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Socialization at the University: A Qualitative Investigation on the Role of Contextual Dynamics in the Socialization of Academics

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of content, context and process variables in the socialization of new faculty members. The study was designed as a phenomenological study and utilized interview as the data collection technique. A total number of 40 new faculty members working in 12 different public universities in Turkey participated in the study. The results of the study suggest that culture, power dynamics, reward and remuneration systems, social interaction, role models, organizational trust and trust in top management as contextual factors; knowledge sharing, networking and participation as process factors playing role in the socialization of the new faculty members. When the institutions provide the conditions for context and process factors, the new faculty members express positive statements about their adaptation to the new work setting while negative statements are evident in the opposite case. It is argued that the context and process dynamics are critical in reaching affective outcomes, which are basic to ensure productive behaviors (e.g., positive attitudes toward work, high level of motivation, and job involvement) and eliminating unproductive behaviors(e.g., turnover intentions).

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Introduction

How to develop and retain qualified faculty members has been one of the basic concerns for higher education organizations. Different developments such as the elevating demand for higher education, increasing societal expectations, diversifying student profile, the need to incorporate new technologies into teaching and research, widening the range of programs or offerings, a shift in emphasis toward the learner, and changing approaches to teaching and learning make developing and retaining qualified faculty members an important issue (Austin 2002; Brooks 2010). It can be argued that responding to these developments effectively largely depends on the quality of faculty members. Clark (2000,19) argued "there cannot be enterprise in the university, then, without its faculty..." Hence, socialization, a key mechanism in developing and retaining faculty members, has always been a focus of scholarly interest (e.g., Austin 2002; Boice 1992; Murray 2008; Padilla 2008). However, universities lack formal and systematic socialization programs. Besides, there are lack of accounts on the role of informal side of the organization in the socialization process of the academics. This study aims at revealing the key content, context, process and outcome factors playing role in the socialization of the academics.

Theoretical Framework

In early works on socialization process the concept was defined as a process of acquiring the necessary social knowledge and technical skills, which facilitates the productive stay of the new comers in the organization (Van Maanen and Schein 1979). Van Maanen (1978, 19) described this process as "people processing" and warned that socialization process is unique "not only because people are different, but also, more critically, because the techniques or strategies of people processing differ." Several higher education scholars basically followed similar approach in their definitions of socialization. Trowler and Knight (2000, 28) defined socialization as a process of "acquisition, enactment and creation of culture and knowledgeability, and to reflect upon the processes involved in identity-construction." As a result of internalizing the dominant values, norms, and conducts the new comers become integrated members of the organization (Bogler and Kremer-Hayon 1999). Austin's (2002, 104) definition focused particularly on academic work, stating "faculty socialization as an ongoing process of making sense of academic work and faculty careers, how their interests and values fit with those they saw honored within the academy, and the kind of future they envisioned, which begins with the entrance to the academy." These definitions suggest that socialization is a multiple, dynamic and provisional rather than a fixed and pre-determined process (Trowler and Knight 2000).

Process phenomena in the organization has several different dimensions. One of the broadest frameworks developed to understand process phenomena in the organizations was advanced by Armenakis and Bedian (1999). The authors classify the factors related to process phenomena under content, context, process and outcome dimensions. In this study, the framework of Armenakis and Bedian (1999) was used

to analyze another process phenomenon, that is the socialization process of the academics. In the following sections, relevant literature was presented and made relevant the content, context, process and outcome framework.

There is a consensus in the literature in that the new faculty members commonly experience avoidance, distress, and unproductive feelings in their new work settings which in some cases endanger their socialization, and ultimately their survival of the job (Austin, 2002; Murray, 2008). However, there is less agreement on the method of how to support the new faculty members in coping with these negative feelings and experiences. Scholarly literature and organizational practices seem to prioritize delivery of pre-conceived socialization programs (Bogler and Kremer-Hayon 1999; Murray 2008). Nevertheless, several scholars have raised their skepticism about the effectiveness of such programs because they commonly fail to reflect the informal, non-sequential, and individual character of socialization process (Newland et al. 2003; Padilla 2008; Tierney and Rhoads 1994).

