation-related work is not included in the workload or hours. Hoare and Goad (2022) aimed to determine the factors that positively and negatively affect quality culture in accredited institutions in North America. Focus group interviews were conducted with 36 academic staff members, and a survey was conducted with 198 participants. According to the research results, there was a noticeable difference between those invited to participate in accreditation processes and those who contributed to the decision-making process. This lack of inclusive governance prevents institutions from responding appropriately to the needs of their communities. Bougherira and Elasmar (2023) investigated the impact of program accreditation conducted by the Saudi National Center for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation (NCAAA) on teaching and learning. Within the scope of the research, a survey was conducted with 469 faculty members, and interviews were conducted with 10 faculty members in 5 accredited programs. The research findings show that accreditation has a significant impact on teaching and learning. The greatest effect was observed in the planning and design of learning outcomesIto et al. (2024) conducted a qualitative study to examine the impact of accreditation on the quality of education—in-depth interviews conducted with faculty members of an accredited business school in Japan.The findings revealed that the participants agreed that accreditation positively affected teaching and encouraged active learning and the case method. However, they also stated that accreditation had a restrictive effect on assessment activities, promoting compliance rather than assessment of real learning. Mady et al. (2023) investigated the attitudes of faculty members of the Kuwait University College of Business Administration toward the AACSB accreditation system and how they perceived its benefits. The most positive attitudes in the research findings were that accreditation is an esteemed stamp of excellence and an indicator of a high-quality business program. Shaiban (2024) studied the effects of NCAAA program accreditation on perceived stress among dental college staff and compared levels before and after the process. The findings indicated that 44.67% of participants experienced high stress before NCAAA, while 31.33% reported low stress both before and after the accreditation. Their qualitative research conducted with faculty members working in education faculties in Türkiye, Alpaydın, and Topal (2022) revealed three main themes: "problems encountered by faculty members in the accreditation process," "positive aspects of the process," and "suggestions regarding the process." The highest frequencies in the codes formed under the themes are seen in the codes "extra paperwork and workload problem," "positive contribution to educational content," and "suggestion for communication with experienced institutions." Semerci et al. (2021) surveyed 181 faculty members in their screening model study to measure their perceptions of accreditation. The research results revealed that faculty members' perceptions were high. Still, there were some obstacles, such as "inappropriate standards," "inadequacy of accreditation boards," and "institutional deficiencies" in the higher education accreditation process in Türkiye.

3. METHOD

In this study, after determining the accreditation criteria and current status evaluations for MIS programs in Türkiye, the case study method, one of the qualitative research methods, was preferred to examine the perceptions and perspectives of faculty members regarding accreditation and to reveal the problems encountered in the process. Case studies are defined as the in-depth description and examination of a limited system (Merriam, 1998; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). The accreditation process is considered a system that can be limited by specific rules and conditions. In this study, an in-depth examination is aimed at understanding this system to identify its benefits and problems regarding the functioning of the process. Multiple case study (Yin, 2003) are the basis of this study. In this direction, MIS departments at 11 universities in Türkiye were studied, and each department was evaluated in terms of accreditation. The holistic multiple-case design allows each case to be compared with each other (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). In this research, the accreditation status of the departments examined was compared after data were obtained. Various categories and

codes were created from the received data to obtain inferences and explanations about the situation. Thus, within the scope of the research, common points and differences between departments regarding the accreditation process can be seen more clearly.

3.1. Sample Group

The scope of this research consists of foundation and state universities in the education process in MIS departments, which can be called a new department in Türkiye. The research sample was determined using maximum variation sampling, which is a purposeful sampling method. Various characteristics were focused on to provide maximum variation while creating the sample (Patton, 1987). In maximum variation sampling, the sample is determined based on the factors related to the problem and shows diversity, difference, variability, and similarity within themselves (Grix, 2010). Within the scope of the research, characteristics such as whether the MIS departments are in state or foundation universities, whether they are well-established or relatively newly established among the MIS departments in Türkiye, whether the department or the unit where the department is located has carried out accreditation work, its geographical location, and the language of education were determined. In this way, sample selection was used to provide diversity for the general purpose and questions of the research and to understand the situation from different perspectives. Based on the sampling strategy of the study, according to the 2022 ÖSYM data taken into account on the sample determination date, 82 MIS undergraduate programs in 71 different universities with MIS departments out of 208 universities in Türkiye were determined within the scope of the study. 40 of the 82 programs are in foundation universities, and 42 are in state universities. Most universities where the programs are located are in big cities, 33 of which are in Istanbul, 11 in Ankara, and 4 in Izmir. When examined in terms of language of instruction, it is seen that MIS undergraduate education is provided in 3 different languages: Turkish, German, and English. While there is 1 state university providing education in German, 7 of the 25 departments providing MIS undergraduate education in English are state universities, and 18 are foundation universities. MIS departments providing education in state and foundation universities have different backgrounds, are deep-rooted, and are relatively new.

When the accreditation status of the MIS departments is examined, 1 national and 1 international program accredited department is present at the time of sample determination. When accreditation is examined on a unit basis, it is seen that only 1 university has international accreditation. Considering these features within the scope of the research, the maximum diversity of the sample was targeted. According to Cropley (2002), the sample size in qualitative research should be determined by evaluating the research focus, data amount, and theoretical sampling principles. The researcher can decide that they have sufficient data at the point where the concepts and processes that emerge start to repeat (Guest et al., 2006; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). In this study, after working with 11 participants, repetitive data were obtained, and the desire to interview other people was eliminated. The participant information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Information about the Departments Conducting the Case Study

Participant	The type of University	Region	Department Establishment History	Education in a Foreign Language	Accreditation Status/Readiness	Interviewee Title, Position
MISI	State	Marmara Region	Between 2011-2019	No	Yes	Prof. Dr., Department Head
MISII	State	Marmara Region	2010 and before this date	Yes	No	Prof. Dr., Dean
MISIII	State	Marmara Region	2010 and before this date	Yes	Yes	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vice Dean
MISIV	State	Central Anatolia	Between 2011-2019	No	Yes	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vice President of Department
MISV	State	Black Sea Region	Between 2011-2019	No	Yes	Prof. Dr., Department Head
MISVI	State	Marmara Region	Between 2011-2019	No	No	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Department Head
MISVII	State	Marmara Region	Between 2011-2019	No	Yes	Prof. Dr., Department Head
MISVIII	State	Central Anatolia	Between 2011-2019	Yes	Yes	Assistant Prof., Vice President of Department
MISIX	Foundation	Central Anatolia	2010 and before this date	Yes	Yes	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Department Head
MISX	Foundation	Marmara Region	2020 and beyond	No	Yes	Assistant Prof, Department Head
MISXI	Foundation	Marmara Region	Between 2011-2019	Yes	Yes	Research Assistant., Quality Commission Member

3.2. Data Collection Tool

The interview form used in this study was adapted from that developed by Coşkun et al. (2020). Before implementing the prepared interview form, a pilot study was conducted with 2 faculty members. The data obtained from the pilot interviews were examined, and the interview form was finalized. Before proceeding with the data collection process, ethics committee approval was obtained from the "Sakarya University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee."

