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**Master`s thesis**

**Subject: ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL  
INSTITUTIONS: CASE OF KHAZAR UNIVERSITY**

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## **Abstract**

The present study fills the gap in the current literature and sheds light on academic leadership in higher education in Azerbaijan.

The purpose of the study is to determine the perceptions of executive academicians in the context of leadership, professional development and organizational culture.

The data in this study were collected through interviews. The study use phenomenology method.

It has been observed that the perceived academic leadership roles are mostly performed in the light of the answers given by the executive academicians to the questions about academic leadership. In cases where academic leadership roles cannot be fulfilled, different solutions are offered. As an obstacle to academic leadership roles, the habits of the executive academics themselves and their colleagues and administrative policies came to the fore. In overcoming the stated obstacles, communication and personal relations came to the fore, while the libertarian working environment, experience sharing, creating awareness, transparency and institutionalization were mentioned.

Recommendations for future research are described.

**Keywords: academic, leadership, higher education, university, participants**

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Universities today face a multitude of challenges: leading institutional innovation; attracting and retaining the highest quality faculty, staff and students; adopting learning technologies; meeting the increasing demands of the public, financial institutions, employers, students and university staff, seeking new and alternative sources and financial models. This new organizational environment requires leaders who are successful against the challenge of change, who support innovative environments, encourage trust and learning, and who can successfully guide themselves, their components and units, departments and universities into the future.

**The purpose of the study** is to determine the perceptions of executive academicians in the context of leadership, professional development and organizational culture.

Research by the United States and Canada Conference Board reports that “leadership” is the number one competency that businesses and organizations seek to develop in their people. Groups under the umbrella of businesses and organizations are lacking in leadership and are concerned with developing leaders not only at the top level, but also at the highest level throughout the business or organization (Brown, 2001).

Debrowski and Blake (2004) emphasized that it is also important to train academic leaders who manage change in the university context. At this point, it is thought that universities need investment to train their own leaders. It is seen that the internal and external pressures for organizational change in higher education are increasing day by day. As the budget paid by the state decreases, competition increases and it is thought that it is important to create new resources and to raise awareness that universities should not be turned into business houses in this process. It is known that the replacement of the functions of creating a vision for change, creating and providing resources, providing individual support, establishing standard operating processes and

monitoring development is not as easy as replacing the leadership functions in normal operation. In the change process, these functions are expected from the leader and those who are in the formal leadership position cannot be accepted as leaders when they cannot fulfill these functions (Karip, 1998).

One advantage of universities creating their own academic leaders is that the leader can see the needs of the university more clearly. Thus, it is ensured that the strategic plan created is a plan compatible with the leader's own university rather than a general pattern. Traditional models of academic leadership appear to be focused on individual excellence. However, the understanding of modern academic leadership is focused on the development of the institution and has adopted the shared power. It is assumed that development-oriented job satisfaction is important for all members, rather than individual material rewards, thanks to the autonomous understanding of the members of the organizations where the leaders are located.

The idea that leadership is an official administrative position in education and bureaucracy has been replaced by a different approach in recent years (Bakioglu, 1998). Formal leadership based on traditional understanding ignored the needs of the members of the organization because it was task-oriented. It is thought that this situation affects individuals' job satisfaction, sense of belonging, and therefore job performance negatively. Today, it is emphasized that it is important to raise leaders who have more humanistic philosophical foundations and do not ignore reflective thinking and power sharing. It is seen that it is important to update the understanding of leadership in higher education and to give the necessary importance to leadership. In addition, as Ervay (2006) states, academic leaders do not have to be only certified or appointed individuals. On the other hand, standardized school improvement initiatives of even academic leaders elected in a democratic context reduce the quality of academic leaders in the context of higher education (Bracey, 2003; Ervay, 2006). An academic leader who cannot benefit from the benefits of localization and cannot take initiative may not be able to contribute to the development of the institution he is affiliated with.

Instead of behaviorist leaders with a classical understanding of leadership, leaders who understand the diversity of the society and do not isolate themselves and the institution they lead from the society should be trained. Managers at universities, which are the locomotive educational institutions of the countries, should also help the higher education institution, where it assumes the leadership role, take its place in the society by turning their institutions into a social organization intertwined with the society, and while doing this, they must strictly adhere to the dynamics of the society. It is seen that the understanding of academic leadership that directs higher education and its focal points has not yet taken its deserved place in our society. However, academic leaders, who focus on human behavior and are a locomotive in guiding learning, are thought to be one of the most important concepts in the 21st century. It is emphasized that academic leaders, who are influential in the field of management and regulation as well as being a role model with their commitment and passion for learning, are the most powerful weapon for the understanding of increasing competition in our globalizing world.

Ervay (2006) defined the leader as a professional support staff, administrative leader or faculty member who increases the quality and quantity of students' learning, as well as the management dimension of academic leadership. One of the dynamics of the higher education institution is the students. The correct execution of academic leadership will also increase the quality of learning and teaching in today's higher education institutions.

The traditional management approach is insufficient for the correct direction of investments made in the field of education, which is required by today's competitive understanding, and for the formation of a modern academic culture in innovative and higher education institutions. In addition to an academic leader who can see the whole picture, has a vision and does not make wrong decisions, an academic leader who does not ignore the norms of academic culture in the organizational and professional context is very important for higher education institutions that constantly improve themselves

in today's competitive environment. From this point of view, focusing on the concept of academic leadership is important for the future of higher education.

**Research Questions.** In the field of academic leadership, studies that deal with the roles, responsibilities, reflective thinking skills of executive academics in universities in the context of professional development and organizational culture are very few in number. Therefore, the problem sentence of the research was determined as “How are the academic leadership perceptions of the executive academicians in the universities in Azerbaijan in the context of organizational culture and professional development?”. Depending on this problem statement, the questions are as follows:

1. What are the similarities and differences between the perception of academic leadership roles of academics and academic leadership roles stated in the literature?
2. How do academic leadership perceptions of academics affect reaching the goal in the context of strategic management?
3. How do executive academics perceive the interaction between organizational culture and academic leadership?
4. How are the levels and requirements for executive academics to apply their academic leadership skills in the context of professional development?

**Significance of the Study.** Academic leaders must have a high level of managerial and functional skills in order to establish a successful higher education institution, to train quality organization members that will increase competitiveness, and to create an innovative and entrepreneurial higher education culture. Studies show that the concept of academic leadership directly affects the concepts of organizational culture, reflective learning skills and professional development. However, studies in the field of academic leadership in Azerbaijan are quite insufficient. Only a few international studies explored the academic leadership in higher education. To the best of our knowledge, no such studies were conducted in Azerbaijan. The present study fills the gap in the current literature, sheds light on academic leadership in higher education in a previously under-researched country.



The findings to be obtained as a result of this research:

- Raising awareness among executive academics about academic leadership development in a professional context;
- To create an academic leadership understanding that is innovative, keeps its mission up to date, is one step ahead to reach its vision, constantly improves its leadership skills, and sees the organization as a whole;
- Establishing and developing a higher education culture within the strategic management approach by getting rid of the traditional management approach;
- Contributing to higher education administrators' access to leadership skills by seeing their deficiencies within the scope of their roles and responsibilities for the development of leadership skills;
- Provide local information and findings for academics on behalf of academic leadership;
- Saying that it will constitute an important resource for academics in terms of developing different research topics on academic leadership expresses the importance of this research.

**Limitations.** The study group of this research is limited to the administrative academics of Khazar University in the city of Baku. The research is limited to the answers given by the academicians in the study group to the interview questions.

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Differences of leadership and academic leadership**

Good leadership is to ensure unity and integrity on the decisions taken in relation to management. Since academic leadership belongs to a leadership that is needed in academic environments and academic institutions, it is a special situation in general leadership. Academic institutions have a very different environment from private or public institutions. Private corporations are guided only by the considerations of increasing the material value of the shares held by the shareholders. Government agencies and public sector organizations, on the other hand, are guided by the thoughts of increasing the value created by the institution (the quantity and quality of the service) for the stakeholders, including the society at large. Increasing stakeholder value in academic institutions means increasing the value produced in the academic institution and making it more valuable for stakeholders such as students, staff, society and financing institutions. Stakeholders in academic institutions are much more diverse than stakeholders in private or public institutions. As it can be understood, academic leadership has some common points with general leadership, but academic leadership also has some unique and special challenges. An important reason for this is the diversity of stakeholders. Because students, lecturers, etc. in academic organizations. There are various stakeholders such as Therefore, the academic leader needs to look at each stakeholder as a separate individual and determine and use different policies to deal with them (Sathye, 2004).

