



THE SENIOR MANAGERS' OPINIONS ON THE ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP PROCESS

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Abstract. The purpose of the present study is to describe the roles and responsibilities of academic leaders. Specifically it aimed to provide answers to following questions: What are the competencies of academic leadership? What are the approaches determined by academic leaders in the management of organizational process? A phenomenological research design of qualitative research was used. The participants of the study consist of 13 senior managers from various positions in a university in Turkey and they were determined through maximum variation sampling method. In collection of the data, a semi-structured interview model was used. According to the results of the study, the managers participating in the study categorize the tasks on the focus of academic leadership role into three groups, "bureaucratic works", "the works about instructors" and "educational works". When the views of the managers about the factors shaping the academic leadership role were studied, scientific and technological advances, socio-cultural background and personal factors played important role in the process.

Key words: Leadership, academic leadership, higher education.

1. Introduction

Today, there are many difficulties that the universities are exposed to. Some of these are the management of institutional change processes, employing the best instructors, staff and pupils in universities, the use of technology in education, meeting the increasing demands of the people, financial institutions, employers and students and finding new resources and financial models. This new organizational environment needs leaders who will challenge these changes, promote the occasions that will allow the innovations to happen, foster the environment of trust, be trusted and be successful in the future (Brown, 2001).

The change of demand and general assumption towards higher education has led to some changes not only about the purpose, nature and the place in society of higher education but also about leadership and management systems. Unlike traditional management model, universities are the institutions consisting of scientists/instructors in which the principles of local administrations are carried out in high level of democracy and decision-making process, where an understanding of leadership was improved based on the responsibility and common institutional understanding and in which entrepreneurship was raised in the management of universities. However, actual approaches/thoughts about leadership bring into the front the new approaches and behaviours about leadership (Joyce & O'Boyle, 2013).

The type of leadership that should be displayed in higher educational institutions is academic leadership. An academic leader is a person who motivates, inspires and guides the instructors in the way of reaching targets (Siddique, Aslam, Khan & Fatima, 2011). According to Marshall, Adams, Cameron and Sullivan (2000), academic leadership covers the duties and operations of the appointed leaders to the legal responsible fields. According to Askling and Stensaker (2002), academic leaders direct people and groups into a common purpose as social interaction process. According to Koen and Bitzer (2010), academic leadership is described with vision, adaptable to the process of change,

competencies, and effective leadership and transformation skills. Meanwhile, according to Jones and Holdaway (1996), academic leadership is based on the activities of the department chairs about programs, the process about faculties and personal academical activities.

At the start of the factors shaping the role of academic leadership, the qualification of leadership comes first. These qualifications can be defined as personal qualities, behaviours, skills, values and knowledge (Shahmandi, Silong, İsmail, Samah, & Othman, 2011). Similarly, according to Yang (2005) and Gonzalez (2004) the role of leadership is affected by personal qualities and skills (flexibility, anxiety control, time management, having positive attitude and behaviour, transformism, innovation, being motivator, being honest, having vision, having an entrepreneur character, having information about social reality, having information about international higher education, having an international experience, high academic respect and success, sustainable learning skills, social skills, English grammar, critical thinking) managerial activities (decision-making, transfer of authority, discovering alternatives, team-work, communication, vision, planning, debate, conflict resolution, evaluation, knowledge management, creating network and project management, determining purpose, holistic mastery, collecting knowledge and assessment, strategic decision-making, leading, organising, coordination, evaluation and inspection, motivating, communicating, recruiting personnel, providing materials. etc.) social responsibility competencies (social responsibility, sensitivity to cultural diversity, detecting social demands, political sensitivity, implementing of national education policy, service understanding, competence etc.) and institutional competencies.

