THE EXPECTATIONS OF POST GRADUATE STUDENTS FROM ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS: THE EXAMPLE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES INSTITUTION

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Abstract

In this study, the question of "What are the expectations of graduate students from academic staff members" has been focused so that the expectations of graduate students from academic staff members and to which extent they can attain these expectations could be found out.

While determining the working group, maximum variation sampling, one of the methods of purposive sampling was used. At this point, our working group includes 9 master students and 10 doctorate (PhD) students in the educational sciences institution of Gazi University in 2009-2010 academic year. Measuring tools developed by the researchers of this study was used to obtain the data, and the technique of category analysis was used while analyzing the data.

As a consequence of this study, it has been found out that there are two kinds of sub-dimensions which are respectively Communication Skills related with the active learning process of graduate students and Personal Qualities along with Academic Adequacy related with academic staff members in terms of Academic Proficiency. There are some characteristics like being a model and ability to empathize under the sub-dimension of Personal Qualities while there are some characteristics like ability to empathize, the ability to use Turkish in an efficient way, use of body language and being objective under the sub-dimension of Communications Skills related with the academic staff members.

Key Words: Graduate Education, Efficient Learning, Academic Proficiency

INTRODUCTION

Graduate education is a planned, programmed education process in which individuals are directed to produce technology, dominate the development of their countries through searching and which comes after the undergraduate degree (Varış, 1984). The importance of this education process cannot be overlooked since it establishes an efficient relationship between student and the academic staff. At this juncture, one of the most important factors that increase the efficiency of graduate education is "the academic staff members" (Alliott and Shin, 2002; Knight, 1984; Erdoğan and Uşak, 2005). Academic staff members must show better performances in classroom so that

they could contribute to the efficiency of education in a better way. According to Çatalbaş (1999), it is essential to choose the right and suitable methods to be able to establish student-teacher relationship. There are many techniques and methods that an academic staff member could use. What is significant is that academic staff member must choose the best methods suitable for his personal quality and student's personality along with such characteristics as methods essential for certain subjects and academic member's ability of identifying and choosing these techniques.

One of the essential problems that we can face while creating an efficient learning environment is the establishment of student-academic staff member relationship which is possible with the efficient use of language and body language along with the ability of oral and written communication. When academic staff members benefit from these in an influential way, then an efficient learning environment could be sustained. According to the results of the research carried out by Mcdowell (1993), teacher in the position of instructor, should use oral and written communication skills in an influential way so that an effectual relationship could be constructed. Likewise, Frymier (1993) also points out that smiling, one of the speechless communication skills, is primarily crucial while the subject that teacher is explaining is secondly important.

While identifying the abilities of academic staff members' personal qualities (communication, efficiency in his subject, academic pedagogy etc.) towards active learning, the perceptions of the graduate students who are on the way of becoming science persons are significant. According to Popli (2005), identifying the quality of education given by universities is a crucial point of departure for universities attaching importance to the quality studies of universities.

METHOD

The question of "What are the expectations of graduate students from academic staff members" has been focused so that the expectations of graduate students from academic staff members and to which extent they can attain these expectations could be found out. In this context, phenomenological pattern, one of the patterns used in qualitative searching method, has been benefited. Phenomenological pattern focuses on the things of which we are aware, but about which we do not have detailed knowledge. We could come across with a variety of phenomena like occasions, experiences, perceptions, tendencies, concepts. Phenomenological studies form an important basis for us to have a search upon subjects about which we do not have detailed knowledge, but of which we are aware (Yıldırım and Şimsek, 2008). While determining the working group, maximum variation sampling, one of the methods of purposive sampling, has been used. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008), the objective of maximum variation sampling is to create an obscure sampling and to reveal the differences in the ideas of the ones studying upon this. At this point, our working group includes 9 master students (one from the department of computer education and instructional technology, eight from the department of elementary mathematics education) and 10 doctorate (PhD) students (three from the department of computer education and instructional technology, two from the department of elementary mathematics education, three from the department of elementary science education, one from the department of physics education and one from the department of primary school teacher) in the educational

sciences institution of Gazi University in 2009-2010 academic years.

Through document analysis method used as measuring tool for data in phenomenological studies, the problems that students run through while registering courses have been focused. To be able to focus upon data, the measuring tool developed by researchers has been benefited, and some processes are run through which are respectively as such: 1) identifying the problems: finding out the objective and questions 2) writing the questions: creating a draft form, 3) taking the opinions of experts and creating pre-application forms, and 4) carrying out the essential processes. For the content validity of draft form, the advices of experts were applied, and Kendall's Tau Correlation Coefficient has been identified in association with the feedbacks of the experts' advices. Besides, consistency among experts and the reliability of measuring tool have been determined. Categorical analysis, one of the techniques of content analysis, has been benefited for the analysis of data. According to Bilgin (2006), categorical analysis could mean the fragmentation of a certain message into units firstly and then categorization of these units under certain criteria.