3.3. Data Collection

After determining the universities where the case study would be conducted, interview requests were created with the determined individuals. The individuals who would participate in the study were contacted via their institutional email addresses. An explanation was given about the purpose and content of the study, and an interview request was made. Interviews with individuals who wanted to participate in the study were planned to be held in their own institutional offices on a specified day and time. While the interviews were conducted face-to-face with 8 participants who agreed to participate in the study, 4 participants were interviewed via the Google Meet video-conferencing application. Before the interview, the researcher briefly introduced himself and provided brief information about the study's purpose, scope, and content. Prior to the interviews, permission for audio recording was requested, and the interviews were recorded with the consent of 11 participants, except for 1 participant. Interviews for which permission for audio recording could not be obtained were not included in the analyses to not affect the validity of the research.

The average interview duration was 1.5 hours (88 minutes); the most extended interview was completed in 2 hours and 25 minutes, and the shortest interview was completed in 42 minutes. The interviews were held over approximately 3 months, starting in the Spring semester of March 2022-2023.

3.4. Data Analysis

In the rationalist paradigm, the terms typically used to determine the degree to which a study's findings are solely a function of the respondents and the conditions of the study rather than the researcher's biases, motivations, interests, perspectives, etc., are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, respectively. (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). Guba and Lincoln (1982) proposed alternative concepts by suggesting that qualitative research should consider trustworthiness rather than validity and reliability. These concepts are grouped under four main headings: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Some strategies for applying these criteria have been adopted by many researchers (Cho and Trent, 2006; Herr and Anderson, 2015; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). In a study, one or more of these strategies should be used to check the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2003).

Credibility means that the research results match reality (Zohrabi, 2013). Detailed interviews were conducted with the participants to provide credibility criteria for the research. The interviews recorded with a voice recorder were transcribed using transcription software and were given as direct quotes. The obtained voice recordings were archived to be viewed again when necessary. Long-term interaction was provided with the transcribed interviews, and the following steps were followed.

- The audio recordings converted to text via software were listened to once and checked.
- Incorrect conversions in the text file were corrected.
- The text was simplified by deleting interview records that were not within the scope of the research.
- The documents were read 5-6 times to ensure familiarity with the text.

Transferability is the equivalent of the concept of generalization in quantitative research in qualitative research (Yıldırım and Seçkin, 2018). In quantitative research, generalization is achieved by showing that the data are collected from a sample representing the universe (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). There is no generalization purpose for qualitative research. Nevertheless, the research results should be explained in detail so that other researchers who examine the research can apply them in their study (Başkale, 2016). According to Erlandson et al. (1993), detailed descriptions and purposeful sampling methods are recommended to ensure the transferability of the results. A purposeful sampling method was selected for this research, and the results were described in direct quotation.

Guba and Lincoln (1982) suggested the concept of dependability in qualitative research instead of the concept of reliability, which indicates repeatability in quantitative research. Repeatability in qualitative research is impossible because of the constant change in events and phenomena. Accordingly, qualitative research does not pursue reliability as in quantitative research. Instead, qualitative research aims to accept variability and reflect this variability in the study in a consistent manner (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). If the procedures of previous case studies are not well documented, this may cause doubts about the reliability of the study (Aytaçlı, 2012). According to Yin (2003), a study should be

prepared to record the procedures performed and guide the researcher to ensure the repeatability of the research. Within the scope of the study, the following methods were carried out based on the relevant literature to ensure dependability (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

1. The research questions were clearly stated, and the steps followed were explained.
2. The research data were obtained using the interview form and presented with direct quotes.
3. The obtained data's ability to answer the research questions and the consistency of the results were constantly checked.
4. In the content analysis, code lists were created using a deductive approach based on the relevant literature. The researcher obtained a standard code by comparing the codes made at different times.
5. The codes obtained from the second researcher were compared; the codes with differences were examined, and a consensus was reached.
6. The codings were finalized based on the expert opinion.

In scientific research, results are expected to be objective and to avoid the subjective judgments of the researcher. However, complete objectivity is not possible in qualitative research, and the researcher has an influence. In qualitative research, the concept of confirmability, which is used instead of objectivity, is expected from the researcher to verify the results obtained with the data they collect constantly and to be able to provide a logical explanation to the reader (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). To meet the confirmability criterion within the scope of this research, the researcher attempted to reflect the participants' opinions objectively with an objective attitude. The data collection tools used in the study, data collection process, analysis phase, and codebook were described in detail and presented to the experts for review.

The categories and subcategories were created based on the study of Coşkun et al. (2020). The categories and subcategories created in line with the purpose of the research are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Category and Subcategory List

Category	Subcategory
Perceptions and perspectives on accreditation	The concept of accreditation
	The purpose of accreditation
	Accreditation is a fashion or quality
	The contribution of accreditation to continuous improvement
	Indicators of the best accreditation system
	Turkish Higher Education System
Accreditation of MIS programs	Information about the processes and steps to follow
	MIS accreditation preference criteria
	Information about ABET accreditation
	Assessment in line with ABET criteria (Deficient Criteria)
Problematic Areas and Benefits of Accreditation	Information about the cost of accreditation
	Institutional budget for accreditation
	The idea that accreditation is worth the high cost
	Obstacles to accreditation
	The effect of being a state or foundation university on the process
	Advantages of accreditation
	Difficulties and disadvantages of accreditation

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The MAXQDA 2022 package program was used to code the deciphered data and present the codes. The codes created within the scope of the research were counted once per document, and the code matrix scanner Excel output was prepared. The prepared tables are presented in each category.

Participants were asked to evaluate the awareness and knowledge levels of their faculty members, students, and administrators about accreditation and the general situation regarding the accreditation process on a 10-point scale. The median values of the responses of the 11 participants are presented in Table 3.