Employees of the higher education system need autonomy and complete professional freedom to carry out their work effectively. Researchers dealing with this issue in previous years believed that there was no need for a formal leader to guide employees. However, the world we live in today is much more complex and the business world has taken a more dynamic and uncertain form compared to the past. Because of these troubles and difficulties, today there is a greater need for leaders who

will lead people in the right direction and efficiently. An effective leader uses his own motivating and impressive powers to adapt and adapt to various changes that may occur within and outside the organization or organizations he is leading. Regarding this concept, it is stated that from time to time, due to similar dynamic and complex changes in the environment, the personnel working under the leadership of the leaders seize the autonomy in the workplace. In today's world, organizations have become 'stakeholder organizations'. Leaders have a greater burden than before to learn and fulfill the demands of their stakeholders. Therefore, while the burden on all leaders has increased much more than in the past, academic leaders have to take their share of this increase in burden. Therefore, faculty members working in academic institutions have to renounce their professional autonomy today. Academic institutions these days face pressures such as quality assurance, performance management and continuous improvement, which limits the academic freedom of faculty and as a result strong leadership is required for institutions to achieve such broad and challenging goals.

The last decade has witnessed a shift from management development to leadership development. While management focuses on structuring goals, tasks, and roles, leadership focuses on influencing direction and change, developing quality relationships, and bringing out the best in oneself and others. Effective leaders develop both managerial and leadership behaviors and qualities. Many management development programs today place much more emphasis on the leadership component, and many are renaming their programs as leadership development to convey and reflect this emphasis. Investing in the development of leaders is, in fact, an investment in individual and corporate growth and innovation as well. As Kouzes and Posner note, "the most important contribution of leaders ... is their contribution to the long-term development of people and institutions that adapt, evolve and grow" (Brown, 2001). Yet leadership development is an underused strategy in many universities. Dynamic leadership is needed among faculty, staff, deans, rectors, vice presidents, presidents and students across the university to meet the current challenges in higher education.

Academic leadership development can build leadership capacities deep within the organization by paying greater attention to people and processes and by more consciously applying the principles of effective leadership.

Today, the higher education sector is faced with a number of challenges: increasing global competition, the need to develop more economical educational practices, the need for more efforts for innovative ways of fulfilling research and teaching tasks, and increasing current productivity in higher education, particularly staff recruitment and student-teacher training. Problems arise such as making the numerical balance more consistent. Of course, one reason for these pressures has to do with the changing contexts in which universities operate. Many countries around the world have faced reduced government support for their universities, resulting in more business-oriented practices and increasing pressure to increase accountability within the institution. This situation certainly puts great pressure on university administrators to take the costs of university activities more seriously. It is also leading to some important changes in university practices and values, which have significant and unpredictable consequences, particularly in relation to academic cultures, study contexts and outcomes (Debowski, 2015).

### **Leadership in institutions**

In times when volatility is very dynamic and uncertain, it is important that academic institutions are supported by better leadership. The literature on the field frequently and widely emphasizes the need for insightful, courageous, strategic and generous leaders in guiding their communities. In order to meet the need for such a leader, most universities offer mostly structured leadership and management training conducted in-house. The most common form of such training is to prepare a development program that consists of basic management training sets such as conflict management, recruitment, goal setting and performance review.

There is general consensus on the need to begin efforts to develop leadership in the academic field at an early stage of the academic career, namely at the postdoctoral

or assistant professor level. Although they do not hold a formal management position, in fact most faculty members are leaders in some way. The mentoring role is often the first type of leadership the young researcher encounters. By allowing experienced leaders to guide younger leaders in the organization, it is possible to both enable them to recognize their leadership expertise and allow young leaders to benefit from the knowledge and experience of those who are more experienced than themselves. Particularly, the participation of young researchers in knowledge sharing networks by meeting with leaders inside and outside the academy will provide a good platform for young leader candidates to understand leadership (Berg ve Jarbur, 2014).

It is also important to talk about having self-awareness and self-management skills. Personal and leadership development must continue at all levels and dimensions of leadership. Leadership development training and programs are certainly not a sufficient guarantee for good leadership, and leaders must also be keen on issues such as understanding, behavior change, and improved self-awareness.

Understanding the leadership role of deans or department chairs involves understanding the academic, collegiate, or departmental dimensions of academic leadership. Leadership skills for such needs can also be acquired through mentoring or academic leadership programs. Issues such as finance, budgeting and planning specific to academic management can also be examined under this subheading. His resources for developing understanding of academic leadership generally include conferences sponsored by various professional bodies or articles from academic periodicals, presentations on academic management, and workshops.

First of all, academics begin to perceive themselves differently when they move from their position to dean. For example, department heads, among whom many deans are elected, think predominantly and primarily in terms of the human and structural frameworks of academic leadership (Gmelch, Reason, Schuh, & Shelley, 2002). Also, department heads in academia focus primarily on maintaining staff happiness, helping staff progress to become permanent staff, and supporting groups that revise the

curriculum. They also pay attention to the organizational structure. As a kind of guardian of the rules laid down by the institution, they have to make sure that the people working in the institution are aware of the policies in force and that they adhere to these policies.

When the department heads rise to the position of dean, they expect and want more attention from the employees of the institution for themselves in two new frameworks, political and symbolic. Special meetings and dinners, ceremonies and graduations that deans do not feel compelled to attend more comfortably when they were previously faculty or department heads suddenly become high priorities. Reconciliation within the organization and division becomes more important than in the past, and they begin to see closely the importance of the very different types of relationships, institutional and bilateral, and become people who see the big picture within the organization.

For an effective leadership, in addition to the conceptual understanding of leadership, certain behaviors and skills in the leader such as communication, conflict resolution, negotiation, resource management, performance appraisal and coaching must be developed simultaneously. These skills, which are vital for leaders, can be acquired to some extent and to a certain extent in formal education, but on-the-job application and feedback are also of reinforcing importance in order to turn these skills into practice.

According to Gmelch and Miskin, although it is a necessary condition for an academic administrator to have a conceptual understanding of management to be able to lead, a leader's only conceptual understanding of management is leadership (<http://atwood.six-o-six.com>). It is not sufficient on its own for the development of the skill. At the same time, the leader should reflect his conceptual understanding of management to the behaviors and skills he will develop in accordance with the situations he encounters, that is, he should have the skills to apply this conceptual awareness in the field. Otherwise, the conceptual understanding of the leader is only

theoretical and insufficient. What are the most critical and essential skills for academic administrators to achieve success in leadership? Planning and prioritizing? Vision? Conflict resolution? Managing resources? Motivating faculty and staff? Team building? All of these are important and their degree of importance increases and decreases depending on the current demands of the university to which the administrator is a member. For example, if the university is dealing with human resources or financial cutbacks, the management of financial resources and motivating faculty and staff become a priority. If the university to which the academic leader belongs is smooth and everyone in the university seems happy, it is not surprising that the leadership prioritizes vision and planning (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002).

A leader who is alert and at the same time adept at the climate of the university should be able to put the most necessary skills into play at the right time. So how do academic leaders develop these skills that need to be put into play that are essential to success? It can be a logical and correct way for them not to miss formal work opportunities such as seminars, workshops and conferences and to use simulations, case studies and action planning to develop their skills. Formal education is only part of acquiring the skills necessary to be a good manager and a good academic leader. Academic leaders also need on-the-job experience of applying this knowledge before turning it into a skill. If institutions do not have their own centers for academic leadership and professional development, institutions can contribute to the development of their academic leaders by providing workshops and training opportunities through the human resources department, if available (Gmelch ve Buller, 2016).

Wolverton and Gmelch (2002) state that leadership development is an inward journey. Self-awareness and corrective feedback should be part of an academic administrator's leadership journey. Having the opportunity to discuss important challenges they face in peer groups and with a mentor contributes to the reflective learning process necessary for leadership development. Moral, ethical and spiritual enhancement dimensions should also be included in the process of academic leader

development. Moral, ethical and spiritual equipment are necessary and compulsory components for an academic administrator to successfully complete his leadership journey. The development of the academic leader is very much related to finding one's inner voice (or managerial conscience). Since reliability and accuracy are at the heart of academic leadership, identifying one's beliefs and assumptions to guide one's self strengthens effective leadership. By listening to structured feedback, reflecting frequently, and developing self-awareness, environments can be created for understanding leaders to thrive.

In his book *The Reflective Practitioner*, Donald Schon (1983) states that reflection during action is of great importance in dealing with the uncertainty, instability, loneliness and value conflict that deans commonly face in their leadership lives. For this reason alone, reflection during action is critical. Deans rarely reflect on their observations, although deans resort to reflection during action (Schon, 1983). This is exactly why deans need to form support groups where they can safely communicate their personal dilemmas and insights and test them against the opinions of their peers. Leadership development does not occur in isolation from the world. Leadership develops best in a group or group of trusted colleagues in the roles of mentor, friend, or coach (Beineke & Sublett, 1999). When a group of Australian deans were asked what skills they most needed to be effective deans, the dean of an engineering school replied, 'Know thyself, I need to know myself before leading my faculty and team'.

In summary, deanship development should encompass all three approaches; conceptual development, skill development and reflective thinking/practice.

### **Developing academic leaders**

Developing academic leaders requires time and steps to improve, practice and understand academic leadership skills. This process requires conceptual understanding, skills development, and reflection, which can be achieved through reading, education, mentoring, skills workshops and peer interaction. The development of leaders in academia is often left to chance or a few individual mentoring efforts. Given the



ongoing intergenerational transformation and the increasing demands and challenges on academic administrators, institutions should implement more focused and systematic processes to develop future academic leaders.

