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Perceptions versus Realities: Teaching Quality in Higher Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of both students and faculty members on teaching quality in higher education, taking nationality, gender, GPA and faculty members' perceptions of university priorities into consideration. The mixed method approach was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously in the study. The quantitative data were collected from two countries: The United States and Turkey through a questionnaire developed for the study. Qualitative data were collected through focus group meetings; two with the faculty members and two with the students. The results indicated a difference between the perceptions of the student and faculty groups, regardless of nationality. In contrast to the students, faculty members perceived themselves competent in the three areas of delivery of instruction, rapport, and assessment. It was also found that nationality and GPA had an impact on students' perceptions whereas gender had an insignificant effect. As for perceived priorities, although both groups stated that teaching is important, it was interesting to note that Turkish group also emphasized administrative work and research/publication as priorities for the university. The results of this research suggests that more work is still needed to reach the high expectations for teaching quality in higher education such as in-service training and professional development activities, particularly on as self-reflection, improvement of teaching skills, and innovative teaching methods with an emphasis on technology.

Keywords

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Introduction

The quality of teaching in higher education has become an issue recently because the number of universities is growing faster than demand. Thus, universities which are expected to offer effective teaching and also conduct extensive research have started competing globally to attract more students, focusing on quantity rather than quality. This has led faculty members to feel under pressure to conduct more research for publication purely to increase the visibility of their universities, at the expense of teaching. Scientific reports reveal this dilemma, indicating that universities face a choice between quality in teaching and quality in research; and quality in research does not necessarily reflect quality in teaching (Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University, 1998; Hatakenaka, 2006).

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Measuring *teaching quality* has become a controversial area over the years, in contrast to measuring *research quality,* which is considered to be more objective due to the scientific methods followed, or criteria used for scientific publication. However, many scholars (Barrette, Morton, & Tozcu, 2006; Berk, 2005; Berliner, 2005; Biggs, 2003; Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs, & Robinson, 2004) have made a considerable effort to measure teaching quality in an objective way through a number of approaches, including classroom observation, student ratings, peer-ratings, and teacher interviews. Evaluation by students has become a preferred approach among others because, as stated in many sources, teaching effectiveness should be evaluated at the level of the students, the direct receivers of instruction (Berk, 2005; Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005). However, research on evaluations by students indicates that some student factors, such as nationality, gender, and grade point average (GPA, a measure of a student's academic achievement at a university), or grade expectations should be taken into consideration in order to provide an in-depth interpretation of the results.

Research on gender has yielded inconclusive results (Basow, 2000; Feldman, 1993; Wolfer & Johnson, 2003), with a few exceptions claiming that females are more likely to give positive ratings of teacher effectiveness (Mason, Steagall, & Fabritius, 1995; Korte, Lavin, & Davies, 2013). Young, Rush, and Shaw (2009) attract attention to gender bias and claim that gender bias has an influence on students' views of an effective teacher when they evaluate pedagogical and content characteristics. Underlining the importance of nationality in his study, Worthington (2002) claims that students from a non-English speaking background expect higher grades and tend to give higher ratings. The research on GPA finds mixed results and indicates that the influence of GPA on student evaluation of teaching remains situational because it has not found consistent effects (Millea & Grimes, 2002). Focusing on the correlation between grades and student evaluations, some researchers indicate that students with higher GPAs generally give higher ratings to their instructors (Centra, 1993; Haladyna & Hess, 1994; Marsh, 1987), while others find it has no effect (Ikponmwosa, 1986; Zangenehzadeh, 1988). The research by Kane, Rockoff, and Staiger (2006) shows no correlation between GPA and teacher effectiveness. They claim that grades are biased and variable across instructors, classes and institutions; and therefore are not reliable indicators of performance. Badri, Abdulla, Kamali, and Dodeen (2006) suggest that this inconsistency in the literature could be clarified by examining the fairness of grades. They state that if students feel that they are treated fairly by the instructor, their GPA will not be affected by their evaluation of teaching.