Socialization programs for faculty members tend to divorce contextual dynamics from the socialization process. In other words, contextual dynamics which are likely to facilitate or hinder the socialization of the new faculty members are not considered the pre-developed plans. The question why certain organizations are successful in socializing the newcomers while the others fail is partly related to contextual dynamics surrounding the new comers. Trowler and Knight (2000, 28) suggested that in addition to the constructed mechanism of socialization, the cultures created in the "localized activity systems" or "community of practice" have a determining value in socialization process of the new faculty members. In addition, it is essential to note that the constructed social systems into which the

new faculty members enter are not static. There is a mutual interaction between the existing social structures and the new comer in that, both parties construct and re-construct each other (Austin 2002; Newland et al. 2003). Trowler and Knight (2000) argued that the culture in which the new comers are socialized is a not a static one; rather, it is dynamic, unbounded, and diversified social context. The dynamic understanding of socialization process supports the negotiated nature of socialization between the new comer and the work setting in general, rather than conceptualizing it as a unilateral process of imposing values, norms, roles, and rules to conform to (Ibarra 1999; Schein 1978). Newland and colleagues (2003) pointed out that new faculty members need opportunities to develop networks of colleagues, find appropriate mentors, and understand the fundamentals of faculty life in order to progress up the academic ladder. In many cases, it is not the program itself, but the by-products of the programs (e.g., developing networks, opportunities for social interaction, knowledge sharing in informal setting) contributes to the socialization of the new faculty members.

Social interaction, networking, open and wide communication, and opportunities for peer and managerial support in different activity systems (e.g., departments, research groups, and teams) can be considered as critical engagement of the new academics with the cultural context. As a result, new faculty members may get the chances of incorporating shared values, achieve goals, influence others, establish relationships, give messages about self, and get approval from others. Trowler and Knight (2000) indicated that this is basic to accomplish what they labeled as "intersubjectivity", which they defined as the engagement of the new comer with the common set of understandings and assumptions held collectively in the community of practice.

Focusing on uniqueness of academic fields Austin (2002) highlighted the importance of contextual dynamics. She argued that each discipline possesses unique academic practices including teaching and research as well as unique work relationships between scholars. Gaff (2002) advanced parallel arguments indicating that knowing a specialization and how to conduct research may not be sufficient to perform academic job effectively. Faculty members are typically expected to develop courses, handle diversity of students, contribute to institutional development (e.g., curriculum development, curriculum internationalization, material development), incorporate new technologies into teaching, research and other daily practices, and serve committees (Murray 2008). Formative socialization of faculty members does not cover training on such tasks; rather, these tasks are largely learned in the work context. The incongruence between the content of formative socialization, including training programs and the demands of the work setting has been indicated as one of the obstacles in the socialization of the newcomers. Murray (2008, 125) stated that "the doctorates are prepared in a limited number of research universities of which missions, values, cultures, and conceptions of faculty roles and responsibilities are far different from employing institutions." This incongruence gives way to the development of unrealistic expectations from both the academic job and work setting, which impact job satisfaction of the new faculty member. Different contextual dynamics such as knowledge sharing, social interaction, and peer and managerial support function a mechanism to replace such expectations with realistic ones.

The collective side of the academic profession emerged as another reason for focusing on the contextual dynamics in explaining socialization of the new faculty members. Although the academic

profession has traditionally been conceptualized as an individualized enterprise, several scholars highlighted the collective side of the profession. Boice (1992) stated that although academic autonomy is at the core of academic profession, new faculty members rely extensively on peer and senior support in excelling their teaching and research. Likewise Murray (2008) addressed that new faculty members demand social interaction with peers and support from senior faculty. Such interaction seems to be vital in the socialization process because of what they get from their social interaction can be a useful input for constructing aspect of their academic job. Social interaction functions as a source of support, mechanism of material share, context of discussing approaches, a basis for advices to deal with administration, and even as a basis of knowledge for different research funds. Austin (2002) identified social interaction as a source of learning for the new comers. Through social interaction the new comers identify role models, benefit from informal mentoring, develop time management skills, share research interests, spot strategies of dealing issues in relation to students, and decide to take on various tasks. Social interaction can be perceived as a source of support, cooperation, coordination, and guidance which are considered as major principles in socialization of the new faculty members (Hessler 2006; Tang and Chamberlain 2003). Social interaction may function as a factor dealing with negative experiences and feelings (e.g., feelings of isolation and loneliness, lack of solidarity feeling and support of the academic community) which characterize early stages of academic employment (Bogler and Kremer-Hayon 1999). Using Vygotsky's social learning theory, Brooks (2010) advanced similar statements about the importance of social interaction in the socializations of the new comers. Social interaction is considered as a way of sharing knowledge and expertise. This reflects the community of practice understanding of

Lave and Wenger (1991) or "localized activity systems" of Trowler and Knight (2000, 28).

