

An Analysis of Professional Alienation in Academics

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Abstract This study aims to measure level of professional alienation among academics working at different departments. The population of the study consists of 850 academics working at different departments of Yozgat Bozok University at Turkey during 2018-2019 academic year. The sample of the study consists of 192 academics working at different departments of Yozgat Bozok University at Turkey during 2018-2019 academic year and voluntarily participated in online survey sent by researchers. Survey was used as a research method in the present study. Participants' demographic features were collected using "personal information form". Academic Alienation Scale developed by [1] is to analyze participants' alienation towards academic teaching as a profession. The obtained data were statistically analyzed using SPSS 18 software program. Frequency analysis, percentage analysis, arithmetic means, t test, ANOVA analysis and post hoc tests were used for data analysis. The findings suggest that there were significant differences among levels of professional alienation in academics in terms of academic working years, required materials for academic activities and sufficiency of materials ($p < 0.05$). On the other hand, no significant differences were observed in terms of gender, title, level of communication with colleagues, exposure to mobbing, place of work, participation in social and sports activities and standard working hours ($p > 0.05$).

Keywords Academic, Alienation, University

1. Introduction

In today's world, higher education institutions are considered as a qualified human source, and occupy a vital position when it comes to increasing social life quality and global competitiveness in a country [2]. Both public and private universities greatly contribute to national progress, economic development, innovation and transformation [3]. In addition to shaping social transformations, universities are also influenced by these transformations [4-5-6].

Such changes and transformation in a university

environment are known to lead to administrative transformation in higher education, different academic hiring processes, different student profiles, technological developments and innovations, and a higher competitiveness in private sector, which also affects universities' academic structure and academic teaching as a profession. Furthermore, rapid globalization constantly increases pressure on academic life, and results in a fast-growing complex academic structure [7].

An academic is defined as an intellectual, distinguished and specialized person who can fulfill multiple different tasks at the same time such as administration, teaching, scientific research and social services in their affiliated universities [8]. Their role is central to the achievement of academic goals in higher education institutions. However, the idea of business management which has recently popularized in the administration of higher education institutions due to changing conditions make it difficult for academics to fulfill their essential roles as they are expected to perform new tasks [9-10-11]. While higher education institutions were considered communities of colleagues, which attached importance to solidarity, respect, academic freedom and collaboration in the past, they are now argued to turn into a new structure in which economic issues and institutional values are prioritized [12]. Nevertheless, it is also argued that above-mentioned changes in academic structures may influence different aspects such as academics' commitment to their university and profession as well as raising awareness about market values and producing related knowledge [13-14-15].

Alienation, which means "the other, stranger" in Latin and is derived from the word "alinear", is used as "psychopath" in different Western languages such as French, Spanish and German [15]. [16], also states that alienation may also refer to estrangement from an object or idea and that it is a phenomenon peculiar to human nature. Alienation is strongly related to an individual's social circle, and may result in negative behaviors such as rivalry, jealousy, disobedience and aggression. US scientists started to study alienation as a sociological concept during the 1960s, and subsequently developed different methods to measure it.

Self-alienated individuals are often interested in

financial income and security rather than internal factors, thus finding it difficult to achieve satisfaction in their jobs. Academics working at universities are often neglected in studies on professional alienation. Hence, it can be noted in different studies on educational organizations that samples usually consists of teachers and students at different levels of education. In this respect, it is safe to argue that complex structure of academic institutions is one of the most crucial factors. It bears utmost importance for academic institutions and society to pay attention to levels of alienation among academics because they may play different roles such as researcher, teacher and administrator [17]. In parallel with universities' main functions, according to [5] an academic is mainly expected to perform research, teach and serve the society.

The present study, which aims to identify levels of professional alienation among academics who fulfill different roles as scientists, researchers, teachers and administrators at different departments, will yield important results for not only academics but also universities and society.

2. Materials and Methods

In this section, population and sample of the study, data collection tools and statistical methods used for data analysis are described.

2.1. Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study consists of 850 academics working at different departments of Yozgat Bozok University at Turkey during 2018-2019 academic year. The sample of the study consists of 192 academics who work at different departments of Yozgat Bozok University at Turkey during 2018-2019 academic year and voluntarily participated in online survey sent by researchers.

