

The Relationship between Pre-service Teachers' Lifelong Learning Tendencies and the Quality of University Life*

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ABSTRACT This study aims to examine the relationship between pre-service teachers' lifelong learning tendencies and their perceptions about the quality of university life with respect to certain variables (their gender, subject-areas, and graduation status). The pre-service teachers (n= 552) in the spring semester of the 2014-2015 academic year at Abant Izzet Baysal University, Bolu-Turkey formed the study group, and it was designed as a survey study. The quantitative data were collected through a "Quality of Faculty Life Scale" and a "Lifelong Learning Tendencies Scale". The data were analyzed using the SPSS for Windows 20 Program and for the analysis of the data, the mean and standard deviation scores were calculated, an independent samples t-test was used and the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient scores were calculated. The results of the study revealed a significant relationship between the quality of faculty life and the lifelong learning tendencies of pre-service teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Today, information technology has effects on educational institutions. In this respect, university administrations are required to revise their administrations, institutional structures, their internal processes and procedures in order to keep pace with developments observed in the information society (Titrek et al. 2013). In today's world, education does not only mean the level of knowledge obtained by completing a series of educational institutions. That is why education and private "learning" is more likely defined as a process, which needs to continue throughout one's life. Lifelong learning is a matter of fact that European civilizations have been trying to develop in order to improve their mechanisms and materialize with educational and career development politics according to the human resources. The concept of *Lifelong Learning (LL)* can be examined in different aspects. But the concept, in its most general meaning, can be identified as a person constantly updating his/her knowledge, skills, and competence in a lifelong process (Toprak and Erdogan 2012). According to Guven et al. (2015) lifelong learning includes individuals' learning at any age, in any place and in any subject regarding individual needs and organizing planned activities to meet this individual needs.

It is possible to approach the lifelong learning concept from different directions according to its philosophy, age era, or level of education.

The UNESCO General Conference has been defining different approaches to this concept since 1976. That is why lifelong learning is considered as a structure which aims to maximize potential in order to improve the knowledge, skills, and competence apart from the educational system (Coskun 2009). In consideration of this approach and similar ones, it can be seen that the literature presents a number of studies that have been conducted until today. These studies are sufficiently qualified both in formal and informal education. When explanations and definitions related to formal education approaches are reviewed, it can be mostly seen that the concept of lifelong learning is associated primarily with basic education, job and career education, and career development (Dunlap 2005). Moreover, according to Dunlap (2005), referring to the literature (Brookfield 1985; Candy 1991; Dunlap and Grabinger 2003; Grow 1991), lifelong learners are able to learn and adapt, to reflect on the quality of their understanding, to seek to go beyond what they know, to take risks, to love learning, they are willing to engage in learning, they are persistent, and view learning as an ongoing process. Thereby, lifelong learning deals with individual development in terms of one's knowledge, skills, and career development areas as much as it draws attention to the development of the personal quality of life when these competences are actually realized. When teachers, both in-service and pre-service, are concerned, their training period at universities can be considered as an impor-

tant step for the formation and development of their lifelong learning tendencies (Kuzu et al. 2015)

On the other hand, *Quality of Faculty Life* (QFL) is a concept that generally includes the circumstances of developing an individual's potential and positive social skills together with an individual's feeling of well-being (Lunenbergh and Schmidt 1988). It is possible to define QFL as the contribution of schools to the academic, social, and psychological development of their students in accordance with the expectations of the society in which they live (Mok and Flynn 2002) or the satisfaction of the students with every aspect of an educational institution provided and offered to them. Today, universities are affected by the information society and globalization. As the consequence of this, university students are expected to have necessary knowledge and skills required by the information society and the globalization. In other words, the university students are expected to be aware of the necessary lifelong learning knowledge and skills, as: to reach knowledge, to analyze knowledge and to renew and update it for his/her business purposes and to increase his/her knowledge capacity (Titrek et al. 2013). In relation to this fact, Poyraz and Titrek (2013) pointed out that lifelong learning concept implies education programs in general but university education programs in particular. According to them universities should have active roles in the implementation of lifelong learning. Thereby, it can be claimed that the environment and cultural level of a school directly affects the students' perceptions of the quality of school life. On the other hand, Pang (1999) states that the quality of school life is affected by all formal and informal aspects. When studies on the quality of school life quality are analyzed it can be seen that they are about both middle school students and university students, emphasizing aspects such as the students' satisfaction with the educational institution, the social structure of the institution and the activities offered to them at those institutions (Epstein and McPartland 1976), students' perceptions of the quality of school life and the effect of the quality of the services provided on students' satisfaction with the school (Grodem 2009). On the other hand, the literature presents studies that examine university students' perceptions about the quality of university life and perceptions about the quality of university life within

the scope of the quality of democratic life (Bokeoglu and Yilmaz 2007; Doganay and Sari 2006; Ozdemir 2012). Even though the literature reviewed by the researchers revealed quite a lot of studies on the quality of faculty/ university life, there is no other study that examines the relationship between the quality of school/university life and a student's lifelong learning process than Beytekin and Kadi's (2014).