Research on effective teaching and student evaluation of teaching emphasize that there is a number of variables and dynamics influencing teaching and learning process. In general, Ramsden (1992, p. 5) defines effective teaching as the process of building an environment in which deep learning outcomes are made possible for students, and where high quality student learning is promoted. According to Ramsden, the main principles of teaching in higher education are making learning a pleasure, demonstrating respect and concern, providing appropriate feedback and assessment, and giving clear goals and challenges. Allan and Clarke (2007) claim that effective teaching is based on providing a supportive learning environment, having high expectations, becoming an independent learner, developing meta-cognitive skills, solving problems, acting on feedback, assessing one's strengths and weaknesses, working effectively with others, and having efficient time-management. Similarly, Devlin (2003) defines effective instruction as being well organized, and clearly and enthusiastically presented, with sufficient student involvement. Hopkins, Ainscow, West, Harris, & Beresford (1997) put forward three dimensions of effective teaching: teaching effects, acquisition of effective teaching models, and teacher artistry. The first includes teaching skills and teaching behaviors such as time management, setting clear objectives, and being well organized. The acquisition of effective teaching models is related with the learning environments that a teacher creates in the classroom, whereas teacher artistry refers to the level of personal responsibility a teacher takes for effective learning. Aregbeyan (2010) lists the most effective elements of teaching as follows: clear explanations, interest in and concern for quality of teaching, a capacity to assess the students' level of understanding, an engaging presentation style, an interest in recent developments in the field, respect for students, the ability to identify the key issues in lectures, accuracy and precision in answering questions, and an emphasis on conceptual understanding.

A specific study conducted in higher education by Allan, Clarke, and Jopling (2009) indicates that the necessary attributes of effective teaching are excellent subject knowledge, varying the style of teaching, promoting active learning, assuring a high level of engagement, approachability, and punctuality. The same researchers describe the necessary personal attributes as being patient, respecting students' opinions and being enthusiastic. This study suggests that effectiveness is mainly perceived as the provision of a supportive environment in which teachers scaffold learning effectively and promote effective interaction with their students. Investigating perceptions of students, Witcher et al. (2008) associate effective teaching with having a student-centered attitude, being knowledgeable about the subject matter, being professional and enthusiastic about teaching, being an effective communicator, being accessible, being competent in instruction, being fair and respectful, and providing adequate feedback. The research conducted by Delaney, Johnson, Johnson, and Treslan (2010) identifies important characteristics of effective teachers in the ranking of the importance: respectful, knowledgeable, approachable, engaging, communicative, organized, responsive, professional, and humorous. Additionally, the research by Balam (2006) highlights further characteristics, including availability and accessibility during office hours, the ability to effectively organize course objectives and content, effective rapport with students, flexible methodology, such as incorporating classroom discussions, encouraging questions from students, and using examples.

Almost three decades ago, Shulman (1987) emphasized the importance of a combined focus on pedagogy and content, and was able to improve pedagogical content knowledge, defining it as teachers' interpretations and transformations of subject-matter knowledge in order to facilitate learning. However, recent reports by international agencies indicate that there is still room for teaching and learning in higher education to improve, and more work is needed in order to facilitate learning and meet expectations on teaching in higher education. The reports conducted by Henard (2010), Higher Education Academy (2012) and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2008) highlight that universities should put more effort into developing quality teaching, with an emphasis on pedagogy enhancement, support for student learning, and continuing education for faculty members. These reports also underline university students' independence and autonomy, which involves engaging students actively in their learning and building confidence to become agents.

A report by The Higher Education Council (HEC) in Turkey (Hatakenaka, 2006) highlights similar concerns, stating that lecturers still use outdated classroom methods, and indicates that support in fostering teaching quality is needed because it is important for a university lecturer to be competent in transferring knowledge in his/her field (Korkut, 1999). European Science Foundation also brings up the issue of outdated methods employed by lecturers such as lecturing to students, tendency to focus narrowly on subject knowledge, and leading students to passivity. Such studies are becoming more important, especially at a time when universities are under pressure due to the rapid expansion in higher education and the increasingly competitive environment. The increasing international mobility of students and global competition in undergraduate and post graduate programs is also an important motive for increasing teaching quality (McNamara & Scott, 1997; Warwick, 2007). Globalization presents universities with a number of challenges, one of which is educational quality that has a big impact on a country's human resources. In particular, the Bologna process, which aims to increase student mobility, underlines that academics need a better understanding of teaching and learning as well as to advance the pedagogic competences for better teaching. As indicated in the research results and the reports above, more research is still needed to investigate the perceptions of students and lecturers as well as their expectations in order to facilitate learning and increase the teaching quality in higher education.