Many aspects of leadership expertise can be derived from a single principle that is quite simple and not so original. The unique function of leadership is to reveal the potential within people and to guide them towards the future. An effective academic leader defines clear goals for his institution and seizes new opportunities, regularly and efficiently manages both people and resources, motivates and inspires staff to take action, trains and develops his followers, and learns how to improve his own performance. constantly listens to the staff. He does all this with integrity, energy, motivation and spirit because he knows that without them he will not be followed by his staff. Deep down we know that not all academic staff are great teachers or researchers. Most of us are average. Someone can help brilliant students and instructors achieve excellence. But only an outstanding lecturer or leader can help average people do great things. It can be said that the art of leadership is to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Deans and department heads rise to leadership positions without receiving leadership training, without previous managerial experience, without a clear understanding of the ambiguity and complexity of their roles, unaware of the metamorphic changes that occur as they transform from an academic to a leader, and without knowing the bills their new job/positions will impose on their academic and personal lives. The transition from academic to academic leadership takes time and dedication, and not all academics who come to this position can make the transition completely to leadership. The socialization of academic leaders seems to be left to chance.

On-the-job experience in different types of academic leadership positions is a typical path to academic leadership. On-the-job experiences form the basis for understanding the academic leader's role, but often provide an incomplete picture and

may not provide the conceptual understanding and skill development necessary for success in the broader academic leadership role. Developing academic leaders requires time and specific steps to understand, apply and develop academic leadership skills. This process requires conceptual understanding and skill development and reflection, which can be achieved through reading, education, mentoring, skills workshops and peer interaction. The development of leaders in academia is often left to chance or the individual mentoring efforts of a few. Given the increasing demands and challenges on academic leaders, institutions should implement a more focused and systematic process to develop future academic leaders.

Higher education is experiencing a revolution in today's world. The increasing number of students, the communication speed of universities, international student programs, the decrease in the budget allocated by the government, and the diversification of activities that can provide resources are only a few of the reasons for this revolution. The future success of our universities depends on all these dynamics and how these dynamics are managed. This is what makes academic leadership a vibrant and living concept. Adapting to the changing world, requiring different management skills and approaches; the increasing dedication of academics, students and other employees makes academic leadership one of the most important leadership styles today. On the other hand, it is seen that universities generally use the number of researches, projects and publications they have done as success criteria in the strategic plans and self-evaluation reports they have prepared. Because one of the main reasons for the existence of universities is to contribute to social development through scientific research, projects and publications. Although the number of publications and the number of citations made in Turkey have provided certain developments in recent years, it is known that when compared to the USA, EU countries, OECD countries, they are not yet at the desired level (Bakioglu, 2014).

Politics is a very common concept in the management and leadership areas of today's higher education institutions. From the micro level to the macro level, from the

organizational level to the people, in short, wherever the concepts of power and decision-making exist, the concepts of management and leadership take their place, therefore, the concept of politics. Policy in higher education institutions has quite different dimensions: formal, informal. This concept, which has different dimensions such as interdisciplinary, psychological, ethical, power and economics, has an important place that cannot be ignored. Again, in the field of educational leadership and management, values are intertwined with many topics such as professionalism, authority and power, management, organizational goals, conflicts, and micropolitical structures. In our world where the dynamics of education and management are constantly changing, it is very important to redefine the standards required in the field of leadership. One of the starting points of academic leadership is to respond to this need. In today's world where it is impossible to respond to the constantly changing conditions with a single leadership dimension, it is necessary to adapt new knowledge and techniques to the development of academic leadership. It can be said that academic leadership does not see higher education leadership as a mechanical structure. For this reason, there is an irregularity within the order in the administration. This situation is inevitable in social organizations because in an institution with human factor, management cannot be planned down to the smallest detail. The leader, who encounters a situation contrary to the plan, knows how to reach a solution with instant strategies. Setting boundaries regarding the nature of academic leadership is the first phenomenon to be understood and applied. Understanding the management reforms and changes that need to be made, preparing the pioneers of change and preparing for the anticipated obstacles are among the tasks expected to be done due to the nature of academic leadership. In addition, determining what kind of actions will be included in the practices, who will be affected, what the basic concepts will be, and the determination of the limitations are also within the scope of the nature of academic leadership.

Bouckaert and Pollitt (2011) stated that the literature on management and leadership explores destruction rather than construction, and its limitations and

contrasts rather than a persuasive and fluid depiction. The modern understanding of leadership also forms the basis of academic leadership. With the modern understanding, the relations between the appointed and elected administrative officials have also changed. It has been observed that development and change occur more rapidly and effectively in organizations where conflicts are less and where a mild climate prevails. It is observed that the academic leadership field has also developed with the modern leadership approach and the targets set in higher education are realized more quickly and effectively. On the other hand, it is a fact that has taken its place in the literature that the characteristics, roles and competencies of leadership and management are different. It is also stated that these two concepts have similar aspects to each other. All that is required in an organization where managers can take leadership is to have a relationship of influence. Leadership quality can be attributed to the manager when the manager and subordinates are in a mutual relationship (Yukl, 2010). It is known that in an institution where there is mutual communication, authority and power will also occur as a result of indirect management. Thus, in an educational organization where great changes will be implemented, the support of the members of the organization to the change will enable them to reach the target determined by the educational organization quickly.

Emphasizing that leadership is a natural effect that creates values, Cashman (2008) stated that the modernity in the understanding of leadership has removed the hierarchy in the organization and spread the leadership to the whole organization or institution. Based on this assumption, we can say that the understanding of academic leadership can remove the hierarchy in higher education levels and put an end to bureaucracy, and institutions can act as a single body and work in coordination. Organizational practices that do not meet the expectations of the members of the educational organization and do not comply with their goals may lead to questioning the leadership of the administrator of this institution and reduce the efficiency of the organization. For this reason, the academic leader should be able to show expertise in

areas such as purpose, interpersonal communication, and the field of change. However, this will ensure that innovation and change movements in higher education will be successful.

### **Obstacles of academic leader**

It is clear that the academic leader can overcome internal and external obstacles or problems thanks to his expertise in various fields. One of the most important of these obstacles is the obstacle that the academic leader creates against himself. One of the requirements of being a leader is development. The academic leader should not ignore the requests and ideas of other members and should always be willing to expand his own vision. An understanding of academic leadership that is open to development enables the individual to be more flexible while drawing his own boundaries, enabling the educational organization to become an institution focused on innovation and development.

Academic administrators in higher education act as a bridge between their departments or faculties and the central administration. They establish a link between the rectorate and the faculty. Sustainability of this bond requires balancing the wishes and needs of the faculty and the rectorate and responding to the expectations of both parties. The social bond of the academic leader with the society gains importance at this point. The norms of the society, external pressures and the perception of people are answered in accordance with the personal ability and social skills of the academic leader.

Today, it is getting harder and harder to keep up with the rapidly changing world. Academic organizations should be the institution that initiates this change rather than following it. It is the leaders who initiate the change. In order for the next academic generation to be closer to perfection, it is necessary to support change and transformation, go beyond the standards and take radical decisions. It is clear that academic leadership affects the entire faculty or department (Settoon & Wyld, 2004; Gidman, 2013). For this reason, besides how faculty or department employees perceive

leadership, how the academic leader perceives leadership is very important. In the concept of academic leadership, in which social competence is essential in addition to professional qualifications, the most important dimension of modern higher education leadership perception is the self-perception of academic leaders. For this reason, it can be said that academic leadership is based on reflective thinking and the perception of transformational leadership is very important for the sustainability of academic leadership.

It is important for academics and higher education professionals to trust their leaders to drive the success of their institutions. In order to provide this trust and create a perception of trust in people, the academic leader should know the organizational culture and respond to the expectations of these people. The leader may need to create a new organizational culture in cases where the culture required to ensure organizational success is not available. Being able to act as a single body is achieved by ensuring cultural unity and creating a community (Nielsen, Randall, Yarker ve Brenner, 2008).

### **The difficulties in the field of academic leadership**

The difficulties encountered in the field of academic leadership are grouped under various headings. Some of these dimensions are focus on results, leading subordinates, management of organizations, management of systems and management of values (Van Wart, 2013). In academic organizations focused on results, it is the responsibility of academic leaders to make difficult choices and to deal with challenges such as competition brought about by globalization. As for subordinates, increased cynicism and reduced resources can be cited as a few of the obstacles. In order to lead academic organizations, it is necessary to keep up with the changing and developing world. In such a case, some of the things to do is to keep up with the developing technology and reorganize the organizations to meet the needs of the public. On the other hand, ensuring the motivation and coordination of individuals for teamwork and ensuring social agreement are included in these obstacles. It is one of the main

responsibilities of the academic leader to ensure trust in policy and management systems, and to determine which individuals should follow within complex structures and phenomena.