Therefore, it is generally thought that in addition to various related factors and variables that have an influence on university students' lifelong tendencies, in this study it is believed that the quality of their educational lives, school satisfaction, their perceptions about the experiences they have gone through throughout their time at university and their perceptions about the quality of their educational lives, as Brooks and Everett (2008) point out, higher education is a process and training period that provides learning skills, openness to education, and a global outlook. According to the results of Beytekin and Kadi's study (2014) there is a correlation between the opinions of university students about the quality of faculty life and their opinions about lifelong learning. For this reason, when determining university students' lifelong learning tendencies, their perceptions related to the quality of life their educational institution provided them with are usually encountered and considered an important issue. Hence, it is essential to investigate and to determine the relationship between the concepts of *Quality of Faculty Life* and *Lifelong Learning*. On the other hand, it is believed that when university students' quality of life improves, it contributes to their lifelong learning tendencies.

Concerning the contribution of this study to the literature, it can be stated that when pre-service teachers are provided with the necessary opportunities to develop themselves both professionally and personally during their pre-service training periods at their universities where they are equipped with the necessary lifelong knowledge, skills, and attitudes they will have positive perceptions about their future lives. Furthermore, there are many factors that have an influence on the lifelong learning tendencies of university students, and the quality of university life is one of these factors. Therefore, it is important to examine the relationship between lifelong learning tendencies and the quality of students' university life. In this respect the re-

sults of the present study can lead to other studies that examine the influences of other factors on university students' perceptions about their lifelong learning tendencies.

As the consequence of this fact, this study aims to understand and define the relationship between the lifelong learning tendencies of pre-service teachers and their perceptions of the quality of faculty life. Within this framework, the following questions were examined in this study:

1. What are the lifelong learning tendencies of pre-service teachers?
2. What are perceptions of pre-service teachers about the quality of faculty life?
3. Do pre-service teachers' lifelong learning tendencies significantly relate to their perceptions about the quality of faculty life?
4. Do pre-service teachers' lifelong learning tendencies and perceptions about the quality of faculty life significantly differ as to their gender?
5. Do pre-service teachers' lifelong learning tendencies and perceptions about the quality of faculty life significantly differ as to their subject area?
6. Do pre-service teachers' lifelong learning tendencies and perceptions about the quality of faculty life significantly differ as to their graduation status?

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This study is a descriptive survey study in order to determine the relationship between the Lifelong Learning tendencies of pre-service teachers and their opinions about the Quality of Faculty Life with regard to certain variables. The survey studies help to determine the relationship between and among the variables as well as measuring the attitudes, opinions, and beliefs using effective measuring procedures (Christensen et al. 2015). In this study, the relationship between the pre-service teachers' LLT and their opinions about QFL was examined with regard to certain variables (their gender, their subject-area, and their graduation status).

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of 2100 pre-service teachers (n=600) trained in var-

ious majors at Abant Izzet Baysal University, Faculty of Education in the spring semester of the 2014-2015 academic year and graduate students (n=1500) who were participating in pedagogical formation courses (a teacher training program offered to the graduates of various faculties, for example, graduates of the arts or science faculties, the finance faculty, the nursery or engineering faculties, and others.) in the spring semester of the 2014-2015 academic year. The sample group consisted of 580 pre-service teachers who were senior pre-service teachers at the faculty of education and who were participating in pedagogical formation courses and who voluntarily participated in the present study in the spring semester of the 2014-2015 academic year. Even though during the study the surveys were given to 580 pre-service teachers, only 552 pre-service teachers completed the surveys. On the basis of this, it can be said that the sample group of the study represented the whole population (Krejcie and Morgan 1970).