The Aim of the Study

In line with recommendations in previous studies, this particular study aims to investigate the perceptions of both students and faculty members on teaching in higher education. It is believed that investigating the perceptions of students and faculty members will shed light on what is perceived and what is reality as experienced by the students, which is expected to lead to more realistic evaluation of the teaching-learning environment. The study also aims to explore perceptions of students and faculty members in two countries, Turkey and the US, in order to bring a new perspective to teaching quality in terms of cultural diversity. As indicated in previous studies, increasing mobility of students and globalization bring out the need for comparative studies from different cultural background. It is believed that such studies have an important additional value in understanding the process of learning and teaching on a broad scale, which is expected to increase the quality of education. The findings are expected to raise students' and faculty members' awareness on teaching; and also stimulate further discussions on related issues, such as pedagogical approaches used in class and in-service training support.

The study addresses the following questions:

Regarding delivery of instruction, rapport, and assessment

i. Is there any significant difference between the perceptions of students and faculty members?
ii. Is there any significant difference in the perceptions of students in terms of nationality?
iii. Is there any significant difference in the perceptions of students in terms of gender?
iv. Is there any significant difference in the perceptions of students in terms of GPA?
v. Is there any significant difference in the perceptions of faculty members in terms of nationality?
vi. Is there any significant difference in the perceptions of faculty members in terms of gender?
vii. What are the faculty members' perceptions of their university's priorities?

Limitation of the Study

Although the research has reached its aims, there are some limitations. This study is limited to the corresponding programs in both universities, and the academic ranks of full professor, associate professor and assistant professor. The findings of the study are based on the assumptions that the participants have given correct information.

Method

In this study, the mixed method approach was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Sequential procedure was followed; first the study began with the quantitative method in which a questionnaire developed to collect data; and then qualitative method involving focus group meetings was employed in order to explore the items stated in the questionnaire in detail. The data was then integrated to provide an interpretation of the overall results (Creswell, 2003). The purpose was to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problems and to obtain sufficiently detailed data. Firstly, after a careful review of literature, a questionnaire was developed, related to effective teaching elements regarding classroom management, the staging of lessons, assessment and evaluation, and psychological factors (Biggs, 2003; Hillier, 2012; Marsh, 1987; Ramsden, 1992; Skelton, 2004; Yates, 2005). Separate versions of the questionnaire were subsequently developed in order to examine the difference between the perceptions of the students and faculty members. The purpose of using separate versions with the same items was to identify any difference between the lecturers' and students' perceptions; and to make more realistic evaluation of teaching quality. Therefore; the content of the items in two versions was identical; except for 'the subject' (e.g. in the faculty version, one item was 'I, as a faculty member, use a variety of teaching methods and techniques' while the corresponding item in the student version was 'our faculty members use variety of teaching methods and techniques').

After a review of the questionnaire by faculty members, students, and experts working at an education faculty, items that were generally considered to be highly similar were eliminated. The revised scale also included demographic information: gender, nationality, GPA, and perceived priorities of university. The scale was piloted by students and faculty members, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program 15.00. Principle Components Analysis was used for construct validity and Cronbach's Alpha for reliability analysis. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was used to identify sample size conformity, and coefficiency was found to be 0.975. Barlett's test significance level was found to be $p<0.001$, and item correlations were at sufficient level for factor analysis. The analysis indicated three components, eigenvalue of which is over 1; and the first component explained 47.41% of the feature to be tested; the second 5.59%; and the third one 3.48%. Principle Components Analysis showed that items gathered in three components: *delivery of instruction*, *rapport*, and *assessment*. The delivery of instruction component loading of the scale was found to be between 0.46 and 0.79, rapport between 0.34 and 0.73, and assessment between 0.47 and 0.70. Total variance of the three components was found to be 56.37%. Cronbach' Alpha value of delivery was 0.92, rapport 0.95, and assessment 0.90. The Cronbach's Alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.97. Eta Square Value was interpreted based on 'd' index of Cohen (1988), and values were categorized as small (d= .02), medium (d= .05) and large (d= .08). In order to analyze the impact of gender, nationality and GPA on students and faculty members' perceptions, factorial MANOVA was employed while an independent sample t-test was used to determine the difference between the perceptions of faculty members and students. In order to eliminate the effect of the difference in size between the faculty members and student groups, a group of 254 students was randomly chosen using SPSS. The two groups were compared to identify whether there was any difference in their perceptions.

