Measuring Satisfaction Levels of Akdeniz University Faculty of Education Students in terms of Service Quality[1]

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the satisfaction levels of Akdeniz University Faculty of Education students concerning the quality of various services and facilities provided to them. The research was undertaken using the relational screening model. The study's sample consists of 364 students studying in their second-grade or fourth-grade at Akdeniz University's Faculty of Education, determined by disproportionate cluster sampling from a population of 3,587 students. The data of the study were collected through application of the "Quality of Service Scale for Higher Education Students". The applied scale consists of a total of 48 items in four factors. Data collected were analyzed by descriptive statistics, independent groups t-test and ANOVA analyses. As a result of the research, it has been concluded that the male students are more satisfied than the education faculty administrative staff. According to the variable of high school graduated, the satisfaction levels of graduates of Science / Anatolian High Schools are higher than those from Vocational High Schools and General High Schools. It is concluded that the fourth-grade students are satisfied with the qualifications of the education and training sources, the quality of the teaching staff, and the quality of the university support services, whilst the students who are in primary education are satisfied with the teaching staff and administrative staff.

Key Words: Service, Quality, Higher Education

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INTRODUCTION

Quality is finding the desires in the product or service by stakeholders, in other words the degree to which needs are met, the satisfaction that is perceived by stakeholders. The function of the education system is to constantly monitor and understand the needs of stakeholders (Lockwood, 1992, p. 19). Quality in the education process, provision of expectations from the education-training process can be identified with the diploma obtained as a result of the process; but it is more accurate to associate the qualifications of education with the words of power, capacity, character, or qualification (West, 1984, p. 153).

There is a significant difference in education from other sectors in terms of quality perspective. In education, the student is the input of the process, the material processed in the process, the output of the process and the stakeholder – all at the same time. The student, who is the most important stakeholder in the education process, has to continue his / her life with this service, unlike other areas. This entwined structure makes it even more important to determine the levels of satisfaction of students in terms of the education received.

Being able to create student-centered learning environments can be achieved through the effective identification and determination of strengths and weaknesses of all dimensions of service quality, the development and implementation of strategies that will support strong areas and strengthen weak areas. Vedder (1994, p. 11) defines quality of education as the ability to meet educational objectives and functions. The goals in this definition can be defined as the effectiveness of the learning and the functions as the ability to prepare students for real life, and the achievement of success when they start business life. Another definition related to quality in higher education is that, "for example, the customer's satisfaction from a brand new car and the satisfaction from higher education are not the same, this includes quality but this activity is not synonymous with efficacy and responsibility" (Cryer, 1998, p. 24).

The most widely used method in order to measure educational quality is assessments related to the quality of instructional staff and the link between course content. Some methods try to go beyond course evaluation and try to measure the outputs of the education process. In this measurement, it is tried to measure the knowledge and competency levels of the students. Both course assessments and assessments of competence do not provide clear information on the quality of education (Holdford, & Reinders, 2001).

In order to measure the quality of education in more detail, it is important to evaluate how students perceive their output, as well as their perceptions of the way they are provided with education. Education is a rich combination of in-class and out-of-class experiences. When the students' opinions on this process are evaluated together with their perceptions of the outputs, it is better understood how students perceive the quality of education. There are a number of reasons for evaluating the educational process and outcomes from a student's point of view. For example, applications to many universities are decreasing. This situation pushes universities to fight for students. If students' views are taken into consideration by universities, this information will raise the image of the school and encourage positive perceptions by students and graduates, which can be used to develop more professional programs (Sakarya, 2006, p. 58).

It has been stated that the most important element in the formation of the qualifications in the studies to determine the quality of the higher education services is the "teaching staff". When studies of student satisfaction towards the teaching process are examined, it is seen that

the realization of the learning activity is related to the satisfaction intensely obtained from the course (Açan, & Saydan, 2009).