When the studies about the effects of leadership behaviours in higher education were analysed, it was observed that the prominent factors on leadership behaviours were collected under professional behaviours and personal characteristics. For instance, while Bolden, Gosling, O'Brien, Peters, Ryan and Haslam (2012) claimed that the prominent characteristics were motivating, having merit, sincere, ethic, fostering group-works, scientifically equipped, confident, respected, high standing and having collaboration skills, McFarlane (2011) emphasized the skills such as being role-model, providing mentorship, being supportive and protective. While defining leadership behaviours in higher education, there are also various studies focusing mostly on human relations. For example, Ngui, Hong, Gan, Usop and Mustafa (2010) stated that leaders should build good relationships with people, lead the change and produce solutions, while Breakwell and Tyherleigh (2008) stated they should be confident, have specialized knowledge, standard bearer (arbiter of quality), have academic confidence, have high awareness of financial issues, have adaptation skills, have sound characters, have the responsibility of vision, mission and strategy. Likewise, Spendlove (2007) featured the competencies of dealing with institutional shareholders.

Bryman (2007) gave more importance to the competencies in institutional level and emphasized on building a structure that will support the determined way, creating a positive environment based on support and collaboration, having a sound characteristics, fostering the process of decision-making, open to communication, behaving respectful to available culture in the process of imposing value, keeping personal autonomy, showing a pro-active approach in the process of reaching the mission of the university, showing a visionary approach in realizing of institutional targets, inspiring the shareholders of the institution, being self-focused about the faith for the institution, developing business networks with various support groups and being outgoing to affect these groups positively, being flexible, being entrepreneur/taking risk, pioneering the changes affecting the culture and values of organisations and designing bodies to support the change.

There are exclusive indications and applications of effective leadership in higher education (Bryman, 2009). According to Middlehurst, Goreham and Woodfield (2009), leaders in higher education are the transformational people to inspire the shareholders in the future and create visions. Similarly, Anderson and Jhonson (2006) pointed out that accountability, due to the available hierarchical structure of higher education system, is quite appropriate for higher education system as part of the contributions it makes. Effective leadership in higher education involves overcoming difficulties, caring about cultural diversities and the process of collaboration with colleagues and institutional shareholders (Ruben, De Lisi, & Gigliotti, 2017).

One of the important elements of effective leadership approaches is decision-making process. This

process plays important role in reaching targets, providing business satisfaction and effectiveness. Accordingly, it is important the managers should decide who can participate in decision making process, how the decisions affect the workers and determine the elements preventing the application of decisions made and the mechanism of effective decision-making of the institution to involve shareholders in decision making and application process (Van Loveren, 2007). Decision-making can be defined as choosing the most appropriate one among the alternatives and determining the most suitable option for the aim. Since decision-making includes in mental and logical reasoning, it is generally defined as intuitive learning process (Ahmed & Omotunde, 2012). In other words, decision-making is an assumption that is used in the process of reaching a target and stepping. It is noticed that while some leadership theories suggest a collaborative approach in decision-making process, some adopt a more authoritative approach. In this respect, it is possible to say decision-making the process develops based on leadership theories. According to Rowley and Sherman (2003), academic leadership involves in increasing trust in decision-making process, respect, team-work, success in relations with management units and maintaining the relations properly.

When the literature about academic leadership was studied, it was noticed that the studies generally focus on the roles and aspects of leadership, the things affecting the performance of leaders, effective leadership, decision-making process and the difficulties leaders encountered with. According to Kennie (2010) studying about the aspects of academic leadership, academic leadership has 6 basic aspects; dignity, curiosity, collegiality, character and trust. Of these aspects, dignity should be deserved with four fields; personal (academic success), peer/colleague (taking positive support from academic circles) positional (enjoying the dignity of a large academic circle) and political (coping with inevitable political challenges on higher education system). The aspect of curiosity is explained with overcoming difficult works and creativity. Collegiality involves in guidance of the academic leaders for other members, participating in team-work, sharing the ideas openly, promoting the contribution of the colleagues to the field and assisting colleagues. The aspect of academic leadership skill indicates the behaviours such as widening horizon, being prescient, being capable, communicating and appreciating individual and group success. The prominent elements in the aspect of character are honesty, flexibility and openness. The aspect of trust, on the other hand, involves in giving trust the academicians need in the process of developing ideas (Kennie, 2010).