The qualitative and quantitative data were collected from two universities; one in Turkey and one in the US during the researcher's stay as a guest researcher in America for four months. When the study was conducted, the American university had 6 faculties and 49 programs with around 5200 students, and the Turkish university had 8 faculties and 41 programs with 6500 students. Before the questionnaire was administered, corresponding faculties/departments in both universities were identified, which were Communication, Computer Sciences, Arts and Design, and Administrative Sciences. The four departments in the American university had 73 lecturers and 1193 students when the study was carried out, while Turkish university had 91 lecturers and 1444 students. Based on the schedule given by the departments in both universities, the researcher reached 1607 students; however, 24 questionnaires were not taken into consideration as they were not completed properly. The quantitative data were collected through the questionnaire during 2014-2015 Academic Year, Fall Semester from the university in the US; and from the Turkish University during 2013-2014 Academic Year. Before the questionnaire was administered and focus groups were invited, all necessary arrangements were made at the both universities. Approval for the research was obtained from the respective university administrations and ethics committees in order to ensure ethical conduct of the research. In addition, the researcher was asked to complete an online research ethics program on the "Human Research Curriculum" and to submit the report to the ethics committee. The researcher administered the scale to the students at the beginning of lessons, and to the lecturers in their office hours. The researcher made a brief explanation about the purpose of the research before distributing the consent letter and the questionnaire. The data were collected from a total of 1583 students and 127 faculty members from the two universities. Detailed information regarding the sample is given at Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. General Characteristic of Students

Source	**n**	**%**
Turkey	850	53.70
USA	733	46.30
Female	885	55.91
Male	698	44.09
GPA 00 – 1,80	73	4.61
1,81 - 2,50	334	21.10
2,51 - 3,00	426	26.91
3,01 - 3,50	455	28.74
3,51 - 4,00	295	18.64
Total	1583	100

Table 2. General Characteristic of Lecturers

Source	**n**	**%**
Turkey	70	55.12
USA	57	44.88
Female	71	55.91
Male	56	44.09
Total	127	100

Qualitative data were collected through four focus group meetings; two with the faculty members and two with the students at the both universities. Just after the collection of the questionnaires, the researcher gave information about the focus groups to be organized and invited volunteer students and lecturers. The researcher noted down the volunteer students' and lecturers' contact information (e-mails, office numbers) for the organization of the focus groups. The researcher gave advanced notice of the interview structure to the participants (interview duration, where, when, how). A group of eight volunteer male and female participants representing the respective departments (Communication, Computer Sciences, Arts and Design, Administrative Sciences) joined the focus group meetings and same procedure was followed for each meeting. At the beginning of each meeting, the researcher informed the participants of anonymity and ethical conduct of the research. The participating lecturers and students signed an informed consent form before taking part in the focus groups. Meetings were conducted by the researcher, notes were taken based on the items in the scale and audio-recorded; each meeting lasted around 45 minutes. In the analysis of the focus group meetings, comments made by the faculty members and the students were interpreted based on the items in the scale and some of the comments were displayed in the findings with the following labels: Turkey (T), The United State (US), student (S), faculty member (FM) and focus group (FG) together with the numbers indicating the particular focus group and participant

Results

The first question was designed to identify any significant differences between the perceptions of students and faculty members about delivery of the instruction, rapport, and assessment. The results indicated that faculty members perceived themselves competent in terms of delivery of the instruction (t(377.561)=15.479; p<0.001), rapport (t(376.075)=16.500; p<0.001), and assessment (t(331.075)=13.040; p<0.001), in contrast to the views of the students (Table 3). It was found that faculty members considered they displayed the skills of delivery (=7.95, S=0.74), rapport (=8.03, S=0.69) and assessment (=8.52, S=0.50) in classroom, while students perceptions were different (=6.26, S=1.39; =6.16, S=1.52; =7.05, S=1.65).