This study aims to reveal the role of contextual dynamics in the socialization of the new faculty members. As indicated above, several scholars have discussed the role of contextual dynamics anecdotally. Hence, there is a need for a more comprehensive studies aiming to reveal the role of contextual dynamics in the socialization process of the new faculty members. One may argue that contextual dynamics are broad and may cover several factors impacting the socialization process. This argument is largely valid and hence, it justifies the need for a comprehensive framework in studying socialization of new faculty members. This study implements the process, context, content framework of Armenakis and Bedian (1999), which was originally developed for the analysis of organizational change process. Conceptualizing change as a process, Armenakis and Bedian (1999) suggest that the factors impacting the change phenomenon can be analyzed under process, context, and content categories. In this study, a similar framework is proposed in analyzing another process phenomenon, the socialization process. For this study, content factors refer to the socialization process itself. Since the aim of the study is reporting the factors surrounding the socialization process, the findings will not cover the content dynamics. Second, Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) conceptualized contextual factors as the forces existing in an organization's environment. The degree of specialization or work specificity required by existing technology, level of organizational slack, and experiences with previous changes, workload, top management attitudes, communication, organizational trust, and power dynamics are some instances of internal contextual factors of change. Finally, Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) conceptualized process factors as the actions undertaken during enactment of a process

phenomenon (in the case of this study, socialization process) and employee responses to these actions.

Considering this discussion, the purpose of this study is to answer the following research questions: What are the content, context and process factors impacting socialization process? How do these factors contribute to socialization process of the new faculty members?

Method

This study is a part of a larger research project which investigated socialization and professional identity development processes of faculty members holding tenure track positions in 13 universities located in different parts of Turkey. The first part of the study, which is presented in this paper, was designed as a phenomenological study and implemented interview technique in order to collect data. A common belief in phenomenological studies is that different people in different settings who are possessing similar characteristics and/or experiences in relation to a phenomenon will reveal similar patterns to a phenomenon. Phenomenogical design is suggested as a potent design choice to reveal the commonalities or patterns among different individuals sharing the same qualities in relation to phenomenon (Creswell 2007; Patton 2002).

Forty faculty members were interviewed in this study. The participating faculty members share three basic characteristics. First, all of them gathered their PhD degrees at a university different from their current university. In other words, they experienced a different academic culture during their PhD studies and after their arrival to the new work environment they have been confronted with the challenge of adapting to the new work environment. Second, all of the faculty members are working at public universities in Turkey. This suggests

that they are exposed to similar expectations concerning three basic roles of the university (teaching, research, and community services). Besides, they go through similar recruitment, promotion and remuneration processes. They are expected to develop their own courses and teaching materials on the one hand and contribute to research productivity of their own institutions, on the other. They are demanded to fulfill some basic criteria of both Higher Education Council (HEC), a supreme body regulating higher education in Turkey, and the criteria of their individual employers/universities. The third commonality across the participants is that all of them are in their first five years in their academic career following their PhD degrees. This is particularly important because socialization process is largely associated with the early years of the employees in their new work settings (Boice 1991). As a result of these commonalities, phenomenological design is believed to be a potent design choice serving the purpose of this study.

Semi-structured interview guides were utilized in collecting the data. The interview guide covers questions to reveal their socialization process and the content, context, and process factors relevant to this process. The literature on the socialization process and the content, context, and process framework were reviewed in developing the questions for the interview guide. Typical questions are "Could you describe your role model? What do you think about the level of social interaction in your work setting? What do you think about the level of knowledge sharing in your work setting?" The interviews took about 90 minutes and, except for three of them, they were audio-recorded. The data were collected in 2009 fall semester and 2010 spring semester.

Content analysis was conducted in analyzing the data. Before coding the data, first, the audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim.