The leadership process in higher education is affected by the national and international difficulties the faculties and universities encountered with, by privatization of higher education, the challenges in the job of academicians, more accountability, new technologies, difficulties about students and the need of innovative and rapid change against increasingly changing and competitive global economy (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). It was observed that when the difficulties the leaders in higher education encountered with were studied, the prominent ones were financing problems, socio-cultural structures, problems about personell and students, the difficulties about the autonomy of higher educational institutions and academic freedom (Bellibaş, Özasan, Gümüş, & Gümüş, 2016; Odhiambo, 2017).

Increasing the quality in higher education seems to depend on discharging the roles of the leaders effectively who are in various key positions in higher education systems. In other words, it seems important to determine the roles and responsibilities of academic leaders and the elements affecting their performances and to bring out the difficulties they encounter with in order to increase the quality in higher education. To this end, the purpose of this study in which behaviours of effective leadership is tried to be determined is to describe the roles and responsibilities of academic leaders. With this purpose, responses were sought for these sub-problems:

- What are the competencies of academic leadership?
- What are the approaches determined by academic leaders in the management of organizational process?

2. Method

A phenomenological research design of qualitative research was employed in the study. Phenomenological studies are described as interpretation of the experiences of individuals about a phenomenon or concept (Creswell 2013). The phenomenon studied in the research was described as “academic leadership”.

Participants

The participants of the study consist of 13 managers from various positions in a university in Turkey and they were determined through maximum variation sampling method. The purpose of using maximum variation sampling method was to reach out participants from various managerial positions. In this respect, the study was conducted with the participation of three deans, five managers and five department chairs.

Of the managers participating in the study, 2 of them are women and 11 of them are men. In addition, four of the managers are professors, seven of them are associate professors and two of them are assistant professors.

Data Collection and Analysis

In collection of the data of the study, a semi-structured interview model was used. During the interviews, the questions about the roles and responsibilities of academic leaders, the difficulties they encountered with and their performances were asked. The first six of the questions in the form were about answering to the first sub-problem and the last four of the questions were about answering to the second sub-problem. The interviews lasted for about 45 minutes. The questions in the interview form were as such:

1. Can you describe the tasks that make up the focus point of your leadership role?
2. Can you describe the factors that shape your leadership role?
3. Can you give information about the difficulties you encountered with while making leadership?
4. What are the aspects that you are pleased while making leadership?
5. What are the factors that affects your performance positively?
6. What are the factors that affects your performance negatively?
7. Can you give information about the communication process with instructors in your department?
8. Can you give information about decision-making process?
9. Can you give information about the prominent values in your department?
10. What are the strategies (managerial, academic etc.) you practise during any moment of change?

The data obtained from the interviews were analysed using descriptive and content analysis. During the process of descriptive analysis, themes were determined based on the questions in the form and sub-themes and codes were produced through content analysis method based on the data.

Validity and Reliability of the Study

Providing validity in qualitative studies is associated with trustworthiness (Merriam, 2013). Providing trustworthiness, however, needs a four-level process; credibility, dependability, confirmability and transmissibility (Creswell, 2003). In providing credibility of the study, expert analysis and participant confirmation method suggested by Holloway and Wheeler (1996) were used. In this stage, data collection tool, raw data obtained from the interviews, produced codes after analysis and study results were presented so as to be studied by an expert instructor in higher education. Besides, in this stage again, analysis results were shared with two managers interviewed and participant confirmation was taken. In the process of providing dependability, determining the participants, the process of collecting data and analysis and describing them in detail were conducted. To provide transmissibility, the participants were determined through purposive sampling method and described in detail.