2.2. Data Collection Tools

A primary source research, questionnaire was used as a data collection tool in the present study because it is a cost-effective, feasible and suitable method for collecting information from dispersed and large masses within a short time. The questionnaire form is divided into two parts in the present study. While participants' personal and social features were determined using limited items in the first part, a 5-point Likert type scale was used in the second part in order to measure academics' level of professional alienation.

2.2.1. Academic Alienation Scale

Academic Alienation Scale, which was developed by [1] in order to measure participants' level of professional alienation was used in the present study. This data

collection tool is a scale with five sub-dimensions and 21 items, ranging from 1 (Totally Disagree) to 5 (Totally Agree). The sub-dimensions of the scale are self-alienation, alienation towards scientific research, alienation towards teaching, isolation and weakness, and total reliability of the scale is .86, while reliability of its sub-dimensions is .79, .79, .76, .68, and .67, respectively. The maximum score of the scale is 21.00 while the maximum score is 105.00.

In the present study, total reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as .85. A reliability coefficient between .70 and .90 can be considered as a high level of reliability (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; 76-94, Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Therefore, it is evident that the scale meets the minimum requirement for internal reliability coefficients.

2.3. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the study was analyzed using SPSS 18.0 package program. Prior to the statistical data analysis, the data must be prepared for analysis because skewness and kurtosis coefficients are of vital importance [16]. A skewness coefficient of (+2) and a kurtosis coefficient of (+7) indicate a normal data distribution. [18-19-16]. In the present study, skewness and kurtosis coefficients were calculated as 0.030/1.861 and 0.062/-2.437, respectively, thus demonstrating a normal data distribution. Parametric tests were used for statistical analysis.

Frequency analysis was used in order to identify participants' demographic features. T test was used in order to identify differences among levels of academic alienation based on different demographic variables. Finally, ANOVA test and multiple comparison tests (Post-Hoc LSD and Tamhane T2) were used depending on variance homogeneity. Statistical significance level was taken as 0.05.

3. Findings

The findings related to participants' demographic features are given in Table 1.

According to Table 1, 119 participants (62.0%) were male while 73 of them (38.0%) were female. 9 participants (4.6%) were professors, 14 of them (7.2%) were associated professors, 57 of them were (29.6%) assistant professors, 63 of them (32.8%) were PhD lecturers, and 49 of them (25.5%) were research assistants. 148 participants (77.0%) had 1-10 years of experience, 33 of them (17.1%) had 11-20 years of experience, 11 of them (5.7%) had 21 years of experience and more. When it comes to level of communication with colleagues, 122 participants (63.5%) had a high level of communication, while 63 of them (32.8%) had a moderate and 7 of them

(3.6%) had a poor level of communication. As for exposure to mobbing, 45 participants (23.4%) responded 'yes', whereas 57 of them (29.6%) said 'partly' and 90 of them (46.8%) said 'no'. 57 of them found (29.6%) materials sufficient for academic activities while 67 of them (34.8%) said they were partly sufficient and 68 of them (35.4%) found them insufficient. While 144 participants' (75.0%) place of work and residence are the same, 48% of them work and live in different places

(25.0%). While 45 participants (23.4%) participated in social and sports activities in their place of work (province or town), 75 of them (39.0%) partly participated in these activities, and 72 of them (37.5%) did not participate at all. As for standard working hours, 69 participants (35.9%) answered 'yes', while 57 of them (29.6%) said 'no' and 66 of them (34.3%) said 'partly'.

t test findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of gender are given in Table 2.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Features

		N	%
Gender	Male	119	62.0
	Female	73	38.0
Title	Prof. Dr.	9	4.6
	Assoc. Prof.	14	7.2
	Asst. Prof.	57	29.6
	PhD	63	32.8
	Research Asst./PhD Research Asst.	49	25.5
Length of Professional Experience	1-10 years	148	77.0
	11-20 years	33	17.1
	21 and more	11	5.7
Level of Communication with Colleagues	High	122	63.5
	Moderate	63	32.8
	Poor	7	3.6
Exposure to Mobbing	Yes	45	23.4
	Partly	57	29.6
	No	90	46.8
Sufficiency of Materials for Academic Activities	Yes	57	29.6
	Partly	67	34.8
	No	68	35.4
Place of Work (Province-Town) and Place of Residence (Province-Town)	I work and live in the same place	144	75.0
	I work and live in different places	48	25.0
Participation in Social and Sports Activities	Yes	45	23.4
	Partly	72	37.5
	No	75	39.0
Standard Working Hours	Yes	69	35.9
	Partly	57	29.6
	No	66	34.3

Table 2. t test findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Sd	t	p
Academic Alienation Scale Mean Total Scores	Male	119	2.5	.31	-.516	.607
	Female	73	2.97	.28		

It can be understood from Table 2 that no statistically significant differences were observed among mean total scores in terms of gender ($p>.05$).

ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of academic title are given in Table 3.

Table 3. ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of academic title

	Group	N	\bar{X}	sd	Source of Var.	Sum of Sq.	Df.	M. Sq.	F	p
Academic Alienation Scale Mean Total Scores	Prof. Dr.	9	3.00	.22	Between Groups	0.638	4	.159	1.811	.128
	Assoc. Prof.	14	3.00	.30	Within Groups	16.456	187	.088		
	Asst. Prof.	57	2.98	.30	Total	17.094	191			
	PhD.	63	2.88	.30						
	Research Asst.	49	3.01	.29						

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$

Table 3 indicates that there were no statistically significant differences among mean total scores in terms of academic title ($p>.05$).

ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of professional experience are given in Table 4.

Table 4. ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of professional experience

	Group	N	\bar{X}	sd	Source of Var.	Sum of Sq.	Df.	M. Sq.	F	p	Significant Difference
Academic Alienation Scale Mean Total Scores	1-10 yr. (1)	148	2.93	.29	Between Groups	.805	2	.403	4.670	.010**	2-1
	11-20yr.(2)	33	3.10	.29	Within Groups	16.289	189	.086			
	21 and more(3)	11	2.93	.32	Total	17.094	191				

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$

It can be seen in Table 4 that a statistically significant difference was found among mean total scores in terms of professional experience ($F= 4.670$; $p=.010$). It was observed that academics with a professional experience of 11-20 years had a higher level of academic alienation compared to those with a professional experience of 1-10 years.

ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of level of communication with colleagues are given in Table 5.

Table 5. ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of level of communication with colleagues

	Group	N	\bar{X}	sd	Source of Var.	Sum of Sq.	df	M. Sq.	F	p
Academic Alienation Scale Mean Total Scores	High	122	2.93	.29	Between Groups	.224	2	.112	1.258	.287
	Moderate	63	2.98	.31	Within Groups	16.870	189	.089		
	Poor	7	3.08	.20	Total	17.094	191			

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$

It can be inferred from Table 5 that no statistically significant differences were found among mean total scores in terms of communication with colleagues ($p>.05$).

ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of exposure to mobbing are given in Table 6.

Table 6. ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of exposure to mobbing

	Group	N	\bar{X}	sd	Source of Var.	Sum of Sq.	Df.	M. Sq.	F	p
Academic Alienation Scale Mean Total Scores	Yes	45	3.02	.30	Between Groups	.256	2	.128	1.438	.240
	Partly	57	2.92	.28	Within Groups	16.838	189	.089		
	No	90	2.95	.29	Total	17.094	191			

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$

Table 6 indicates that no statistically significant differences were observed among mean total scores in terms of

exposure to mobbing ($p > .05$).

ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of sufficiency of materials for academic activities are given in Table 7.

Table 7. ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of sufficiency of materials for academic activities

	Group	N	\bar{X}	sd	Source of Var.	Sum of Sq.	df	M. Sq.	F	p	Significant Differences
Academic Alienation Scale Mean Total Scores	Yes (1)	57	2.93	.33	Between Groups	.859	2	.429	4.998	.008**	3-1/2
	Partly (2)	67	2.89	.23	Within Groups	16.236	189	.086			
	No (3)	68	3.04	.30	Total	17.094	191				

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

According to Table 7, a statistically significant difference was observed among mean total scores in terms of sufficiency of materials for academic activities ($F = 4.998$; $p = .008$). It was found out that academics who answered 'no' had a higher level of alienation compared to those who answered 'yes' and 'partly'.

t test findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of place of work (province/town) and residence (province/town) are given in Table 8.

Table 8. t test findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of place of work (province/town) and residence (province/town)

	Place of work (province/town) and Residence (province/town)	N	Mean	Sd	t	p
Academic Alienation Scale Mean Total Scores	I work and live in the same place	144	2.96	.30	.265	.792
	I work and live in different places	48	2.95	.26		

Table 8 demonstrates that no statistically significant differences were found among mean total scores in terms of place of work (province/town) and residence (province/town) ($p > .05$).

ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of participation in social and sports activities in place of residence (province/town) are given in Table 9.