FINDINGS

From the point of view what the expectations of the post-graduate students are in post-graduate education in terms of course selection, to what extent they realize such expectations and this affects their course selection, and the students were posed four open-ended questions, and accordingly, some themes were created within the scope of the data obtained herefrom. Thereafter, category groups were constituted in respect thereof. The frequencies and their percentages arising from such categories are demonstrated in Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Table 1. Range of the Frequency and Percentage According to the Views from Post-Graduate Students with respect to the Dimension of Effective Instruction

Effective Instruction	f	%
Objectives and Attitudes of the Students	3	4
Skills of Scientific Process	5	7
Comprehensibility and Simplicity of the Content	1	1
Use of Methods and Strategies	4	6
Skills of Communication	7	10
Adequacy of Area	6	8
Academic Pedagogy	3	4
Counseling Services	3	4
An Instruction without Memorizing	5	7
Regard of Views from Students	3	4
Ability to Produce Knowledge	3	4
Associating Knowledge with Daily Life	5	7
Active Participation in the Process	3	4
Persistency of the Knowledge	4	6
Use of Materials	3	4
Target Group	2	3
Assessment and Evaluation	5	7
Physical Conditions	4	6
Classroom Management	3	4
Total	72	100

As indicated in Table 1, the frequencies and percentages consisting of the behaviors regarding the dimension of "Effective Learning" are provided. When we look at Table 1, we can notice that featuring views concerning effective learning dimension of the post-graduate students cover *Communication Skills* (10%), *Adequacy of Area* (8%), *Skills of Scientific Process, Instruction without Memorizing, Association with Daily Life and Assessment & Evaluation* (7%).

Table 2. Range of the Frequency and Percentage According to the Views from Post-Graduate Students with respect to the Dimension of *Effective Instructor*

Effective Instructor		f	%
	Enjoying One's Profession	3	4
	Being a Model	7	9
	Skill of Communication	5	6
	Moral Norms	2	3
	Encouragement	4	5
Personal Qualities	Intimacy and Sincerity	3	4
	Ability to Empathize	5	6
	Using Body Language	3	4
	Diction	4	5
	Efficient Use of Time	3	4
	Being Democratic	4	5
	Knowledge of Subject Area	5	6
	Academic Pedagogy	4	5
	Skill of Communication	6	8
	Openness to Innovations	3	4
Academic Proficiency	Accessibility	4	5
	Time Allocation	1	1
	Providing Active Participation	5	6
	Implementation Basis	5	6
	Activation of Scientific Processes	3	4
Total		79	**100**

As indicated in Table 2, the frequencies and percentages related to two sub-dimensions consisting of the behaviors regarding the dimension of "Effective Instructor" are provided. When we review Table 2, two sub-dimensions are being formed with regard to "Effective Instructor" in the dimension of post-graduate students including "Personal Qualities" and "Academic Proficiencies". In the sub-dimension of *"Personal Qualities"*, the behaviors of *"Being a Model"* (9%), *"Skill of Communication"* (6%) and *"Ability to Empathize"* (6%) come into prominence. In the sub-dimension of "Academic Proficiencies", the leading behaviors are *Skill of Communication* (8%), *Knowledge of Subject Area* (6%), *Providing Active Participation* (6%) and *Implementation Basis* (6%).

Table 3. Range of the Frequency and Percentage According to the Views from Post-Graduate Students with respect to the Dimension of *Communication Skills*

Skills of Communication	f	%
Using Body Language	4	13
Proper Usage of Turkish Language	5	16
Ability to Empathize	7	23
Accessibility	4	13
Creating Opportunities	3	10
Objectiveness	4	13
Being Positive	2	6
Simplicity and Sincerity	2	6
Total	31	**100**

As indicated in Table 3, the frequencies and percentages of the behaviors regarding the dimension of "Communication Skills" are provided. When we look into Table 3, we can notice that in the dimension of "Communication Skills" belonging to the post-graduate students, the featuring behaviors are *Ability to Empathize* (23%), *Proper Usage of Turkish Language* (16%), *Usage of Body Language* (13%) and *Objectiveness* (13%).

Table 4. Range of the Frequency and Percentage According to the Views from Post-Graduate Students with respect to the Dimension of *Instruction Strategies and Approaches*

Instruction Strategies and Approaches	f	%
Considering Individual Differences	3	9
Formation of Meaningful Learning	4	12
Development of Scientific Process Skills	4	12
Formation of Multiple Ways to Think	5	16
Persistency of Learning	3	9
Encouragement	2	6
Providing Active Participation	4	12
Use of Technology	5	15
Use of Laboratory	3	9
Total	33	**100**

As indicated in Table 4, the frequencies and percentages of the behaviors regarding the dimension of "Instruction Strategies and Approches" are provided. When we look into Table 4, we can notice that with respect to the instructor in the dimension of "Instruction Strategies and Approaches" of post-graduate students, the featuring behaviors cover *Formation of Multiple Ways to Think* (16%), *Use of Technology* (15%), *Formation of Meaningful Learning* (12%), *Development of Scientific Process Skills* (12%) and *Provision of Active Participation* (12%).