Following transcription of the audio-recordings, each text file was sent to the relevant participant for "member check." In this procedure the participants were asked to read their written version of the interview and to indicate whether they still agree with their answers to the questions. After getting the member checks of the participants, the interviews were coded by utilizing a pre-developed initial code list. A new code was generated when the code list fell short to code a part of the text. Subsequently, similar codes were brought together and major themes in socialization process were identified. Finally, the report of findings was written.

Findings

Internal contextual factors in socialization process

Contextual factors refer to different characteristics in the internal and external environment of the organization intervening in the socialization process. Findings suggested that internal context possesses several challenges in the socialization process of faculty members. First, several interviewees indicated that they find the internal context undefined. For these interviewees the written and unwritten rules of settling down in their own organizations are not clear, structured and accessible. In some cases, there may be guidelines defining roles, responsibilities, and expectation from faculty members. However, the organization may fail to make these roles, responsibilities, and expectations public. Hence, implementing different rules or implementing inconsistent rules for different cases emerge as a challenge in their adaptation process. One interviewee stated his/her discontentment with this issue:

I think quite a lot over this issue. I do not think that they specifically target me but there is a total chaos, there is no rule, or it's because they do not like to follow the rules. It is bad to have this vague situation (Engineering)

Some of the interviewees stated that the problems caused by internal environment are partly related to public bureaucracy which forms the underlying structural-functional characteristics of the employing organizations, namely public universities. These universities are bounded with uniform implementations in their financial and administrative practices. For example, in the promotions all public universities have to follow the criteria set by the Higher Education Council (HEC), a supreme body regulating higher education in Turkey. Other interviewees suggest that internal dynamics of each unit (department) within the organization (university) can be another source of challenge. Interpersonal or intergroup conflict can be sources of challenge for the newcomers in their adaptation process because these conflicts lead to strained relationships and weaken social interaction. Interpersonal and/or intergroup conflict is closely related to power dynamics within the organization. Following we report more on different internal contextual variables which intervene with the socialization process of young faculty members.

Power dynamics

The interviewees expressed ambivalent thoughts, experiences, and observations about power dynamics. First, some of the interviewees expressed positive perception about power dynamics in their organizations. In other words, they implied that power-based groups, membership to these groups, possession of authority and exercise of authority in their work setting accelerate their socialization process. These interviewees indicated that power-based groups are a

natural consequence of organizational life because these groups facilitate interaction among group members, function as a support mechanism for the newcomers, and serve the unity of the group. Some interviewees suggested that positive or negative perception depends on interaction among group members and communication of the group with other groups. According to these interviewees, when the group interacts with other groups, then power dynamics are likely to produce positive outcomes for themselves, and as a result for the organization. Hence, in their perception, the open nature of the group mediates the negative consequences of group dynamics. The following quotation maintains this understanding of group dynamics.

> *… the level of groupings is important of course. I think as long as we have communication between groups there is no problem. But when the groups are closed or isolated from the rest of the department then we may have a problem. It is quite natural that some people may be close to the others with whom they get along. But there must be a limit for this. I think if you are able to sit down and handle a professional matter with someone with whom you may not want a social contact, then I think you do not have any problem with groupings in the department. (Arts and Sciences).*

Interviewees holding positive perception on power dynamics expressed that they have authority over their basic activities (teaching and research). In other words, they indicated that they possess the authority over their research practices as well as determining the content and method of their teaching. Particularly for teaching practices, they indicated that they feel free to open new courses, decide on the teaching materials and they choose their teaching methods. Nonetheless, other interviewees indicated that their authority over their basic practices is limited by the needs of the department. In many cases they are obliged to teach courses which are not compatible with their expertise or research topics. Interviewees in this group indicated

that they understand the need to teach these courses because of the limited number of faculty members and excessive demand for certain courses.

Another finding on positive perception of faculty members toward power-based groups is that faculty members tend to develop a positive perception about power dynamics when they feel/see themselves as a member of a particular group. They suggested that groups are formed around both academic topics and social interests. In other words, the groups are formed by people working on the same topic, in the same field, in the form of peership, or in the form of the extension of social interaction. Hence, these groups have the potential to serve the professional development of the faculty members.