Participants stated that they have a high level of knowledge about the objective (8), process (9), and criteria (8) about accreditation. This indicates that the accreditation process is generally understood. The belief in the necessity of accreditation is relatively high (9). However, the belief that all accreditation criteria can be successfully implemented is lower (7). This situation reflects concerns about the difficulties of the process and the inadequacy of available resources. The average scores for the adequacy of resources (7) and expert staff (7) also support these concerns. Top management support was evaluated positively (8). This is an important factor for the successful implementation of the accreditation process. Curriculum adequacy (8) is considered to be at a reasonable level. In the questions aimed at assessing awareness

Table 3. Participants Rating

Questions	Median
Knowledge about the objective of accreditation	8
Knowledge about the accreditation process	9
Familiarity with accreditation criteria	8
Belief in all criteria to be realized	7
Belief in the necessity of accreditation	9
Sufficiency of resources for accreditation	7
Sufficiency of expert personnel for accreditation	7
Top management support	8
Curriculum adequacy	8
Independent management level	7
Qualified academics	8
Awareness of faculty members about accreditation	7
Knowledge of faculty members about accreditation	7
Awareness of students about accreditation	6
Students' knowledge about accreditation	5
Self-awareness about accreditation	9
Self-knowledge about accreditation	9
Awareness of managers about accreditation	8
Knowledge of managers about accreditation	8

and knowledge, it was evaluated that students had the lowest level of knowledge (5). The knowledge and awareness of the administrators (8,8) were assessed as higher than those of the faculty members in the department (7,7).

4.1. Descriptive Analysis of Categories

Category 1: Perceptions and Perspectives on Accreditation

Within the scope of the research purpose, prominent codes were determined in line with the questions asked to understand faculty members' perceptions and perspectives on accreditation.

The concept of "standardization" comes to the fore in response to the question of what accreditation means to you. The participant with code MISI interpreted this concept of standardization in terms of the quality process and expressed it as "*a quality process, a process of complying with standards.*" The participant with code MISIII similarly stated that "*this indicates the quality that comes with standardization*." Most participants interpreted what accreditation meant to them using expressions such as "providing standards, complying with standards, determining standards." The distribution of codes related to the purpose of the accreditation category by participants is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Code Distribution of the Purpose of Accreditation

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 11)	Percentage of Participants
Ensuring standards	6	54.5
Process management	4	36.3
Ensuring quality	4	36.3
Educational studies	3	27.2
Improvement	3	27.2

When the category of the purpose of the accreditation is examined, the prominent codes are "ensuring standards, process management, ensuring quality, educational studies, and improvement." Educational studies include "harmonization of the curriculum, aiming to provide contemporary education." It is thought that there are problems regarding how much accreditation serves these purposes in Türkiye today because "most of the criteria are not fully implemented." Participants believe that accreditation serves its purpose in universities managed by accreditation standards and is beneficial. The dominant idea is that since accreditation is new in the MIS field, determining the standards is more important.

The distribution of codes regarding the perception of whether accreditation is fashionable or not is presented in Table 5. Although none of the participants directly approached the accreditation process with a perception of fashion, the

dominant thought was that it could be evaluated for advertising purposes, but it is still needed. Table 6 was created to understand the comparative situation better.

Table 5. Code Distribution Regarding the Fashion Perception of Accreditation

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 11)	Percentage of Participants
Necessity	8	72.7
Quality	7	63.6
Fashion by perspective	6	54.5
Fashion	0	0.0

3 participants thought that accreditation would be fashionable from their perspective, but at the same time, they stated that it was a necessity. 5 participants also indicated that they believed that accreditation was necessary and that they had a perception of quality.

Table 6. Comparison of Fashion Perceptions About Accreditation

Code System	MISI	MISII	MISIII	MISIV	MISV	MISVI	MISVII	MISVIII	MISIX	MISX	MISXI
Fashion by perspective	√	√	√	√	√		√				
Necessity		√		√	√	√		√	√	√	√
Quality	√		√			√		√	√	√	√
Fashion											

In general, it was emphasized that accreditation is sometimes perceived as a fashion in Türkiye, that long-term efforts and labor are required for accreditation, that the accreditation process is complex, and that this process requires good work and effort. Therefore, the dominant thought is that accreditation is important for an institution, even if it is done for advertising purposes rather than fashion. There is a thought that accreditation is not a temporary fashion. The participant with the code MISI drew attention to the fact that it is important even if it is done for advertising purposes rather than for fashion perception with the statement, "So if they get that accreditation from good places, if it complies with its rules, even if they do it for advertising purposes, it means they are doing something right, they are working well, they are working on it." The participant with code MISIV made a different assessment for state and foundation universities with the statement, "*Actually, we can't think of it as a fashion perception because we are a state university. . . But I think foundation universities have such a concern. In foundation universities, there is both financial expectation and because they are concerned about bringing international students to their institutions." The participant with code MISIX stated, "It is more like a necessity than a fashion, like someone else has it and I don't. Because a student comes. I do the promotion and say we have accreditation. Then they go to another university and say that university X has accreditation. . . , after a while, this will become a necessity." The idea that it has become necessary for universities with student demands is dominant. The participant with code MISV stated, "So it can be called accreditation, or it can be in another way. It can be a certificate or a certificate of competence. I believe in the necessity of these, but as I said at the beginning, it should not be a fashion if these are realized by believing in their necessity and internalizing them.*" This situation draws attention to the implementation process of accreditation.

Table 7 presents the code distribution of participants' perceptions of accreditation's contribution to continuous improvement.

Table 7. Code Distribution of Participants' Perceptions of Accreditation's Contribution to Continuous Improvement

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 11)	Percentage of Participants
Yes	9	81.8
No	2	18.1

While 2 participants stated that accreditation does not contribute to continuous improvement, all others stated that accreditation positively contributes to continuous improvement. The participant with code MISII stated that an institution can remain at a certain level as long as specific accreditation criteria are met. Therefore, it cannot directly contribute to continuous improvement. The participant with code MISVII also thought there is no constant improvement because accredited institutions are not checked every year, and there is no continuous improvement because the criteria can be provided similarly during the re-evaluation process once they are met. The participants' statements with codes MISII and MISVII are as follows.