Another important point for the effective use of the concept of academic leadership is the leadership style used by the leader. Sternberg (2013) examined leadership styles under four headings. These; authoritarian, faculty-oriented authoritarian, management-oriented authoritarian and liberating leadership style. Although Sternberg collects leadership styles under 4 main headings, it is stated that the academic leadership style, which is based on reflective and transformational leadership models, can also adopt different styles situationally (Askling & Stensaker, 2002).

Today's higher education conditions have caused academic leadership to become a very challenging qualification. It is emphasized that competition is not only in the field of education, but also in the economic and sociological fields. For this reason, the academic leader is expected to lead the formation of a university that has a say in the international platform, taking into account the national conditions. It is important for academic development that academic units can provide proficiency in internal management. Deciding on structural change where necessary is one of the duties of the academic leader. The establishment of academic units and the clear distribution of tasks will reduce the conflict environment within the organization and increase the efficient use of time. In addition, careful distribution of resources in the planning process, and strengthening studies on the development of academic staff are among the issues that concern the internal management of the academic leadership. With the formation of new academic units, new roles and responsibilities arise. In order to successfully fulfill these roles and responsibilities, academic leaders need to specialize in managing new units.

Effective universities; have systems where academic freedom, participation in the decision-making process, democratic management approach dominate and

creativity and autonomy are more valuable. Collective decision-making mechanisms are used effectively in academic institutions where academic leadership is more than traditional management understanding (Spendlove, 2007).

Confucius believed that educating people is a moral imperative for the leader. Based on this view of Confucius, it can be said that individuals who follow the leader also have moral responsibilities, and therefore loyalty and dedication to the leader is important (Xu, 2011). The patriarchal leadership, which is effective in Far Eastern culture, brings compassion, morality and authority into a whole (Goethals, Sorenson, & Burns, 2004). While emphasizing the importance of the cultural influence of the Far East in leadership, Xu (2011) also stated that the western culture has a result and production-oriented leadership type. However, the current literature shows that shared leadership models and interpersonal relations are becoming more dominant in the field of management with the effect of transformational leadership. In the academic leadership model, where academic expertise, ethics and educating individuals are important, the benefits of transformational leadership play an active role.

### **Academic leadership in higher education**

Higher education is an institution that is expected to respond to the increasing needs of society as a result of industrialization and trade. In order to respond to this need, a management approach that will increase sharing should be considered. For this reason, some of the skills that will increase knowledge sharing and responsibility sharing are critical and creative thinking. The most important model that plays a role in the development of these skills in the academic leadership model is the shared leadership model. This management model, which increases sharing and coordination by reducing bureaucracy, is an indispensable part of higher education. Sharing and coordination dimensions play an important role in academic leadership being a type of leadership that can meet today's higher education needs. From this point of view, it is seen that the academic leadership model has many important dimensions. These



dimensions enable higher education to change and develop, to cope with the challenges of globalization and increasing competition.

The National Knowledge Commission (2008) stated that there are significant improvements in the quality of higher education in knowledge-based societies and there is a need for quality higher education institutions. As stated in the report, even an individual with leadership skills should be trained for academic leadership because the continuation, development and sustainability of a higher education institution is possible with the harmonious functioning of its subsystems. Existing managers need to have a broad vision in order to fulfill these responsibilities. It is only within the competence of an academic leader to see that there is more than one solution to a problem encountered in higher education. Considering that universities are the locomotive for countries, it is clear that they should be considered not only in terms of administration but also in terms of teaching. It is one of the most important requirements of our age that teaching activities are carried out in order to progress from rote-based learning to learning by making sense and to raise awareness of lifelong learning in individuals.

The task of facilitating the learning of academicians as well as students' learning and raising awareness of the need for lifelong learning in the members of the academic leader's unit also rests with the academic leader. Considering the fact that education and training activities are carried out more effectively with today's technologies, providing the necessary infrastructure support and guiding the learning of current technology are among the main responsibilities of the academic leader. Along with the modern management approach, the idea that health, local government, coordinated work and non-governmental organizations have an important place in the management of higher education institutions has developed. In addition to the specified areas for the formation of a quality higher education institution, it is essential to organize the task of actively participating in fields such as industry, conferences and in-service training activities and to be involved in the academic leadership approach. With the integrated

management approach, information resources will increase, and research areas will develop for the budget that will ensure the financial development of higher education. Thus, a holistic understanding will be achieved, and academic leadership will be handled in a broader context.

Considering the developed countries, it is seen that higher education institutions are the leading institutions of innovation and development. Universities in developing countries are seen as the key to achieving high living standards and having high-income jobs. The importance of higher education is increasing in both societies. For this reason, it is obvious that academic leadership should get rid of the hierarchical management approach and have a shared management approach in order to respond to the increasing needs. Considering that the understanding of higher education had a mechanical understanding far from social understanding in the past, the financial and educational situation it is in can be understood more easily. On the other hand, today the situation is quite different. Today's higher education institutions, which surround the society with a utilitarian understanding and attach importance to academic freedom, collegiality, development and change, and expertise while doing this, are the pioneers of corporate management, strategy and change in the society, which are within the responsibilities of academic leadership rather than traditional management approach. As stated, academic leadership is not a type of leadership that an individual with leadership skills can do without training (National Information Commission, 2008). For this reason, universities should play an active role in the training and development of academic leaders. Academic leadership understanding can be instilled and developed through courses to be offered to individuals who have leadership qualifications or who are already in a managerial position.

It has been stated by some authors that higher education institutions require more coordinated work and indirect leadership compared to other institutions (Bryman, 2007). From this point of view, one of the most important dimensions of academic leadership is ensuring the solidarity of academics and the management of this solidarity.

According to Tapper and Palfreyman (2010), one of the most important dimensions that distinguish the teaching at the higher education level and the teaching in other institutions is the solidarity between these colleagues. For this reason, one of the most important tasks brought by the understanding of academic leadership is the management of this solidarity. The research and development of this solidarity contributes to the strengthening of the concept of academic leadership.

Although the academic functions of higher education institutions differ in the international arena, the professional members of the administrative unit specialize in the face of internal and external focused problems (Kohtamäki and Hölttä, 2013). Professional development in the field of academic leadership is needed in order to keep up with new and constantly differentiating situations in our world that is becoming more and more global every day (Yielder & Codling, 2004). For this reason, responding to the current needs and taking precautions regarding the problems to be encountered results in the professional learning of academic leadership as a necessity.

### **Conceptual framework**

As already indicated above, a conceptual framework of leadership in higher education underpins this study.

Gardner (1987) claims that leadership development is a process that continues over many years. According to Wolverson and Gmelch (2002), three domains of influence simultaneously and together create the necessary conditions for developing academic leaders:

- a) conceptual understanding of the unique roles and responsibilities encompassed by academic leadership;
- b) skills needed to achieve results by working with faculty, staff, students and other administrators
- c) Reflection practice to learn from past experiences and perfect the art of leadership.

In a book titled "On Leadership", he explores the problems of leadership in large organizations, the political environment, public administration and at the intersection of these areas. He deduces a series of leadership qualities that are gleaned from other research and are central to leadership success.

1. Physical endurance and energy.
2. Intelligence and ingenuity.
3. Willingness (desire) to take responsibility.
4. Competence.
5. Understanding followers / participants and their needs.
6. Social skills.
7. Goal orientation.
8. Ability to motivate others.
9. Courage, determination and perseverance.
10. Ability to gain and maintain trust.
11. Ability to manage, make decisions, prioritize.
12. Confidence.
13. Domination, persuasiveness
14. Adaptability, flexibility.

From now on, these three domains and their intersections with each other will serve as the framework of analysis that is believed to be necessary to develop effective academic leaders successfully (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002).

Gmelch, Hopkins, and Damico (2011) offer the following advice to new academic leaders:

- a) Give importance to national issues in education: Be aware of issues affecting education.
- b) Develop good relations with ministry of education staff and national legislature: You will need these individuals when you take action or initiate change.

c) Develop a university-wide perspective: Be aware of other colleagues' goals and dreams for the future. Make sure they know yours too. Collaborate at every opportunity.

d) Find a mentor: Find someone you admire, with whom you can storm ideas and share your concerns. Sometimes the person you need for this important job is someone outside the organization.

e) Remember that there is a difference between a friend and a colleague: Once in a managerial position, it will be difficult to socialize with the lecturers as before. Because everyone pays attention to who has a closer relationship with the manager.

f) Remember that knowledge is power: Be careful with whom you share what with, because what should remain a secret sometimes may not.

g) Take time for professional development: Just as you support the professional development opportunities of faculty members, do not miss out on professional development opportunities for yourself.

h) Build a strong academic record: Stay away from the office at certain times of the week and day and make time for your scientific studies.

i) Do not neglect your physical, social and intellectual aspects: Take time for your special needs.

When it comes to desired leadership characteristics, the harmony between leadership needs in higher education and leadership needs elsewhere is remarkable. What academics expect from leaders is the academic version of what people working in other organizations expect from their leaders, and what academics expect department heads to do is actually close to what teachers expect their principals to do. The factors defined as effective in the general leadership literature are also valid for the concept of academic leadership at the university.