Table 9. ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of participation in social and sports activities in place of residence (province/town)

	Group	N	\bar{X}	sd	Source of Var.	Sum of Sq.	df	M. Sq.	F	p
Academic Alienation Scale Mean Total Scores	Yes	45	2.96	.34	Between Groups	.199	2	.100	1.115	.330
	Partly	72	2.99	.29	Within Groups	16.895	189	.089		
	No	75	2.92	.27	Total	17.094	191			

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

It can be understood from Table 9 that no statistically significant differences were observed among mean total scores in terms of participation in social and sports activities in place of residence (province/town) ($p > .05$).

ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of standard working hours in the academic institution are given in Table 10.

Table 10. ANOVA findings related to the comparison of mean total scores in terms of standard working hours in the academic institution

	Group	N	\bar{X}	sd	Source of Var.	Sum of Sq.	df	M. Sq.	F	p
Academic Alienation Scale Mean Total Scores	Yes	69	2.94	.28	Between Groups	.051	2	.025	.281	.755
	Partly	57	2.95	.35	Within Groups	17.044	189	.090		
	No	66	2.98	.25	Total	17.094	191			

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

It is evident in Table 10 that no statistically significant differences were found among mean total scores in terms of standard working hours ($p > .05$).

Any comments and suggestions are welcomed so that we can constantly improve this template to satisfy all authors' research needs.

4. Discussion

In this section, the obtained data are compared with similar studies in the literature. No statistically significant differences were observed among mean total academic alienation scale scores in terms of gender. [20] reported no significant differences between males and females in terms of professional alienation in a study on PhD lecturers. In a study on classroom teachers, [21] found no significant differences between male and female teachers in terms of professional alienation. Similarly, [22] did not find out any significant differences between male and female teachers in public and private high schools. [23] also did not observe any differences between male and female physical education teachers. In a similar vein, [24] analyzed teachers' level of school alienation and concluded that there were no differences between female and male teachers. [25] did not find any significant differences between female and male nurses in terms of work alienation. Finally, [26] also did not find any significant differences between female and male teachers in terms of work alienation.

In the present study, no statistically significant differences were observed among mean total scores in terms of academic title. On the other hand, [20] reported some significant differences among academics with different titles when it comes to professional alienation.

In terms of academics' length of experience, a statistically significant difference was identified among mean total scores as academics who had an experience of 11-20 years had a higher level of academic alienation compared to those who had an experience of 1-10 years. However, some studies in the existing literature do not overlap this finding. For instance, according to [21] professional alienation did not lead to a significant difference among classroom teachers with different lengths of experience. [22] did not find any significant differences among public and private high school teachers with different lengths of experience in terms of organizational alienation. [27] similarly, did not report any significant differences among levels of professional alienation in teachers with different lengths of experiences. [23] also did not identify any significant differences among physical education teachers with different lengths of experience. [24] in a study on different teachers, found out that length of experience did not lead to any significant differences in terms of school alienation. [25] stated that no significant differences were observed among nurses with different lengths of experience as far as work alienation is concerned. [26] revealed that there were no significant differences among teachers with different lengths of experience in terms of professional alienation.

5. Conclusions

In the present study, no statistically significant

differences were found among levels of academic alienation in terms of gender. It can be inferred from this finding that female and male academics' levels of academic alienation are similar. In addition, level of academic alienation did not create any statistically significant differences in terms of academic title, indicating that different titles did not influence professional alienation.

Academics' length of experience did not lead to any significant differences for academic alienation. The length of academic experience is directly proportional to academic alienation. However, no significant differences were found among levels of academic alienation in terms of communication with colleagues. Similarly, there were no significant differences between academics when it comes to exposure to mobbing.

As for sufficiency of materials for academic activities, a statistically significant difference was observed among academics' levels of alienation. It was found out that academics who answered 'yes' had a higher level of academic alienation when compared to those who answered 'yes' and 'partly'. Research plays a vital role for academic activities. Therefore, it can be argued that academics' level of professional alienation is negatively influenced when their academic activities are hindered.

As for academics' place of work (province/town) and residence (province/ town), no statistically significant differences were observed among levels of academic alienation. Similarly, there were no statistically significant differences among levels of academic alienation in terms of participation in social and sports activities in academics' place and residence of work.

Finally, no statistically significant differences were found among scores of academic alienation in terms of standard working hours in academics' respective institution.

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