MISII: "*Well, it doesn't mean it will happen because it wants certain things and certain criteria. Once they meet those criteria, they can stay there. . . So, I am accredited. Let me maintain myself at this level. What about sustainability? Yes, as long as it maintains that level, but will it lead to improvement?*"

MISVII: "*So they give 5-year accreditation. If you get it, you'll stay like that for 5 years. You're not doing anything else. It doesn't make any improvements. . . you already think I provided it 5 years ago, and I am in the same situation again. I will provide it again. You cannot make improvements.*"

Participant MISIII, who thought that accreditation contributed to continuous improvement, said, "*It is beneficial because accreditation changes constantly. When accreditation changes, you will try to catch up with the times... Accreditation challenges you, provides control... accepts you, and accredits you but says, look, you have a deficiency here. At least someone says that the king is naked.*" This statement drew attention to the fact that the criteria of accreditation agencies are also updated, that they expect these updates from the institutions they will accredit and that they control the institutions they will accredit, and emphasized that continuous improvement is achieved thanks to these updates. Participant MISV drew attention to the relationship between accreditation and continuous improvement with this statement, "*. . . if you are already entering an accreditation process, it is like riding a bicycle. . . It is a process that you should not stop. You should constantly move forward, like a bicycle ride. Therefore, they support each other. Continuous improvement ensures accreditation. Accreditation requires continuous improvement. They create a cycle within themselves.*" The participant with code MISX emphasized the continuity of the accreditation process and touched upon its positive contribution to continuous improvement with the statement, "*I think it has critical contributions in terms of continuous improvement. . . It is similar to TQM, that is, continuity in total quality management, that is, it is not like saying, 'Okay, we are accredited at once, everything is finished,' but in the form of continuous improvement.*"

When the answers to the question of what indicators of the best accreditation system are examined, the prominent codes are "accreditation agency recognition, accreditation agency experience, and stakeholder contribution." "The internationality of the accreditation agency, accreditation agency image, accreditation agency guidance" constitute the codes related to the accreditation agency that determine a good accreditation system. The code related to the "accreditation agency recognition" stated by 5 participants consists of expressions such as worldwide recognition, international recognition, and awareness. The distribution of codes for the indicators of the best accreditation system is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Code Distribution of Criteria Determining the Indicators of the Best Accreditation System

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 11)	Percentage of Participants
Accreditation agency recognition	5	45.4
Accreditation agency experience	3	27.2
Stakeholder contribution	3	27.2
Accreditation agency image	2	18.1
Accreditation agency guidance	2	18.1
Meeting department requirements	2	18.1
Being international	2	18.1
Applicability of the criteria	1	9.0
Corporate culture	1	9.0
Leadership	1	9.0
Acceptance of graduates	1	9.0
Provided collaboration network	1	9.0
Quality-oriented standards	1	9.0
Independence of Universities	1	9.0
Attitude of top management	1	9.0

The codes that stand out in evaluating the Turkish higher education system's compliance with accreditation criteria are "capacity planning problems, limitations, differences between universities, and failure to fully implement the criteria." Table 9 presents the distribution of codes related to the Turkish higher education system category according to the participants.

The statements that make up the code "Capacity planning problems" generally include an insufficient number of teaching staff and the distribution of quotas not being in line with the physical conditions of institutions. The participant with the code MISV noted that the limited capacity could not meet the increased quotas with the statement, "*I request 40 students every year. They send me 70 students every year, and then the students rightfully complain and complain.*" The participant with code MISVII drew attention to the problems caused by the increased quotas in computer laboratories. The statement, "*Currently, our computer laboratory has a capacity of 45 people. CoHE gives us a quota of 65. With the horizontal and vertical transfer international students, my first-year student count is 150; there is such a distorted*

Table 9. Code Distribution Regarding Turkish Higher Education System

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 11)	Percentage of Participants
Capacity planning problems	6	54.5
Limitations	5	45.4
Failure to fully implement the criteria	4	36.3
Differences between universities	4	36.3
Insufficient resources	3	27.2
Not ready for accreditation	1	9.0
Level of awareness	2	18.1
Advantages of Bologna studies	1	9.0

quota structure. And these 150 people are not the remaining students. They are students taking a course for the first time." The participant with code MISVI stated, " *CoHE is also responsible for the teaching staff and our technical needs at work. . . I need teaching staff, the number of students per teaching staff is high.*", emphasizing that the number of students per teaching staff is high due to the increase in quotas. The participant with code MISIX, who works at a foundation university, stated that the accreditation criteria are compatible with the Turkish higher education system, considering a national accreditation agency.

Category 2: Management Information Systems Accreditation

Prominent codes were determined in line with the questions to understand faculty members' accreditation knowledge levels, MIS departments' accreditation agency preference evaluations, and their perspectives on ABET accreditation. It was observed that all participants had general information about the accreditation process. Table 10 presents the code distribution of accreditation criteria suitable for the MIS program.

Table 10. Code Distribution of Accreditation Criteria for MIS Programs

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 11)	Percentage of Participants
Interdisciplinary structure	6	54.5
Evaluation different from social sciences	4	36.3
General accreditation preference criteria are valid	3	27.7
Processes and criteria	3	27.2
Mastery of the MIS field	1	9.0
MIS awareness	2	18.1

When the answers to the accreditation criteria to be preferred in the accreditation of MIS programs are examined, the prominent codes are as follows: "interdisciplinary structure, evaluation different from social sciences, processes, and criteria." 3 participants stated that there are no different criteria to consider when evaluating MIS programs and that "general accreditation preference criteria are valid." Most participants evaluated the accreditation process by drawing attention to the interdisciplinary structure of MIS programs. The participant with code MISIV drew attention to the fact that MIS departments in Türkiye are located under different units with the statement, "*As you know, we are in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, the Faculty of Applied Sciences, and the Faculty of Business Administration... However, this management information system may not provide all the features of the faculty it is in. There needs to be an accreditation place that sets the standard for this. . .* " The participant with code MISXI stated, "*. . . it is more logical to choose an interdisciplinary institution. Due to the structure of MIS, if we choose an institution that is completely focused on engineering, then we may be subject to a very harsh evaluation process, and in fact, we may receive some unnecessary criticism.*" Similarly, the interdisciplinary structure of MIS programs was emphasized by the participant with the code MISIX. "*As we said, we do not have a distinction such as completely social sciences or science, that is, since it is an interdisciplinary department. . . maybe different things can be done about application-based courses, etc. specifically for MIS.*" When the statements representing the code "evaluation differently from social sciences" were examined, it was stated that it would not be right to evaluate it only under the social sciences, again emphasizing its interdisciplinary structure. The participant with the code MISXI stated, "*. . . if an institution that is completely communicative and focused on social sciences is chosen, some points may be missed there.*" and drew attention to the problems that may arise because MIS programs are not evaluated one-sidedly and this one-sided perspective. The MISVII branch participant also stated the relationship between MIS departments and engineering with the statement, "*For example, MIS should not be considered under management. . . It is something that should be evaluated together with industrial engineering.*", again thinking that it would not be right to evaluate only the social sciences.