Results

Findings about the Roles on the Focus of Academic Leadership

The views of the managers about the roles and responsibilities of academic leaders are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *The roles on the focus of academic leadership*

| Theme | Sub-theme | Codes |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Roles of Academic Leadership | Bureaucratic works (Managerial works) | The assignments defined with law and Legislation Problem solving Building coordination between units Making correspondences Enforcing the process described in regulations |
| | The works about instructors | Fostering scientific studies Designing physical environment |
| | Educational Activities | Course Schedules Material designation Regulation of physical environments |

As is seen in Table 1, the roles on the focus of academic leadership can be studied under three themes; bureaucratic works, the works about instructors and educational activities. Some codes under these sub-themes are the assignments defined with law and legislation, problem solving, making correspondences, fostering scientific studies, course schedules and regulation of physical environments.

About the issue, one of the managers, Y4 (E) stated;

“The tasks on the focus of my academic leadership, I divide them into two, the first one is those that should be standardly conducted, these tasks have already been described with law and legislation. I consider them as management based on the principle of equality for managing the faculty, predicting the problem before for solving the problem and standing against reactions without reflecting this feedback, if there will be a feedback/reaction while solving problem. The second part: I have some tasks which I attribute to leadership: 1) communicating constantly, and if possible turning the dialogues into a dialogue circle, it is not enough that only you are in the dialogue, subordinates should also be in the dialogue with each other. And I think providing dialogue between the hierarchies of subordinates and superiors is the issue that the leadership should particularly focus on. On the other hand, Y2 stated that “behaving all the staff in our faculty on an equitable basis, developing love and respect and creating a comfortable and peaceful working atmosphere for them are on the focus of my leadership role.

Findings about the Factors Shaping the Roles of Academic Leadership

The codes about the views of the managers about the factors shaping the roles of academic leadership are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Factors shaping the roles of academic leadership*

| Theme | Sub-theme | Codes |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Factors Shaping the Roles of Academic Leadership | Scientific and Technological Factors | Globalisation, competition, technological developments, scientific innovations |
| | Socio-Cultural Factors | Dominant Cultural Elements, Expectations of the environment |
| | Organisational factors | Student variety |
| | Personal factors | Human love, tolerance, organisational dependency, experience, effects of roles and models, point of view, communication style |

When Table 2 was studied, it was found that the emerging sub-themes were *scientific and technological factors*, socio-cultural factors, organisational factors and personal factors and the prominent codes were globalisation, competition, technological developments, dominant cultural

elements, student variety, human love, tolerance, organisational dependency, experience, effects of roles and models, point of view, communication style. About this, Y2 (K) stated that “the basic component that feeds the leadership is point of view and reading for human life” and Y7 (E) said that “I think technology is quite effective on this process. For the announcements, for example, we can immediately reach a wide range of students through social media”

Findings about Difficulties Academic Leaders Encountered

The codes about the views of the managers about difficulties academic leaders encountered are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. *Difficulties academic leaders encountered*

| Theme | Sub-theme | Codes |
|---|---|---|
| Difficulties Academic Leaders Encountered | Difficulties resulting from the system | Bureaucratic difficulties, regulation changes, financing problems, too much workload, the issue of quality, number of personnel, lack of auxiliary staff, |
| | Difficulties resulting from individuals | lack of coordination, adaptation difficulties for new situations |

When Table 3 was studied, it is possible to say there are some difficulties under two different sub-themes; “difficulties resulting from the system” and “difficulties resulting from the individuals”. The codes that can be studied under this sub-theme were “*bureaucratic difficulties*”, “*regulation changes*”, “*financing problems*”, “*too much workload*”, “*the issue of quality*”, “*number of personnel*”, “*lack of auxiliary staff*”, “*lack of coordination*” and “*adaptation difficulties for new situations*”. About this, Y4 (E) stated that;

"...making too many system changes in a short time, we change regulations almost three times just in a year even though our faculty is too old, it has no a sound and well established management history.

Findings about the Factors that Affects the Performace of Academic Leaders Positively

The views of the managers about the factors affecting their performances positively are given in Table 4.

