

AN EXAMINATION OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' SATISFACTION WITH THEIR FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ANÁLISE DA SATISFAÇÃO DE PROFESSORES EM FORMAÇÃO COM SUA FACULDADE DE EDUCAÇÃO

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine pre-service teachers' satisfaction with their faculty of education. The study employed a qualitative case study design, and the participants consisted of 88 pre-service teachers selected through typical case sampling. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview form and analyzed through content analysis. The findings revealed that pre-service teachers were generally dissatisfied with the content, scope, and variety of compulsory and elective courses. Although faculty members were perceived as strong in subject-matter and general cultural knowledge, they were considered to need improvement in professional competencies, assessment practices, and educational management. Communication skills and interactions with faculty members were evaluated positively overall; however, variations were reported regarding their quality and consistency. Finally, pre-service teachers expressed low satisfaction with the academic, social, technological, cultural, and supportive opportunities provided by their faculty.

Keywords: Higher Education Quality. Pre-Service Teacher Satisfaction. Qualitative Case Study. Student Perceptions. Teacher Education.

Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo é examinar a satisfação de professores em formação com sua Faculdade de Educação. O estudo adotou um delineamento qualitativo do tipo estudo de caso, e os participantes foram 88 professores em formação selecionados por meio de amostragem de caso típico. Os dados foram coletados por meio de um formulário de entrevista semiestruturada e analisados por meio de análise de conteúdo. Os resultados revelaram que os professores em formação demonstraram, em geral, insatisfação quanto ao conteúdo, à abrangência e à variedade das disciplinas obrigatórias e optativas. Embora os docentes tenham sido percebidos como competentes em conhecimentos específicos e em cultura geral, considerou-se que necessitam de aprimoramento em competências profissionais, práticas de avaliação e gestão educacional. As habilidades de comunicação e as interações com os docentes foram avaliadas positivamente de modo geral; contudo, foram relatadas variações quanto à sua qualidade e consistência. Por fim, os professores em formação expressaram baixo nível de satisfação em relação às oportunidades acadêmicas, sociais, tecnológicas, culturais e de apoio oferecidas por sua Faculdade.

Palavras-chave: Qualidade do Ensino Superior. Satisfação de Professores em Formação. Estudo de Caso Qualitativo. Percepções Estudantis. Formação de Professores.



1 INTRODUCTION

Universities are higher education institutions that follow scientific developments, contribute to research and production processes, uphold democratic values, maintain continuous interaction with society, and bear the responsibility of enlightening the public (Erdem, 2013). Holding a significant place in ensuring both individual and societal development, universities make substantial contributions to a country's economic, social, and cultural advancement through their functions such as knowledge production, training qualified human resources, and building a knowledge-based society (Karaçoban & Yeşilpınar Uyar, 2024).

Today, universities are expected not only to adapt to technological, economic, social, and educational changes but also to actively shape and guide these transformations. Accordingly, universities aim both to respond to societal needs through their educational activities and to contribute to development through research and production processes (Donat Bacıoğlu & Vural, 2018). Universities should be modern and dynamic institutions that prepare students for professional life after graduation, encourage creative and innovative thinking, and closely follow technological developments by supporting research activities (Karakaya *et al.*, 2016).

Students are among the most important stakeholders of higher education institutions. The level of students' satisfaction with their universities is one of the key indicators reflecting the extent to which higher education institutions achieve their established goals and objectives. Moreover, student satisfaction stands out as a meaningful source of data in evaluating the quality of education provided at universities (Uygur & Yanpar Yelken, 2017). For this reason, many universities regularly administer student satisfaction surveys in order to improve service quality and support quality assurance processes, and they strive to implement continuous improvements in educational and service domains by analyzing the data obtained from these surveys (Çavdar & Çalış, 2023).

Astin (1993) has defined student satisfaction as the evaluation of experiences related to university life, the quality of academic staff, institutional governance processes, the level of interaction among students, the adequacy of educational programs, and the university's facilities in accordance with quality standards (Astin, 1993). Student

satisfaction can be determined through the systematic assessment of students' perceptions regarding various dimensions of the services offered by higher education institutions (Dolmans *et al.*, 2003). Students' satisfaction with their universities has a multidimensional structure. In this context, student satisfaction may be evaluated within the framework of various factors, including the quality of education and instruction, physical infrastructure, internship and practical training opportunities, social, cultural, and sporting activities, as well as students' individual characteristics (Uzgören & Uzgören, 2007).

The cleanliness and security levels of universities, the adequacy of their information and technology infrastructure, the availability of libraries, photocopying, computer and internet facilities, as well as the provision of spaces where students can socialize and access living areas such as dining halls and cafeterias, play a critical role in the formation of student satisfaction (Arambewela & Hall, 2007; Joseph *et al.*, 2005). The academic competencies of faculty members, their ability to manage the instructional process effectively, and the quality of their communication with students constitute another important factor determining student satisfaction within universities (Kuh & Hu, 2001; Pozo-Munoz *et al.*, 2000; Voss & Gruber, 2006). Additionally, it is reported that students who are taught by instructors who use assignments and examinations effectively, enhance students' thinking skills, and support their abilities exhibit higher levels of satisfaction (Dalton & Denson, 2009; Sproule, 2000).

Determining students' satisfaction with their universities enables the improvement of educational processes as well as the strengthening of institutional planning and student-faculty relationships (McCuddy *et al.*, 2008; Penny, 2003). Measuring student satisfaction emerges as a fundamental tool for obtaining valid and reliable results regarding the quality of the opportunities and services provided by universities (Browne *et al.*, 1998; Guolla, 1999; Penny, 2003). Universities aspiring to rank highly in international league tables can document their effectiveness and efficiency by utilizing student satisfaction data (Arambewela & Hall, 2007; Kwek *et al.*, 2010).