The first question about the ABET accreditation agency was intended to measure the participants' knowledge about it. In the answers of the majority of the participants, the name of the ABET accreditation agency was heard, but there was no information about the processes and criteria. Participants stated this situation with the expression, "*I heard*

about it, but I don't have much of an idea. I heard about it, but I don't know the details." 3 participants stated that they had no information about ABET before, using the expression, "*I heard about it for the first time, no I haven't.*" It was observed that participants with codes MISII and MISVII had information about the processes and criteria for ABET accreditation. The participants' distribution of the codes regarding ABET accreditation agency knowledge is presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Distribution of Codes Related to ABET Accreditation Agency Information

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 11)	Percentage of Participants
Partially (I heard, but I have no information)	6	54.5
Yes	2	18.1
No	3	27.2

Due to their low level of knowledge about the ABET accreditation agency, they were first given information about the ABET and then explained the information systems program accreditation criteria. After this information, they were asked to evaluate the MIS undergraduate program in which they were working according to the ABET accreditation criteria. Responses were received for each criterion, and coding was performed for criteria found to be missing. The codes created for the criteria found to be missing in the program evaluation according to the ABET criteria are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Code Distribution for Missing Criteria according to the ABET Criteria

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 11)	Percentage of Participants
Institutional support	5	45.4
Facilities	5	45.4
Student outcomes	3	27.2
Faculty	3	27.2
Curriculum	0	0.0
Program educational objectives	0	0.0
Continuous improvement	0	0.0
Students	0	0.0

When Table 12 is examined, in the coded structure created in line with the 8 criteria presented by the ABET accreditation agency, the criteria the participants found deficient are "institutional support, facilities, student outcomes, and faculty." The participants stated that they had no deficiencies in the 3 uncoded situations (MISII, MISV, MISIX). For the difficulties experienced in the institutional support criterion, the participant with code MISVII was compared with a national accreditation agency with the statement, "*Departments and universities are not very comfortable with institutional support*". Moreover, stated that due to the centralized structure of the Turkish higher education system, the deficiency in this criterion could be understood in the evaluation of the national accreditation agency, but that there would be difficulties in international accreditation. The participant with code MISVII also emphasized the faculty professional development support heading in the institutional support criterion and said, "*. . . there is no professional development support. Maybe this has become clearer in the last few years, or I have become more aware. I do not know, but I believe academics are left alone in terms of professional development support. My personal development is entirely dependent on my efforts.*" The participant with code MISIV also noted the limited budget opportunities and said, "*We do not have a program budget or financial support. We only have a faculty budget for the program budget and financial support. Our faculty budget is also limited.*"

It was stated that the facilities criterion could not be met due to the generally increased quotas. The participant with code MISIV drew attention to the fact that the laboratories could be insufficient with the statement, "*We have 2 laboratories. . . 60 people each. Sometimes, students cannot fit into intensive courses. For this reason, we conduct those courses in groups.*" The participant with code MISVI noted that the laboratories could be insufficient with the statement, "*The facilities are always insufficient for the teachers. No situation you can say is sufficient because this is related to technology. Do we have a laboratory for the metaverse? No. Do I have a special laboratory for Unity? No, I don't.*" It was noted that they have a laboratory in the field of big data and that it works very well. However, other laboratories are needed for subjects that fall within the scope of MIS programs, and the importance of laboratories for students and technology development due to the structure of MIS programs was emphasized.

Category 3: Problematic Areas and Benefits of Accreditation

Prominent codes were determined based on the answers to the questions about problematic areas of accreditation and the benefits of accreditation.

3 of the interviewed participants stated that they did not have any information about accreditation costs. 1 participant,

without relevant information, worked at an institution that did not have accreditation studies based on their faculty or department. The other 2 participants worked in the MIS department of a foundation university. 4 participants who were informed about the cost evaluated the international and national accreditation by comparing them and stated that international accreditation is more costly. The participant with code MISI expressed this situation as "*Although it is more costly and takes longer, international accreditation has very important advantages.*" In the answers given to the question "Do you have a budget to cover this cost?", 10 participants stated that they had a budget, while 1 participant working at a foundation university stated that they did not have the necessary budget. When the answers to whether accreditation is worth the high costs are examined, the prominent codes are "worth the cost, varies by accreditation agency, varies by the institution to be accredited." None of the participants think that it is not worth the relevant costs.

Table 13 presents the distribution of codes by participants on the question of whether accreditation is worth the high costs.

Table 13. Code Distribution Regarding High Accreditation Costs

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 11)	Percentage of Participants
Worth the cost	5	45.4
Varies by accreditation agency	4	36.3
Varies by the institution to be accredited	2	18.1
Not worth	0	0.0

The participant with code MISXI, who has a value mindset without any restrictions, stated, "*Absolutely value. . . . so many things have changed in the institution and department that if a university wants to develop, it needs to go through these processes. In other words, it deserves the benefits it will provide.*" Although it causes high costs, it has been evaluated as valuable. There is a belief that it is especially necessary for developing universities. Participants with the code MISVI drew attention to the importance of human capital with the statement, ". . . *this is a much more important issue than money. In other words, human capital is significant. You are training people here. I am speaking as an educator. In other words, when it comes to education, everything else is unimportant. . . We said accreditation is needed. For education, for quality education.*", and emphasized the importance of the control mechanism that accreditation will provide and stated its importance in ensuring quality education. Under the code that "varies by accreditation agency", there are topics such as the benefits the accreditation will provide in the international arena, its role in attracting quality students, and the convenience it will provide in student exchanges. For example, the idea that national accreditation would not offer these benefits and would not be worth the high costs to be paid was expressed. The participant with code MISVII expressed this situation in the cost calculation and made for a national accreditation agency in the following way: "*It is not worth it at the moment. I do not see much value in accreditation.*" The participant with code MISIII emphasized the importance of international accreditation and stated that the returns of accreditation would be much more than the costs to be endured with the statement: "*For example, if you start accepting students from abroad, it would be good. If you start raising your level, these are all the returns, then you can earn much more.*" The code that "varies by the institution to be accredited" includes the idea that the department is not ready for this process, there are deficiencies in basic quality processes, and the budget that the institution will allocate for accreditation is not worth the returns of accreditation for the institution. The participant with code MISVIII stated, "*If I am still at the beginning of the road, I need to learn to walk a little earlier. I need to go through quality processes. I need to improve the process. Maybe we need to work with more national accreditation companies.*" and emphasized that the institution must fulfill basic quality requirements and that preparing for the process before bearing accreditation costs is important.

When the answers given to the question of what are the biggest obstacles to accreditation are examined, the codes that emerged are as follows: "budget, insufficient resources, lack of expert personnel, unconsciousness/unawareness, lack of top management support, will, limitations, established corporate culture, anxiety." Table 14 presents the distribution of codes regarding obstacles to participant accreditation.

