Elementary School Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of Quality in Higher Education

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Abstract

Maintaining quality throughout all stages of higher education and its constituents is crucial for cultivating a quality labor force. The purpose of this study is to identify the perceptions of pre-service teachers regarding the quality of higher education. This study aims to achieve this goal through qualitative methodologies. The data was gathered via an interview questionnaire developed by the researcher. The study group consists of volunteers enrolled in departments of elementary education from two public universities made up of 47 female and 13 male candidates, for a total of 60 pre-service teachers. A semi-structured interview questionnaire developed by the researcher was used for the collection of data. For data analysis, thematic content analysis was employed. It was found in the study that the facilities, the equipment provided by the institutions, and the amenities present in the surrounding areas were deemed insufficient by the pre-service teachers in both universities. Furthermore, they remarked that their interests, requests, complaints, and needs were being neglected, while also expressing views affirming the qualities of the academic and administrative staff in their respective institutions. Taking into consideration the perspectives from both universities, the factors of transportation, the natural environment, attitudes of local people towards the students, security, social services, sports amenities, food, and accommodations were observed to be variable in terms of the viewpoints of pre-service teachers. Similarly, the perceptions of pre-service teachers concerning guidance and counseling services, views towards course materials and their practical applications, systems of examination, and university awards and honors have also shown differences between the two institutions.

Keywords: Pre-service teachers, higher education, elementary school, perceptions of quality

Introduction

One of the 21st century's most explored topics of research that concern educational systems throughout the world deals with areas such as how to effectively promote the growth of knowledge, and how to better ensure the spread of said knowledge. In this regard, the pursuit of quality and the processes of accreditation are deemed necessary. However, it is unclear what is considered "quality" in higher education (Brockerhoff et al., 2015). Stakeholders such as parents, students, teachers, and employers all possess different conceptualizations of quality. Parents view quality as a concept related to investment and future employment for their children. Students relate quality with the process of education and future employment prospects. While teachers perceive quality as a value chain encompassing the entirety of the process of education, employers are predominantly concerned with the student's efficacy

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as an employee (Prakash, 2018). Quality is a multi-faceted term that is dynamic and contextual (Krause, 2012), however, it can also be perceived differently by different types of stakeholders (Schindler et al., 2015).

In higher education, there are four main groups of stakeholders: providers (e.g., funding bodies), users of products (e.g., students), users of outputs (e.g., employers), and the employees of the education sector (Schindler et al., 2015). It is likely for quality to be perceived differently by different points of view and is therefore considered to be subjective (Harvey & Green, 1993). Furthermore, "quality" exhibits properties that are both tangible (e.g., class materials) and intangible (e.g., student affairs) (Yeo, 2009). As stated by Ekhaguere (2005), quality is not a static or unchanging goal that can be achieved through sheer hard work but is rather a dynamic and ever-changing goal that can be achieved through an array of strategies.

According to Grönroos (1984), dimensions of quality can be categorized into three: technical quality, functional quality, and institutional image. Another similar grouping has been proposed by Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1991) as technical quality, interactive quality, and institutional quality. Factors related to technical quality can be measured independently of the customer. Functional quality pertains to the interaction between the service provider and the service recipient, and is generally considered to be subjective. The dimension of institutional image is related to how the organization is generally perceived by the customers and is a result of a combination of factors alongside the aspects of technical and functional quality. Owlia and Aspiwall (1996) present the concepts of the dimensions of quality in higher education as:

1. Tangibles: Sufficient and modern equipment and facilities, ease of access, attractive environment, and support facilities (accommodation, sports, etc.)

2. Competence: Sufficient academic staff, theoretical knowledge, qualities, practical knowledge, up-to-dateness, teaching expertise, and communication.

3. Attitude: Understanding students' needs, willingness to help, availability of guidance and counseling, emotion, courtesy, and giving personal attention.

4. Content: Relevance of curriculum to the future careers of students, effectiveness, and containing primary knowledge and skills.