In a business faculty in the Middle East, in a study carried out to improve the quality system and search for service quality, six dimensions were determined to evaluate the quality of the services provided by the university and among these dimensions, it was found that the teaching and administrative staff formed the most effective dimension in students' evaluating the quality of service (Sohail, & Shaikh, 2004).

Tütüncü and Doğan (2003) determined that the most important variable regarding the levels of customer satisfaction was the educational quality in the studies carried out at Dokuz Eylül University's, Social Sciences Institute in Turkey to determine the satisfaction of graduate and doctoral students. What's more, it was determined that the faculty members and lectures were the variables which affected the satisfaction of major field of study the most. In a study conducted by Çokluk-Bökeoğlu and Yılmaz (2007) to determine whether the views of university students on the quality of faculty life differ according to various variables, when differences were examined according to faculties, there was no significant difference in the dimension of "Satisfaction in Classroom Environment and Student Relations", however, it was observed that "Satisfaction from Instructors", "Satisfaction from the Faculty" and the differences in total value were meaningful. It was also found that "Satisfaction with Classroom Environment and Student Relations", "Satisfaction from the Faculty" and the differences in total value were meaningful.

The determination of the satisfaction levels of students, who are the main component of higher education, with all dimensions of the service they receive, is important in terms of providing the students' participation in all of the processes of higher education. This current study aims to fill a considerable gap in the field in terms of attracting attention to the levels of satisfaction of university students, leading to the development of higher education by creating awareness in both administrative and academic staff.

Under the guidance of these findings, the main objective of this research study is to determine the levels of satisfaction of students attending the Faculty of Education of Akdeniz University, Turkey, with respect to the quality of various services and facilities provided to them. In order to achieve this aim, answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. How are the satisfaction levels of Akdeniz University Faculty of Education students regarding their service quality?
2. Do the satisfaction levels of Akdeniz University Faculty of Education students differ according to their gender, type of education, class, location of the family of the student, and type of high school from which they graduated?

METHOD

Model of Research

This research is a descriptive study using the relational scanning method, one of the general scanning models. Relational screening models are research models that aim to determine the existence and the extent of interchanges between two or more variables (Karasar, 2008, pp. 55-63).

Population and Sample

The population of the research is made up of 3,857 students studying at the Faculty of Education of Akdeniz University, and the sample consists of 364 students studying in the second-grade or fourth-grade in the departments of Primary School Mathematics Teacher Training, Class Teacher Training, Social Sciences Teacher Training, Pre-School Teacher Training, and Turkish Education. Disproportionate cluster sampling technique was employed in determining the students to be sampled. The sample size was set at 347 for a 95% confidence level, but it was decided that the opinions of 400 students would be sought due to the expectation of deficiencies and inattentive completion of the scales resulting in a level of exclusions that might not be used in the research. With the data collection obtained, analyses were conducted on 364 fully-completed scales.

217 (59.6%) of the students are female and 147 (40.4%) are male. 181 (49.7%) of the participants are in their second-grade and 183 (50.3%) are in their fourth-grade. 307 (84.3%) of the students are studying primary education and 57 (15.7%) of them secondary education. 71 (19.5%) of the students are in Pre-School Teacher Training, 70 (19.2%) are in Mathematics Teacher Training, 65 (17.9%) are in Social Sciences Teacher Training, 60 (16.5%) are in Class Teacher Training, 50 (13.7%) are in Turkish Teacher Training, and 48 (13.2%) are in English Teacher Training Departments.

Data Collection Tool

The data of the study were collected with the "Quality of Service for Higher Education Scale for Higher Education" scale that was developed by Holdford and Reinders (2001) and adapted to the Turkish language by Sakarya (2006). The original form of the scale consists of 58 items. Ten items in the dimension of "University support services" of the scale were removed because they included questions about the university in general. The scale applied in this current study consists of 48 items in total. The scale presents a four-factor structure. These factors were determined as; education and training sources (eight items), teaching staff (19 items), administrative staff (14 items), and university support services (seven items). The items in the scale are answered in the range of "1 - I never agree" to "5 - I totally agree". Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the subscales are; education and training sources .68, teaching staff .67, administrative staff .72, and university support services dimension .73. The Cronbach's Alpha value for all of the scales was found to be .76.