Table 4. *Factors affecting the performances of academic leaders positively*

| Theme | Sub-theme | Codes |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| Factors affecting the Performance positively | Institutional factors | Loving the job, motivation, working conditions, problem solving, managing the decision-making process, institutional policies, price |
| | Personal factors | Helping people, being appreciated, dynamism, being liked, following the innovations, success, specialisation, recognition |

When Table 4 was studied, it was found that two sub-themes, “institutional factors” and “personal factors” emerged and the prominent codes under these sub-themes were “being appreciated”, “being liked”, “loving the job”, “helping people”, “problem solving”, and “working conditions.

Y1 who emphasized the role of servant leadership pointed out that “I always think the pleasure to help someone when I do my job. I mean whether he is a student or one of my colleagues, solving a problem they encountered makes me happy and increases my performance.”

Findings about the Factors that Affects the Performace of Academic Leaders Negatively

The codes about the factors affecting the performance of the managers in a negative way are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Factors affecting the performances of academic leaders negatively

| Theme | Sub-theme | Codes |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| Factors affecting the Performance negatively | Institutional factors | Bureaucracy, institutional policies, team-mates, aim conflict |
| | Personal factors | Feeling of inadequacy, time consuming, private life, being slandered, slanders, groundless complaints, role ambiguity, age, professional experience, sex |

When Table 5 was studied, it was found that the themes “institutional factors” and “personal factors” emerged and the prominent codes under these sub-themes were “bureaucracy”, “institutional policies”, “team-mates”, “aim conflict”, “feeling of inadequacy”, “time consuming”, “being slandered” and “slanders” and “groundless complaints”. Assessing the factors affecting the performance in negative way in the context of interpersonal factors, Y2 stated that “three things make me avoid from working, producing and helping people: taking advantage of my good intention, encountering with selfish feelings, encountering with slanders.”

Findings About the Approaches That Academic Leaders Use in the Process of Communication

The codes for the views of the managers about the approaches they use in the process of communication are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. The approaches academic leaders used in the process of communication

| Theme | Sub-theme |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Communication process | Meetings |
| | Communication among equals |
| | Communication based on sharing |
| | Exchange of ideas |
| Communication barriers | time, personal barriers |

When Table 6 was studied, it was found that the prominent sub-themes were “meetings”, “communication among equals”, “communication based on sharing” and “exchange of ideas”. Stating that communication process were generally shaped through meetings, but adding in some situations he encountered with communication barriers, Y8 pointed out that “we have routine meetings every other week, these meetings are one of the most important tools that shape the communication process. Besides, we wish to make communication through daily talks, but we have some problems at this point, we have some teachers who don’t want to communicate and the students as well...”

Findings about the Strategies that Academic Leaders Follow in Decision-making Process

The codes for the views of the managers about the approaches they used in decision making process are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Decision-making process of academic leaders

| Theme | Sub-theme | Codes |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| structure of decision-making process | The principles obeyed in decision-making process | Participation of shareholders, equality, agreement, respect the values |
| | The factors affecting decision-making process | Personal factors, structure of top management, approaches of top management, aims, time |
| | The difficulties of decision-making process | time, content of decision |

As seen in Table 7, , it was found that three sub-themes, “*The principles obeyed in decision-making process*”, “*the factors affecting decision-making process*” and “*difficulties of decision-making process*” emerged under the theme of “*structure of decision-making process*”. The primary codes belonging to these sub-themes are “*participation of shareholders*”, “*agreement*”, “*respect the values*”, “*structure of top management*”, “*approaches of top management*” and “*content of decision*”. Stating that participation of shareholders was grounded on decision-making process, Y4 pointed out that “*our decision-making process works slower due to some regulations in the available structure, yet this slowness provides us to think over the decisions. We focus on the detail and we get its efficiency. Additionally, while setting the agenda, the view of the shareholders are being taken, the agenda is completely made up based on the shareholders.*”