5. Delivery: Effective presentation, sequencing, timeliness, consistency, fairness of examinations, feedback from students, and encouraging students.

6. Reliability: Trustworthiness, giving valid awards, keeping promises, matching to the goals, handling complaints, and solving problems

High quality teaching is said to be central of the higher education sector (Harrison et. al., 2022). In order for higher education institutions to implement up-to-date education, they must treat the factors of teaching staff, students, physical environment, and social environment as a whole. A modern university should not progress in isolation, but utilize a framework of opportunities in coordination and cooperation with other universities. Unity among teachers and students is also thought to have a wide range of benefits within factors such as classroom contribution, participation in social activities, joint studies, curriculum planning, and school administration. According to Williams and Cappucini-

Ansfield (2007), gathering feedback from students regarding their experience in tertiary education has become an essential part of the process of quality. Scholars have determined the gathering and publishing of student feedback as key components of the process of quality assurance and development. According to these scholars, students enrolled in tertiary education institutions have earned their place as the primary stakeholders, and their voices are now heeded with more regard in their respective institutions and their state governments. This situation has led students to assume a more active role in their own learning process and thus take on more responsibilities.

Harvey (2003) states that a student's perspective provides invaluable information that can benefit the process of improving the quality of an institution. Thus, the process of evaluating the effectiveness of a tertiary institution should be considered incomplete without the student's input. Evaluating the quality of education from the student's perspective is a multidimensional prospect and is a practical method for institutions to self-evaluate on the microscale (Wang et al., 2018). For this reason, it is advisable for institutions to consider the student's perspective as an important element for quality evaluation, development, insurance, and control. Following this rationale, determining the perceptions of teacher candidates towards quality in higher education in the context of their educational institutions can be seen as essential. In the literature, there are studies revealing the perceptions of students from different faculties about quality in higher education (Ataman, & Adıguzel, 2019; Dicker et al., 2017; Karakaya et al., 2016), determining the relationship between tourism students' quality perceptions and their satisfaction and recommendation levels (Topsakal, & İplik, 2013), and revealing the quality perceptions of doctoral students (Cheng et al., 2016). However, it has been observed that there is a limited number of studies in which pre-service teachers' perceptions of quality in higher education are determined (Yokuş et al., 2016). Although these studies reveal university students' perceptions of quality in higher education in general, there was a need to reveal the quality perceptions of the participants in depth.

Unraveling the perceptions of teacher candidates in this regard will provide universities with ample opportunities for self-evaluation. A quality labor force entails the management of quality throughout all stages of higher education and its constituents. Therefore, it was determined that the purpose of this study is to identify the perceptions of pre-service teachers towards quality in higher education.

Method

Model

This study aims to identify the perceptions of teacher candidates through qualitative methodologies. This study was conducted in accordance with the phenomenology design since it is a study on pre-service teachers' perceptions of the quality phenomenon. In phenomenology design, which is one of the qualitative research designs, individuals' experiences of a concept or phenomenon are revealed (Cresswell, 2007). The data was gathered via an interview questionnaire developed by the researcher.

Study Group

Criterion sampling was implemented as a purposive sampling method. The basic understanding of criterion sampling is to study situations that meet a set of predetermined criteria (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). The study group consists of pre-service teachers enrolled in the elementary education departments of two separate universities. Pre-service teachers' knowledge pertaining to their

institutions and their ability to express their views on the topic of quality regarding said institutions were chosen as the criteria for selecting the candidates. Therefore, it was decided that the participants should consist of 3rd and 4th-year students. Information regarding the study group is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Data from the Study Group

Variable	University 1				University 2					
	Male	%	Female	%	Male	%	Female	%	Sum	%
3rd grade	6	10	21	35			2	3,3	29	48,3
4th grade	4	6,6	4	6,6	3	5	20	33,2	31	51,7
Sum	10	16,6	25	41,1	3	5	22	36,5	60	100

As can be seen in Table 1, the study group is made up of 47 females and 13 males for a total of 60 participating pre-service teachers. The participants consist of third and fourth-year students from across two different universities. Both universities are located in Turkey. University 1 is a state university located in the Marmara Region. University 2 is located in the Central Anatolia Region. The total number of students in University 1 is higher than in University 2. There were 35 participants from University 1 and 25 participants from University 2.

