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STUDENTS' PROBLEMS AND SOLUTION RECOMMENDATIONS ACCORDING TO THE STUDENTS OF THE NON-THESIS MASTER'S PROGRAMS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION¹

Oktay ALKUŞ ²

Abstract

Students of the non-thesis master's program in public administration experience various problems in their education. They are waiting for a solution to their problems. The question of what the problems are and how to solve them is the subject of this research. The study aimed to identify program problems and solutions based on the perceptions of students enrolled in a non-thesis master's program of public administration where the research was conducted. The study was conducted descriptively using the qualitative research method of case design descriptive analysis, and a single case design. The non-probabilistic sampling method of purposeful sampling was used. The participant group was made up of public administration students enrolled in the non-thesis master's program. Data were gathered through observation, interviews, and document analysis. Semi-structured interview questions were used to collect data. The research data were coded in the Maxqda 2022 program, and categories based on codes and themes based on categories were identified. According to the participants, the problems experienced in education in the non-thesis master's program arise from two main factors. One of them is the problems arising from the students and the other is the problems arising from the applications in the non-thesis master's program.

Keywords : Public Administration, Non-Thesis Master's Student, Education, Problem, Suggestion.

Jel Classifications : A2, A22, A220.

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² Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Aksaray Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, oktayalkus@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0001-5046-9366.

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KAMU YÖNETİMİ TEZSİZ YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMI ÖĞRENCİLERİNE GÖRE ÖĞRENİMDE YAŞANAN SORUNLAR VE ÖNERİLER

Öz

Kamu yönetimi tezsiz yüksek lisans programı öğrencileri eğitimlerinde çeşitli sorunlar yaşamaktadır. Sorunlarına çözüm beklemetedirler. Sorunların neler olduğu ve nasıl çözüleceği sorusu bu araştırmanın konusudur. Araştırma, araştırmanın yürütüldüğü kamu yönetimi anabilim dalı tezsiz yüksek lisans programındaki öğrencilerin görüşleri doğrultusunda programda yaşanan sorunları ve çözümünü için önerileri belirlemeyi amaçlamıştır. Araştırma, nitel araştırma yöntemi, olgu bilim, tekli durum deseniyle betimsel olarak yürütülmüştür. Olasılıklı olmayan örnekleme türlerinden biri olan amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi seçilmiştir. Katılımcı grubunu tezsiz yüksek lisans programına kayıtlı kamu yönetimi anabilim dalı öğrencilerinden belirlenen öğrenciler oluşturmuştur. Veri toplama aracı olarak gözlem ve görüşmeyle doküman incelemesinden yararlanılmıştır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme sorularıyla veriler toplanmıştır. Araştırmada elde edilen veriler Maxqda 2022 programında kodlanmış, kodlara dayalı kategorilere ve kategorilere dayalı temalara ulaşılmıştır. Katılımcılara göre bölümdeki öğrenimde yaşanan sorunlar iki temel etkenden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bunlardan biri öğrencilerin kendilerinden kaynaklanan sorunlar ve diğeri ise tezsiz yüksek lisans programındaki uygulamalardan kaynaklanan sorunlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler : Kamu Yönetimi, Tezsiz Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi, Öğrenim, Sorun, Öneri.

Jel Sınıflandırması : A2, A22, A220.

INTRODUCTION

Universities have administrative, academic, and financial autonomy, as well as institutional legal personality, which is guaranteed by the constitution and related laws (Aras, 2004: 11). One of the things that university students appreciate the most is when the lecturer discusses ideas with them (Göze, 1990: VII). The ongoing issues with universities are the lack of collaboration between faculties, the inadequate research and publications, and the difficulty of participating in university administration (Kaya, 1984: 279-284). Universities' primary functions are to maintain close ties with both scientific research and business life, generate knowledge, and train community leaders whose scientific findings will be effective in shaping the social and economic future of society (Kaya, 1993: 160).