It is stated that a student who participates in university activities, establishes positive relationships with peers and faculty members, engages in healthy interactions with their environment, and is satisfied with their university can achieve both academic and personal development more effectively (Singh *et al.*, 2010). An increase in students'

levels of satisfaction with the opportunities provided by universities significantly enhances their academic persistence and graduation rates (Student Life Studies, 1999). The limited implementation of supportive arrangements in university life leads many students to graduate without acquiring the experiences they need throughout their educational process or to withdraw from higher education before completing their studies (Casazza & Bauer, 2006).

Faculties of education within universities are institutions responsible for teacher training. The opportunities and resources these faculties provide to their students play a critical role in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of teacher education processes. The facilities and support offered by faculties of education contribute to the professional as well as personal, social, and cultural development of pre-service teachers (Karaçoban & Yeşilpınar Uyar, 2024). In evaluating the quality of services offered by faculties of education, the most reliable and valid data are obtained from the views and experiences of pre-service teachers, who constitute the primary internal stakeholders (McCuddy *et al.*, 2008; Popli, 2005). In an effective teacher education process, services should be continuously reviewed and improved in line with feedback received from pre-service teachers (Adıgüzel & Sağlam, 2009; Karadağ & Yücel, 2022). The literature indicates that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between service quality and student satisfaction (Wei & Ramalu, 2011; Okumuş & Duygun, 2008).

When the literature on the satisfaction levels of pre-service teachers is examined, it is seen that studies have predominantly focused on the development of satisfaction scales and the measurement of these levels through surveys (Dilşeker, 2011; Sökmen, 2011; Şahin, 2009; Şahin *et al.*, 2011). Additionally, students' satisfaction has been analyzed in terms of variables such as gender, grade level, and the program in which they are enrolled (Ada *et al.*, 2017; Boran & Yanpar-Yelken, 2020; Donat Bacıoğlu & Vural, 2018; Jafarova & Demirtaş, 2020). In this study, the views of students enrolled in the faculty of education regarding the quality of the services provided by their faculty were examined in depth using a qualitative research approach. The study is significant in terms of evaluating student satisfaction with the services offered by the faculty of education, identifying areas where satisfaction is low, and providing recommendations to improve service quality based on the findings obtained. It is anticipated that the findings will contribute to the continuous improvement of services and help raise awareness among

administrative, academic, and support staff in this regard. Moreover, the results are expected to make significant contributions to the design and implementation of teacher education programs in ways that are aligned with students' needs. Within this framework, the purpose of the present study is to examine the satisfaction levels of pre-service teachers studying in the faculty of education with regard to their faculty. In line with this purpose, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How satisfied are pre-service teachers with the compulsory and elective courses offered in their faculty and departments?
2. How satisfied are pre-service teachers with the competencies of the faculty members in their faculty and departments?
3. How satisfied are pre-service teachers with the communication skills of the faculty members in their faculty and departments?
4. How satisfied are pre-service teachers with their interactions with faculty members in their faculty and departments?
5. How satisfied are pre-service teachers with the opportunities provided by their faculty?

2 METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative research study. Qualitative research seeks to explore in depth the meanings that individuals attribute to events and phenomena based on their lived experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, the case study method, one of the qualitative research methods, was employed. A case study is a qualitative research method in which the researcher conducts an in-depth analysis of a specific case or multiple bounded cases using various data collection tools and provides a comprehensive description of the case (Creswell, 2013). In case studies, the researcher attempts to interpret and make sense of a unique and multidimensional phenomenon by examining it in depth within its natural context (Stake, 1995).

2.1 Study group

The study group of the research consists of 88 pre-service teachers studying at the Faculty of Education of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University. The sample was determined using typical case sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods. This sampling method is grounded in the assumption that the phenomenon under study can also be observed in similar contexts and aims to obtain research data from typical, ordinary, or average cases (Tutar & Erdem, 2020). In this context, a typical case refers to situations that overlap with the research population in terms of their fundamental characteristics and possess a high level of representativeness (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Accordingly, three departments that could reflect the general characteristics of the faculty of education and were not considered exceptional were selected. The study was conducted with 88 students enrolled in these three departments. The demographic characteristics of the participants constituting the study group are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Study Group

Variable		n	%
Gender	Female	52	59,10
	Male	36	40,90
	Total	88	100
Department	Fine Arts Education	27	30,68
	Turkish and Social Sciences Education	29	32,96
	Foreign Languages Education	32	36,36
	Total	88	100

2.2 Data collection instrument

The data of the study were collected using a semi-structured interview form consisting of open-ended questions developed by the researcher. Semi-structured interviews are a data collection technique that enables the collection of in-depth data in line with predetermined themes and allows participants to express their personal experiences in detail (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interview form was prepared by the researcher following a review of the relevant literature and subsequently submitted for expert evaluation. Two academics who had completed their doctoral studies in the field

of educational sciences and had experience in qualitative research reviewed the interview form, and necessary revisions were made in line with their recommendations. Subsequently, a pilot study was conducted with 10 students enrolled in the music education program of the faculty of education. Based on the results of the pilot study, further modifications were made and the interview form was finalized.