Most participants see the "budget" as one of the biggest obstacles to accreditation. The participant with code MISVII drew attention to the dependency on the state in terms of the budget. The statement, ". . . *the state can only provide services to the extent of the budget it provides, and that is an obstacle.*" The participant with code MISIV similarly drew attention to the dependency on the state and stated that the limited budget should be allocated to priority areas, and expressed this situation: "If we evaluate it according to the university we are at, for example, I think our university's priority. . . the budget should be allocated for building construction. . . we do not have a building. . . the university is newly established. New faculties are being opened. New research centers are being opened."

The prominent code "insufficiency of resources" consists of a lack of academic and administrative staff and physical infrastructure deficiencies. The participant with code MISVI stated that "there is a concern whether we will be sufficient

Table 14. Code Distribution Regarding Obstacles to Accreditation

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 11)	Percentage of Participants
Budget	5	45.4
Insufficent resource	4	36.3
Unconsciousness/unawareness	3	27.2
Lack of expert personnel	3	27.2
Limitations	2	18.1
lack of top management support	2	18.1
Will	2	18.1
Established corporate culture	1	9.0
Anxiety	1	9.0

both in terms of human resources and technically, that is, whether we will be sufficient both as faculty members and technically" and expressed their situation of not being ready for the accreditation process as an institution and their concerns about issues that will create obstacles during the process. The participant with code MISII drew attention to the lack of administrative staff and said, "We have to handle it with our resources, our personnel resources," and mentioned that as a state university, they cannot make independent decisions in hiring new staff.

Another prominent code is the "unawareness/unconsciousness" code, which describes not having enough information about accreditation processes and their importance. The participant with code MISXI emphasized the importance of stakeholders and awareness in completing the process. The statement, "If there is no desire in the institution to improve such things or if the management does not create this desire, I think it is difficult. Because again, at some point, the people who will make everything happen are the people in the departments, that is, the faculty members there." The participant with code MISIV evaluated the budget as the first of the biggest obstacles to accreditation. They expressed the second biggest obstacle as "unawareness, that is, lack of awareness."

Another issue that will create an obstacle in the accreditation process is the code "lack of expert personnel," which indicates the lack of administrative or academic personnel who will deal with the process and have knowledge about the process. The participant with the code MISIX stated, "An expert staff will definitely... that is, someone who is knowledgeable about this subject" and drew attention to the workload brought by accreditation, indicating the need for the employment of expert personnel who will only deal with the accreditation process in both reducing the workload and controlling the processes. The participant with code MISI stated, "We were lucky. We had 3 dedicated, expert, and qualified personnel with high English proficiency, and there were 3 people in the dean's office. All three of them worked together and completed this process by working in harmony." Moreover, emphasized the importance of expert personnel and stated that completing the process would be difficult if they were lacking.

When the answers given to the question of how being a state university affect the process are examined, the codes of "resource limitation, flexibility in decision-making" contain negative evaluations, while the codes of "having qualified students, high competence and proficiency" express the positive contribution of being a public university. The distribution of codes regarding the effect of being a state university on the process according to the participants is presented in Table 15.

Table 15. Code Distribution Regarding the Effect of Being a State University on the Process

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 7)	Percentage of Participants
Resource limitations	5	71.4
Flexibility in decision-making	2	28.5
Having qualified students	1	14.2
High competence and proficiency	1	14.2

The participant with code MISIV stated, "*The financial resources of the state university are limited. The prices given by the accreditation agencies I have examined are $3,000 and $5,500 for just one department. It is not possible for us to give it.*" This draws attention to the obstacles that the budget will cause and indicates that the resources of the state university are limited. Similarly, the participant with code MISVI stated, "*Therefore, of course, we can also say something about financial resources and their management. We are a bit limited in those matters, state universities. They are all like that.*"

Regarding the code "Flexibility in decision making," the participant with code MISVI stated, "Of course, we cannot write our own goals. We cannot do that, especially about student conditions and the number of students. Our SWOT analyses are not very useful. We are very dependent, we are dependent on process management in state universities." This indicates that there is no authority to make decisions in line with the analyses conducted and no independent

decision-making authority. The participant coded MISVIII stated that ". . . *compared to foundation universities, state universities have more qualified students and that competence and proficiency are higher in state universities..*".

The 3 interviewed participants work in an MIS department at a foundation university. The "resource limitation" code that emerged regarding the impact of being a state university on the process also emerged similarly in the foundation university evaluation. The participant with code MISX expressed the following response: "*The staff and opportunities at state universities are very extensive, but this is not the case here.*" The codes "Taking quick action and quick access to top management" are the codes that express the advantages of being a foundation university. The participant with code MISIX expressed this situation as follows: ".. *our university is also a corporate university, but things do not work as slowly as in the state ones, it allows us to take quicker action.*" The distribution of the codes regarding the impact of being a foundation university on the process is presented in Table 16.

Table 16. Code Distribution Regarding the Effect of Being a Foundation University on the Process

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 3)	Percentage of Participants
Resource limitation	2	66.6
Quick action	1	33,3
Quick access to top management	1	33.3

When the answers to the advantages of accreditation are examined, the codes that emerge with equal frequency are "increasing quality, providing recognition, providing improvement, cooperation network."

Table 17 presents the distribution of codes regarding the advantages/benefits of accreditation according to the participants. One prominent code, "increasing quality," concerns the issues of increasing the quality of research, education, and training and attracting quality students and teaching staff.

Table 17. Code Distribution Regarding the Advantages and Benefits of Accreditation

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 11)	Percentage of Participants
Increasing quality	7	63.6
Providing standards	7	63.6
Providing recognition	7	63.6
Providing improvement	7	63.6
Collaboration network	7	63.6
Process management	5	45.4
Providing prestige	2	18.1
Documentation and accessibility	2	18.1
Student exchange	2	18.1
Increasing competition	1	9.0

The participant with code MISI stated the situation by saying, "Both the quality of education and research is increasing." The participant with code MISVIII emphasized the change in the quality of education by evaluating it with the change in the curriculum and expressed this situation: "... *here is the change in the curriculum; the quality of education is increasing*." *Another prominent code is the code "providing improvement.*" The participant with code MISIII drew attention to the accreditation criteria and emphasized that it provides an improvement in many areas, and expressed this situation as "*Accreditation, by the way, means living like a human being. In other words, there are certain criteria. It says don't living in such a cramped campus, for example.*" The participant with code MISV evaluated it with continuous improvement and said, "*Accreditation requires continuous improvement; they create a cycle within themselves.*" The participant with code MISI stated that the accreditation process brings improvement with the statement ... it may force us to develop and improve ourselves." The code "providing recognition," which was clearly expressed by the participants, was evaluated as national or international according to the accreditation agencies. Participant MISIII emphasized the importance of international accreditation and stated, "*There is also this in accreditation, for example, when you apply for a master's degree, you need to explain your transcript. The student needs to explain. Some documents are sent from here, and some are received from there, but when you are accredited, it is already clear what it is. Especially if they are accredited by the same institution, the other party provides something amazing. That's why I emphasized global.*" Another prominent code is the "providing standards" code, which refers to the provision of accepted and required criteria. Participant MISVIII drew attention to the effort to provide the necessary criteria and expressed this situation as, "*When we consider the sub-divisions of accreditation processes, there is a theme related to each process, and there is an effort to meet a relevant standard in each process.*"

When the answers to the question of the disadvantages of accreditation are examined, the prominent codes are

"workload, difficulty in documenting, following the processes, bearing the cost." Table 18 presents the distribution of the codes regarding the disadvantages of accreditation according to the participants.