The master's program is based on four-year undergraduate education and is known as science specialization, master's, higher engineering, and higher architecture. Its purpose is to reveal the outcomes of specific education and research (Yükseköğretim Kanunu, 1981). Master's programs are divided into two types: those with a thesis and those without. These programs can essentially be introduced as daytime education. However, non-thesis master's programs are typically offered in the form of evening education or distance education, with high student contribution being used to pay faculty members. The Council of Higher Education determines the fees to be paid based on the administrative board of the higher education institution's recommendation. As an allowance, a certain percentage of student fees is transferred to scientific research projects, provided that it is greater than 30%. The remainder is set aside for additional course and examination fees not to exceed ten times the additional course fee, as well as overtime pay for administrative staff assigned to the program (Varcan, 2021: 269-270).

Enrollment in a non-thesis master's program is possible without having to take the Academic Personnel and Postgraduate Education Entrance Exam (ALES/ Akademik Personel ve Lisansüstü Eğitimi Giriş Sınavı). The non-thesis master's program cannot have fewer than thirty credits and sixty ECTS in total. It includes at least ten courses as well as a term project course. It takes at least two and

no more than three semesters to complete. The non-thesis master's program gives the student knowledge of the field. It demonstrates the practical application of newly acquired knowledge. A non-thesis master's diploma is awarded to students who have completed their courses and term project.

The non-thesis master's diploma is awarded to students enrolled in the master's with thesis program at the request of the student whose thesis is rejected, provided that he meets the requirements of the non-thesis master's program. The same is true for students who have a bachelor's degree and are enrolled in proficiency in arts programs but have not been successful in their thesis. Again, if the necessary conditions are met and a request is made, a non-thesis master's diploma is awarded to students who are unable to complete their courses, cannot complete their thesis, or are unsuccessful in their doctorate thesis (Lisansüstü Eğitim ve Öğretim Yönetmeliği, 2016).

The eleventh development plan of Turkey states that diversity in higher education will be expanded, higher education will be provided with a quality-oriented dynamic structure, the level of internationalization in higher education will be increased, and practices will continue to improve the qualifications of higher education institutions (TCCBSBB, 2019). One of the fundamental philosophies of the Turkish higher education system is that the Council of Higher Education solves problems to determine the academic quality of universities. The university and the department, as well as the Council of Higher Education, have been assigned responsibility in this regard (Köksoy, 1998: 187).

Using the qualitative research method of case design descriptive analysis, this study was conducted to explore the opinions of students enrolled in a non-thesis master's program of a department of public administration, as well as the problems they encountered during their education in the program and their solution recommendations.

I. LITERATURE

Studies on the Non-Thesis Master's Program students have been published in the literature. According to some of these studies, the reasons why students enrolled in these programs were to improve their social relationships and interpersonal communication skills (Bağlıbel & Arslan, 2014: 1091); add to their professional knowledge, skills, experience, and specialization (Mert, 2020: 154); gain a new perspective on the field of study (Şahin & Balkar, 2007); and seize the opportunity (Saritaş & Şahin, 2011: 1158).

According to another study, the reasons for enrolling in these programs were to improve the program students' professional position, to ensure their individual development, to raise their social status, and to have the opportunity to find a job in better conditions. The location and class-raising features of these programs also draw attention (Kıray, 2005: 126).

According to the findings of a study on the characteristics of the students enrolled in such programs, more than half of the students were female (Şenel et al., 2005: 115). There was no statistically significant difference between the academic grade point averages of male and female students in these programs (Mert, 2020: 150). There was no statistically significant difference between the attitudes of two different student groups enrolled in the program (Özben, 2005: 42). Attitudes of program students did not differ according to the department studied (Çakır et al., 2006: 45).

Arabacı (2008) reported in another study that program students had a positive attitude toward school experience lessons and practices. In their research, Yılmaz & Çimen (2008) reported that students had a high level of self-confidence and saw themselves as sufficient in educational syllabus program.

According to Memduhoğlu and Topsakal (2008) in another study, students found the programs necessary and gained important knowledge and skills, but it did not fully deliver the expected benefit due to problems in the applications and lecturers' approaches. According to faculty members, the program's expected efficiency had not been achieved, and students had not fully benefited from it. According to both students and faculty members, the Program's goal was to earn a certificate rather than

a master's degree. The institutes, according to the students, were indifferent and did not provide sufficient information. Notifications and announcements were not made when they were required. Students were unable to locate a contact person who could assist them. Misconceptions about master's degrees abound in public, such as "attendance is not required" or "optional". Students have difficulty attending classes because they are unable to obtain permission from their workplace. It is difficult to pass classes. The practices, according to the faculty members, are not coordinated. Communication between departments is poor. The program's general issues are that the lessons are held after-hours, students' indifference, absenteeism, and conflicts between the instructors over lesson sharing (Memduhoğlu & Topsakal, 2008:123-124).