The interviewees advanced statements describing the instrumentality of being a member of power-based groups in their adaptation process to their new work setting. These statements can be considered as another reason behind their positive perception toward power-based groups. They implied that being a member of a group serve their adaptation in the new organization in general. The relationships established in the work setting are carried to social setting and vice versa. Hence, the relationships in each domain reproduce each other. As a result, for several interviewees being a member of a group is inevitable if adaptation is at stake. More importantly, these relationships functions as a tool accelerating the socialization process of organizational members. The following quotation demonstrates this state of power-based groups.

> *To be honest, I've been close to one group and this has had impact on me. I am not regretful about this. There are not two groups in our department. But whenever I experience a negative thing or a problem, friends in the group went to the administration and undertook my advocacy against the administration…*

I mean I do not remember negative experiences. I have had problems because of power groups but I do not remember negative experiences. (Social Sciences).

Despite these positive expressions about power dynamics, the majority of the interviewees expressed negative perception of power-based groups and group membership. They perceive power-based groups as a source of conflict and as a factor limiting productive behaviors (e.g., collaboration or cooperation) in the organization. Besides, they expressed the belief that these groups intervene in their promotions and promotes other negative behaviors (e.g., conflict) in the organization. Hence, the new-comers perceive power-based groups as a source of problem for their adaptation.

The underlying reason behind the negative perception of the interviewees suggest that power-based groups limit their autonomy over their basic practices, particularly in teaching domain. They indicated that teaching functions are compartmentalized and shared by different power groups. They are obliged to offer the courses which they do not reflect their expertise in the field. As a result, the newcomers perceive power-based groups as a factor inhibiting their authority over their practices in their teaching. The following statements illustrate this perception of the interviewees,

…but in teaching I do not have choice at all. Academically everyone has a research focus and delivering courses related to this focus is very easy. This is so because you master every aspect of the topic as a result of extensive reading and research. But I deliver courses which I am not interested in at all because they are considered as related to my field. I want to offer some elective courses but because of my course load I cannot offer them. (Education)

The participants indicated that power-based groups are inevitable and they have potential to serve socialization of the newcomers. However, these expressions of the participants imply that the level of realizing this potential is very limited. The interviewees

advanced negative meaning to power-based groups because of their limiting effect on their autonomy in teaching domains.

Role models

The interviewees suggested that the newcomers perceive their senior faculty members, chairpersons, or supervisors as role models. In general, these individuals or role models are described as successful persons in their academic and administrative performance. It is important to note that the role models mentioned by the interviewees are informal ones. In other words, the interviewees did not indicate having been assigned to work under the mentorship of a senior faculty member. Their role model understanding reflect admiration the productivity of significant persons in their work settings rather than having a coach or mentor. The following quotations describes these qualities of the role models,

> *There are people who have done good things in this department. I have been inspired by their studies during my undergraduate study. The paths I draw for my current academic career have mostly been specified as a result of taking these people as models (Arts and Sciences).*

However, technical skills and professional success is not the only defining criteria in identifying a role model. In addition to technical skills, establishing good relationships with people in the work environment, their stance toward academic life, and other social skills are expressed as defining characteristics of the role models. Faculty members who are identified as role models serve as mentors or visionary leaders for the new comers. This indicates the fact that exhibiting social proximity and willingness to support in the adaptation process determines whether certain senior faculty members will be identified as a role models, as indicated in the following quotation.

First of all their academic accomplishments, being someone who value social interaction, being responsive to demand for help on academic and non-academic issues determine my role model choice. I know a professor who possess these qualities. He is working at another university. I think he can be considered as a role model for academic and non-academic matters (Education).

Organizational trust and trust in top management

The interviewees expressed both negative and positive statements about trust in their organizations. Some of the interviewees expressed that they find the internal context of their organizations trustful and fair. However, the expressions of the majority of the interviewees suggest that young faculty members' trust in the organization is problematic. Limited support, lack of knowledge sharing, and limited collaboration are some of the underlying problems causing distrusting environments. Although these problems contribute to the lack of trust within the organizations, unfair conducts form a more prevalent reason causing lack of trust within the organization. Particularly distribution of facilities (e.g., housing facilities) is found as unfair by the participants. The following quotation relates these problems to the dominant culture of the department.