When the participants of the study are examined in terms of their gender, it is seen that (n=417) were female pre-service teachers and (n=135) were male pre-service teachers. From the view point of the subject area they were studying, it is seen that (n=282) were graduates of science departments (Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Health) and (n=270) were the graduates of social sciences departments (History, Turkish Language Teaching, Finance, Business, Economics, Fine Arts Teaching, Classroom Teaching). When whether they are graduated or not is concerned (n=345) of them were fourth-year students and (n=207) of them were graduate students who were participating in a pedagogical formation program.

In the present study, the quantitative data were collected through two data collection instruments; the Lifelong Learning Tendencies Scale (LLTS) and the Quality of Faculty Life Scale (QFLS).

a) *Lifelong Learning Tendencies Scale (LLTS)*

The Lifelong Learning Tendencies Scale (LLTS) was prepared and developed by Coskun (2009). The Lifelong Learning Tendencies Scale is a six-point-Likert type scale ranging from (1) "mostly appropriate" to (6) "never appropriate". There are twenty-seven items on the scale under four sub-scales, namely; Motivation, Persistence,

Lack of learning regulation level, and Lack of curiosity (see Coskun 2009). In her study Coskun (2009) found a 0.89 Cronbach Alpha reliability score for the whole scale. Where the present study is concerned, the following Cronbach Alpha reliability scores were found: for the whole scale 0.92, for the Motivation sub-scale 0.86, for the Persistence sub-scale 0.82, for the Lack of learning regulation level sub-scale 0.79, and for the Lack of curiosity sub-scale 0.89.

b) Quality of Faculty Life Scale (QFLS)

The Quality of School Life Scale was developed by Epstein and McPartland (1976) and adopted into Turkish by Yilmaz and Cokluk-Bokeoglu (2006), who named it the "Quality of Faculty Life Scale". The scale was developed as a three-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) "disagree" to (3) "agree", and there are thirty-seven items on the scale under three sub-scales; Satisfaction with the class environment and student relations, Satisfaction with the instructors, and Satisfaction with the faculty, as Yilmaz and Cokluk-Bokeoglu (2006) stated. In their study, they (2006) found the following Cronbach Alpha reliability scores: for the Satisfaction with the class environment and student relations sub-scale 0.67, for the Satisfaction with instructors sub-scale 0.83, for the Satisfaction with the faculty sub-scale 0.75, and for the whole scale 0.87. Where the present study is concerned, the following Cronbach's Alpha reliability scores were found: for the whole scale 0.888, for the Satisfaction with the class environment and student relations sub-scale 0.70, for the Satisfaction with instructors sub-scale 0.81, and for the Satisfaction with the faculty sub-scale 0.73.

The data were analyzed through the SPSS for Windows 20 Program and for the analysis of the data the mean and standard deviation scores were calculated, an independent samples t-test was used, and the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient scores were calculated.

RESULTS

The results for the pre-service teachers' lifelong learning tendencies and perceptions of the quality of faculty life are presented in Tables 1,2,3,4,5,6,7, and 8.

When the results for the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their lifelong learning tendencies

are examined, it can be seen that the mean score for their lifelong learning tendencies was (\bar{X} =130.34) (see Table 1). In the light of this, it can be said that the pre-service teachers' lifelong learning tendencies were very high. Additionally, it can be seen that the mean score for their perceptions of the quality of faculty life was (\bar{X} =76.93). This could mean that their perceptions of the quality of faculty life are rather high, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Results on pre-service teachers' Lifelong Learning Tendencies (LLT) and Quality of Faculty Life (QFL)

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Min</i>
LLTS	552	130.34	20.09	162	27
QFLS	552	76.93	12.93	111	37

As can be observed in Table 2, a significantly low-level relationship ($r = .15$, $p < .05$) was found between the pre-service teachers' perceptions about QFL and their LLT. Based on this finding, it can be said that the opportunities provided by the university where the present study was conducted and the university and faculty life experiences that the pre-service teachers had gone through influenced their LLT.

Table 2: Results on the relationship between pre-service teachers' LLT and QFL

	<i>N</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
LLTS	552	.15	.000
QFLS	552		

$p < 0.05$

The t-test results, as shown in Table 3, indicate a significant difference in favor of female pre-service teachers when their lifelong learning tendencies are examined ($t(550) = -3.79$, $p < .05$). This could mean that female pre-service teachers are more aware of the importance of lifelong learning than male pre-service teachers.