According to program students in another study, there was a greater emphasis on theory in the courses. The lectures were always prepared and given by the students. The courses' content had nothing to do with the Public Personnel Selection Examination (Şahin & Balkar, 2007: 108). In addition, students have difficulty in writing their graduation projects (Ak & Soybalı, 2021: 139).

According to another study, students wanted to ensure that they were adjusted to university life and that the program adhered to scientific ethics. They found sourcebooks insufficient. They were concerned that such program would become obsolete. According to students, the Student Selection and Placement Center should organize the entrance exam and establish a non-thesis doctoral program (Aycan et al., 2005: 25). The course contents did not correspond (were insufficient) to the objectives (Umur & Demirtaş, 2018: 100). In lessons, the teaching-learning process was inefficient (Durmuşçelebi, 2008: 179). The course and its contents should be reviewed, (Güven, 2009: 147) updated, and organized in a practical manner. The program fell short in terms of teaching students how to write and publish scientific papers (Bağlıbel & Arslan, 2014: 1092).

II. METHOD

The study aimed to explore the educational problems of students enrolled in the program from their perspectives. The research was conducted in this manner using the single case study pattern, which is one of the qualitative research designs. Understanding and explaining from the perspective of the person being studied is required for qualitative research (Tarkun, 2000: 30). Case study, according to Creswell (2018), is a qualitative approach in which the researcher defines situations and situation-related themes through in-depth analysis of one or more situations within a fixed time through observations, interviews, documents, and other data collection tools. In this study, which used the qualitative research method case study design, it was attempted to discover the problems encountered in the education of the non-thesis master's program in the department of public administration, as well as suggestions for their solutions based on student opinions.

The study's participant group consisted of sixteen students in their final semester in a non-thesis master's degree in public administration. Purposive sampling, one of non-probabilistic sampling types, was used to select participants using the maximum variation sampling method. In the maximum diversity sampling method, the study group comprises participants from various units with a wide range of characteristics (Baş & Akturan, 2017). Various, diverse, and different dimensions of the research problem were examined (Altındış & Ergin, 2018). The goal of this sampling method was to reflect the different scenarios of the students who would contribute to the study with their opinions. Communication with the students resulted in voluntary participation during the research process. Data were gathered through participant interviews.

Table 1. Personal Information of Research Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Cumulative Grade Point Average
K1	Female	32	2,70
K2	Female	36	2,70
K3	Male	31	3,19
K4	Male	40	3,02
K5	Male	35	2,84
K6	Female	28	3,75
K7	Female	29	3,25
K8	Male	46	3,14
K9	Male	29	3,33
K10	Female	31	3,01
K11	Male	30	3,03
K12	Male	45	2,72
K13	Male	32	2,71
K14	Male	30	2,93
K15	Male	36	3,67
K16	Female	31	3,51

Data collection tools used in the study included observation, interviews, and document analysis. The interview is defined as the activity of gathering the participants' thoughts and feelings (Aslan & Özen, 2018). The interviewer asked semi-structured questions. The semi-structured questions were designed to allow participants to focus on the research topic (Ulutaş, 2018). The permission of the University Ethics Committee, to which the program is affiliated, was obtained to conduct the research. Two questions were asked in the interview form to elicit the general opinions of the participants: "Can you tell us about the educational problems you have encountered in the department?" and "Do you have any suggestions for resolving the problems you have encountered during your education in the department?". On a predetermined day and time, participants were interviewed at the university. Before the interview, the participants were informed about the study and told that their personal opinions would be kept private. Following the interview, the participants' consent was obtained in their own handwriting to use the data obtained through their opinions.

After compiling a summary of the responses, they were transferred to the Maxqda 2022 program for open, axial, and selective coding. Opinions were coded in lines based on sentences. Codes were created in data analysis using the opinions of the participants. The codes' similarities and differences were used to create categories. The categories were determined using inductive logic. The categories were compared in the study, and the themes were revealed through holistic analyses. The continuous comparison technique, as well as descriptive and content analysis, were used to analyze the data. The opinions expressed or explained by the participants were included in the study, along with descriptions and direct quotations when necessary to accurately reflect the views of the participants.