DISCUSSION

Among the views of post-graduate students related to the dimension of *effective learning*, the view about *Communication Skills* shines out. Accordingly, it is seen that the expectations of post-graduate students from the instructors are considerably high at this point. At the point of communication skills, according to Celep (2002), the perception of self-value is developed in the student who feels

that the instructor regards himself/herself. His/her self-esteem is increased and he/she becomes happy of being understood. Consequently, he/she bears cordial emotions towards the instructor. These emotions drive the mutual positive climate of learning. Çakmak (1995) studied the expectations of the post-graduate students in the relations between instructor and students. When students' expectations are reviewed, the views that "the instructor should treat the students equally; the instructors should understand well the students' psychologies; the instructors should be able to contact their students in every respect, and so forth" are the most focused test items in which the participation is the highest. Taş (2009) studied the reflection of the positive – negative behaviors by instructors within the classroom into the communication between the instructor and the students. According to the research findings, the majority of the students stated that they are not appreciated by the instructors, the instructors do not share anything in various matters in the classroom, the instructors do not evoke affection and trust towards the students, they do not treat anyone in an unprejudiced and equal manner, they regard unenthusiastic lecturing as communication deficiency. The majority of the instructors state that they did not see any communication deficiencies in respect thereof.

Two sub-dimensions are being formed with regard to "*Effective Instructor*" in the dimension of post-graduate students including "Personal Qualities" and "Academic Proficiencies". In the sub-dimension of "*Personal Qualities*", the behaviors of "*Being a Model*" and "*Ability to Empathize*" come into prominence. The instructor is a model for the students in respect of the students' character development. Such personal qualities as physical nature, the talent to harmony and creation, speech style, facial expressions, neatness, and so on pertaining to the instructors are of importance. The qualities of the instructors which they possess in the position of instructing people will directly affect the student behaviors (Açıkgöz, 2003). Effective listening is the evidence of real understanding by the listener. This evidence forces the continuation of the speech and to get to the roof of the problem. Effective listening and the impression obtained from the messages of the source by the listener mean the expression by the listener with his/her own words. Effective listening is "Empathy" (Altıntaş, 2001). In the sub-dimension of "Academic Proficiencies", the leading behaviors are *Knowledge of Subject Area* and *Implementation Basis*. Şen and Erişen (2002) found out that the majority of the instructors demonstrate the behavior of "understanding the basic concepts and principles related to the subject area". In the same research, few instructors are regarded in class management of in-class instruction activities as sufficient by the students.

We can notice that with respect to the instructor in the dimension of "Instruction Strategies and Approaches" of post-graduate students, the featuring behaviors cover *Formation of Multiple Ways to Think, Use of Technology, Formation of Meaningful Learning, Development of Scientific Process Skills* and *Provision of Active Participation*. In the research aiming at *evaluation of in-class instruction activities by instructors*, it was found out that out of 28 items at total, 15 of them are regarded as too insufficient and the remaining are regarded as sufficient with respect to in-class education activities by the instructors. *While the gender and class levels of the students constitute difference in the perceptions of the instructors in level of realizing in-class activities, it was also found that their departments do not constitute a diffence.*

CONCLUSION

In the effective learning dimension, the post-graduate students expect the behaviors of *Communication Skills* (10%), *Adequacy of Area* (8%), *Skills of Scientific Process, Instruction without Memorizing, Association with Daily Life, and Assessment & Evaluation* (7%) from the instructors to demostrate effectively.

Two sub-dimensions are being formed with regard to "*Effective Instructor*" in the dimension including "Personal Qualities" and "Academic Proficiencies". The students have expectations about the behaviors of *Being Model* (9%), *Skill of Communication* (6%), *Ability to Empathize* (6%) in the "Personal Qualities" sub-dimension, and the behaviors of *Communication Skill* (8%), *Knowledge of Subject Area* (6%), *Provision of Active Participation* (6%) and *Implementation Basis* (6%) in the sub-dimension of "Academic Proficiencies".

We can notice that in the dimension of "Communication Skills" belonging to the post-graduate students, the featuring behaviors are *Ability to Empathize* (23%), *Proper Usage of Turkish Language* (16%), *Usage of Body Language* (13%) and *Objectiveness* (13%) and expectations in this respect are considerably high.

We can notice that with respect to the instructor in the dimension of "Instruction Strategies and Approaches" of post-graduate students, the featuring behaviors cover *Formation of Multiple Ways to Think* (16%), *Use of Technology* (15%), *Formation of Meaningful Learning* (12%), *Development of Scientific Process Skills* (12%) and *Provision of Active Participation* (12%) and the expectations in respect thereof are very high as well.

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