## CHAPTER 3. DATA AND METHOD

### 3.1. Methodology

In order for a theory to be accepted as a paradigm, this theory needs to be accepted more than the others, but it does not need to explain the facts that it may encounter, and it never explains it (Kuhn, 2012).

As in other social science fields, education, as a research and application field, has been approached with the positivist-normative paradigm, which has been the dominant paradigm for a long time. In recent years, as the interpretative paradigm has become a challenge to the dominant positivist paradigm, educational problems have started to be investigated with the qualitative research approaches required by the interpretive paradigm. The application of qualitative research approaches to education and educational problems has generally been rapidly adopted. Because the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the interpretive paradigm, like other fields of social science, were very suitable for the nature of education, so it could easily find supporters. Educational problems have thus become more accurately resolved by the internal, subjective and participatory perspectives of the participants (Balci, 2011). The method of this study was formed by the researcher's perception of reality and the qualitative paradigm, which is the thought that is guided by philosophical assumptions in the light of existing information.

This study was prepared by using the phenomenological method, one of the qualitative research designs.

The main feature of qualitative research is that it focuses on how individuals construct reality in their interactions with their social world. Here, the researcher tries to understand the meaning of a phenomenon according to the participants in the phenomenon. Meaning "created but not discovered. Meaning is not inherent in the object, it just waits for someone to encounter it. Meanings are constructed by people as they engage with the world they interpret" (Crotty, 1998; cited in Merriam, 2013).

This study was prepared in accordance with the qualitative research design. Qualitative research focuses on how reality is perceived through experiences (Merriam, 2013). Phenomenology is an appropriate qualitative research method for studies aiming to investigate the phenomena that appear in various forms in the world we live in (Yildirim & Shimshek, 2011). In this study, the phenomenological approach, which is one of the qualitative research designs, was used. Since the philosophy of phenomenology emphasizes the experience itself and how experience transforms into consciousness, phenomenological interview is the primary data collection method to obtain the basic structure or truth underlying the meaning of experience (Merriam, 2013).

Since the focus of this research is to examine the academic leadership perceptions of executive academicians, the study group consists of executive academicians. Purposive sampling (Patton, 2014) method was used because the aim of the study was to examine the academic leadership perceptions of academics. In this context, 4 executive academicians working at a state university in Baku participated in the research.

### **3.2. Data collection and analysis**

In qualitative research types, interview is one of the basic data collection tools. It is a way of gaining insight into people's perceptions, meanings, definitions, and constructions of reality. Interviewing is basically about asking questions and getting answers, but it has much more meaning than that, especially in the context of qualitative research (Punch, 2005). In this respect, an interview is very different from an ordinary conversation in which individuals do not hear each other from time to time, messages are taken incorrectly and there is little depth (Yildirim & Shimshek, 2011).

Creswell (2013), on the other hand, divided the interview types into two; face-to-face interviews and interview using interview form. In the research process, it was

preferred to conduct face-to-face interviews on behalf of the unstructured part of the semi-structured interview in order to directly reach the participants and intervene in their gestures and mimics. Although the interviews are generally divided into two as structured and semi-structured, Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) divided the interview types into four. These; structured interview, semi-structured interview, informal interview, retrospective interview. For two important reasons, semi-structured interviews are considered as data collection method. The first is that it is suitable for exploring the opinions and perceptions of the participants on some sensitive and complex issues and allows probing to obtain more information by clarifying the answers, and secondly, the standardized interview program is hampered by various professional, educational and personal background situations (Louise, Barriball ve While, 1994). Interview questions were prepared by considering the theoretical and practical literature of the study.

A demographic information form consisting of 9 questions developed by the researcher was used to obtain the demographic information of the academic administrators participating in the research.

For this study, semi-structured interview questions were used to examine the academic leadership perception of academics in the context of organizational culture and professional development. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews using semi-structured interview questions with executive academics.

The interviews were conducted by requesting face-to face appointment from the participants. It was explained to the executive academicians that their requests (taking a break, stopping the recording of the interview, ending the interview) would be taken into account before and during the interview, and that their names and the data obtained would be kept confidential. Each interview lasted an average of 30-40 minutes. Interviews were collected by audio recording with the prior consent of the participants. The data recorded via audio recording were turned into a written transcript.

In this process, the steps of coding the data first, then classifying the obtained codes and organizing and interpreting them according to the themes that best explain



these codes are followed (Yildirim & Shimshek, 2011). Qualitative data are generally analyzed using content or descriptive analysis methods. Due to the scarcity of studies in the field and the originality of this study, the interview data were carefully and repeatedly read, and appropriate themes were extracted. When compared with the codes in the literature, it is seen that some of these themes are in the opposite direction and some of them overlap. For this reason, content analysis method was used in the present study. The purpose of content analysis is to gather similar data collected during the interview process under certain themes and present them in a regular way (Metin, 2014). In content analysis, themes were created by discovering the common points of the data coded under the categories; Thus, the findings were interpreted by establishing horizontal and vertical relationships between the themes (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

In the process of analyzing the data, the written transcripts in which the interviews took place were read many times and the data were conceptually categorized. The themes were reached by establishing a relationship between the codings. When the data obtained from the interview questions and the literature were started to be analyzed, superficial coding was carried out. The codes obtained from the superficial coding were associated and combined under a common concept. Afterwards, the existing codes were reviewed with axis coding and basic categories were determined. Finally, the existing themes were revised with selective coding and the main themes of the study were reached.

In general terms, "validity" is related to the accuracy of the research results, while "reliability" is related to the reproducibility of the findings of the study (Yildirim & Shimshek, 2011). The validity and reliability analysis of qualitative studies are different from quantitative studies. While Stenbacka (2001) stated the concept of reliability as "explanatory purpose" in quantitative studies, he emphasized that it was "meaningful purpose" in qualitative studies. Since this study has a qualitative interpretative paradigm, "meaningful purpose" is pursued in the study.

In this study, expert opinion was sought from the development of data collection tools to the writing of data analysis results. The consistency of the study with various external controllers was examined and the data were enriched by comparing it with different sources with the same purpose.

It is often not possible to replicate studies with a qualitative interpretative paradigm. In qualitative research, the researcher can be considered as a data collection tool, while the interpretive paradigm favors presenting reality with an objective eye (Yildirim & Shimshek, 2011). In this context, when it comes to qualitative research, the fact that the researcher is a data tool negatively affects objectivity in practice. For this reason, the researcher should control all possible negativities with various methods in order to ensure the reliability of his study. The researcher took some precautions in order not to affect the existence of the study. In order not to affect the collected data and assumptions, the researcher submitted all the coding, perceptions and assumptions he made during the analysis phase to the expert opinion and recorded them for examination when necessary. In addition, data analyzes were completed with the feedbacks of three experts, thus aiming to make reliable analyzes in an objective way. The reliability of the data was ensured by sessions with interview questions. On the other hand, opinions of different evaluators were taken during the analysis of the data obtained from the data collection tools in order to ensure the validity of the research; In this sense, it is thought that different researchers applied to a similar study group will achieve similar results. Reporting the data collection process in detail and explaining how the researcher reached the conclusion are among the important criteria for validity in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). In this context, frequency information of the data obtained in the study, demographic information and number of participants, direct quotations, participant codes and conceptual categories were tried to be presented in detail.

**Ethical Consideration.**

Informed consent of participants was obtained before research was conducted. The confidentiality of participants was protected. To minimize potential bias member check was used.

## **CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. Demographic Information of the participants**

The study was carried out through interviews with a total of 4 academicians working at the Khazar University in Baku. 2 of the academics participating in the study is female and 2 is male. Considering the titles of the academicians constituting the study group, it is seen that there are 2 executive academicians with the title of professor. Considering the administrative positions of the academicians that make up the study group, it is seen that 1 academician is the top manager, 1 academician is the research coordinator, 1 academic is the head of department, and 1 academic is rector assistant.

In this qualitative study, which aims to determine the perceptions of academic leadership of executive academics at Khazar University, the data obtained by the interview method were examined in the light of the literature and examined under 3 main themes: Leadership, professional development and organizational culture. Interview data classified under these headings were tried to be analyzed by content analysis. While the themes were determined deductively from the literature, sub-themes, categories and codes were obtained inductively from the data.

### **4.2. Academic leadership**

The interviews about the academic leadership dimension were analyzed using content analysis and all of the interviews were read many times by the researcher. The themes were determined by using the literature and using the inductive method from the interviews. Codes were created in the context of the determined themes, the validity and reliability of the study was ensured by taking expert opinion and having the experts analyzed with similar coding.