III. FINDINGS

Three themes emerged as a result of the document analysis combined with observations and interviews conducted with study participants. The following are the themes:

1. Student-related findings.
2. Management-related findings.
3. Teaching-related findings.

III.I. Student-Related Findings

The subject of attendance to the course is the first finding about the participants themselves. K2 stated that “Since we are in the working world, the curriculum has caused some issues with attendance”. K4 agreed with K2 and said, “We had difficulties attending classes due to working hours during the education period.” Similarly, K16 claimed that as a student working in a job, he had difficulty attending classes. K3 claimed that they had lessons every day and that he was working, making it difficult for him to get to class. “I had a lot of trouble getting permission from the administration during my working days, and being from outside the province was a burden both in terms of time and financially”, K16 expressed. K6 summarized his situation with the sentence “The class hours did not match with my departure from work”, whereas K7 claimed that he had no problems with class hours. Furthermore, K8 described his situation by saying, “We experience adaptation problems due to tiredness after work because the lessons are held in the evening”.

The second discovery concerns course preferences. “I preferred courses on politics and management. The reason I chose these courses was that I had less knowledge of them. I applied to this program to improve myself on these topics.”, K15 said. K3 expressed their opinion by stating that if the program had included more environmental issues and management-related courses, it would have been more effective for him. K4 emphasized that, despite choosing courses based on both working hours and course hours announced at the time of course selection, she had to drop some of them because the hours of some courses were changed during the add/drop week. K13 claimed that by spreading out the lessons over one or two days, the challenges of attending class every day after work could be overcome.

III.II. Management-Related Findings

The first observation regarding management relates to communication. “It is very difficult to reach employees in any branch, they do not answer the phone, and even if they do, they say ‘it is on the site’ and brush off, I’m not happy with these actions.” K6 declared. K5 agreed with this statement, saying, “We have difficulty reaching lecturers.”. K16 disagreed with these assertions, claiming that every question was addressed on the program’s website. If you visit the website to test the situation, you’ll notice that the answers to the questions that students can ask are written under the frequently asked questions tab, as K16 suggested.

The second discovery relates to technological infrastructure. On the subject of technical infrastructure, K12 stated that the technical infrastructure occasionally did not respond, the system crashed during the online application, and he had to apply again, so the application times should be increased. K15 expressed that “Because I was placed from the additional quota, I only had one day to choose classes, and I had to make decisions in a short period without knowing the course contents or the lecturers. The procedure could have been better planned.”. K6 pointed out that the number of online course assignments that can be uploaded to the distance education center system is limited to one and that the system does not allow re-uploading in case of an error and this is an important problem that needs to be fixed.

Regarding the technological infrastructure, while choosing courses, K13 realized that the system allows for overlapping courses to be taken, however, the system should show the overlapping courses, so that the student has a chance to reconsider. According to K9, the online course registration system should be configured so that the course hours do not overlap.

The third finding concerns the advisory service. According to K16, there is a possibility that the student will be assigned an advisor with expertise in a field other than the subject of the project on which the student will work; however, an advisor should be appointed considering the subject determined by the student. K9 made his point by saying, "Advisors should be appointed based on the student's request." According to K13, advisors make certain that students for whom they will be the advisor take their course. Advisors, according to K1, make students choose their courses to be their advisors; however, K1 suggested that "Students should be able to take courses from the teachers they want."

The fourth finding is about classrooms. Regarding the situation of the classrooms, K15 made the following observation: "Due to the lack of technological infrastructure in the classrooms, the lessons can be monotonous. At least in certain classrooms, the technological infrastructure should be better, there should be internet, interactive boards, etc." K15 offered the following opinion on classrooms as a suggestion: "It would be more beneficial to teach lessons in smaller classes". According to K5, desks, tables, lecterns, and blackboards in some classrooms are not useful. "There are no computers in the classrooms, and every teacher has to bring their own computer, which is a problem," K8 said. Furthermore, K6 stated oddly that because there were no cables for presentation in their classroom, they had to move to another class with a cable in one lesson. Another point raised was the size of classrooms. According to K3, holding the courses in large classrooms wastes energy; therefore, K3 suggested that conducting the courses through distance education will reduce energy waste, especially in the fall semester. K14, like K3, suggested that lessons be held in smaller classrooms to save energy.