I do not think we will have it (trust) in our department…Considering people, the general philosophy of the department, the sense of share in the department, and the dominant culture in the department, I would say we do not have trust. Indeed, it would be wrong to share every detail about me with others. I personally do not like to share my ideas in details with everyone. For example, I do not share ideas about a developing project (Arts and Sciences).

The most immediate consequence of limited trust within the organization is diminished collaboration and increased individualized work, as indicated in the following quotation.

There is no orientation at all for the newcomers. There is no support, there is no sharing. You always share your materials with others but you do not see the same from others. There is not a real collaboration. I always prefer to collaborate with projects, share news about conferences, and do research with my colleagues. (Education).

These statements indicate the limited state of trust within the departments of the interviewees. In fact, negative state of trust becomes worse when higher levels of organization (e.g., faculty, university) are considered. Young faculty members expressed less trust with higher levels in their organizations. These statements suggest that trust in top management is an issue in the socialization of the newcomers.

The interviewees stated various reasons that inhibit trust in top management. Failing to protect the rights and incentives of the young faculty members (e.g., promotion issues, fair application of rules and procedures, protecting rights at upper levels, and fair distribution of facilities), failing to provide necessary technical and social support, and distant management styles are the most commonly expressed factors diminishing trust of the new faculty in top management. In general, most faculty members find different applications unfair. These applications are related to assessments made in distributing rewards and facilities, as illustrated by the following statement,

When I arrived they did not give me a PC, they said "do a project and get a PC for yourself." For almost one year, I brought my own lap top. I was very very angry. You start to work here as a faculty member, but they do not give you a PC. This should not be possible. Interestingly they gave PCs to the ones who joined after me…It does not work for me, and I think I am exception. For some, there is every service for their offices (Engineering).

Particularly promotion is one of the most commonly stated issues giving rise to diminished trust in top management. The

interviewees particularly complained about the intentional disregard of the pre-specified promotion criteria and applying arbitrary ones. The following quotations illustrate the complaints of the interviewees about promotion problems,

> *I am suspicious whether they implement the rules, there are rules but they are applied differently to different people. The attitude is "we have rules but shall we apply it, can we postpone it?" There are arbitrary practices especially with regard to applying rules in the promotion of new faculty (Architecture).*

Besides, many of the interviewees expressed distrust in top management because of their distant and closed leadership styles. Although this may contradict the general understanding of academic autonomy, this is understandable since they seek active help in shaping their research and teaching at the beginning of their career, as illustrated below.

Process factors

In this study the interviewees suggested three process factors as key to their adaptation. The findings on social interaction, information seeking and knowledge sharing, and participation are presented in the following sections.

Social interaction

The interviewees expressed both positive and negative statements about social interaction in their organizations. Some of them expressed their contentment with social interaction in their work settings. They stated that there are multiple channels for both formal and informal interaction. The participants suggested that social interaction is a source of information for technical and social knowledge. Hence, social interaction is a factor contributing to the adaptation of the new comers, as suggested in the following quotation.

The following quotations illustrate the positive state of social interaction.

> *When I think of social interaction, of course social interaction becomes a factor facilitating adaptation to the department. In the end, taking part in [social] activities help to get familiar with the dominant culture. In other words, social activities in the department and in the campus help to get rid of stress, provide a context of social interaction; and as a result bring in positive outcomes for adaptation. I think these activities fasten adaptation (Arts and Sciences).*

Despite these positive statements, negative statements about social interaction with the organizations of the interviewees are very frequent. Several interviewees stated limited social interaction as one of the underlying reasons behind lack of participation, boredom, and alienation to their organization, as illustrated in the following quote.

> *There have been times when people were not instructive. Here people are more closed in terms of what they do in daily life. In the USA especially senior people are more instructive. In [a different university] there is what they call mentoring. Here we do not have such things. Here, senior people are following their own agendas. Indeed, senior people are involved in many other things (Economics and Administrative Sciences).*

Different interviewees suggested different underlying reasons for the limited social interaction in their work setting. Some of the interviewees indicated the workload while others indicated the nature of academic profession (including the individualized work) as the basic underlying reasons behind limited social interaction. The following quotations illustrate both the limiting effect of workload and the individualized nature of the academic profession on social interaction, and the consequence of limited social interaction on socialization of the new faculty members.