2.3 Data collection process

Prior to the data collection process, ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Graduate School of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, confirming that the study complied with ethical principles (Approval Date: 12.09.2024, Decision No: 13/09). The data collection process was conducted after receiving this ethical approval. The data were collected in classroom settings during regular course hours. Before the implementation, participants were informed about the purpose and content of the study, and it was clearly stated that the data obtained would be used solely for scientific purposes and that no identifying information would be requested. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, indicating their voluntary participation in the study.

2.4 Data analysis

An inductive approach to qualitative content analysis was adopted in the analysis of the research data. The primary aim of inductive content analysis is to generate meaningful patterns, concepts, and themes directly from the data without being constrained by a predetermined theoretical framework. Within this approach, codes and themes are derived from participants' statements, and the analytical process progresses in a data-sensitive and iterative manner (Krippendorff, 2019; Miles *et al.*, 2014). In accordance with the principles of inductive content analysis, themes and codes were developed during the data analysis process. First, all interview transcripts were read by the researcher, and each transcript was examined thoroughly. Common concepts and ideas within the interviews were identified and defined, leading to the development of codes. In the second stage, related codes were grouped together to form themes.

2.5 Validity and reliability

While the concepts of validity and reliability constitute the foundation of quantitative research, in qualitative research these concepts are addressed through the dimensions of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). Within the scope of credibility, an academic expert in the research field was also involved in conducting an in-depth review of the study. To ensure reliability, the procedures followed at each stage of the research process were described in detail. In order to enhance internal validity, the data obtained in the study were additionally examined by two academics working in the field of educational sciences. Participants' statements were included to support the findings and to strengthen the quality of the research. Furthermore, data triangulation was employed during the data analysis process to further enhance the rigor of the study.

3 FINDINGS

The findings related to pre-service teachers' satisfaction with the compulsory courses offered in their faculty and departments are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Compulsory Courses

Theme	Code	f
Diversity	Courses being sufficiently rich to support students' development	25
	Limited diversity of courses	23
Scope	Deficiencies in terms of topic diversity and depth of the courses	19
	Courses reflecting the fundamental subjects of the field	19
Content	Courses addressing topics in a superficial manner	23
	Course content being up-to-date and aligned with students' needs	22
	The majority of courses being non-functional	5
	Course contents not supporting learning	4
	Insufficient inclusion of practice-oriented activities in courses	3
	Courses being instructive/useful	2
	Repetition of similar topics across courses	1

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that compulsory courses are grouped under three main themes: diversity, scope, and content. The findings indicate that pre-service teachers hold both positive and negative views regarding the content, scope, and diversity

of the compulsory courses offered in their faculty. Pre-service teachers expressed predominantly negative views about compulsory courses, stating that the diversity, content, and scope of the courses were inadequate, that the majority of courses were non-functional, that the courses did not support learning, and that course contents were overly theoretical and repetitive. However, the findings also reveal that some pre-service teachers expressed positive opinions, indicating that the diversity, content, and scope of the compulsory courses were sufficient and that the courses were instructive. The view most frequently expressed by pre-service teachers was that “the diversity of courses is adequate” (f=25). Selected statements reflecting pre-service teachers’ views on compulsory courses implemented in the faculty of education are presented below.

P30: “.....*Compulsory courses are sufficient; however, there is a need to place greater emphasis on practical applications in terms of content.*”

P70: “.....*I think that the scope and diversity of the compulsory courses should be increased.*”

P84: “.....*I think that most of the compulsory courses are useful and have contributed significantly to my personal knowledge.*”

The findings related to pre-service teachers’ satisfaction with the elective courses offered in their faculty and departments are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Elective Courses

Theme	Code	f
Diversity	Course diversity not meeting students’ expectations	39
	Courses being offered across a wide range	26
Scope	Limited scope of the courses	22
	Courses addressing topics in depth	16
	Courses being aligned with field competencies	3
	Courses not supporting field-based learning	1
Content	Courses addressing topics in a superficial manner	27
	Course content supporting students’ knowledge and skills	19
	The majority of courses not aligning with students’ needs	6
	Insufficient contribution to students’ professional competencies	6
	Courses failing to stimulate curiosity for learning	4
	Course content focusing more on theoretical knowledge than practice	3
	Course contents being similar to one another	1

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that elective courses are grouped under three main themes: diversity, scope, and content. The findings indicate that pre-service teachers

hold both positive and negative views regarding the content, scope, and diversity of the elective courses offered in their faculty. Pre-service teachers expressed negative opinions, stating that the diversity, content, and scope of elective courses were inadequate, that the majority of courses did not align with students' needs, failed to contribute to the development of their professional competencies, did not stimulate curiosity for learning, were not sufficiently related to the field, and that course contents were highly theoretical and repetitive. However, the findings also reveal that some pre-service teachers expressed positive views, indicating that the diversity, content, and scope of elective courses were sufficient, that the courses supported the development of students' knowledge and skills, and that they were related to the field. The view most frequently expressed by pre-service teachers was that "the diversity of elective courses is insufficient" (f=39). Selected statements reflecting pre-service teachers' views on the elective courses implemented in the faculty of education are presented below.