Table 18. Code Distribution Regarding Disadvantages/Difficulties of Accreditation

Code System	Number of Participants (out of 11)	Percentage of Participants
Workload	6	54.5
Difficulty in documenting	4	36.3
Following the processes	3	27.2
Bearing the cost	2	18.1
Pushing educational institutions' resources	1	9.0
Seeing it as the ultimate goal	1	9.0
Cultural differences	1	9.0
Resistance to change	1	9.0
Eliminating differences	1	9.0
Lack of a compatible team	1	9.0
Long-lasting process	1	9.0

Most participants see "workload" as a significant disadvantage. The participant with code MISVII evaluated the time and effort required for accreditation with the statement, "*I can't say much in general, but it puts a burden on the department, faculty members spend time on accreditation instead of the time they should spend on students. These are disadvantages, and they cause excessive load.*" The participant with code MISII similarly emphasized the situation that the process will cause with the statement, "*Maybe it will cause boredom as workload.*" The participant with code MISX also stated the problem with the statement, "*Workload, there is no other disadvantage. . .* "

Another code that expresses the disadvantage of accreditation is the code that describes the situation related to the process and ensures that the work and processes are recorded and can be accessed whenever desired. Regarding this code, expressed as "difficulty in documentation," the participant with code MISIII emphasized the difficulty that the recording process will create by saying, "*Writing a lot of reports, writing reports, and trying to explain things.*" The participant with code MISIX stated "*Paperwork, writing work, I think documentation is the biggest thing*", while the participant with code MISX noted the situation similarly, "*Just a lot of paperwork*".

5. DISCUSSION

The combination of information and communication technology (ICT) developments and global organizational changes has resulted in an international division of labor. As economies integrate into the new knowledge economy, industrialization increasingly depends on developing more complex ICT. There is now a greater need for a highly skilled and technologically educated workforce (Sanyal and Martin, 2007). Socio-economic and cultural transformations have put pressure on the system focus of education to shift from quantitative expansion to quality-oriented expansion (Sahney et al., 2004). Globalization, in turn, has created the need to facilitate the comparability of educational standards. These developments require adopting a typical competence structure and comparable systems for quality assurance (Hernes and Martin, 2008). Accreditation, defined as verifying compliance with specific standards by an independent institution, plays an important role here.

This study aims to examine the perceptions and perspectives of faculty members working in MIS departments regarding accreditation. The analysis of the interviews conducted with 11 faculty members working in the MIS department reveals important findings regarding the accreditation process. According to the study results, most faculty members consider accreditation and standardization together. Adelman and Silver (1990) defined accreditation as a centuries-old and voluntary process that aims to guarantee standards in schools and higher education. When examined as a process, it is expressed by many researchers as the verification of compliance with specific standards by an independent institution (Eaton, 2012; Van Berkel and Wijnen, 2010; Bruening et al., 2002; Aktan and Gencel, 2010; Erkuş, 2009; Chowdhury et al., 2013). While faculty members evaluate the primary purpose of accreditation as ensuring standards, they also draw attention to the process management associated with it. Alaskar et al. (2019) defined the accreditation process as actions implemented by academic staff and senior administrators that lead to specific results or outcomes. Institutional accreditation processes include standards set by accrediting bodies that encourage many activities to demonstrate compliance with measurable criteria within an institution and its programs (Alaskar et al., 2019). While the faculty members participating in the research provide the standards that accreditation will bring, they believe that process management should also be carried out. Research is being conducted on modeling, implementing, and improving business processes in higher education (Thomas et al., 2017; Ahmad et al., 2007; Seeman et al., 2006; Balzer, 2020). Menzli et al. (2019) investigated the relationship between business process modeling and quality by

focusing on accreditation processes in higher education. Bittick (2003) stated that the accreditation process provides an opportunity to look deeply into the entire process and solve problems that have not been noticed for a long time. Faculty members generally interpret the purpose of accreditation as described in the literature.

Considering the recent interest in accreditation, especially in Türkiye, whether accreditation is regarded as a temporary fashion constitutes an important research question. Accreditation is a deep-rooted process that has been used for many years to provide quality assurance. Academicians have stated that the first period in the historical development of accreditation began with the establishment of the University of the State of New York in 1784 as a board of King's College (now Columbia University) in New York City (Harcleroad 1980 and Wilkins 1959 as cited in Alstete, 2007). Eaton (2012) stated that the roots of accreditation date back to the end of the 19th century. It has become an important tool for the quality assurance of higher education institutions, especially in the United States. Although accreditation has deep roots in some countries, higher education accreditation studies in Türkiye began in 1994 with the application of some engineering departments for ABET accreditation. For accreditation to serve its purposes, a long-term quality assurance mechanism is needed. Most faculty members who participated in the research consider it a necessity or need for quality, although it is sometimes perceived as a fashion in Türkiye. It can be said that the faculty members have a general awareness of the contribution of accreditation to the quality of education and continuous improvement.

When evaluating the success of a good accreditation system, faculty members prioritize the recognition of the accreditation agency and the experience of the accreditation agency. Another critical issue is that stakeholders support and contribute to the process. The primary purpose of this research is to examine the perceptions and perspectives of stakeholders whose contributions to the process are of great importance in obtaining an idea about the applicability and sustainability of the accreditation process. The findings revealed that faculty members perceive that compliance with standards will be achieved and quality education will be achieved with accreditation. Along with the idea that the recognition that accreditation provides will bring cooperation, there is also the idea that accreditation increases the prestige of departments and will positively attract students. The perspective on the benefits of accreditation is parallel to many studies in the literature (Roller et al., 2003; Bitter, 2014; Wilson-Hail et al., 2019; Semerci et al., 2021; Alpaydın and Topal, 2022; Bougherira and Elasmar, 2023; Mady et al. 2023; Ito et al., 2024). According to the research results of Wilson-Hail et al. (2019), faculty members believe that the national accreditation process is important for status and prestige. Bitter (2014) concluded that faculty members believe that it increases the reputation of their programs in the eyes of their stakeholders. Bougherira and Elasmar (2023) found that faculty members have perceptions that it positively affects teaching and learning. The research findings also revealed that faculty members have some perceptions about the difficulties of the accreditation process.