The fifth finding concerns the passing mark in the legislation. A graduate student must have at least CB, or an average of 70 points, to be successful in a course, according to the legislation. This average is calculated by taking 40% of the midterm exam grade and 60% of the final exam or make-up exam grade and calculating the final grade. According to K4, students who are unable to attend the midterm exam will fail the course even if they receive a full score on the final exam because the passing mark in the relevant legislation is 30% of the midterm exam score and 60% of the final exam score. As a result, K4 proposed changing the calculation of the final grade in the legislation to 40% of the midterm exam score and 60% of the final exam. K1, K2, K3, K9, K10, and K16 all agreed with this problem and suggestion and had similar points of view.

III.III. Teaching-Related Findings

Participants in the study stated that there were teaching-related issues in the department and proposed solutions to them. Four major categories have been reached in this context. These are the categories:

- a. Opinions on courses.
- b. Opinions on lecturers.
- c. Opinions on lecture presentations.
- d. Opinions on course exams.

a. Opinions on courses

Course content, course hours, and overlapping courses are all issues with the courses. In terms of course content, K15 stated, "We only learn what we will learn when we attend the class. I believe that if there is a curriculum that we can access after course selection, it will be more efficient in both course selection and learning." According to K2, "If the course schedule is prepared before the course

selection period, we can choose courses accordingly. A predetermined schedule can help us make more informed course choices.”.

On the same subject, K1 stated: “In general, some courses do not provide information that is in-depth enough for graduate students. It is a rehash of well-known topics. It may be more useful if the subject's unknown aspects are explained in greater detail”, and added that they may be educated with courses that increase their level of knowledge. According to K13, some of the subjects covered in the lessons were repetitions of widely known information and did not contribute. K4 emphasized the scarcity of resources with the sentences “We had difficulty finding resources for some courses.”, and “We couldn't find resources.”. The lessons, according to K14, were focused on historical information and resources. In contrast to K1, K4, and K13, who were dissatisfied with the courses, K6, K7, K9, and K11 expressed satisfaction with them. K6 said “The distribution of the subjects was sufficient.”, K9 said “I find the course contents quite adequate.”, K11 said “I don't have any problems with the lessons.”, and K7 said, “It is quite sufficient as a department.”.

Participants provided course content suggestions. According to K3, course materials should be kept up to date, and he suggested that “Courses can be supported with visual materials and can be remembered more permanently.”. K14 proposed developing strategies for future-oriented learning, learning by experience, and learning by doing. According to K8, “The Turkish and European Political History” course should be added to the courses. According to K15, “Politics and management courses should be more in-depth and face-to-face.”. K16 made the following statement: “I believe that online education would be beneficial. Taking attendance and recording it in online classes will increase participation in the course.”.

K15 stated, “I believe that the lessons will be more efficient if they are distributed on specific days.”. “It may be better to schedule the lessons on some days rather than every day,” said K1. According to K14, classes should begin around 6:00 p.m. and also be held on weekends. K15, like K14, suggested that classes begin at 5:30 p.m. K3, on the other hand, shared their opinion that when two lessons overlap, students taking those lessons are having difficulty, and a more flexible schedule should be made for working students.

It was clear that overlapping courses had a negative impact on the students. Other participants also voiced their thoughts on the subject. Regarding overlapping courses, K9 stated, “It was difficult for us to choose the courses because some of them were at the same time.”. K15 said, “It would be better if more attention was paid to the timing of the courses when scheduling them because most graduate students are already working full-time jobs, so there may be conflicts.”. K2 stated “There were overlapping courses among the courses we chose this semester, so we had to change courses and we came for four days for five lessons; this situation occasionally caused problems with our jobs.”. K4 said, “We had issues, we had to be late for some classes since they were overlapped.” and added because of overlapping courses, they had to leave one class early and enter the other late, disrupting the continuity of the topics and adding to their problems. K8 also described their experience, saying, “We had to take classes at later hours due to some of our fellow students' overlapping courses.”. “I believe that the courses shouldn't overlap while the curriculum is being developed.”, K11 said in his suggestion. K10 also suggested that “The curriculum be prepared in such a way that courses do not overlap, and appropriate hours be arranged in accordance with the collective demands of the students”.