P12: *"There are many elective courses in my faculty, particularly in the areas of professional knowledge and general culture, that I cannot really associate with my education. For this reason, the course contents do not seem engaging or sufficient."*

P36: *"I think that the elective courses are related to our field and sufficiently diverse."*

P56: *"I believe that the diversity of elective courses is sufficient; however, their content is inadequate. All the elective courses I have taken so far were at a level that could be passed easily without even needing to attend classes. I do not think their content is sufficient in terms of contributing to students' development."*

The findings related to pre-service teachers' satisfaction with the competencies of faculty members in their faculty and departments are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Competencies of Faculty Members

Theme	Code	f
	Strong subject matter knowledge	58
Subject Matter Knowledge	Subject matter knowledge below the expected level	33
	Closely following developments related to education and their field	3
	Not keeping up with developments related to education and their field	3

	Not giving sufficient emphasis to practice in their courses	1
	Teaching courses outside their field of expertise	1
General Culture Knowledge	Sufficient general culture knowledge	49
	Limited general culture knowledge	24
Professional Knowledge	Effectively reflecting their professional expertise in their teaching	48
	Deficiencies in professional knowledge being reflected in instruction	40
	Inability to manage the assessment and evaluation process effectively	9
	Insufficient contribution of their courses to student development	5
	Students gaining new perspectives in the course	3
	Courses being conducted inefficiently	3
	Not attending their classes	2
	High effectiveness of their courses	2
	Talking about topics unrelated to the lesson during class	1

When Table 4 is examined, it is observed that the competencies of faculty members are grouped under three main themes: subject matter knowledge, general culture knowledge, and professional knowledge. It is evident that pre-service teachers generally hold positive views regarding the competencies of faculty members in their faculty and departments. Pre-service teachers expressed positive opinions, stating that faculty members possess sufficient subject matter, general culture, and professional knowledge, provide students with new perspectives, keep up with developments in education and their respective fields, and conduct their courses effectively. However, the findings also reveal that pre-service teachers expressed negative views regarding faculty members' competencies, indicating that some faculty members have insufficient subject matter, general culture, and professional knowledge, fail to manage the assessment and evaluation process effectively, do not contribute to students' development, do not follow developments in education and their fields, conduct their courses inefficiently, do not attend their classes, discuss topics unrelated to the course during class, and teach courses outside their areas of expertise. The most frequently expressed view by pre-service teachers was that faculty members have "strong subject matter knowledge" (f=58). Selected statements reflecting pre-service teachers' views on the competencies of faculty members are presented below.

P9: *“I observe that faculty members have sufficient knowledge in their fields. I see that some of them have developed themselves in many areas and try to apply current developments in education in their courses; however, some of their classes are so inefficient that I find myself wishing for the lesson to end as soon as possible.”*

P17: *“While some of our faculty members contribute greatly to our development, we see no benefit at all from some others.”*

P55: *“I think that our faculty members generally have sufficient subject matter, professional, and general culture knowledge.....However, it should also be noted that some faculty members are inadequate in terms of assessment and evaluation”*

The findings related to pre-service teachers' satisfaction with the communication skills of faculty members in their faculty and departments are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Communication Skills of Faculty Members

Theme	Code	f
Initiating Communication	Being open to communication	15
	Being closed to communication	13
	Being accessible in terms of initiating communication	8
	Not being accessible in terms of initiating communication	1
	Failing to communicate with students regarding exams	1
Maintaining Communication	Having well-developed communication skills	59
	Being open to improving communication skills	27
	Perceiving oneself as superior to students during communication	11
	Belittling students during communication	10
	Communicating with students in a friendly / equal manner	9
	Engaging in mobbing in communication with students	2
	Being closed to feedback or criticism during communication	1

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that the communication skills of faculty members are grouped under two main themes: initiating communication and maintaining communication. It is evident that the majority of pre-service teachers hold positive views regarding the communication skills of faculty members in their faculty and departments.

Pre-service teachers expressed positive opinions, stating that faculty members have well-developed communication skills, are open to communication, establish friendly and equal interactions with students, and are accessible in terms of initiating communication. However, the findings also reveal that pre-service teachers expressed negative views regarding faculty members' communication skills, indicating that some faculty members are in need of further development in this area, are closed to communication, perceive themselves as superior to students during the communication process and belittle students, are not easily accessible, fail to communicate with students regarding examinations, and are closed to feedback and criticism. The most frequently expressed view by pre-service teachers was that faculty members have "well-developed communication skills" (f= 59). Selected statements reflecting pre-service teachers' views on the communication skills of faculty members are presented below.

P12: *"It is easy to reach many faculty members and communicate with them. I think that the vast majority of them are open to communication."*

P18: *"Most of the faculty members who teach our courses have developed their communication skills. I am very satisfied with the way some of our faculty members communicate with us; they act as both a friend and a teacher."*

P27: *"Most of them have good communication skills, but it is difficult to communicate with some faculty members. We cannot even ask questions. We cannot talk to some of them. They have a condescending attitude and look at us as if belittling us. On the other hand, some are very understanding and willing to listen."*

The findings related to pre-service teachers' satisfaction with the interactions they establish with faculty members in their faculty and departments are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Interactions with Faculty Members

Theme	Code	f
Initiation of Interaction	Faculty members being reluctant to initiate interaction	15
	Interactions being established only during class	9
	Interactions being easily established	9
	Faculty members being willing to initiate interaction	6
	Interactions being strong	56

Adequacy of Interaction	Interactions being at a low level	21
Quality of Interaction	Interactions being positive and sincere	19
	Interactions contributing to student development	9
	Interactions being negative and artificial	4
	Interactions being limited	4
	Faculty members not interacting with all students at the same level	1

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that the interactions established with faculty members are grouped under three main themes: initiation of interaction, adequacy of interaction, and quality of interaction. It is evident that the majority of pre-service teachers hold positive views regarding the interactions they establish with faculty members in their faculty and departments. Pre-service teachers expressed positive opinions, stating that these interactions are strong, positive, and sincere, contribute to student development, that faculty members are willing to establish interaction, and that interactions can be established easily. However, the findings also reveal that some pre-service teachers expressed negative views, indicating that the interactions established with faculty members are at a low level, negative, and artificial, that faculty members are reluctant to initiate interaction, that interactions are limited only to classroom settings, and that faculty members do not interact with all students in the same manner. The most frequently expressed view by pre-service teachers was that “the interactions established with faculty members are strong” ($f = 56$). Selected statements reflecting pre-service teachers’ views on their interactions with faculty members are presented below.