Analysis of Data

Data collected in the study were analyzed by descriptive statistics, *t*-test for independent groups and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

FINDINGS

In this section, findings of the research and comments according to the objectives and sub-objectives of the research are given. In Table 1, descriptive statistics about the satisfaction levels related to the service quality of students in Akdeniz University Faculty of Education are shown.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics about satisfaction levels related to service quality of students*

	$\bar{X}$	S
Education and Training Sources	2.95	.74
Teaching Staff	3.09	.75
Administrative Staff	2.73	.86
University Support Services	3.08	.88

As can be seen in Table 1, the students who have participated in the research have shown the most participation in the Teaching Staff dimension ($\bar{X}$=3.09, S=0.75). This dimension is followed by University Support Services ($\bar{X}$=3.08, S=0.88), Education and Training Sources ($\bar{X}$=2.95, S=0.74), and Administrative Staff ($\bar{X}$=2.73, S=0.86).

In Table 2, the results of *t*-test analysis are shown for Akdeniz University Faculty of Education students, which has been conducted in order to compare the satisfaction levels related to the service quality according to gender.

Table 2. *Comparison of student satisfaction levels related to service quality according to gender*

Dimension	Gender	n	$\overline{X}$	S	SD	t	p
Education & Training Sources	Female	217	2.90	.73	362	1.52	.12
	Male	147	3.02	.76			
Teaching Staff	Female	217	3.03	.76	362	1.71	.08
	Male	147	3.17	.75			
Administrative Staff	Female	217	2.60	.85	362	3.21	.00
	Male	147	2.90	.85			
University Support Services	Female	217	3.11	.86	362	.94	.34
	Male	147	3.02	.90			

As can be seen in Table 2, opinions of the participating students have not reflected differences in dimensions such as education and training sources [$t_{(362)}$=1.52, p>.05]; teaching staff [$t_{(362)}$=1.71, p>.05], and university support services [$t_{(362)}$=0.94, p>.05] according to gender. However, opinions of the participants related to the administrative staff have reflected differences according to gender [$t_{(362)}$=3.21, p<.05]. In this dimension, male students have more positive opinions ($\bar{X}$=2.90, S=0.85) compared to female students ($\bar{X}$=2.60, S=0.85).

Table 3 shows the results of *t*-test analysis of Akdeniz University Faculty of Education students, which was conducted in order to compare the satisfaction levels related to the service quality according to type of education.

Table 3. *Comparison of student satisfaction levels related to service quality according to type of education*

Dimension	Type of Education	n	$\overline{X}$	S	SD	t	p
Education & Training Sources	Daytime education	307	2.97	.75	362	1.35	.17
	Evening education	57	2.82	.67			
Teaching Staff	Daytime education	307	3.14	.74	362	3.36	.00
	Evening education	57	2.78	.77			
Administrative Staff Dimension	Daytime education	307	2.82	.83	362	5.09	.00
	Evening education	57	2,20	.83			
University support services	Daytime education	307	3.11	.89	362	1.95	.05
	Evening education	57	2.86	.81			

As can be seen in Table 3, the opinions of the students that participated in the research do not differ according to the teaching type in the dimensions of education and training sources [$t_{(362)}$=1.35, p>.05] and university support services [$t_{(362)}$=1.95, p>.05]. However, the opinions of the participants in the dimensions of teaching staff [$t_{(362)}$=3.36, p>.05] and administrative staff [$t_{(362)}$=5.09, p<.05] differ according to education type. In terms of teaching staff, the students who study in primary education ($\overline{X}$=3.14, S=0.74) have more positive views than the students in secondary education ($\overline{X}$=2.78, S=0.77). If we consider the administrative staff, students who study in primary education ($\overline{X}$=2.82, S=0.83) have more positive views than students who study in secondary education ($\overline{X}$=2.20, S=0.83).