Findings About the Prominent Values Academic Leaders Adopted

The codes for the views of the managers about the values they adopted in the process of management are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. *The values academic leaders adopted*

| Theme | Sub-theme | Codes |
|------------------|----------------------|---|
| Prominent values | Institutional values | Loyalty, dependency, devotion, equality, collaboration, guiding, finishing the job on time, problem solving |
| | Personal values | Commitment to national and moral values, love, respect, tolerance, innovative, mutual understanding |

As is seen in Table 8, the values academic leaders adopted in the process of management were defined under two sub-themes, “*institutional values*” and “*personal values*”. The primary codes belonging to these sub-themes were “*loyalty*”, “*dependency*”, “*devotion*”, “*equality*”, *collaboration*, *committed to national and moral values*”, “*love*”, “*respect*”, “*tolerance*” and “*innovative*”.

One of the managers participating in the study, Y8 stated that the values he adopted are in line with devoting to the institution and pointed out that “*I try to finish the works by working extra-time when necessary, in most cases, I neglect my own academic studies and my children, but I was aware of such difficulties before I accepted this appointment, I think carrying on business without a hitch is the important thing and remunerating for works.*”

On the other hand, Y10 stated that “*there are three values I adopted when I talk about them in the class, in the meeting and in the interviews: knowing, teaching and loving.*”

Findings about the Management Strategies of Academic Leaders in Change Process

The codes for the views of the managers about the strategies they used in change process are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. *Management skills of academic leaders in change process*

| Theme | Sub-theme |
|--|---|
| Management strategies In change process | <i>Understanding the purpose of change</i> |
| | <i>Analysing the necessity of change</i> |
| | Communicating with higher authorities |
| | Studying regulations |
| | Team building Leaving time |

As is seen in Table 9, the strategies of the managers in change process were grouped under the sub-themes of “*understanding the purpose of change*”, “*analysing the necessity of change*”, “communicating with higher authorities”, “studying regulations”, “team building” and “leaving time”.

Emphasizing the importance of leaving time in change process, Y10 stated that “I actually support to advance in progress, I don't like changing something a lot, but I generally do like that: I leave it time for a little bit...”

On the other hand, Y4 stated that “when the regulation changes, a result emerges like that: those who benefit from the change of the regulation and do not. I try to increase the numbers who benefit from it and minimize the number who don't... My fundamental philosophy is that the benefits in the regulation should be inclusive.”

Y9 emphasized to interpret the purpose of the change and stated that “I try to understand the change better. My idea about the changes is that it is not enough of changes to remain as a jargon. Indeed we should explore the soul and the source of the change. The change is only successful in this way.

4. Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

According to the results of the study, the managers participating in the study categorize the tasks on the focus of academic leadership role into three groups, “bureaucratic works”, “the works about instructors” and “educational works”. When these roles and responsibilities were examined in detail, it was found that academic leaders didn't include the process in so-called strategic fields such as determining purpose, roles and responsibilities about financial process, human resources management, providing quality assurance, improving organizational culture and accountability”. However, Arntzen (2016) stated that deans have a number of roles about educational process in the fields, such as determining strategy and purpose, research, communication, providing quality assurance, budgeting, fund procurement, human resource management and improving human resources and improving organizational culture. While the managers were expressing their roles and responsibilities, one of the emphasized processes was to provide communication and coordination. Arntzen (2016) pointed out that deans have tasks in providing collaboration and coordination, which seems similar in findings of the study. As a similar result of the study, Tucker (1992) categorize knowledge, skill and competencies the department chairs should have in American higher education system into eleven groups, “budgeting and fund procurement, curriculum and programs, management of the activities about the department, communication with external shareholders, works about the faculties, communication with internal shareholders, following legal process, office management, professional development, staff recruitment and students affairs. However, it was found that while the managers were expressing their views about the roles and responsibilities, they didn't talk about professional development. Additionally, it was observed that the managers hardly ever talked about academical activities (reviewing educational activities, academic research), building business networks (communication with external support groups and marketing), management and administration (budget management, meeting management, listening to the complaints, preparing a report, answering demands etc.), planning and policy improvement (strategic planning, new opportunities etc.) and staff management determined by Scott, Coates and Anderson (2008). According to Rosser, Johnsrud, and Heck (2003), the area of responsibility of academic leaders were stated as determining vision and objective, management of units, interpersonal relations, communication skills, the educational quality of the unit, providing institutional variety and research, professional development and improvement of shareholders.