P8: *“I do not engage in any interaction with faculty members outside the classroom.”*

P9: *“There is a sincere communication network and a positive state of interaction with faculty members.”*

P10: *“I cannot say that it is very satisfactory. Unfortunately, we experience difficulties in terms of interaction; however, this does not apply to all faculty members.”*

The findings related to pre-service teachers’ satisfaction with the opportunities provided to them by their faculty are presented in Table 7.

Table 7*Opportunities Provided by Faculty of Education*

Theme	Code	f
Academic Opportunities	Library services not meeting students' needs	19
	Comprehensive library services	9
	High-quality academic opportunities	4
	Insufficient academic opportunities	3
Social Opportunities	Limited areas for student socialization	37
	Inadequate announcement of events organized by the faculty	3
Supportive Opportunities (Nutrition, cleanliness, security, technology)	Limited food options	17
	Insufficient technological facilities	12
	Poor quality of meals served in the cafeteria	11
	Students' concerns regarding safety	5
	Nutrition facilities meeting students' needs	4
	Failure to provide clean environments for students	3
Sportive Opportunities	Cafeteria service hours being incompatible with students' schedules	1
	Lack of opportunities for students in the field of sports	19
Cultural Opportunities	Very limited number of cultural activities	12
Overall Opportunities (General)	Insufficient opportunities provided by the faculty	38
	Sufficient opportunities provided by the faculty	12
	Offered opportunities not contributing to student development	1

When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that the opportunities provided by faculty of education to pre-service teachers are grouped under six main themes: academic, social, supportive, sportive, cultural, and overall opportunities. It is evident that the majority of pre-service teachers hold negative views regarding the opportunities provided by their faculty. The participants stated that the academic, social, cultural, sportive, nutritional, technological, security, and cleanliness-related facilities offered by their faculty are insufficient and that the provided opportunities do not contribute to their personal development. However, a small number of pre-service teachers indicated that they find the opportunities offered by their faculty adequate. The most frequently expressed view

was that “the opportunities provided by the faculty are insufficient” (f = 38). Selected statements reflecting pre-service teachers’ views on the opportunities provided by the faculty are presented below.

P13: *“There are no areas where students can socialize.....I also think that cultural and sportive opportunities are inadequate. The activities that students can participate in free of charge and use for self-development are very limited.”*

P14: *“There is no internet connection, let alone a sports area, we do not even have a garden where we can breathe. The school is like a public passage where anyone can enter freely. The cafeteria hours are incompatible with our class schedules and are too limited, making it almost impossible to eat properly.”*

P29: *“The restrooms of the school are in very poor condition. I do not think that proper cleaning is carried out. They are extremely dirty and I do not even want to use them.”*

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the findings of the study, it was determined that pre-service teachers’ satisfaction with compulsory courses is at a limited level. The majority of participants stated that the content, scope, and diversity of compulsory courses are inadequate. In contrast to the findings of this study, the literature indicates that pre-service teachers generally report a moderate level of satisfaction regarding the content, scope, and diversity of compulsory courses. Indeed, some studies have reported that pre-service teachers are moderately satisfied with the content and scope of compulsory courses offered in their faculty and departments (Boran & Yanpar Yelken, 2020), that they are moderately satisfied with courses and curricula (Jafarova & Demirtaş, 2020; Şahin, 2009), and that they find the courses offered by the faculty to be sufficient (Uygur & Yanpar Yelken, 2017). In another study, university students stated that they were satisfied with the diversity of courses offered by their faculty and considered the curriculum content to be adequate (Awang & İsmail, 2010). This discrepancy may be attributed to the changes implemented in teacher education programs in recent years, which may have raised pre-service teachers’ expectations, while the existing courses remain insufficient in meeting these expectations. Furthermore, the increased demand for higher-quality,

practice-oriented, and flexible learning experiences in the post-pandemic period may constitute another contributing factor. Therefore, the divergence between the findings of this study and the existing literature may be associated with the evolving needs of students and the transforming nature of contemporary learning experiences.

Although pre-service teachers stated that compulsory courses contribute to their development, they also expressed dissatisfaction with the limited diversity of these courses. This indicates that pre-service teachers believe there are insufficient course options that would enable them to develop in different areas and correspond to their interests and needs. Accordingly, it can be argued that the current structure of compulsory courses does not adequately address individual differences. Another notable finding of the study is the inadequacy of compulsory courses in terms of topic diversity and depth. Although participants stated that compulsory courses reflect the fundamental subjects of the field, they also emphasized that these courses do not offer opportunities for in-depth learning. This suggests that pre-service teachers perceive compulsory courses as superficial and repetitive. It was further understood that while compulsory courses are sufficient at a basic level in providing subject matter knowledge, they fall short in fostering higher-order skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical application. Similarly, another study found that pre-service teachers believe their faculty offer core courses that enable them to acquire competencies related to their field (Donat Bacioğlu & Vural, 2018).