Table 3: Results on pre-service teachers' LLT and their gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Male	135	124.71	20.99	-3.79	550	.000
Female	417	132.70	19.47			

$p < 0.05$

The t-test results, as shown in Table 4, indicate a significant difference in favor of female

pre-service teachers where their perceptions of the quality of faculty life are concerned ($t(550) = -3.005, p < .05$). On the basis of this result, it can be stated that gender as a variable has an effect on the opinions of pre-service teachers in relation to the quality of faculty life.

Table 4: Results on pre-service teachers' perceptions of QFL and their gender

Gender	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
Male	135	74.05	13.42	-3.00	550	.003
Female	417	77.87	12.64			

$p < 0.05$

Table 5 indicates a significant difference in favor of the pre-service teachers of social sciences when their departments are the focus of attention ($t(550) = 2.30, p < .05$). This could mean that this field of study has an effect on the pre-service teachers of lifelong learning tendencies, as due to the nature of social sciences they have close relationships and interactions with other sciences (for example, history, sociology, philosophy, language, and others); therefore, the pre-service teachers of social sciences can use different channels and means of communication in different learning environments. This fact could have a positive effect on their lifelong learning tendencies.

Table 5: Results on pre-service teachers' LLT and their departments

Department	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
Social sciences	270	132.35	18.45	2.30	550	.022
Sciences	282	128.42	21.41			

$p < 0.05$

Table 6 indicates no significant difference in the perceptions of pre-service teachers when their departments are the focus of attention ($t(550) = 1.54, p > .05$). Accordingly, this finding could mean that the pre-service teachers' field of study has no effect on their perceptions of QFL. In other

Table 6: Results on pre-service teachers' perceptions of QFL and their departments

Department	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
Social sciences	270	77.80	13.63	1.54	550	.124
Sciences	282	128.42	21.41			

$p > 0.05$

words, they could have the same opinions about QFL.

No significant difference was found between the opinions of graduate pre-service teachers and non-graduate pre-service teachers in their LLT ($t(550) = 1.14, p > .05$), as seen in Table 7. As the study group of the present study is made up of both fourth-year pre-service teachers and graduate pre-service teachers, it can be assumed that they were almost at the same stage of their training periods. This fact could cause no differences between their opinions about LLT.

Table 7: Results on pre-service teachers' LLT and their graduation status

Graduation	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
Graduated	207	131.61	19.64	1.14	550	.252
Student	345	129.58	20.35			

$p > 0.05$

When Table 8 is examined, a significant difference is found in favor of graduate pre-service teachers about their QFL-related opinions. As most of the graduate pre-service teachers were students from different universities, their opinions about the QFL of the university context where the present study was conducted could be different from the opinions of the non-graduate pre-service teachers.

Table 8: Results on pre-service teachers' perceptions of QFL and their graduation status

Graduation	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
Graduated	207	78.86	14.22	2.73	550	.006
Student	345	75.77	11.96			

$p < 0.05$

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study is to examine the relationship between the levels of the quality of university life of pre-service teachers and of their lifelong learning tendencies with respect to certain variables (their gender, subject area, if they had graduated or not). For this purpose, the pre-service teachers ($n=552$) answered the data collection instruments, namely, the "Quality of Faculty Life Scale" and the "Lifelong Learning Tendencies Scale" in the spring semester of the 2014-2015 academic year at Abant İzzet Bay-

sal University, Bolu-Turkey. The results of the present study were limited to the perceptions of AIBU Education Faculty fourth-year pre-service teachers and pedagogical formation students ($n=552$) who participated in the study in the spring semester of the 2014-2015 academic year.

The results of the study revealed that the mean scores of the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their LLTS and of their QFL were ($\bar{X}=130.34$) and ($\bar{X}=76.93$), respectively. As the mean scores obtained from both scales were higher than the average scores obtained from these scales, it can be said that the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their LLTS and their QFL are high, as seen in Table 1. In line with this fact, there could be a similarity between the literature and the results of this study. In other words, Erdogan (2014), according to the results of her study, stated that the LLT of pre-service teachers is quite high, almost close to the maximum score obtained on the scale that she developed. Meanwhile, Kuzu et al. (2015) reported that the lifelong learning tendencies of pre-service teachers in their study is statistically high ($\bar{X}=127.02$). Where the relationship between the pre-service teachers' LLT and QFL levels is concerned, the results of the present study, as shown in Table 2, show a significant and low-level relationship between the pre-service teachers' opinions about QFL and their LLT. Based on this finding, it can be said that the opportunities provided by the university where the present study was conducted and the university and faculty life experiences that the pre-service teachers had gone through influenced their LLT.