Data Collection Tools

To collect data for the study, a semi-structured interview questionnaire with 10 items was developed by the researcher. Owlia and Aspinwall's (1996) dimensions of quality were utilized in the making of the questionnaire. During the questionnaire's development, two experts in the field of education were consulted. Following this feedback process, the item count of the first questionnaire was reduced from 13 to 10. To ensure clarity, a pilot study for the interview questionnaire was conducted with 10 pre-service teacher participants, and adjustments were made accordingly. To protect the participants' privacy and to acquire sincerer responses, no personal information was asked from the participants.

Collection of Data and Analysis

The participants were briefed on the purpose of the study and the content of the interview questionnaire during the process of data collection. The pre-service teachers who volunteered to participate were given 30 minutes to answer the open-ended questions. The responses collected in the interview questionnaire were later decoded into text. Thematic content analysis was employed to analyze the data. Thematic analysis is a type of analysis that aims to identify, analyze, and interpret the themes found in the data. It is used to first organize the data minimalistically and then describe it in great detail (Braun, & Clarke, 2006). The phases of thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006) include familiarizing oneself with the data (1), generation of initial codes (2), searching for themes (3), reviewing themes (4), defining and naming themes (5), and producing the report (6). The participants were coded as, for example, U1P1 (university 1, participant 1). The data was coded by two researchers. Afterwards, the researchers came together to compare the codes and themes. A discussion

was held on the codes and themes that were not in common. After this discussion, codes and themes were agreed upon.

Findings

The findings of the study are presented in the themes of; sufficiency of facilities, sufficiency and modernness of equipment, means of transport, city and environment, security, accommodation, food, sufficiency of social services and sports amenities, the quality and quantity of academic staff, the quality and quantity of administrative staff, interests, requests, addressing complaints and needs, sufficiency of guidance and counseling, appropriateness of class content for future careers, exams, systems of examination, and university awards and honors. Teacher candidates' perceptions towards facilities and equipment are represented in Table 2.

Table 2

Perceptions Related to the Facilities and Equipment Theme

		University 1		University 2
Category	f	Code	f	Code
Sufficient	7	Social environment, classrooms, laboratories and lecture halls, educational technological equipment	1	Library
Insufficient	63	Social environment, classrooms, laboratories and lecture halls, libraries, modernness, educational technological equipment, internet speed, canteen	36	Social environment, classrooms, laboratories and lecture halls, libraries, modernness, educational technological equipment, canteen

As can be seen in Table 2, almost all students have expressed that the facilities and equipment were insufficient in their respective institutions regarding the theme of facilities and equipment. In U1, the concerns regarding insufficiencies were primarily focused on the social environment, and in both universities, the modernness of equipment was a focal point. Furthermore, U1 teacher candidates expressed concerns regarding the insufficiencies of libraries, classrooms, laboratories, and lecture halls. Some of the statements given by the participants regarding the sufficiency of facilities and equipment are as follows:

U1P16: "We are meant to improve on so many different areas, yet we only receive education in classrooms. We are meant to learn teaching techniques through practice, yet we are confined to do presentations instead. Painting and music courses are conducted in classrooms, and physical education courses are done in a town hall. But at least the things we have are of serviceable quality."

U2P11: "I cannot say that the quality of education is lacking, however, the equipment in the facilities and their lack of modernness is terrible. I often ask myself if this was the university that I dreamed of in high school. I wished a higher education institution would be equipped better and be more modern."

Perceptions towards transportation are represented in Table 3.