According to the findings of the study, although the majority of pre-service teachers stated that the content of compulsory courses is up-to-date and aligned with students' needs, they also emphasized that the topics are addressed in a superficial manner and that the intended learning outcomes are not effectively conveyed. Additionally, the lack of practice-oriented activities in compulsory courses was perceived by pre-service teachers as a significant deficiency in terms of preparing them for the teaching profession. The predominance of theoretical content, limited opportunities for practical experience, and the insufficient support for active learning prevent pre-service teachers from acquiring the level of professional competence they expect from these courses. In contrast to the findings of this study, another study reported that pre-service teachers learned a substantial portion of the concepts and practices related to their profession through the courses they took and had opportunities to reinforce their theoretical knowledge through

practical applications (Uygur & Yanpar Yelken, 2017). This discrepancy may be attributed to the limited inclusion of practice-based activities and the predominantly theoretical structure of compulsory courses in the faculty where the present study was conducted. This highlights that variations in instructional approaches, teaching methods, and opportunities for application across universities may significantly influence students' perceptions of satisfaction. Furthermore, a small number of pre-service teachers in the current study stated that compulsory courses were instructive and beneficial. This suggests that experiences may vary depending on the quality of specific courses or the instructional approaches adopted by individual faculty members.

The findings of the study indicate that pre-service teachers' satisfaction with elective courses, similar to compulsory courses, is limited. The majority of participants stated that the diversity of elective courses does not fully meet students' expectations. Although some pre-service teachers noted that the courses are offered across a wide range, this was not sufficient to increase the overall level of satisfaction. This suggests that pre-service teachers do not perceive a genuine sense of "freedom of choice" within the elective course offerings. The results of this study are consistent with previous research highlighting the inadequacy of elective courses. In studies conducted by Eriş and Çapkıner (2012) and Donat Bacıoğlu and Vural (2018), pre-service teachers similarly reported that there were not enough elective courses in terms of number and diversity to meet their interests and needs.

The findings of the study show that the majority of participants perceived the scope of elective courses as limited. Although some pre-service teachers stated that elective courses addressed topics in depth, this was not sufficient to create an overall perception that the scope of elective courses in the faculty of education was adequate. Moreover, a small number of pre-service teachers indicated that elective courses were aligned with field-specific competencies and supported professional knowledge. This suggests that the quality of elective courses may vary depending on the course content and the instructional approach adopted by the faculty member. Overall, it appears that elective courses remain limited to the transmission of surface-level knowledge rather than fostering the in-depth development of field-related competencies. Although some pre-service teachers reported that certain elective courses contributed to their knowledge and skills, these contributions do not seem to represent a general pattern across all elective

courses. Another point of criticism raised by the participants is that the content of elective courses does not stimulate curiosity or a desire to learn. Furthermore, the predominantly theoretical nature of elective courses and the lack of practice-based activities were identified as significant shortcomings. This indicates that pre-service teachers do not encounter the flexible, student-centered, and practice-oriented learning environments they expect from elective courses.

According to the findings of the study, pre-service teachers generally hold positive views regarding the competencies of faculty members; however, important deficiencies were also identified in certain areas. The majority of participants reported that faculty members possess strong subject matter knowledge. This suggests that faculty members have adequate expertise in their respective fields and teach their courses on a sound scientific basis. This finding is supported by previous studies in the literature. Research conducted by Donat Bacioğlu and Vural (2018), Saydan (2008), Erdoğan *et al.* (2005), Uygur and Yanpar Yelken (2017), and Awang and Ismail (2010) similarly revealed that pre-service teachers and university students perceive faculty members as knowledgeable in their fields. However, a considerable number of pre-service teachers in the present study stated that some faculty members do not possess the expected level of subject matter knowledge. Comparable findings can also be found in the literature, indicating that certain faculty members lack sufficient knowledge in their areas of specialization (Eriş & Çapkıner, 2012; Şen & Erişen, 2002). These results suggest that there are notable differences among faculty members in terms of their knowledge and professional competence.

The variation in pre-service teachers' perceptions regarding faculty members' engagement with developments in education and their respective fields also appears to stem from differences in faculty members' professional competencies. Pre-service teachers reported that some faculty members lack sufficient academic renewal and professional currency. While participants stated that most faculty members possess adequate general cultural knowledge, they also noted that a portion of faculty members have a limited general cultural background. This indicates that students place importance not only on subject matter expertise but also on a broader cultural foundation in the teaching–learning process. Contrary to the findings of the present study, another study reported that pre-service teachers considered faculty members' general cultural

knowledge to be insufficient (Şen & Erişen, 2002). This discrepancy may be attributed to changes in the qualifications and academic profiles of faculty members over time. Increased access to graduate education opportunities, academic development programs, and international resources may have contributed to strengthening faculty members' general cultural knowledge in more recent years.

The findings of the study indicate that most pre-service teachers believe faculty members effectively reflect their professional expertise in their teaching. However, despite this positive perception, several concerns were raised regarding deficiencies in faculty members' professional knowledge, which were reported to negatively affect the instructional process. Participants noted that some faculty members were unable to manage the assessment and evaluation process effectively and that, in certain cases, courses did not sufficiently contribute to student development. Issues such as unproductive class sessions and faculty members' absenteeism were also highlighted as factors that reduce students' satisfaction levels. These findings are consistent with previous research in the literature. Studies conducted by Şen and Erişen (2002), Murat *et al.* (2006), Aksu *et al.* (2008), Arslantaş (2011), and Eriş and Çapkıner (2012) similarly revealed that pre-service teachers perceive faculty members as insufficient in assessment and evaluation practices. Conversely, some pre-service teachers in the present study reported that they gained new perspectives from the courses and found them to be highly effective. Likewise, another study found that the courses offered by the faculty contributed to students' intellectual development (Awang & Ismail, 2010). These contrasting findings suggest that there are individual differences among faculty members regarding their pedagogical competencies and instructional approaches. Overall, the findings indicate that while faculty members generally possess strong subject matter knowledge and general cultural knowledge, there remain areas requiring improvement particularly in professional competencies, assessment and evaluation practices, and the management of the instructional process.