> *I think social interaction is negative because there are deadlines constantly. Even in the workplace, there is a very limited time/occasion (i.e., formal meetings) to*

interact. There are some administrative tasks. Except for this, social interaction is not evident. I have the same observation for almost everyone in here. Everyone thinks in this way "let's come, do our job, publish our papers and go back"…People here are extremely individualistic. I think limited social interaction has negative impact on adaptation, maybe because of the nature of our department, social interaction is not evident in my department. People do not come together even for conducting academically joint work, let alone individual interaction. We could do academically nurturing studies together but this is not evident for us in the department (Education).

Information seeking behavior and knowledge sharing

Before stating the findings about knowledge share, the findings on information seeking behavior are presented. Information seeking is a critical indicator of effective socialization process. Together with knowledge sharing, information seeking provides the technical and social knowledge necessary for adaptation to a new environment. The interview findings suggest that young faculty members rely on reaching directly to the source or asking the source directly when they need a particular information. They suggested that they use a variety of media to directly collect the information from various sources. In some other cases the informants stated that they prefer indirect information seeking behavior especially when the social cost associated with information seeking is high. The indirect information seeking behavior is commonly demonstrated by use of social relations or friends to reach the necessary information.

Another important issue in relation to information seeking behavior is related to the frequency of information seeking over time. Most the interviewees stated that the frequency of information seeking behaviors decrease throughout time. This is an important indicator of socialization because throughout time new faculty members may have developed the essential understanding about information sources and

the way to seek this information. However, some other interviewees suggest that the frequency of their information seeking behavior has not decreased but the way they seek information has been changed, as illustrated in the following quotation.

> *The first way I follow is asking the more experienced administrative staff, not my friends. I've learned what to ask and where to ask throughout time. Hence, rather than asking my friends I ask these experienced administrative staff or units. Sometimes of course I dial some wrong persons or units but they direct me to the right place. Hence, I prefer to get the information directly from its sources. (Education).*

Interviewees suggest that knowledge sharing is largely accomplished through informal channels. This can be related to the individualized nature of the academic job. However, overreliance on the informal channels for knowledge sharing indicates a problematic state of knowledge sharing in the organizations of the interviewees. Most of the interviewees stated that they do not observe a wide knowledge sharing in their organizations.

Besides, the interviewees expressed that the formal knowledge sharing channels do not function effectively. The expressions of the interviewees suggest that there is a limited awareness about knowledge sharing within the organization. As a result, the organizations give very limited space in their structural-functional choices to accomplish knowledge sharing. For example, none of the organizations possess a distinct unit for accomplishing knowledge sharing. As a result, when asked about knowledge sharing the interviewees complained about the limited awareness about knowledge sharing and the ineffectiveness of the administrative mechanism for accomplishing knowledge sharing. The following statements illustrate this perception of the interviewees about the negative state of knowledge sharing.

To be honest, I have some complaints about access to information. Let me give you an example about publication rewards. I filled the form and there were at least six or seven different phone numbers about where to sent the form. Whenever I contact someone in the rector's office he/she forwards me to another persons. After one hour I realized that the process begins in the department (Education).

The limited knowledge sharing in the organizations has some negative implications on the adaptation of the young faculty members. The following statements illustrate the negative implications of limited knowledge sharing on organizational trust in general and on adaptation of the newcomers in particular.

Yes, it is loss of time, my patience is vanishing, I am worried, and I feel my productivity is decreasing. It affects my, what you call my adaptation, as well. As a result, it [limited knowledge sharing] negatively affects my trust toward my institution and desire to stay in the institution (Education).

Participation

Some of the interviewees suggested that there is a space of participation in academic and administrative issues. Their expressions suggest that they are satisfied with their participation in administrative and academic processes. Incorporating their opinions in critical decisions especially on issues related to their career (e.g., promotion) satisfies their participation expectations. The interviewees described the atmosphere democratic and participative.

Most of the interviewees, however, expressed their dissatisfaction with their participation in administrative and academic processes. They indicated that their participation is not secured in many critical academic and administrative processes. In some cases, their problem is related to failing to develop mechanisms for soliciting the opinions of crowded groups. One interviewee stated that

expressing opinions in a group of sixty faculty members is almost practically impossible. Hence, it can be argued that the administrators are uninformed about alternative decision-making approaches for groups with uncommon qualities (e.g., large size, senior-junior imbalance).