Table 3

Perceptions Related to the Transportation Theme

		University 1		University 2
Category	f	Code	f	Code
Sufficient	15	Access to other facilities and transportation services, access to faculty	22	Access to other facilities and transportation services, access to faculty
Insufficient	32	Access to other facilities and transportation services, access to faculty, access to city center, overcrowded transportation, travel time	15	Access to other facilities and transportation services, access to faculty, overcrowded transportation, pricing (round voyages should be free), orientation

As illustrated in Table 3, the perceptions of teacher candidates towards the theme of transportation vary between the two institutions. U1 pre-service teachers have emphasized the issue of a general lack of means of transportation and have stated concerns regarding the insufficiency of access to the city center and access to other facilities. On the other hand, more than half of the U2 pre-service teachers have expressed that they found the means of transport to be sufficient, yet they raised concerns stating that the vehicles were too crowded and that the pricing was unfavorable. Some of the statements given by the participants regarding the sufficiency of transportation are as follows:

U1P14: "While it may seem like we have the opportunity to use university shuttle buses, they are actually very insufficient. After all, we are students and we do not have much money. We cannot pay for the bus every day. We are already paying for student housing. At least we shouldn't have to pay for travel."

U2P12: "Since the faculty is far from the entrance to university campus, it is not feasible to walk. And because of that, I have to use the round voyage shuttles. It is always overcrowded, and with people bumping each other. We end up starting the day in a tense and weary state and come late to the classes because of having to use a vehicle meant for 15 people packed full of 25 people instead. On top of it all, we have to pay for the round voyage despite it being free in other universities."

Perceptions towards the environment are represented in Table 4.

Table 4

Perceptions Related to the Environment Theme

		University 1		University 2
Category	f	Code	f	Code

Sufficient	20	Social environment, comfort and security, natural beauty	12	Social environment, comfort and security, natural beauty, transportation and traffic
Insufficient	39	Accommodation, social environment, comfort and security attitudes towards students, faculty equipment, transportation and traffic, cleanliness of the environment	17	Social environment, faculty equipment, cleanliness of the environment

As shown in Table 4, the predominant viewpoint among pre-service teacher's leans towards insufficiency. However, the teacher candidates of both universities had expressed different concerns regarding environmental factors. Whereas U1 teacher candidates emphasized the social environment and the attitudes of local people towards students, U2 participants mostly focused on the insufficiencies of the social environment. Furthermore, while the U1 teacher candidates' have largely brought up natural beauty as being sufficient, U2 teacher candidates were not found to be focusing on anything in particular in the sufficient category. Some of the statements given by the participants regarding the sufficiency of the environment are as follows:

U1P10: "The people are a little weird. It is almost as if they view students as just opportunities for monetary gain. I don't get what kind of town this is. I would not put it past them that we were just put here as part of some kind of a social experiment."

U2P9: "As someone from a large city, this place is very restrictive. The townspeople's attitudes for the students are not very positive. At least accessing places is easy and most government buildings are at the city center due to it being a small community."

Perceptions towards the support facilities are represented in Table 5.

Table 5

Perceptions Related to the Support Facilities Theme

	University 1		University 2	
Category	f	Code	f	Code
Sufficient	15	Comfort and security, social services, sports amenities, food, accommodation	20	Comfort and security, food, accommodation
Insufficient	97	Comfort and security, social services, sports amenities, food, accommodation	32	Comfort and security, social services, sports amenities, food, accommodation

As can be seen in Table 5, the predominant viewpoint of teacher candidates in both universities towards support facilities is that they are mostly insufficient. It can be observed that the U1 participants have expressed more negative views towards support facilities in comparison to U2 teacher candidates'

viewpoints. In both universities, the teacher candidates have deemed comfort, security, sports amenities, and social services as insufficient. In contrast, some U2 teacher candidates have expressed that the food and accommodation services were sufficient. Some of the statements given by the participants regarding the sufficiency of support facilities are as follows:

U1P3: "School security is in an absurd state. Plenty of non-students are inside the school boundaries. There are no accommodation services for guest students. The meals could have been better. There isn't even a club that provides sports and social services."