When the views of the managers about the factors shaping the academic leadership role were examined, scientific and technological advances, socio-cultural background and personal factors played important role in the process. McGoey (2005), who interviewed, top-level managers, senators and his students about leadership effectiveness, concluded that the factors such as leadership experience, knowledge of higher education, the process of fund procurement and the process of healthy communication are important. According to Nelms (2005), leadership styles and skills, academic responsibility, values and standards, fund management and planning and determining objective are the prominent factors affecting the leadership process.

The managers in the present study emphasized institutional issues while talking about the factors increasing their performance and emphasized the issue of helping people and solving problems while talking about personal factors. In the way of supporting the results of the study, Scott, Coates and Anderson (2008) emphasized the points such as helping the staff reach their targets while referring to task process of academic leaders which pleases themselves, on the other hand unlike the study results, they emphasized the process such as making team-based change, working with high motivated staff, developing strategy and developing policy.

According to the results of the study, the factors affecting the performance of academic leaders negatively are institutional ones such as bureaucracy and institutional policies, and personal factors such as sex, age, time consuming and role ambiguity. Scott, Coates and Anderson (2008) pointed out that ambiguity situations, working with hard staff, meetings and reports are the displeasing parts of the leadership roles for the leaders themselves. Unlike the results of the study, they stated that the displeasing factors for the leaders are inefficient meetings, constantly travelling, taking no result, time consuming activities such as over reporting, performance management system of the staff and budget management. According to Bellibaş et al (2016), while academic leaders were pointing out the difficulties they encountered, they stated that the fact that they do not have power during the staff recruitment and instead only deans and rectors being authorized affect themselves negatively.

When the strategies of the managers used in decision-making process were analysed, it was found that they gave importance to the participation of shareholders and stated that in decision-making process top management committee are as effective as personal qualifications. As parallel to this finding, Montez (2003) stated that in decision-making process, the awareness of the leaders about their own feelings and other shareholders' feelings provides the opportunity to take more healthy decisions.

With reference to the values used by the managers, the qualifications of academic leadership were determined. In this respect, it is possible to say that the institutional values academic leaders used are loyalty, dependency, devotion, equality, collaboration, guidance, finishing the job on time, problem-solving and the personal values they used are commitment to national and moral values, love, respect, tolerance, open to innovations and mutual understanding. When the studies about the qualification of academic leaders in literature were analysed, similar results were obtained. For instance, Drew (2006) and Bryman (2007) determined the qualifications of academic leaders as such; honesty, courage and passion, reliability, reflexion, accountability, being easy-going, adaptation and change, predicting the future of alternatives, developing partnership based on collaboration, providing a positive business atmosphere based on collaboration, being supportive and taking support when necessary and affecting people positively.

Some recommendations that could be proposed based on the results of the study are as such: it was found that academic leaders were not assigned for the fields such as policy-making which makes up the basis of management process, budgeting, accountability and providing quality assurance. When they can be assigned for the fields, this will be an important factor that will increase the quality in higher education. In addition, it seems necessary to provide an atmosphere which will allow to improve the performances of academic leaders, to minimize bureaucracy which is among the factors affecting the performances negatively and to eliminate role ambiguity. On the other hand, according to the study results, women pointed out that their sexes affected their performances negatively while they made their role of academic leadership. Within this context, it is important that the role of academic leadership should be made attractive for women in management.

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