Table 3. Outcomes of an Independent Sample t-test Between the Faculty Members and Students

Source	t	df	p
Delivery of instruction	15.479	377.561	0.000***
Rapport	16.500	376.075	0.000***
Assessment	13.040	331.075	0.000***

***p < 0.001

The second, third and fourth questions aimed to identify any significant differences between the perceptions of students regarding delivery of the instruction, rapport, and assessment in terms of nationality, gender and GPA. Regarding nationality, the results showed a significant discrepancy among the means of instruction (F(1, 1565)=21.103; p< 0.001), rapport (F(1, 1565)=90.577; p< 0.001), and assessment (F(1, 1565)=484.152; p< 0.001). The US students found their lecturers' instruction, rapport, and assessment (=6.59 S=1.10; =6.80 S=1.15; =8.13 S=0.00) more effective compared to the Turkish group (=6.10, S=1.49; =5.86, S=1.60; =6.44, S=1.66). Regarding nationality, Eta Square values were found significant on delivery (= 0.013), although to a low degree, whereas they had a more significant effect on rapport (= 0.055) and assessment = 0.236). The results on gender showed insignificant effect on students' perceptions about lecturers' delivery of the instruction (F(1, 1565)=0.253; p > 0,05), rapport (F(1, 1565)=0.113; p> 0,05), and assessment (F(1, 1565)=0.121; p>0,05). However, GPA was found significant on delivery of instruction (F(4, 1565)=3.315; p<0.05), rapport (F(4, 1565)=4.539;p<0.01), and assessment (F(4, 1565)=4.242; p<0.001). As seen in Table 4, only interaction effect of nationality*GPA (F(3, 1565)=5.636; p<0.01) showed significant effect, whereas nationality*gender did not. According to the results, the US students at all levels of GPA found their lecturers' delivery, rapport, and assessment more effective compared to the Turkish group. While interpreting GPA levels, 00-1.80 range was not taken into consideration because there were no US students at this level (Table 5).

Table 4. Outcomes of Factorial MANOVA on the Student's Score

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Nationality	Delivery	36.608	1	21.103	0.000***	0.013
	Rapport	176.782	1	90.577	0.000***	0.055
	Assessment	695.808	1	484.152	0.000***	0.236
Gender	Delivery	0.439	1	0.253	0.615	0.000
	Raspport	0.221	1	0.113	0.736	0.000
	Assessment	0.174	1	0.121	0.728	0.000
GPA	Delivery	22.999	4	3.315	0.010*	0.008
	Rapport	35.436	4	4.539	0.001**	0.011
	Assessment	24.389	4	4.242	0.002**	0.011
Nationality * Gender	Delivery	0.632	1	0.364	0.546	0.000
	Rapport	0.008	1	0.004	0.949	0.000
	Assessment	0.006	1	0.004	0.949	0.000
Nationality * GPA	Delivery	2.751	3	0.529	0.663	0.001
	Rapport	6.225	3	1.063	0.364	0.002
	Assessment	24.299	3	5.636	0.001**	0.011
Gender * GPA	Delivery	3.570	4	0.514	0.725	0.001
	Rapport	10.155	4	1.301	0.268	0.003
	Assessment	4.220	4	0.734	0.569	0.002
Nationality * Gender * GPA	Delivery	4.817	3	0.926	0.428	0.002
	Rapport	4.558	3	0.778	0.506	0.001
	Assessment	3.818	3	0.885	0.448	0.002
Error	Delivery	2714.819	1565			
	Rapport	3054.445	1565			
	Assessment	2249.170	1565			
Total	Delivery	66221.598	1583			
	Rapport	66213.120	1583			
	Assessment	85958.766	1583			

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

Table 5. Grade Point Averages according to Delivery, Rapport and Assessment

Factor	Variable	Turkey		USA	
			S		S
Delivery	00 - 1.80	5.88	1.64	-	-
	1.81 - 2.50	5.87	1.48	6.40	1.10
	2.51 - 3.00	6.19	1.45	6.57	1.17
	3.01 - 3.50	6.37	1.43	6.63	1.04
	3.51 - 4.00	6.27	1.48	6.62	1.10
Rapport	00 - 1.80	5.63	1.57	-	-
	1.81 - 2.50	5.57	1.61	6.56	1.27
	2.51 - 3.00	5.95	1.49	6.75	1.80
	3.01 - 3.50	6.24	1.54	6.84	1.09
	3.51 - 4.00	6.03	1.68	6.88	1.17
Assessment	00 - 1.80	6.46	1.52	-	-
	1.81 - 2.50	6.05	1.68	8.13	0.00
	2.51 - 3.00	6.42	1.72	8.13	0.00
	3.01 - 3.50	6.87	1.52	8.13	0.00
	3.51 - 4.00	6.76	1.61	8.13	0.00