U2P14: "The security could be more strict. Accommodations are sufficient. I think the school cafeteria is sufficient as well. The school canteen seems more expensive. Progress is being made with social services but more needs to be done. Sports amenities are insufficient."

Perceptions towards the academic staff are represented in Table 6.

Table 6

Perceptions Related to the Academic Staff Theme

	University 1		University 2	
Category	f	Code	f	Code
Sufficient	36	Quantity, quality, communication with students, taking on responsibility	10	Quality
Insufficient	16	Quantity, quality, taking on responsibility	9	Quantity, quality, communication with students

Upon examining Table 6, it can be seen that U1 teacher candidates express a more positive view towards the sufficiency of academic staff, whereas in U2, opinions are divided. In both universities, a vast majority of the teacher candidates have expressed that the quality of the academic staff is sufficient. While the U1 teacher candidates emphasized the insufficient quantity of academic staff, some of the U2 students stated that the quality of the staff and the communication between the students and the academic staff were insufficient. Some of the statements given by the participants regarding the sufficiency of academic staff are as follows:

U1P8: "I think that some of the teaching staff are not imparting knowledge sufficiently. Specifically, the teaching staff responsible for the course of teaching mathematics, in my opinion, do not give effective lessons. I think the academic personnel is good overall, but only with a few exceptions."

U2P16: "Even though they are experts in their fields, they display characteristics like favoritism and being unjust when it comes to certain subjects."

Perceptions towards the administrative staff are represented in Table 7.

Table 7

Perceptions Related to the Administrative Staff Theme

		University 1		University 2
Category	f	Code	f	Code
Sufficient	19	Quantity, quality, communication with students, commitment, care, courtesy	14	Quality, commitment, care, courtesy
Insufficient	20	Quantity, quality, communication with students, commitment, care, informativeness, courtesy	11	Quality, commitment, care, informativeness
No knowledge / opinion	12		7	

When analyzing teacher candidates' perceptions towards the administrative staff theme, the most noticeable feature is the existence of a no knowledge/opinion category. A portion of the students in both universities have stated that they do not possess an opinion about the administrative staff. In addition, neither study group's viewpoints have clearly been fitted into a category. Further looking into the details of the codes, teacher candidates in both universities have mostly found the quality of the administrative staff to be sufficient. Yet, the insufficiency of the informativeness of the administrative staff in U1, and a lack of commitment from the administrative staff in U2 were focal points. Some of the statements given by the participants regarding the sufficiency of administrative staff are as follows:

U1P16: "I think the administrative personnel are good overall and are considerate."

U2P9: "I am not acquainted with the administrative personnel. But whenever I needed to consult someone for a thing that needed to be done once or twice a year, they led me to the solution without any issues."

Perceptions towards considering viewpoints are represented in Table 8.

Table 8

Perceptions Related to the Considering Viewpoints Theme

		University 1		University 2
Category	f	Code	f	Code
Sufficient	12	Considering requests, considering complaints, considering needs	3	Considering requests, considering complaints
Insufficient	28	Considering requests, considering complaints, considering needs, information regarding respective department	18	Considering requests, considering complaints, considering needs

No knowledge / opinion	3		7	

Examining the perceptions of teacher candidates towards the theme of considering viewpoints as shown in Table 8, it is seen that in both universities the students are of the opinion that their viewpoints are being neglected. Additionally, a small number of students have not expressed an opinion on this subject. Some of the statements given by the participants regarding considering viewpoints are as follows:

U1P7: "Students' interests, requests, complaints, and needs are taken into consideration by the student representative, but not by the administrative personnel."

U2P11: "The only things done to address these issues are the internet surveys. There are as many students who respond to these surveys with deliberation as the ones who do not. Okay, they learn of the issues, but we do not see anything being done to address them."

Perceptions towards guidance and counseling are represented in Table 9.