b. Opinions on lecturers

K2 stated, “I had no problems with the lecturers in terms of coursework, assignments, exams, and communication with students. I'd like to express my gratitude for this.”. K3 stated that “Our lecturers are competent and effective in their subjects.” and added that they were satisfied with the lecturers' knowledge of the course subjects they taught and their presentations; however, they explained that some lecturers repeatedly warned them about failing the exam, which caused them problems. They reported that these warnings made them anxious about the exam and that if their anxiety subsided, their ability to understand the lessons would improve. K9 also stated that some lecturers' speeches about failing the exam made them anxious and affected their learning negatively.

K6 stated regarding the lecturers, “Our lecturers’ narratives were sufficient.”. K4, after stating that they could not find the tolerance they expected from lecturers in terms of attendance due to working hours, noted that they did not experience any problems caused by the lecturers, however, they acknowledged that some lecturers were unable to complete all of the subjects in the course content until the exam.

According to K5, students had to take their own notes because some instructors did not share materials. Also, according to K5, some instructors did not interact with students when teaching. There were lecturers who were extremely knowledgeable in their fields, but their visual presentations were sometimes lacking. The instructors’ doing a short test after each lesson may contribute to students’ understanding of the subject. According to K14, lecture notes should be distributed to students at the start of the semester so that they are better prepared for class. K9 also suggested that “Instructors should actively use electronic resources in course presentations”.

K12 stated that they had no difficulty learning because the instructors were knowledgeable, had a strong command of their subjects, were efficient in using course materials, and were successful in their fields. K16 appreciated that the instructors were understanding of students’ behaviors. According to K13, some instructors made it mandatory for students to purchase some books, and students were directed to take classes taught by their advisors; however, students should be able to take any course they want.

K5 made a point such as “We are having difficulty reaching lecturers.”. On the other hand, K8 observed that the instructor was not well prepared in some non-presentation courses.

K15, who took a different perspective, claimed that the appointment of a faculty member from another department lowers the program’s quality. As a result, they advised against assigning a lecturer from outside the department, emphasizing that the lecturer who conveys knowledge to the student will provide real benefit by reviving the knowledge in the course and that they should lecture with this in mind.

c. Opinions on lecture presentations

According to K14, education quality was good, and learning outcomes were adequate. K14 thought it was critical that some lessons be face-to-face; however, it was also critical to use as much material as possible in the lessons. K13 took a similar approach, reporting that the course materials were generally insufficient. Furthermore, according to K13, “There has been no problem with material and content in online lessons, but online materials should also be created for face-to-face lessons”.

Regarding the lecture presentation, K6 stated, “I tried to be as active in the lessons as possible.”. The situation was described by K7 in the phrase “Blending my old knowledge with new knowledge has been very productive for me.”. “The conversational style of the lecturer’s delivery”, in K1’s words, “helped me to commit the information in my memory”.

K1 concurred that the lecture presentations were extremely beneficial. They claimed that the lecturer’s visual presentation of course topics, particularly in the form of slide presentations, was quite effective. The lecture presentations were “beautiful and effective”, according to K3. According to K6, “The lessons went without a hitch.”. K1, on the other hand, expressed satisfaction by stating that the lecturers’ presentation of the lesson in a conversational setting helped them retain the information better. According to K13, teaching the lesson solely through narration means addressing only the sense of hearing and failing to draw attention while explaining some subjects. According to K12’s statement on the subject, “giving homework is important for information feedback.”. According to K15, providing a topic summary before the lesson will help students learn faster.

K9 expressed their opinion in this regard, stating that “Electronic environments are used sufficiently in course presentations.”. In contrast to this assertion, K15 claimed that the lessons were monotonous due to a lack of technological infrastructure in the classrooms. K8 also suggested that “if

the course content is rich, if crime scene investigation, film, and other similar contents are added, the lessons will become more harmonious”.

K12 expressed “As if distance learning is a reasonable solution; however, face-to-face education is more important in terms of learning and influence.”. K10 suggested stating that lecture presentations should take the form of mutual communication and discussion with students.