In Table 4, the results of the t-test analysis conducted with the aim of comparing the levels of satisfaction of the students of Akdeniz University Faculty of Education according to the class type are shown.

Table 4. *Comparison of student satisfaction levels in terms of service quality according to class type*

Dimension	Class Type	n	$\overline{X}$	S	SD	t	p
Education & Training Sources	2nd Grade	181	2.84	.75	362	2.70	.00
	4th Grade	183	3.05	.72			
Teaching Staff	2nd Grade	181	2.97	.72	362	2.71	.00
	4th Grade	183	3.19	.78			
Administrative Staff	2nd Grade	181	2.70	.81	362	.38	.70
	4th Grade	183	2.74	.91			
University Support Services	2nd Grade	181	2.93	.88	362	3.12	.00
	4th Grade	183	3.21	.85			

As seen in Table 4, the opinions of the students that participated in the research do not differ according to the class type in the dimensions of administrative staff [$t_{(362)}$=5.09, p<.05]. However, their opinions on the dimensions of education and training sources [t (362) = 2.70, p> .05], teaching staff [$t_{(362)}$=2.71, p>.05], and the university support services, differ according to the class type. The fourth-grade students ($\overline{X}$=3.05, S=0.72) have more positive opinions than the second-grade students ($\overline{X}$=2.84, S=0.75) in terms of education and training sources. The fourth-grade students ($\overline{X}$=3.19, S=0.78) have more positive opinions than the second-grade students ($\overline{X}$=2.97, S=0.72) in terms of teaching staff. In terms of university support services, the fourth-grade students ($\overline{X}$=3.21, S=0.85) have more positive opinions than the second-grade students ($\overline{X}$=2.93, S=0.88).

Table 5 includes the results of ANOVA analysis, which was performed with the aim of comparing the satisfaction levels of the students of the Faculty of Education, Akdeniz University, with respect to the quality of service compared to the place where the student's family lives.

Table 5. *Comparison of student satisfaction levels with quality of service compared to place where student's family lives*

Points	Where student's family lives	n	$\bar{X}$	S	SD	F	p	Difference (Tukey)
Education & Training Sources	1. Town-Village	76	2.98	0.83	3-363	1.28	.28	-
	2. Town Center	103	2.98	0.72				
	3. City Center	43	3.08	0.78				
	4. Metropolitan	142	2.86	0.70				
Teaching Staff	1. Town-Village	76	3.23	0.77	3-363	1.49	.21	-
	2. Town Center	103	3.09	0.78				
	3. City Center	43	2.99	0.69				
	4. Metropolitan	142	3.03	0.73				
Administrative Staff	1. Town-Village	76	2.75	0.97	3-363	0.20	.89	-
	2. Town Center	103	2.76	0.86				
	3. City Center	43	2.66	0.86				
	4. Metropolitan	142	2.70	0.81				
University Support Services	1. Town-Village	76	3.27	0.90	3-363	2.67	.04	1-4
	2. Town Center	103	3.05	0.77				
	3. City Center	43	3.20	0.83				
	4. Metropolitan	142	2.94	0.92				

As can be seen in Table 5, the opinions of the students that participated in the research do not differ according to the place where the student's family lives in the dimensions of the education and training sources of the participants [F (3-363) = 1.28; P> .05], teaching staff [F (3-363) = 1.49; P> .05], and administrative staff [F (3-363) = 0.20; P> .05]. However, the opinions of the participants on the aspect of university support services differ according to the place where the student's family lives [$F_{(3-363)}$=2.67; p<.05]. In this dimension, the students living in the towns and villages ($\bar{X}$=3.27, S=0.90) have more favorable views than the students living in the metropolitan areas ($\bar{X}$=2.94, S=0.92). Table 6 shows the results of the ANOVA tests which aimed at comparing the service quality and related satisfaction levels of Akdeniz University Faculty of Education students according to the graduated high school type.