The fifth and sixth questions were designed to identify whether there were any significant differences between the perceptions of faculty members on delivery of the instruction, rapport, and assessment regarding nationality and gender. Delivery ($F(1, 123)=4.108$; $p<0.05$) was found to be a significant factor regarding lecturers' nationality, whereas rapport ($F(1, 123) = 0.978$; $p> 0.05$), and assessment ($F(1, 123)=1.978$; $p>0.05$) showed insignificant effects. The results indicated that the Turkish faculty members (=8.07, S=0.60) perceived themselves as more competent regarding delivery compared to the US group (=7.79, S=0.86). Regarding nationality, Eta Square values (=0.032) on delivery were found to be significant, but low. Gender was found significant on delivery ($F(1, 123) = 7.021$; $p < 0.01$) and assessment ($F(1, 123) = 12.706$; $p<0.001$); however, it had no effect on rapport ($F(1, 123)=3.551$; $p>0.05$). It was also seen that the Turkish female faculty (=8.11, S=0.63) perceived themselves to be slightly more effective compared their US counterparts (=8.08, S=0.53). Similarly, the Turkish male faculty members (=8.00, S=0.56) perceived themselves more competent compared to their US counterparts (=7.52, S=1.02). Regarding gender, Eta Square values (= 0.054) had a medium effect size on delivery. Additionally, the Turkish female and male faculty members combined (=8.67, S=0.35; =8.47, S=0.47) percieved themselves slightly more competent in assessment compared to the US female and male faculty members combined (=8.65, S=0.33; =8.47, S=0.47). However, it was seen that Eta square value (= 0.094) had no significant effect on assessment. Similarly, the interaction effect of nationality*gender was not found significant for delivery ($F(1, 123)=2.981$; $p>0,05$), rapport ($F(1, 123)=0.903$; $p> 0,05$) or assessment ($F(1, 123)=1.810$; $p> 0,05$) (Table 6)

Table 6. Outcomes of Factorial MANOVA on the Faculty Member's Score

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Nationality	Delivery	2.060	1	4.108	0.045*	0.032
	Rapport	0.455	1	0.978	0.325	0.008
	Assessment	0.442	1	1.978	0.162	0.016
Gender	Delivery	3.521	1	7.021	0.009**	0.054
	Rapport	1.653	1	3.551	0.062	0.028
	Assessment	2.837	1	12.706	0.000***	0.094
Nationality * Gender	Delivery	1.495	1	2.981	0.087	0.024
	Rapport	0.421	1	0.903	0.344	0.007
	Assessment	0.404	1	1.810	0.181	0.015
Error	Delivery	61.686	123			
	Rapport	57.257	123			
	Assessment	27.461	123			
Total	Delivery	8091.302	127			
	Rapport	8247.478	127			
	Assessment	9247.391	127			

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

The final question explored the faculty members' perceived priorities for universities. It was noticed that both groups emphasized the importance of teaching; however, unlike the US group, the Turkish group also put emphasis on research/publication and administrative duties (Table 7).

Table 7. Perceived Priorities of Universities by the Faculty Members

	USA	Turkey
Teaching	31	22
Research & Publication	7	16
Projects	11	8
Administrative Duties	8	17

Focus Groups

Faculty member focus groups: The data collected from the faculty member focus groups expanded the findings stated above. Faculty members considered that, in general, they displayed the behaviors mentioned in the questionnaire, such as starting/finishing lesson on time; coping with disruptive behaviors; informing students about exams; evaluating student work fairly; and returning exams on time. However, difficulties were reported in using a variety of teaching methods and materials due to an overloaded syllabus and time concerns. It might be interesting to note although the both groups of faculty perceived themselves competent in all three areas, self-criticisms of teaching were made during the focus group meetings, particularly concerning the use of technology in classroom. Regarding rapport, they emphasized the importance of enthusiasm for teaching, and of respecting and valuing students. They considered that they meet students' expectations in terms of assessment. In-service training and the expectations of the new generation of students emerged as an important issue during the focus groups, although no items on this topic were included in the questionnaire:

"We are aware that we generally employ traditional methods in lessons and prevent effective learning as Teachers (FM2/FG1,T)."