As seen in Table 3, there was a significant difference in favor of female pre-service teachers when their lifelong learning tendencies are examined ($t(550) = -3.79, p < .05$). In this regard, it can be said that there is a similarity between the results of this study and the literature. In their study, Beytekin and Kadi (2014) reported that male students have more lifelong learning tendency points than female students ($X_m = 98.38, X_f = 92.52$). Meanwhile, Izci and Koc (2012) found a significant difference in favor of female students in the pre-service Classroom teaching, Mathematics teaching, and Turkish Language teaching departments. Additionally, the results of Gencel's (2013) study revealed significant differences between male and female candidate teachers' perceptions in terms of lifelong learning competence in favor of prospective female

teachers. There was also a significant difference in favor of female pre-service teachers when their perceptions of the quality of faculty life were concerned ($t(550) = -3.00, p < .05$) (see Table 4). Meanwhile, as far as the literature is concerned, it can be seen that similar results are observed between the results of the present study and the literature (Beytekin and Kadi 2014; Cokluk-Bokeoglu and Yilmaz 2007; Mok and Flynn 2002; Ozdemir 2012).

Table 5 indicates a significant difference was found between the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their LLTS and their departments in favor of the pre-service teachers of social sciences when their departments are focus of attention ($t(550) = 2.30, p < .05$). In the meantime, Izci and Koc (2012) reported a significant difference between the pre-service teachers of social sciences and of positive sciences where their lifelong learning skills are concerned. Additionally, Gencel (2013) stated that when pre-service teachers' perceptions of their lifelong learning competencies are analyzed in terms of their departments, there was a significant difference in favor of the pre-service teachers of social sciences. Finally, Oral and Yazar (2015) and Tunca et al. (2015) pointed out that the mean scores of social science pre-service teachers ($\bar{X}=4.27$) are higher than the positive sciences ($\bar{X}=4.27$). Additionally, when Table 6 is examined, no significant difference can be found between the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their QFSL and their departments ($t(550) = 1.54, p > .05$). In their study, Ozdemir et al. (2013) reported no significant differences in the satisfaction levels of students with respect to their departments where their satisfaction with the faculty is concerned [$F(4,28) = 1.42, p > .05$]. In the meantime, Cokluk-Bokeoglu and Yilmaz (2007) stated that Faculty of Science students are generally more satisfied than the students from other faculties that participated in their study. Meanwhile, as a result of a comparative analysis of the faculties, Ozdemir (2012) concluded that the students from the Forest Faculty tended to view their school life as being much more qualified than the participants from the other faculties.

Even though no significant difference was found between the opinions of graduate pre-service teachers and non-graduate pre-service teachers on their LLTS ($t(550) = 1.14, p > .05$), as seen in Table 7 a significant difference was found in favor of graduate pre-service teachers about their

QFL-related opinions ($t(550)=2.73, p<0.05$). As stated in Coskun and Demirel (2012), when the population of the present study is considered, as most of the graduate participants are the graduates from different departments from different universities, and have gone through different experiences at their universities, it is not difficult to assume that they have different perceptions, world views, and opinions. As a consequence of this fact, it can be said that this difference is to be expected among pre-service teachers.

CONCLUSION

All environments that enable individuals to develop and keep themselves up to date, can be considered under the concept of “lifelong learning”. When studies on lifelong learning are examined, it can be seen that learning and instructional activities carried out in formal education and informal education institutions aim to achieve certain objectives. When universities as formal institutions and university life are dealt with from this point of view, it can be said that the universities and the opportunities provided to university students, namely, the quality of university or faculty life, have an influence on the lifelong tendencies of university students and can be considered as part of certain learning experiences they have gone through that can be observed in their behavior. In line with this, university programs can have influences on lifelong learning concept in making decisions, collecting data for making decisions and active implementation of these decisions. On the basis of this fact, it can be said that the training period of university students is a remarkable time for the lifelong learning tendencies of university students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When possible future studies are concerned, the differences caused by gender and other variables need to be examined using both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. In addition to this, students’ opinions about the facilities and the opportunities provided to them need to be investigated and defined by using different data collection tools (observations, interviews, surveys, etc.) by university administrations. The data collected reveal that necessary measures need to be taken in order to increase the quality of school life and to enrich lifelong

learning environments. That is to say, the results of the present study and of the other studies in the literature indicate that university students’ lifelong learning conceptions, awareness and skills need to be formed and developed and to achieve this purpose university education programs need to be revised in order to acquire the university students with necessary lifelong learning habits and skills.

NOTE

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