Table 6. *Comparison of student satisfaction levels according to graduated high school type*

Points	Graduated High School Type	n	$\bar{X}$	S	SD	F	p	Difference (Tukey)
Education & Training Sources	1. Science/Anatolian	121	3.06	0.75	3-363	2.08	.10	-
	2. Vocational/Technical	38	2.74	0.89				
	3. General High School	156	2.90	0.72				
	4. Teacher Training	49	2.97	0.62				
Teaching Staff	1. Science/Anatolian	121	3.14	0.80	3-363	0.77	.50	-
	2. Vocational/Technical	38	2.93	0.65				
	3. General High School	156	3.08	0.74				
	4. Teacher Training	49	3.05	0.75				
Administrative Staff	1. Science/Anatolian	121	2.80	0.81	3-363	3.02	.03	4-1
	2. Vocational/Technical	38	2.46	0.98				4-3
	3. General High School	156	2.80	0.84				2-1
	4. Teacher Training	49	2.50	0.90				2-3
University Support Services	1. Science/Anatolian	121	3.10	0.87	3-363	0.37	.77	-
	2. Vocational/Technical	38	2.96	1.04				
	3. General High School	156	3.05	0.89				
	4. Teacher Training	49	3.14	0.74				

As can be seen in Table 6, participants' ideas about education and training sources [$F_{(3-363)}$=2.08; p>.05], teaching staff [$F_{(3-363)}$=0.77; p> .05], and university support services [$F_{(3-363)}$=0.37; p>.05] do not differ according to the graduated high school type. However, the attitudes of the participants in terms of administrative staff differ according to the graduated high school [$F_{(3-363)}$=3.02; p<.05]. In this dimension, the students who study at Teacher Training High Schools ($\overline{X}$=2.50, S=0.90) are more negative than students who study at Science / Anatolian High Schools ($\overline{X}$=2.80, S=0.81) and General High Schools ($\overline{X}$=2.80, S=0.84). In addition to this, the students who study at Vocational / Technical High Schools ($\overline{X}$=2.46, S=0.99) have more negative views in comparison to the students who study at Science / Anatolian High Schools ($\overline{X}$=2.80, S=0.81) and General High Schools ($\overline{X}$=2.80, S=0.84).

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

In this research, it was aimed to determine the satisfaction levels of Akdeniz University Faculty of Education students related to the quality of various services and facilities provided to them. According to this, the highest levels of satisfaction among the students of Akdeniz University Faculty of Education is the dimension of Teaching Staff. Participants then respectively showed the highest attendance in the dimensions of University Support Services, Education and Training Sources, and Administrative Staff. The opinions of the participants of all dimensions are closer to the response of "I moderately agree".

The highest satisfaction of the participants can be seen as a positive situation in the Dimension of Teaching Staff. Because it is important that there is a positive and warm relationship between the teaching staff and the students (prospective teachers) in Faculties of Education that educate future teachers. The teacher training process is not only an information transfer process, but also an observation and role-modeling process. However, the average result in this dimension was not found to be very high.

Participants' lowest participation in the dimension of Administrative Personnel can be interpreted as there not being very good relations between students and prospective teachers in Education Faculties. However, if considered in terms of the importance of teacher training process, this dimension can be seen as a dimension that requires development.

The fact that the opinions of participants on the dimension of administrative staff changes according to gender supports the above interpretation. For this dimension, male students have more positive views than female students. As a result, it was understood that the male students are more satisfied with the administrative staff of the faculty of education. Male students' generally taking a more active role in communicating with administrative staff in the classroom. May be effective in this case.

Similar findings were reached by previous studies. In other studies (Aypay, & Demirhan, 2009; Kızıltan, 1994; Öztemel, 2010; Şahin, & Tuncel, 2008) male students attending university education were found to have higher personal and general levels of adjustment than female students. In a study carried out by Çokluk-Bökeoğlu and Yılmaz (2007), as different from these studies, the perceptions and evaluations of the students concerning their faculties were comparatively examined in terms of variables thought to affect the quality of faculty life. In their study, in comparison related to gender, the average for females was found to be higher than for males. This difference means that females and males do not evaluate the same conditions in the same way and it was concluded that the perceptions and evaluations of the females are more positive than those of males (Çokluk-Bökeoğlu, & Yılmaz, 2007).