The findings in this section are presented under the themes of academic leadership's perceptions of academic leadership, academic leadership roles, obstacles

in front of these roles, overcoming these obstacles, and their perceived greatest and most effective achievements. The codes related to the themes specified in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1. Academic Leadership Status**

Academic Leadership	f
Academic Leadership Roles	
a) Being a guide	10
b) Being transparent	10
c) Providing motivation	7
d) Being visionary	6
e) Providing coordination	5
f) Being a conciliator	5
g) Being a model	5
h) Being innovative	4
i) Building trust	3
j) Acting fairly	2
k) Awareness raising	2
l) Being honest	2
Barriers to Academic Leadership Roles	
a) Administrative problems	6
b) Habits	5
Overcoming Barriers to Academic Leadership Roles	
a) Communication	10
b) Personal relationships	6
c) Supports received	6
d) Libertarian working environment	5
e) Experience	4
Greatest Perceived and Effective Success	
a) Contribute to the growth of the division	10
b) Increasing the quality of teaching	9
c) Opening communication channels	8
d) Bringing innovation	8
e) Providing a peaceful working environment	5
f) Problem solving	3

When questions are asked to academics about their perceptions of academic leadership, the answers vary. Data on the main theme of academic leadership; academic leadership roles, obstacles to academic leadership roles, solutions to academic leadership roles, and the greatest and most effective success. In cases where the

executive academicians had opinions addressing more than one category, they were included in both categories. Therefore, in some cases, the total number may exceed 4.

Most of the academicians (10/4) who participated in the interview agree that the academic leader should lead the developments and help the academicians who are just at the beginning of their professional career and who are experiencing professional problems.

“The academic leader needs to guide development. What I mean by developing is how a publication is made academically, or where it is sent when it is published, how it is published in which journal. I think that they can be included in academic leadership and I think that such guidance should be given from the research assistantship. There may be a way for the manager in terms of classes he can take, congresses he can attend or creating common areas. I can think of it as an academic leadership, even to introduce it to the environment, to receive different trainings. In short, guiding is to be a guide because after all, academic staff is always a development process for research assistants.” (A3)

It has been stated that the academic leader, as an academician who leads the unit to which she is affiliated in terms of research and development, should also provide depth and qualification to her unit in the scientific sense.

“It is extremely important that a manager should always works on improving his professional skills and talents by doing various activities and programs. Personally, I attend sessions, and at the same time, I organize sessions and programs in the leading and administrative areas. Joining online courses and conferences is also one of the activities that I do to ensure my professional development. In addition to that, I always do my best to update my knowledge and seek new information that copes with current time. Moreover, I do my best to always learn new skills and talents.” (A1)

An academic who believes that an academic leader should be a guide not only to his colleagues but also to students expressed his thoughts as follows:

“It doesn't matter whether the relevant department has its own equivalent universities or the entrance score in this university or the city where it is located. It can be in Turkey as well. The other is that he needs to locate a place, and at the end of his undergraduate education, he has to say where it should be at the end of his undergraduate education, and after positioning it, he needs to put the graduates and students into the work, and he needs to determine a policy, that is, a development policy or strategy towards that goal. That's what he should have done in the first place.” (A2)

Most of the academics (10/4) who participated in the interview emphasized the importance of the role of transparency. He mentioned that an academic leader who is transparent in his behaviors and thoughts can both provide the internal motivation of his colleagues working in the academic unit he is affiliated with, and they will focus less on issues outside of academic work. “

I always say academic leadership transparency. I think that the more transparent our attitude towards people, the more our leadership and power will increase.” (A1)

Some of the academicians (7/4) who participated in the interview mentioned the role of the academic leader in providing motivation to the students and the people they work with.

“Actually, when I think of some friends at this stage, I think I made some effort to get them enthusiastic. It comes to mind when I think about it now that I paid attention to it, that I made some effort to encourage friends who weren't too enthusiastic to agree with the decision.” (A4)

Some academics who participated in the interview stated that an academic leader herself can be a source of motivation, and being with her colleagues as a leader will be a source of inspiration for them.

“I think it is enough for him to live effectively for himself. The linear meaning of leadership is the other. Every action in relation to the other is false. When we live ourselves effectively, our existence becomes an inspiration. Not a model, but a source of inspiration. What I mean here is not to set an example with his life, but if a leader

sets an example with his life, that person is dishonest. There is no exemplary or exemplary behavior in human actions. There is living yourself. That inspiration is something that happens naturally. Influence is violence. The leader's job is not to influence. It is living yourself. He won't even have the intention of being a source of inspiration. When you live yourself, that effect will come true automatically. The eye chooses beauty by itself.” (A2)

Some of the academics (6/4) who participated in the interview agree that one of the roles of academic leadership is to set a vision. One of the executive academicians sees the determination of the vision of the unit he is affiliated with as the adaptation of the unit to the future.

“So time that is experience can stay in the past. It has to be adapted to the time and the future. It's also about a vision.” (A3)

One academician emphasized that academicians who have the vision to increase the quality of academic studies can take universities further.

“It can be a framework that can increase the quality of academic studies and provide studies and scientific interactions that can be respected at national and international level. It is to create a department that should have an effort to take an effective reference. But this is a long-term effort. The person who can provide all the efforts is the competence of the head of the department.” (A1)

Some academicians (5/4) who emphasized the harmony of internal dynamics within the department mentioned the importance of conducting all work from a common center.

“So we coordinate. That is, in relation to different branches of science. We are trying to bring them together and run them from a common center.” (A3)

The academics (5/4) who believe that the academic leader has a conciliatory structure and that the academic unit to which he is affiliated can develop faster in this way emphasized the role of the academic leader as a mediator. An academic who



mentioned the importance of a peaceful working environment stated that such working environments will increase the efficiency of the studies as follows:

“Oh, I think it should be like this. I think it should have a unifying role as much as possible. In other words, I think it should have a middle-way and unifying role rather than creating competition among individuals. I think it is very important to be in a peaceful department and I think it will increase the efficiency of the department.” (A2)

An academician, who stated that he could be a model by conveying his own experiences, emphasized that he could be an example in the context of communication.

“Now it may be in the form of passing on their own experiences to friends. For example, in the context of the dialogue with the students, it can set an example for friends, that is, for other faculty members, how this dialogue should be. It is also something that should happen.” (A1)

Some (4/4) of the executive academicians who accepted the interview stated that new ideas should always be respected and that they should be open to new solutions to the problems encountered. “Managers should have the ability to make decisions in terms of academic leadership... They should be open to different solutions.” (A4)

Academics (3/4) who believe that the concept of trust should be mutual and increase freedom and motivation in an academic environment emphasized the role of the academic leader's reliability.

“The leader person trusts people. For example, he may think that the person who does not come to work today has a job. If he didn't attend class today, I think there's a reason.” (A1)

“You have to be able to trust and follow him blindly. So, if the leadership is the person who is following us, yes, I can say that our dean is a leader.” (A2)

Some academics (2/4) who participated in the interview emphasized that the concept of justice is one of the academic leadership roles. It has been emphasized that academic leadership is based on the concept of justice and that all people working in

the unit should be treated fairly, so that it can become an organization with less problems.

“Fairness. To be fair. Justice is the most important thing in leadership. In other words, you do this to one person and not the other... What if this should not happen. The most striking thing in leadership is fairness. If you are fair, there is no problem. Let's call it justice, in a word, justice.” (A4)

Some (2/4) of the academicians who participated in the interview emphasize that it is necessary to approach the problems related to the department with academic concerns and find solutions. The opinion of the executive academician regarding this is as follows:

“When it is said that I want to do a master's doctorate in assessment and evaluation, I see that we encounter an obstacle such as you are not a graduate of mathematics or physics, we cannot accept you. In my opinion, this is a dramatic situation, an irony. Educational science excludes the educational scientist. So there is such a strange situation.

So solving this situation seems like a mission expected from us. So these are my problems. Attracting more staff and doing it with the concern of solving the problem, not numerical concerns.” (A2)

Expressing that one of the roles of academic leadership is honesty, academics (2/4) stated that the promises made should be fulfilled on time and that only academic studies should be focused on:

“I also think that we need to say what we can, and be honest. I don't think we should make promises we can't deliver or things we can't deliver. I'm thinking of doing the things we can do by making a promise and setting them as the primary goal.” (A1)

When the academics participating in the interview were asked about the obstacles related to their academic leadership roles, three topics were mentioned: administrative problems (6/4) and habits (5/4).

Some of the academicians who participated in the interview (6/4) stated that there may be different perceptions about the management of the unit they are affiliated with and that negative perceptions may cause undesirable effects on the academic leader.

The fact that the academic leader is in harmony with the administrative policies of the unit he is affiliated with is an important element in terms of being a more effective leader. An academic who participated in the interview expressed his thoughts on the subject as follows:

“Each institution has its own rules. This is what we call the system. Sometimes we have the power to change certain parts of the system. We cannot change some of them. This is normal. If we can replace all the parts, there would be no such thing as a system. We are trying to replace these parts.” (A1)

Some of the academicians (5/4) who participated in the interview stated that the innovations brought to the unit they belong to were not adopted by the academics concerned, and this situation contradicted the concept of academic leadership.

“These may be habits of the past. There may be doubts in people's expectations, or there may be differences arising from professional concerns or from some administrative expectations. There may be reasons for their roles to change. These can inevitably be a reaction in people.” (A1)

When the academicians who participated in the interview were asked about solution suggestions for overcoming the obstacles related to academic leadership roles, the executive academics communication (10/4), personal relationships (6/4), the support received (6/4), the liberal working environment (5/4) and the experience (4/4) emphasized.