Table 9

Perceptions Related to the Guidance and Counseling Theme

	University 1		University 2	
Category	f	Code	f	Code
Sufficient	18	Counseling services, guidance services	6	Counseling services, guidance services
Insufficient	4	Counseling services, guidance services	18	Counseling services, guidance services
No knowledge / opinion	12		5	

Examining the data from Table 9, one can see that the teacher candidates' perceptions diverge between the two institutions regarding the matter of guidance and counseling. While most of the U1 pre-service teachers have regarded guidance and counseling in their respective institutions as sufficient, U2 pre-service teachers have expressed that the services of guidance and counseling were insufficient. In both universities, some teacher candidates have not voiced their opinions regarding the theme of guidance and counseling. It is remarkable that a one-third of the U1 teacher candidates have not established viewpoints on the subject. Some of the statements given by the participants regarding guidance and counseling are as follows:

U1P2: "We get enough attention from the teachers who are present at the school most of the time, but we do not get sufficient guidance from our teachers who are seldom at the school."

U1P4: "I have been studying here for four years and I had no idea such services were available. I did not understand how they worked."

U2P10: "I have never used the guidance services, but I have no complaints for the counseling services. I think they manage to fulfill their responsibilities."

Perceptions towards career readiness are represented in Table 10.

Table 10

Perceptions Related to the Career Readiness Theme

	University 1		University 2	
Category	f	Code	f	Code
Sufficient	26	Appropriateness of course content, implementations	7	Appropriateness of course content, real-life applicability of the content
Insufficient	30	Appropriateness of course content, content diversity, real-life applicability of the content	22	Appropriateness of course content, implementations, real-life applicability of the content

Analysis of the data in Table 10 shows that while the U1 pre-service teachers do not lean towards either category, the insufficient category is predominant regarding U2 pre-service teachers' perceptions of career readiness. In both universities, opinions regarding the appropriateness of course content are divided. Half of the teacher candidates view the content as sufficiently appropriate, while the other half does not. Conversely, the viewpoints regarding other factors diverge between the two universities. While the U1 pre-service teachers view the implementations as sufficient, U2 pre-service teachers do not. Moreover, U1 teacher candidates have expressed that the real-life applicability of the content was insufficient, and some have emphasized a lack of content diversity. Some of the statements given by the participants regarding career readiness are as follows:

U1P2: "I do not think they are that applicable. I think the methods taught to us by the teachers are made-up. Because in order to use these methods as instructed by our teachers, the school environment must be adapted accordingly."

U1P11: "I think the teaching courses and psychology courses will be very beneficial for my future career."

U2P4: "The syllabus and the curriculum are devoid of substance. The courses that can be completed in 2 years are spread throughout a period of 4 years. On top of that, we have to take nonsensical courses that have nothing to do with our field."

U2P8: "The courses and the syllabi are appropriate for our field, but there needs to be more emphasis on practical application."

Perceptions towards the examination system are represented in Table 11.

Table 11

Perceptions Related to the Examination System Theme

		University 1		University 2
Category	f	Code	f	Code
Sufficient	23	Exam content and consistency, awards and honors (certificates of (high) honor), evaluation and feedback, exam quantity and variety	2	Fairness
Insufficient	22	Fairness, exam content and consistency, emphasis on memorization, awards and honors (certificates of (high) honor), evaluation and feedback	30	Fairness, exam content and consistency, emphasis on memorization, awards and honors (certificates of (high) honor), evaluation and feedback, exam quantity and variety
No knowledge / opinion	2		-	

Looking into the data presented in Table 11, it is seen that while the U1 pre-service teachers did not fall into a definite category regarding their perceptions of the sufficiency of the examination system, almost all of the U2 pre-service teachers have stressed the insufficiency of the examination system. While the U1 teacher candidates held the opinion that the examination system, in general, was sufficient, they raised concerns regarding the insufficiency of fairness, evaluation, and feedback. On the other hand, U2 teacher candidates generally viewed the examination system as insufficient and have primarily been concerned with the insufficiency of exam content, consistency, and awards and honors. In addition, opinions regarding exam quantity and variety diverge to a high degree between both universities. Those who shared their viewpoint on this subject in U1 have all agreed that the exam quantity and variety were sufficient, whereas the opposite was true for U2 teacher candidates. Some of the statements given by the participants regarding the examination systems are as follows:

U1P1: "I do not think that the exams, exam system, or the awards are a cause for concern for the school. I think the certificates of honor and high honor are beneficial for reinforcing the students."