The findings of the study reveal that pre-service teachers generally hold positive views regarding the communication skills of faculty members; however, the quality of communication varies considerably among faculty members. A substantial portion of participants stated that faculty members are open to communication and able to initiate effective interactions with students. Similarly, Donat Bacıoğlu and Vural (2018) found

that students were able to communicate comfortably with faculty members during class. Nevertheless, some pre-service teachers reported that certain faculty members are closed to communication and are not accessible when students attempt to establish contact. Comparable studies in the literature have also indicated that faculty members' communication skills are perceived as insufficient by pre-service teachers (Şen & Erişen, 2002; Arslantaş, 2011). The overall findings suggest that although faculty members generally exhibit well-developed communication skills, these skills are not consistently demonstrated across all faculty members.

The study also revealed that some pre-service teachers feel discomfort due to faculty members' perceived superiority or occasionally dismissive attitudes during the communication process. This suggests that when faculty members adopt a power- or authority-oriented approach, negative emotional responses may arise among students. In addition, behaviors such as being closed to feedback, showing insensitivity to criticism, or lack of communication during examination processes were identified as factors that weaken the quality of interaction. Contrary to the findings of the present study, Awang and Ismail (2010) found that faculty members provided timely feedback regarding students' academic progress. This discrepancy may be explained by differences in faculty members' understanding of feedback, their communication styles, and the degree to which they adopt student-centered approaches. Furthermore, structural factors such as increasing student numbers, heavy workloads, and time constraints may limit faculty members' ability to provide effective feedback, thereby diminishing the quality of communication. Overall, although pre-service teachers generally perceive faculty members' communication skills as adequate, their experiences vary considerably in terms of the form, depth, and continuity of these interactions.

The findings of the study indicate that pre-service teachers' experiences regarding their interactions with faculty members vary considerably. While a large proportion of participants reported establishing strong interactions with faculty members, a noteworthy number stated that these interactions were limited in depth and that some faculty members did not engage in sufficiently close communication with students. This suggests that not all students have equal opportunities for interaction and that individual differences may be overlooked during the instructional process. Some participants further expressed that certain faculty members were reluctant to initiate interaction and that communication was

predominantly restricted to classroom settings. This indicates that interactions between faculty members and students often remain confined to academic boundaries, providing limited opportunities for engagement outside the classroom. These findings are supported by previous research, which also reported that faculty members were perceived as inaccessible outside of class time (Şen & Erişen, 2002; Arslantaş, 2011). In contrast to the results of the present study, another study found that faculty members were generally accessible after class and during office hours (Awang & Ismail, 2010). This discrepancy may be attributed to institutional differences in interaction culture and variations in faculty members' attitudes toward student engagement. Structural factors such as increased academic workload and growing student numbers may also reduce faculty accessibility, contributing to these differing outcomes. On the other hand, some pre-service teachers in the present study stated that they were able to communicate easily with faculty members and that these interactions occurred in a sincere and supportive atmosphere. Similarly, Arslantaş (2011) reported that faculty members established warm and balanced relationships with pre-service teachers. In contrast, another study found that faculty members were insufficient in displaying sincerity and warmth toward students (Şen & Erişen, 2002). Together, these findings highlight that substantial individual differences exist in faculty members' communication approaches, suggesting that instructors' communication styles, personality traits, and instructional orientations directly influence the quality of interactions with students.

The findings of the study indicate that interactions with faculty members are generally characterized as positive, sincere, and supportive of student development. However, some pre-service teachers reported that these interactions were limited, superficial, or at times insincere. This suggests that certain faculty members may adopt a more formal or perfunctory approach in their interactions with students. In addition, a small number of participants stated that faculty members did not engage with all students at the same level or in an equitable manner. This finding implies that the principle of equality in student–faculty interactions is not always fully upheld. In contrast to the results of the present study, Awang and Ismail (2010) found that faculty members treated students fairly and impartially. This discrepancy may be explained by variations in instructors' attitudes, classroom behaviors, and interaction styles. Furthermore, factors such as large class sizes and limited communication channels may reduce faculty

members' capacity to interact equally with all students. Overall, although pre-service teachers are generally satisfied with their interactions with faculty members, the findings highlight areas in need of improvement regarding the quality, continuity, and inclusiveness of these interactions.

The findings of the study reveal that pre-service teachers have a low level of satisfaction with the opportunities provided by faculty of education. A large proportion of participants reported that the academic, social, technological, supportive, cultural, and sportive opportunities offered by their faculty are insufficient. From an academic standpoint, it was observed that pre-service teachers are unable to fully benefit from library services and academic support systems. Limitations related to the currency, accessibility, and diversity of library resources appear to restrict pre-service teachers' academic work. Although some participants stated that the academic opportunities provided by their faculty were adequate and of good quality, these positive views were not sufficient to alter the overall negative trend. The findings of this study are in line with previous research. Awang and Ismail (2010) and Boran and Yanpar Yelken (2020) similarly found that students perceived the resources and services offered by faculty libraries as inadequate.