Faculty members perceive intense effort is required to meet accreditation criteria and manage the process. They stated that the documentation and evidence creation processes, in particular, increase workload. This finding parallels the literature on the applicability and implementation of the accreditation process. According to Alstete (2004), the fact that most faculty members do not expect to be involved in tasks that will facilitate the accreditation process causes a contradiction between faculty expectations and accreditation needs and processes. Campbell and Rozsnyai (2002) stated that although they believe in the staff monitoring and review process, the combination of regional, specialized, and state reviews sometimes hinders teaching and research. Again, in the study of Wilson-Hail et al. (2019), faculty members think that workload is a disadvantage unless they are recognized for their work. In addition, the bureaucratic process of accreditation and the inadequacy of the necessary resources prevent this process from being effectively conducted. Shaiban (2024) emphasized that the accreditation process requires faculty members' effort and may cause stress. According to the research findings, the biggest obstacles to accreditation were expressed by faculty members as insufficient budget and resources. The process of obtaining initial accreditation and then periodically renewing it is generally considered time- and resource-intensive (Hegji, 2014). In the Campbell and Rozsnyai (2002) study, it is thought that the accreditation process is expensive but valuable because it provides an opportunity for most schools to review their work and ensure that they meet the accreditation criteria. Over seventy percent of the Mandy et al. (2023) survey respondents agreed that resources invested in AACSB accreditation will pay off in the long term. When asked whether the cost was worth it, no faculty member responded that it was not. Faculty members believe that evaluations should be performed differently depending on the accrediting agency or institution to be accredited. Considering that the benefits of accreditation are related to the competence of the accrediting agency, it can be considered an important constraint.

Another question the research seeks to answer is how the accreditation process is viewed regarding MIS departments and how readiness status is evaluated in line with the ABET criteria. Faculty members expressed their opinions that MIS departments should be evaluated differently from social sciences departments, considering their interdisciplinary structure. ABET establishes commissions to accredit programs in different disciplines and evaluates the process in line

with field-specific criteria. The fact that accreditation is relatively new in Türkiye, the few MIS departments accredited by international accreditation agencies, and the fact that there are no MIS departments with ABET accreditation also emerge as factors affecting the awareness of ABET. While only 2 of the faculty members who participated in the research stated that they had information about the ABET accreditation agency, 3 faculty members indicated that they had no information at all. 6 faculty members said they had heard about the organization but did not have any information. Faculty members believe that there are deficiencies mostly in institutional support and facilities criteria. ABET's expectation from the institutional support criteria is that "Institutional support and leadership should be sufficient to ensure the quality and continuity of the program." The facilities criterion is that "Classrooms, offices, laboratories, and related equipment should be sufficient to support the achievement of student outcomes and provide an atmosphere conducive to learning" (ABET, 2024). When evaluated together with the criticisms received from the Turkish Higher Education System, it can be concluded that the facilities are inadequate due to capacity planning problems. In their research in Türkiye, Semerci et al. (2021) concluded that institutional deficiencies are one of the obstacles to accreditation.

6. CONCLUSION

The research findings show that faculty members have a positive perspective on the accreditation process, which aligns with concepts such as quality education, standardization, continuous improvement, and process management. However, difficulties such as documentation, lack of awareness, resistance, failure to perform accreditation by its purpose, difficulty following the processes, and the workload imposed on faculty members have been identified. Faculty members have expressed their views on the issue of evaluating MIS departments differently from social sciences, considering their interdisciplinary structure. However, the scarcity of MIS departments accredited by international accreditation agencies and the absence of a MIS department evaluated with field-specific criteria affect faculty members' awareness of this issue. When this finding in the research results and the lack of awareness of ABET accreditation are evaluated together, this research reveals the importance of ABET accreditation, which assesses MIS programs using program-specific criteria. In this respect, this research can be considered as a guide.

The inadequacy of financial resources required to meet the standards is a significant obstacle to the sustainability of the process. The higher education system can support infrastructure development, laboratory equipment, and technical needs related to university education. It can control the increase in quotas by taking into consideration capacities. Long-term quality policies should be established at the higher education level to prevent accreditation from being seen as temporary and to create sustainable quality assurance systems. By adopting a quality-based education model, accreditation processes can be ensured as a permanent quality assurance tool in higher education. Special funds can be established for universities to provide the necessary resources for accreditation. These funds will provide valuable support, especially for universities that have difficulty meeting the workload and cost of the process. Financial support can be provided to universities to reduce the workload of the accreditation process and to encourage faculty members. This can facilitate process management by meeting the need for additional resources, especially during the documentation and evidence-creation stages. Policymakers can make the process more accessible by offering state incentives to cover accreditation costs. Supporting investments in tools that digitize documentation and evidence-creation processes can reduce faculty members' workload and increase process efficiency. Such tools can simplify and streamline accreditation preparations.

Accreditation agencies can organize regular introductory meetings, training, and guidance studies to increase their recognition in universities and departments. They can also create awareness and trust among faculty members and other stakeholders, mainly by providing informative materials about accreditation's contribution to the quality of education. Organizations' guidance services in the documentation and evidence-creation processes are essential to ease the difficulties of the accreditation process and reduce faculty members' anxiety about the process.

Future research can evaluate the efficiency of accreditation processes by examining their long-term effects on education quality, student satisfaction, and graduate success. It can analyze the effects of accreditation on the increase in education quality and universities' overall performance. Such studies can provide concrete data on the necessity of accreditation. Conducting qualitative and quantitative research to deeply understand faculty members' perceptions of accreditation will contribute to implementing the accreditation process more actively and effectively. Studies need to be conducted within and with accreditation agencies to examine the factors affecting faculty members' motivation during the accreditation process and to determine the factors that reduce the workload in the process. These studies can make the process more efficient and participatory for faculty members. Studies can be conducted to analyze the effectiveness of the contributions of students, sector representatives, and faculty members to the accreditation process. Such studies will provide a deeper understanding of the effects of stakeholder support on the success of accreditation. Comparative

analyses can be conducted between different universities and departments to assess the effects of accreditation on the recognition and prestige of universities at national and international levels. These studies can reveal the effects of accreditation processes on attracting students, graduate employment, and sectoral collaboration with more concrete data.

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