Most of the academicians (10/4) who participated in the interview talk about the problems caused by the lack of communication. They state that the inability to keep up with innovations, resistance, distribution of roles in development, and being unaware of the advantages and disadvantages of a situation are usually due to lack of communication.

“With the studies we have done on this subject, we show that they are not like this, that this is the right thing to do. (A1)

An academician, who mentioned that personal relations can be established not only within the unit but also outside, stated that family visits can also be effective in this regard.

“It can organize such various social events and bring faculty members together. In these free meetings, if there are problems about the department, they can be discussed freely. For example, there are not many here, but family meetings and such also make the department a more whole with each other and establish more solid relations.” (A2)

Some (5/4) of the academicians who participated in the interview emphasized that working environments where the laws are valid for everyone, away from oppression, will contribute to the academic leaders to have a wider range of action and thus to become a more creative and productive unit.

“Not in the form of an element of pressure. We do not put pressure on any of our instructors. Because they are people who have at least as much experience, knowledge and academic skills as we do.” (A1)

Some of the academicians (4/4) who participated in the interview mentioned which ways can be used to overcome the obstacles related to academic leadership roles and what policies should be determined regarding these ways. At this stage, they emphasized that their own or their colleagues' experiences guided them correctly.

“I mean, benefiting from their experience (he thinks) Of course, what you are talking about is not something that is finished in terms of management. It guides our future. Therefore, our experience here actually gives us a lot of direction. Of course, experience is always important, but what guided us was mostly vision, ideas, thoughts. So you have to deal with the experience with it. In other words, mere experience may not guide a person very much. Living conditions are changing. So the time with experience can stay in the past. It has to be adapted to the time and the future. It's also about a vision.” (A3)

When the executive academicians participating in the interview were asked about their greatest and most effective success regarding the unit they were affiliated with during their managerial experience, contributing to the growth of the unit (10/4), increasing the quality of education (9/4), opening communication channels (8/4), bringing innovation (8/4), providing a peaceful environment (5/4), and problem solving (3/4) were emphasized.

Academics (10/4), who have the perception that contributing to the growth of the unit they are affiliated with is their greatest success, mentioned its growth and development in terms of both quality and quantity in institutional and academic terms.

“And the most important thing is that we are hiring a research assistant to the department right now. I think this is a bit of me. I'm describing the episode, and when I say it, I don't mean it as an individual. We have just started to prove ourselves as management. Therefore, I think that maybe there is an increase in such a section. Other than that, I don't know what there is about the administration and the university. Growing, yes, growing... I also have efforts to grow. We are trying to open a master's degree. I just convinced someone out there right now. Your friends in the department also have an effect there. It's not just something I personally do. If we can open a graduate class now, I think it will be a great success for us.” (A3)

Most of the academicians (9/4) who participated in the interview stated that their greatest achievement during their managerial experience was to increase the quality of teaching. Emphasizing the importance of attaching the necessary importance to academic success, the academics emphasized that they devoted all their resources and roles to this goal and they were partially successful. “I aim to improve the academic success of our professors in relation to the faculty. In this context, we organize training seminars. As technology, we started to make up for the deficiencies of our teachers. In addition, we will have various trainings on how they can use technology better. Thus, we plan to increase the academic level of our teachers.” (A3)

The academicians (8/4) who participated in the interview emphasized that every aspect of communication is important for the efficiency of academic studies. In this sense, he stated that an academic leader should use every means to open communication channels, so that the academic unit can develop and grow.

“A question about the episode, of course. So there is no such thing as a national issue. So, now that you're asking me from the bottom as the head of the department, I may have goals related to the department in the context of management, this or success. You call it effective success. So far, I have come here from different places. Friends came from different channels. I did not choose them all. But maybe because they're partly younger than me, he might have a role, too. I compared them to myself. (laughter) I mean, this is your job, I said something.” (A4)

Academics (8/4), who have the perception that bringing innovation is the greatest success, stated that the innovations introduced in terms of both academic and physical infrastructure have a positive effect on increasing the efficiency of academicians' work.

“We have psychological counseling courses based on culture and spirituality. There are courses on qualitative research methods. From undergraduate to doctorate... We try to make children familiar with these concepts. We try to go beyond the usual theses, as a style. Coming to your question, I think this is my greatest achievement. A different style, different content, more culturally sensitive than other programs.” (A4)

The academicians (5/4) who participated in the interview stated that providing a peaceful working environment increases the work quality of the academicians they work with and in this context, corporate culture is formed.

“In other words, I think that I have guidance and efforts to bring the corporate culture and working environment to a healthy level of communication and in this sense to increase academic orientations. In other words, I consider it as seeing academic boundaries and providing strong human relations, creating a livable environment and making some practices that can develop knowledge and skills in accordance with the nature of the job.” (A1)

Academics (3/4) who stated that solving the problems that arise in the unit they belong to are their greatest achievements stated that overcoming even the smallest obstacle is an important step.

“There is a perfectionist production in terms of structure. It's a very delicate production. I don't leave anything unfinished. I do not leave a problem unsolved. I would like to solve it immediately. The accumulating problem is not in my log. Many working hours until this problem is solved... So I try to manage myself. I try to solve problems by going over them. And it's a little bit about something, about a sense of being a perfectionist.” (A2)

### **4.3. Organization culture**

The interviews about the organizational culture dimension were analyzed using content analysis and all of the interviews were read many times by the researcher. The themes were determined by using the literature and using the inductive method from the interviews.

Codes were created in the context of the determined themes, the validity and reliability of the study was ensured by taking expert opinion and having the experts analyzed with similar coding. When questions are asked to academics about their organizational culture perceptions, the answers vary. Data belonging to the main theme of organizational culture; It has been discussed and resolved under 4 themes: change and innovation, decision-making processes, reaching goals, and cooperation for academic studies. Table 4.2 contains the codes for the organizational culture theme in the context of academic leadership.

**Table 4.2. Organization culture**

<b>Organization culture</b>	<b>f</b>
Change and Innovation	
a) Solution to change	23
b) Resistance to change and innovation	20
c) An example of change and innovation	14
d) Not meeting resistance	5
Decision Participation Processes	
a) Personal relationships	20
b) In-unit meetings	16
c) Formal ways	5
d) Common needs	4
e) Ensuring participation in the decision by following the process	4
f) Department visits	3
Reaching Goals	
a) Ensuring participation in the decision	21
b) Failure to ensure participation in the decision	6
Collaboration for Academic Studies	
a) Collaboration by making joint decisions	19
b) Studies with different departments	7
c) Studies using electronic media	2
d) Unable to cooperate	2

When the academicians participating in the interview were asked about their perceptions of the unit they belonged to, the executive academics; He emphasized the solution to change (23/4), resistance to change (20/4), the example of change and innovation (14/4), and not encountering resistance (5/4).

Different answers were received from the academicians (23/4) who participated in the interview about what kind of solutions they brought to the obstacles to change and innovation. Highlighting the importance of self-sacrifice and self-sacrifice in these answers, the academics expressed their thoughts as follows:

“But there were often obstacles to the work of the commission. Obstacles are also within us. We have always known how to beat them with self-sacrifice.” (A2)

Academics (20/4), who stated that there is resistance to change and innovation, stated that individual resistance constitutes a major obstacle to change and innovation.



“At the first degree, of course, there is a resistance in all of the administrative staff, academic staff, inevitably, towards change. We will lose old habits. What will replace it? If this happens to us, what will our losses be, people get excited. Therefore, you may receive great reactions at the first moment.” (A1)

Academics who emphasized academic innovations (7/4) emphasized that for the growth and development of the unit they are affiliated with, they believed that their experiences should be enriched and production should be the center.

“Although universities are actually centers where innovations are produced, we may have difficulty in explaining new things to people who are not in a position to follow such innovations due to their subject matter. I mean for the teachers. We can have difficulty. So the change of mind can take some time.” (A2)

Some of the academics who participated in the interview stated that their attempts towards change and innovation did not encounter any obstacles (5/4) and expressed their thoughts as follows: We are getting support. A very negative situation so far... I have a 7-8 month tenure, I haven't encountered it so far. I hope I don't meet again." (A4)

When the academics participating in the interview were asked about their perceptions of the decision-making processes, the executive academics; use of personal relationships (20/4), in-unit meetings (16/4), use of formal means (5/4), common needs (4/4), ensuring participation in the decision by following the process (4/4) and department visits (3 /4) emphasized.

Academics (20/4) who mentioned the importance of using informal channels in order to overcome the bureaucracy barrier and reach a faster result in cases where formal communication channels become dysfunctional, mentioned that academic leadership can be maintained through persuasion and in this context, bilateral relations are very effective.

“Consultation and bilateral relations are really the things that should be. Even if you try to communicate through writing or an announcement, you may have to return to the consultation environment.” (A1)

When the academicians (16/4) who participated in the interview were asked about the perceptions of the academic leaders about the roles they play in the participation of their colleagues in the decision, they stated that they took an active role in the decisions through the meetings held within the unit.