In terms of social opportunities, one of the most frequently emphasized issues among pre-service teachers is the inadequacy of spaces and activities that facilitate socialization within their faculty. The lack of environments that support students' social development—alongside their academic success—weakens their sense of belonging and renders the university experience one-dimensional. Students reported that the number of social activities is limited and that announcements for such activities are insufficient, thereby restricting faculty-level interaction and negatively influencing social integration. The findings of the present study are supported by previous research. Studies conducted by Erdoğan *et al.* (2005), Güleş *et al.* (2011), and Eriş and Çapkıner (2012) also revealed that students perceive social spaces and extracurricular activities in their faculties as inadequate. However, contrasting findings exist in the literature, showing that some students perceive the available activities as sufficient and report that participation is easily achievable (Awang & Ismail, 2010; Uygur & Yanpar Yelken, 2017). This discrepancy may stem from variations across universities in the allocation of physical spaces, resources, and institutional support for student activities.

With regard to supportive opportunities, the findings indicate that pre-service teachers experience significant dissatisfaction, particularly in the areas of nutrition, hygiene, safety, and technology. Issues frequently mentioned by participants include the quality of cafeteria services, the limited variety of menu options, and the incompatibility of service hours with students' schedules. These findings are consistent with previous studies. Awang and Ismail (2010) reported that university students perceived the food options available in the faculty cafeteria as insufficient. Similarly, the study conducted by Güleş *et al.* (2011) found that students had low levels of satisfaction with cafeteria and dining hall services. In contrast to the findings of the present study, Uygur and Yanpar Yelken (2017) reported that pre-service teachers considered the food and beverage services offered by the university to be adequate. This discrepancy may be attributed to variations among institutions in terms of budget allocation, infrastructure quality, and service planning related to cafeteria and dining hall operations.

With regard to technological opportunities, the findings indicate that pre-service teachers have low levels of satisfaction with the technological infrastructure of their faculty, including computer laboratories, smart boards and projectors in classrooms, and campus internet access. Insufficient technological infrastructure negatively affects students' experiences, particularly in digital learning processes. This finding is consistent with previous research. Uygur and Yanpar Yelken (2017), Beydoğan and Beydoğan (2018), and Boran and Yanpar Yelken (2020) similarly reported that pre-service teachers perceived the physical and technological facilities of their faculties as inadequate. Likewise, studies conducted by Şahin (2009), Awang and Ismail (2010), and Özçakır Sümen and Çağlayan (2013) found that university students viewed their faculties' computer laboratories as insufficient, inaccessible, and in need of improvement. In contrast to the findings of the present study, other research has demonstrated that students in faculties of education were satisfied with the physical conditions of their institutions (Eriş & Çapkıner, 2012) and moderately satisfied with the resources and computer facilities provided (Jafarova & Demirtaş, 2020). These discrepancies may be attributed to institutional differences in technological investment, the currency and maintenance of equipment, and the adequacy of existing technological resources relative to student population size. Additionally, the increasing expectations of students regarding digital learning environments in recent years may have heightened perceptions of inadequacy.

Concerns expressed regarding safety and cleanliness also make it difficult for students to feel comfortable and secure within the faculty environment. In contrast to the findings of the present study, another study reported that students perceived their faculty as safe and secure (Awang & Ismail, 2010). This discrepancy may be attributed to variations across institutions in terms of security policies, physical environmental conditions, and the consistency with which cleaning services are provided. Participants further indicated that opportunities for sports activities are insufficient and that very few cultural events are organized within the faculty. This suggests that the environments necessary to support the multidimensional development of pre-service teachers are limited. Finally, most participants stated that the opportunities provided by the faculty are generally inadequate and do not contribute to their academic or personal development to the expected extent. Overall, the findings of the study indicate that faculties of education need to be improved in terms of the academic, social, cultural, technological, supportive, and sportive opportunities offered to students. Creating inclusive and enriched learning environments that support pre-service teachers not only academically but also socially and emotionally will enhance their sense of satisfaction and belonging toward the faculty.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the findings of the study, it is recommended that faculties of education adopt a multidimensional approach to improving instructional processes, faculty competencies, and institutional opportunities in order to enhance pre-service teachers' satisfaction with their faculties. First, courses should be updated in terms of diversity, content, and scope, and restructured in accordance with students' interests, needs, and professional goals. Elective courses should offer students a genuine opportunity to choose from options that align with their areas of interest. In compulsory courses, course content should be enriched in line with current developments, and greater emphasis should be placed on practices that contribute to the development of professional competencies. Compulsory and elective courses should be structured in a complementary manner. Both compulsory and elective courses should include not only theoretical knowledge but also a greater number of practice-oriented activities, as well as project- and research-based learning opportunities. Faculty members should be encouraged to keep their subject

matter knowledge up to date, adopt contemporary instructional methods, and demonstrate an empathetic, open, and supportive communication style with students. In addition, in-service training programs should be organized to strengthen faculty members' professional development, as well as their communication and interaction skills. Opportunities should also be created for faculty members to interact with students not only in class but also in out-of-class environments. Communication within faculties of education should be transformed from a one-way structure into one that is based on mutual feedback. Pre-service teachers' views should be taken into consideration in the processes of planning course content, designing faculty activities, and improving learning environments. Furthermore, the physical, technological, social, and cultural facilities of faculties of education should be enhanced with a student-centered perspective. Libraries, laboratories, dining halls, sports areas, and social spaces should be improved in terms of both quality and accessibility. Finally, faculty administrations should regularly collect student feedback and make improvements based on the insights obtained.

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All participants took part voluntarily and provided informed consent.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available due to ethical restrictions but can be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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