"I haven't changed my teaching method for 30 years; I don't need to change it (FM5/FG1, T)."

"I used to lecture but now I use technology, and transfer my knowledge via Power point (FM2/FG1, T)."

"I use Power point presentations, but frankly, I have lost my belief and respect in what I am doing (FM7/FG1,T)."

"This is university; not at an elementary school; I teach and they should listen to me (FM1/FG1, T)."

"I have no time due to my administrative duties. Unfortunately I cannot give any feedback to students (FM6/FG1,T)."

"Sometimes the syllabus is too overloaded, it may be a kind of problem for teachers to proceed it (FM1/FG2,US)."

"I sometimes got burdened by course content and so make sacrifices in other areas of preparation. I know how I could connect better with students but do not always make the effort (FM6/FG2, US)."

"Honestly, we are learning with the method of trial and error and we need more than that, especially when you first start teaching (FM3/FG2, US)."

"I am a good teacher because I have passion, enthusiasm for teaching. I love my students and value them; that is why they behave positively (FM1/FG2, US)."

"Teaching is simply a matter of whether you like it or not (FM5/FG2, US)."

"I don't simply lecture- this is a medieval approach coming from the history- I respect my students as they respect me. I want to know them and ask them to write about anything related to lesson, and submit their work to me every week so that I can know them individually (FM4/FG2, US)."

"I rarely give exam, I usually design project-based classroom, assignments etc. (FM2/FG2, US)."

***Student focus group*:** In general, students stated that faculty members were successful in giving the syllabus at the beginning of the semester; coping with disruptive behaviors; giving information about exams and using various assessment methods, and being punctual. However, students reported that faculty members neglected a number aspects of delivery and rapport. They raised the issue of the overuse of Power point and traditional methods. They reported the importance of teachers being caring, praising, and inspiring; and they agreed that faculty members in general gave feedback on their work:

"Lessons are so boring as they are just based on information transfer; we have no brain storming, discussion or group work (S1/FG1, T)."

"Faculty members mostly use Power point during lesson; but it isn't used properly, as some Power point presentations have nearly 100 slides, and it is humanly impossible to follow and to focus (S7/FG1, T)."

"I wish they help us to put theory into practice; we sometimes feel lost as we can't see any connection with the real life (S3/FG1, T)."

"Why are they so insistent on traditional methods, although they have strong background (S2/FG1, T)."

"Some lecturers make us give presentations even at the beginning of the first year; however, we don't have that background. We just memorize our presentation for the sake of getting a mark (S1/FG1, T)."

"My professors put us in groups and we hate it (S5/FG2, T)."

"I feel more focused and motivated when they use their body language (S1/FG2, T)."

"Lecture classes have never been classes in which we succeed. Teachers only use Power points and lecture off, make it harder to grasp and retain information (S6/FG2, US)."

"I think Power point as a technique is misused, too much technology ruins the natural environment of classroom (S3/FG2, US)."

"I learn best when professors do more than just stand there and lecture; lecturers who challenge us, and give in-class assignments help us a lot (S4/FG2, US)."

"My professors design much pair/group work and I really enjoy interactive lessons (S1/FG2, US)."

"We respect our teachers, they are open to communication, they are willing to talk to us (S1/FG2, US)."

"Professors encourage us to use library/learning center, do research for even small assignments, and to present it in class so that we can build our self-confidence and express ourselves (S7/FG2, US)."

"I really enjoy the classes of professors who value his/her students; and I respect these lecturers (S3/FG2, US)."

"They usually return our assignments and give feedback, that is how I learn (S2/FG2, A)."

"Professors give variety of exams and assignments, so we never rely on one big exam (S2/FG2, US)."