The views of the participants on the dimensions of teaching staff and administrative staff differ significantly according to the educational background. The views of students studying primary education, in terms of both teaching staff and administrative staff, are more positive than those studying secondary education. As a result, it can be alleged that the satisfaction levels of primary education student teachers of the faculty and administrative staff are higher. In comparison to the secondary education student teachers, primary education student teachers see administrative staff on a more frequent basis can be influential on this situation. As parallel to this, it is possible that this result is due to primary education student teachers interacting much more with their teaching staff. Likewise, in a study conducted by Açan and Saydan (2009), they revealed that primary education student teachers give significantly more importance to "the encouragement skill of the teaching staff to the lectures" than secondary education student teachers.

The opinions of the students who participated in the research on the dimensions of Education and Training Sources, Teaching Staff, and University Support Services differ according to class type. In all dimensions that differed, fourth-grade students have more positive views than second-grade students. Accordingly, it can be said that fourth-grade students are more satisfied with education and training sources, teaching staff, and university support services than the second-grade students. The fact that fourth-grade students' knowledge of the university is better and have benefited from the opportunity longer may be relevant to this result. Similarly, a study carried out by Güleş, Kabasakal, and Kuzu (2011), in which the support services of a university were evaluated in general, showed that the satisfaction levels of the students about "the adequacy and quality of common and social fields", especially the canteen, refectory, sports hall, student community activities, and other social facilities, were at low levels. In a study conducted by Erdoğan, Şanlı, and Bekir (2005), it was revealed that many of the students found the professional knowledge of the teaching staff to be sufficient; six out of ten students found the courses and exam programs inadequate, and half of the students found the social and cultural activities to be inadequate.

In the current study, there is a significant difference in the dimension of University Support Services in comparison with the place where the student's family lives. The difference in this dimension is between the students with the most negative opinions, whose families live in big cities, and the students with the most positive opinions, whose families live in towns and villages. It is presumed to be quite normal that people with more limited services in towns and villages, where their families are settled, have a more positive opinion.

According to the graduated high school variable, there is a significant difference in the dimension of Administrative Staff. In this dimension, while the students who graduated from Science / Anatolian High Schools and General High Schools, have the more positive opinions, the students who graduated from Vocational / Technical High Schools and Teacher Training High Schools have the more negative opinions. Tinto (1975) argues, in the model, that the academic achievement, especially in high schools, has a significant influence on the success of the university achievement in the years ahead. According to the findings of a study by Ayık, Özdemir, and Yavuz (2007), the levels of satisfaction of the students in universities concerning their departments do not differ according to the high school type from which they graduated. In a study conducted by Di Pietro and Cutillo (2007), they attempted to determine the reasons for university student drop-out in Italy. As a result of their research, they revealed that the

students who achieved considerable success in their high school life had higher levels of university satisfaction.

Studies could be carried out to increase the levels of administrative staff satisfaction of female students who are educated in education faculties. Some studies could also be undertaken to strengthen communication with the administrative staff. In order to increase the satisfaction levels of students of secondary education teaching concerning the teaching staff and the administrative staff, they could spend more time with the teaching and administrative staff or the number of staff could be increased during the evening teaching hours.

In order to increase the satisfaction levels of the fourth-grade students, these students need to encounter adequacy of the education and training sources, communication with teaching staff, and university support services (cultural, artistic etc.) during their earliest study years. In addition, cultural and social activities for students should be spread throughout all four years of university undergraduate education. Plans could be made to increase the satisfaction levels of students whose families live in the bigger cities. Investigations concerning the satisfaction levels of general and vocational high school students may be conducted and as a result of these investigations, studies could be undertaken in order to increase the satisfaction levels of students attending secondary education teacher training.

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