Besides, the interviewees implied that there are formal or institutionalized channels of participation. The existence of such channels can be considered as advantageous for the senior members of the organization. However, the existence of these channels is a challenge for the newcomers. They need to learn and adapt to this functioning. Hence, the structured mechanisms are perceived ineffective in soliciting the ideas of the faculty members. In many cases this is challenging for the newcomers, as suggested by the following quotation.

> *…there are cases where we learn the results of decision making process rather than contributing to it. There is no discussion for consulting or soliciting our contribution to the decision. There are certain boards (or decision units) they talk about the issue and make a decision. I would expect information about the decision if not contributing to the decision-making process. Then ask for contribution to the decision. I do not think that informing the department about the decision is critical once they make the decision (Arts and Sciences)*

Discussion and Conclusions

Utilizing Armenakis and Bedian's (1999) framework, this study analyzes the role of context and process factors on the socialization of the new faculty members. The research findings suggest that power dynamics, role models, organizational trust and trust in top management as contextual factors; social interaction, information seeking and knowledge sharing, and participation as process factors play role in the socialization of the new faculty members.

The interviewees stated both positive and negative conclusions about each of the factors. At first glance the dichotomous nature of the findings may sound perplexing. However, a close look at the findings truly show that when the institutions provide these contextual and processual factors, the new faculty members express positive statements about their adaptation to the new work setting. However, when the organizations fail to provide contextual and processual factors, they express negative perceptions about their adaption and socialization.

A related outcome of this conclusion is that healthy socialization of new faculty members call for a slightly different understanding of culture. An important component of this new culture is a revised managerial practice. According in this new understanding of university management, incorporating some practices of business organizations seems inevitable. Higher education organizations have some traditional values. Sticking on these traditional values, management of higher education organizations call for artful incorporation of some general managerial practices related to business organizations, including ensuring management of power dynamics, developing an appropriate reward and remuneration system, facilitating social interaction, developing a system for ensuring senior faculty support for young faculty, taking measures to ensure organizational trust, ensuring extensive knowledge sharing, networking and participation in the organizations. The concept of *collegial entrepreneurialism* suggested by Clark (2000) seems to be instrumental in responding to the need for adapting a new behavior management in universities while preserving core values of higher education organizations. Clark (2000) argued collegial entrepreneurialism serves the interest of different internal and external groups at different levels (e.g., faculty members, administrators), while

producing leadership. Hence, this understanding of university management is likely contribute to creating necessary contextual dynamics serving new faculty socialization.

Another conclusion is related to the dual nature of socialization process. Socialization covers the process of developing both technical skills for performing the job in particular work setting as well as adapting to the work setting by providing effective incorporation of the dominant culture of the organization (Jex and Britt 2010). In this study the findings show that new faculty members, at least the ones interviewed in this study, have adequate the technical skills and knowledge to survive in their work setting. However, they seem to be challenged with cultural adaptation in their socialization process. Applying Feldman's (1981) stage model of socialization, it can be argued that the faculty members successfully go through anticipatory socialization, encounter, change and acquisition, and behavioral outcomes. In other words, the faculty members successfully gather information and make some assessments about the organization, get familiar with the task and work setting as they are, develop a clear idea about job performance criteria, and develop a fair understanding of organizational culture. In this study, the findings suggest that the new faculty members demonstrate behavioral outcome of socialization process. However, accomplishing full affective outcomes is limited. Affective outcomes are essential to accomplish productive behaviors (e.g., positive attitudes toward work, high level of motivation, and job involvement) and eliminate unproductive behaviors (e.g., turnover intentions). This can partly be considered as a consequence of failing to provide context and process dynamics. Limited affective socialization suggests that in accommodating role demands and adopting values, norms, and rules of the profession, faculty members do not encounter with problems in relation to the academic profession.

However, problems related to institutions themselves hinder socialization of young faculty members. Therefore, it is appropriate to talk about "socialization to the profession" rather than "socialization to the institution." Hence, national and organizational level policy makers can be suggested to reconsider policies of recruiting faculty members in a way to facilitate a full socialization process including affective socialization.

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