Discussion and Conclusion

The results indicated a difference between the perceptions of the student group and faculty member group, regardless of nationality. In contrast to the students, faculty members perceived themselves competent in the three areas of delivery, rapport, and assessment. It was also found that nationality had an impact on students' perceptions; US students perceived their professors as more effective compared to the Turkish group. GPA was also found to have an effect on student perceptions. In contrast, gender was found to have an insignificant effect on students' perceptions. Regarding the perceptions of US and Turkish faculty members, only the delivery component was found significant. According to the results, Turkish faculty members perceived themselves more competent on delivery compared to the US group, while results for rapport, and assessment were insignificant. It was also noticed that gender was a significant factor both on delivery, and also on assessment, since all Turkish faculty members, male and female, perceived themselves more competent compared to the US group. As for perceived priorities, although both groups stated that teaching is important, it is interesting to note that Turkish group also emphasized administrative work and research/publication as priorities for the university. The results of this study seem to be consistent with the other studies (Hatakenaka, 2006; Henard, 2010; Korkut, 2006), revealing that teaching quality in higher education remains an issue; lecturers continue with traditional methods; and misuse technology, using it simply its own sake; and focus on *what to teach* rather than *how to teach.* In line with the inconclusive results on gender found in other studies (Basow, 2000; Feldman, 1993; Wolfer & Johnson, 2003), this study also revealed mixed results, as gender was found significant on professors' delivery and assessment, while it had no effect on students' perceptions.

The data from the student focus groups revealed their dissatisfaction, particularly in relation to key pedagogic and interpersonal issues, such as overuse/misuse of Power points as a technique, the traditional methods employed in classroom, putting theory into practice, the encouragement of active learning, being enthusiastic, using body language, using empathy, and making students feel respected and valued. These factors are stated to be necessary for teaching quality, and studies have repeatedly underlined the importance of varying teaching style, promoting active learning, having an engaging presentation style, and showing respect for students (Allan et al., 2009; Aregbeyan, 2010).

The data from the lecturer focus groups also supported students' view regarding use of traditional methods in classroom, the overuse of Power point for its own sake, and deficiencies in communication. Faculty members also pointed out the importance of motivation, enthusiasm, passion, and respect, characteristics which are emphasized in many studies as being effective tools (Witcher et al. 2008; Balam, 2006). The data from both the student and faculty member focus groups also highlighted some cultural motives related to student satisfaction levels. It seems that, while both student groups stated their dissatisfaction about lecturers' traditional methods and misuse/overuse of slideshows, apparently the US students appreciated the way lecturers challenge and encourage them to do research/give presentations, whereas the Turkish group were less happy with such challenges. Both US and Turkish faculty members openly expressed their dissatisfaction regarding their own teaching styles; however, Turkish lecturers seemed to be more resistant to changing or improving their teaching style, as demonstrated in their quotes above. The reason for this difference may relate to teachers' perceived priorities. Compared to the US group, the Turkish group seemed to attach more importance to administrative duties and research as priorities of university, possibly resulting in less attention to teaching. It is also important to note that the US group expressed the importance of passion and enthusiasm for the profession and also respect and care for students, whereas the Turkish group seemed to regard teaching as one aspect of their work among a number of different duties. Such a difference in the perception of their roles may have led to the differences in their attitudes to delivery in classroom.

The results of this research suggest that more work is still needed to reach the high expectations for teaching quality in higher education. Firstly, regardless of subject area, experience and title, it would be useful for teachers to benefit from in-service training and professional development activities, such as self-reflection on delivery, rapport, assessment, the improvement of teaching skills, and innovative teaching methods with an emphasis on technology, covering area such as the flipped classroom, e-learning, Moodle, and blended learning. Particularly, workshops/activities on self-reflection are believed to raise awareness of faculty members regarding expectations by students. In addition to in-service training, student feedback should be systematically collected and evaluated since many sources emphasize that this is a key tool for teacher development. However, this process should be treated with extreme caution, since it may have unforeseen harmful effects on lecturers' careers. Thus, universities should take the following steps: seek the ways of building a sound evaluation system which rewards teachers who are committed to quality teaching; set up quality units within universities to disseminate a quality culture in the institution; and disseminate and promote good practices within the institution. This study also suggests that faculty members should be encouraged to conduct action research related to their courses to better understand their teaching processes. Recent research on teaching in higher education also underlines the importance of conducting action research and emphasizes the identity of academics as 'teacher-researcher'. Finally, the study reveals that faculty members should be provided with clear and realistic expectations regarding the university's priorities since the faculty in the focus group voiced that they are expected to get engaged in demanding projects, research and administrative duties, which negatively affects their teaching.

The results of the study indicate that research on the effective teaching and quality teaching in higher education should be expanded with a focus on needs and expectations of the students, comparison of performance tasks and competencies of faculty members, and building strong evaluation systems in higher education considering accountability for output. It is believed that the research particularly on teaching in higher education will eventually contribute to quality teaching in higher education institutions.

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