U2P7: "I believe that it is wrong for exams to be result-oriented. I think the examination system is faulty and needs to be changed as soon as possible. I think that the awards and honors system is insufficient."

Discussion

The definition of quality in international literature encompasses a wide array of features, and as a result, this leads to the development of different taxonomies that serve different standards and objectives

regarding their implementations. Scholars have often emphasized the difficulty of creating a singular concept of quality due to its complexity, dynamicity, and multifacetedness. The participants from both universities have stated that the facilities and equipment (especially the social environment, classrooms, and the modernness of equipment) were insufficient. Similar to this result, Cevher (2015) in their study finds that the assessment of equipment and facilities by the participants, in particular, was negative.

It was found that while the participants from U1 have had issues with ease of access to transportation, U2 participants have highlighted concerns regarding overcrowded transportation and high prices.

Participants in both universities stated that the social amenities in their areas were insufficient, whereas only in U1 did participants express that the natural environment was attractive yet also stated that the local population was displaying a negative attitude towards the students.

University students consider the physical infrastructure and facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, sports fields, transportation, food and beverage and accommodation facilities to be extremely important in terms of quality (Ataman, & Adıguzel, 2019). U1 participants stated that security, social services, sports amenities, food, and accommodation were insufficient, whereas U2 participants expressed that social services, sports amenities, and the state of the security were insufficient.

The quality level perceived by university students is mostly related to the academic staff dimension (Topsakal, & İplik, 2013). It has been observed that the quality level perceived by university students is mostly related to the academic staff dimension (Topsakal, & İplik, 2013). In both universities, the participants remarked that the quality of the academic staff was highly sufficient. Munasinghe and Rathnasiri (2011) state that the sufficiency of academic staff is considered to be the most important dimension of quality by undergraduate students. Cevher (2015) states that in their assessment of academic staff in terms of sufficiency and attitude, the students held a positive viewpoint. According to Özer et al (2011), higher education institutions need to reinforce their personnel and physical infrastructure in order to raise and ensure quality.

In both universities, it was found that the qualities of the administrative staff were highly sufficient. Yokuş et. al. (2016) similarly concluded that the majority of pre-service teachers were satisfied with their instructors. However, the study of Cevher (2015) finds that the students did not view the administrative staff to be sufficient.

In both universities, some viewpoints stated that the participants' interests, requests, and needs were not being taken into consideration.

It was found that the U1 participants had a more positive opinion towards guidance and counseling services than the U2 participants.

U1 participants held the opinion that the course content was not suitable enough for real-life use, whereas U2 teacher candidates stated that the lessons needed to be enriched with practical implementations. In contrast, Cevher (2015) states that the opinions of their participants were generally favorable towards class content.

U1 participants held generally positive views towards the exams, systems of examination, awards, and honors, which is contrary to the U2 participants, who mostly found these areas to be lacking. Cevher (2015) finds that their participants did not perceive exam quality to be sufficient. Ünal (2005) in their

study, asserts that administrative services and educational resources were far from being able to cater to the needs of pre-service teachers.

Recommendations

Taking into consideration the findings of this study, these recommendations can be made:

- University administration can take necessary measures to improve the social environment, classrooms, laboratories, and libraries, and to modernize the facility equipment.

- Issues with accessibility (overcrowded transportation, high pricing, etc.) can be alleviated via cooperation with local governments.

- Social amenities can be improved via cooperation between universities and local governments.

- Measures can be taken to improve the feeling of safety of the students by determining the issues through effective communication.

- Alternative options for social services, sports amenities, food, and accommodation are subjects that can be worked upon.

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