According to K14, the courses should be completed through distance education during specific times. Participation in the course will increase if the courses are delivered via distance education, according to K3. Similar to the previous statement, K4, a participant who is familiar with the attitudes and practices of fellow students regarding distance learning, agreed: “I think that especially non-thesis master's courses should be done remotely”.

d. Opinions on course exams

According to K14 on course exams. “It is a very good situation for us, non-thesis graduate students, not to go into too much detail in the course exams.”, K9 said. K6 expressed their opinion with the sentence “Exam times were very short.”.

K4 reported difficulty participating in exams, particularly when exam hours coincided with working hours. In addition, K4 noted that some teachers hold students accountable for topics they were unable to cover in class during the exam; it is important to ask questions about topics covered in class; this will be sufficient to determine whether or not the material has been understood, and it is preferable to assign homework rather than a test so that students can become accustomed to doing research. In contrast, K5 believes that “Exams should not be in the form of homework.”. Furthermore, exams are anxiety-provoking, and thus exam stress should be reduced, according to K3.

CONCLUSION

The study was started that question: What are the problems and solutions faced by the students of the non-thesis master's program in public administration in this research? Sixteen participants were interviewed. It was concluded in this study that the participants had problems that needed to be solved in their public administration education and that they had offered solutions to problems. This finding is consistent with the findings of several research (Kıray: 2005), (Çakır et al.: 2006), (Şahin & Balkar: 2007), (Arabacı: 2008), (Durmuşçelebi: 2008), (Memduhoğlu and Topsakal: 2008), (Yılmaz and Çimen: 2008), and (Sarıtaş & Şahin: 2011), (Mert: 2020).

Three themes were used to categorize the issues that came up in relation to the research participants' opinions. One of these themes is related to students; the second is to management, and the third is related to teaching. Approximately 63% of the participants voiced an opinion on the topic of student-related problems. The student-related problems fall into two subcategories. The first is attendance, and the second is course preferences. To address the issues in both categories, it has been proposed that face-to-face courses be scheduled on a day or two and that other courses be completed online through distance education.

Approximately 88% of participants voiced their opinions on the topic of management-related problems. Management issues were classified into five subcategories, according to the opinions of the participants. Communication, technical infrastructure, advisory service, classrooms, and legislation are among them. It has been determined that the stated communication issues can be resolved by using the institution's website. It has become clear that additional research is required to address technical infrastructure issues. It has been determined that problems in advisory services can be solved by changing advisor attitudes and behaviors to align with student expectations. Lessons should be taught in smaller, more technologically equipped classrooms, according to the participants. In terms of

legislation, it has been proposed that the percentage of midterm exam scores be changed to 30% rather than 40%, and the percentage of final exam scores be changed to 70% rather than 60%.

All of the participants voiced their opinions on the topic of teaching-related problems. According to the opinions expressed, teaching-related problems were classified into four subcategories. These sections cover courses, lecturers, lecture presentations, and course exams. Concerning the courses, participants had concerns about the course content and course hours, as well as solutions. In this regard, the participants desired that the course contents, including the materials, be specified before the course selection, that the courses start at 5:30 p.m. at the earliest, and that different courses not be scheduled at the same time, to avoid overlapping courses.

It has been revealed that the participants are generally pleased with the course instructors. Participants expect lecturers to provide course resources in advance, to be accessible and open to communication with them, to prepare well for the presentation of their courses, to not make the students nervous about the course exams, and to not assign a lecturer from a field other than public administration.

Participants were generally pleased with course presentations; however, they suggested that the use of materials in both face-to-face and distance education should be increased; courses in the fall semester should be delivered more via distance education, and it should be determined which courses will be held face-to-face by soliciting student feedback, and technology should be used more in face-to-face lessons.

Regarding the course exams, the participants stated that the subjects covered in the courses were adequately tested in the exams, exam periods need to be extended; subjects not covered in the lessons should not be included in exams, homework should be preferred instead of exams for some courses, and that exam stress should be kept as low as possible.

In general, participants were generally satisfied with the education they received through the non-thesis master's program in public administration; however, while there are issues arising from students, administration, courses, lecturers, course presentations, and exams, it has been determined that there are also solutions. Arrangements to be made in light of the issues revealed in our study would contribute to the postgraduate education and training service in public administration. Similar studies with students in postgraduate with a thesis and doctoral programs can be conducted to increase such contributions.

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