“The departments of the institute make up the institute board. We have a board of directors here. We discuss them. We get their opinions. We are evaluating. Besides, we have a management structure here.” (A3)

The academicians (5/4) who participated in the interview stated that formal ways were followed during the decision-making process, and that official ways were also applied in cases where informal ways were insufficient.

“We explain orally or in writing we convey our requests to the administration.” (A2)

The academicians (4/4) who participated in the interview mentioned the importance of the principle of voluntariness in their participation in the decision and emphasized common needs in this context. Among these needs, budget support and renewal of the technological infrastructure came to the fore.

“Technological opportunities are like renewing the structure of the faculty, renewing people's work environments. These are basic things. Other academic things are to support them if there is a need for publications, then if they need support for going to the congress, for our faculty, for more support within our budget, we do something, we support it. We contribute.” (A1)

Academicians (4/4) who follow both formal and informal ways in the decision-making processes state that the policies they determine can be implemented faster in this way.

“It is true to say that this department has a characteristic, but it is true that everyone is involved in this business in some way, some in club activities, some in the structuring of their course contents, etc. In other words, we can say that this is a

common dynamic. But it is not a structure that is very structured and tied to formal processes. Maybe it's something that happens in a process." (A4)

Some of the academics (3/4) who participated in the interview emphasize that it is important to visit different departments and ensure their participation in the decisions to be taken so that the planning can be done properly at the beginning of the term.

"In this sense, we generally visit the departments at the beginning of the semester, at the beginning of the semester. Department visits give us the chance to see things that may happen to us from the department, or problems and requests that may arise, on the spot. In this context, we are making a plan again. This is how we continue." (A1)

When the academicians participating in the interview were asked about their participation in the decision to reach the goals, the state of being able to participate in the decision (21/4) and the state of not being able to participate in the decision (6/4) were emphasized.

Emphasizing the importance of acting jointly in the making and implementation of decisions, academics (21/4) emphasized the importance of providing coordination in decision-making and the contribution of all lecturers.

"Of course, we take joint decisions with our dean and other executive friends first. We practice together." (A1)

The questions to examine the reasons for the inability to participate in the decision (6/4) were answered as not being able to reach all the lecturers, people with traditional understanding should show passive resistance and the decision-making bodies should be experts in their field.

"We don't get a chance to find them all together because it's so crowded." (A1)

When the academicians participating in the interview were asked about their perceptions of collaborating in academic studies, the executive academics; co-operation by making joint decisions (19/4), working with different departments (7/4), using electronic media (2/4), and not being able to cooperate (2/4).

The majority (19/4) of the academicians who participated in the interview mentioned the importance of taking joint decisions in order to ensure cooperation in the units they are affiliated with. In this context, it was emphasized that the workload, experience and time should be shared.

“we evaluate the studies and researches we have done with them. This is how we ask each other questions. We value our time.” (A1)

The academicians (7/4) who participated in the interview emphasized the importance of sharing experiences, projects and articles with different units and creating common products and stated that the academic leader had an important role in ensuring the professional development of the unit in this sense.

“Plus I do this, I try to do it. I like to work not only in my own field, but also in one of the other departments of educational sciences. Because they also look from other dimensions. Since there is no education faculty in terms of university, it brings me something like this, again, I think that is a development. We can work with other departments, for example, on theses. For example, at the moment, I am on the thesis jury of a student in the sociology department. In that sense, I can see what is being done there from the eyes of an educator. This is something that can happen in professional development. Because I have always dealt with the education thesis until today. But their point of view is very different. Therefore, we can cooperate in that sense. I think it's important too.” (A3)

In terms of providing a faster environment for communication and saving time, academics (2/4) stated that they benefited from the electronic environment for the communication of decision-making bodies in reaching the targets.

“We have a role at every stage, from the abstract context to being physically there. We would like to provide the contributions of the faculty members or our graduate friends here. We generally use the e-mail system for this. Bulk emails. Or we use the information system. From there, we inform the regulations regarding the necessary studies.” (A1)

The academicians (2/4) who participated in the interview emphasized that they could not work together due to the difference in their departments and that they only carried out management-related works jointly.

“Now we don't do anything like that. Unfortunately, we do not collaborate. So, for example, I do not collaborate with any teacher from my department. But as a manager, I am single. Here we have one PCR, one research assistant, three programmers, but two of our fellow programmers work together. Because they've been together since PhD. I mean, because they did the PhD together. And since they came at the same time, the two of them work together. Therefore, perhaps one of our shortcomings is that we do not sit down and do academic work together. We attend congresses, but we attend separately. So we don't do a joint business together.” (A3)

#### **4.4. Professional development**

The interviews about the professional development dimension were analyzed using content analysis and all of the interviews were read many times by the researcher. The themes were determined by using the literature and using the inductive method from the interviews. Codes were created in the context of the determined themes, the validity and reliability of the study was ensured by taking expert opinion and having the experts analyzed with similar coding.

When questions about professional development perceptions are asked to executive academicians, the answers vary. Data belonging to the main theme of professional development; It has been discussed and resolved under 7 themes: administrative affairs prevent academic studies, management does not prevent academic activities, administrative works do not prevent instructional activities, administrative works prevent instructional activities, obstacles to professional development, ways to ensure professional development, education versus experience.

Table 4.3. contains the codes for the professional development theme in the context of academic leadership.

**Table 4.3. Professional Development**

Professional Development	<b>f</b>
Status of Not Receiving Management Training	
a) Providing personal development	24
b) Periodicals	9
c) E-learning	5
d) Following the regulations	3
e) Congress and seminars	3
Status of Receiving Management Training	6
Ways to Ensure Professional Development	
a) Benefit from own experience	19
b) Benefiting from the experience of others	16
c) Congresses and seminars	4
Administrative Affairs Prevent Academic Studies	
a) The negative impact of management on professional development	23
b) Working at home	6
Administrative Affairs Do Not Prevent Educational Activities	22
Administrative Affairs Preventing Educational Activities	16
Management Doesn't Prevent Academic Activities	10
Barriers to Professional Development	3

When the academicians who participated in the interview were asked about the educational status of academic leadership to ensure their professional development, almost all of the executive academicians stated that they did not receive any training. In this sense, academics; They stated that they provided personal development (24/4), read periodicals (9/4), e-learning environments (5/4), followed the regulations (3/4), attended congresses and seminars (3/4) and followed them. The academics who stated that they did not receive management training explained this situation as follows:

“No, I didn't. Is it given? I look at management in terms of human communication. Because of my personal characteristics, I care about people.” (A2)

It was observed that almost all of the academicians (24/4) who participated in the interview applied to personal development methods in order to ensure their professional development in the context of academic leadership. Executive academicians expressed their thoughts on the methods of ensuring their personal development as follows:

“I follow many successful managers. I read. at national and international level. Especially those who write about their life achievements. I follow and read those who have entered the literature in the academic community. Therefore, they have opened my horizons a lot.” (A3)

In the context of academic leadership, the academicians who ensure their professional development mostly by following periodicals (9/4) stated that these resources contributed greatly to them.

“I try to follow relevant academic journals.” (A4)

“At the beginning, I follow academic journals.” (A1)

“I read publications on management.” (A2)

Some (5/4) of the academicians who participated in the interview provide their professional development in the context of management through the virtual environment.

“However, I am trying to reach new resources related to the field that can be used in the internet environment.” (A1)

Among the academicians who participated in the interview, those who followed the regulations and provided their professional development in the context of academic leadership (3/4) expressed their thoughts as follows:

“We read the regulations and directives about the university. We follow the changes in the directives and regulations day by day.” (A2)

Among the academicians participating in the interview, those who try to gain experience by participating in congresses and seminars (3/4) think that they contribute to their professional development in the context of management.

“What I've been trying to do since I was a research assistant is attending congresses, especially, I think it has an impact on my professional development. Broadcasting and meeting people also help improve. Because being acquainted with someone, meeting with someone from the field also allows to see different views. That's why I care about congresses” (A3)

Some (6/4) of the academicians who participated in the interview stated that they received management training.

When the academicians who participated in the interview were asked about their professional development in terms of academic leadership, executive academics; He emphasized that benefiting from the experiences of others (19/4), benefiting from his own experiences (16/4), congresses and seminars (4/4) and financial opportunities provided by the university (1/4).

More than half (19/4) of the academicians who participated in the interview stated that they primarily benefited from their own experiences in providing their professional development in the context of academic leadership.

“I am a person who acts according to my own observations, and I also act according to the framework of the legal legislation. Therefore, I act by determining the positive aspects of certain people in the institutions I have worked with in the past and thinking how I can apply them. I mean, on my own savings.” (A3)

Academics (16/4) who try to meet their needs for their professional development in the context of academic leadership from the experiences of others emphasized that they receive significant help from their colleagues in this sense.

“We benefit from my experienced friends who have served as department heads and held other positions. We are listening to them. This is how we try to improve ourselves.” (A1)

Some (4/4) of the academicians who participated in the interview stated that they achieved their professional development in the context of academic leadership through congresses and seminars they attended.



#### **4.5. Administrative Affairs Preventing Academic Studies**

When the academicians participating in the interview were asked about their professional development perceptions regarding academic leadership, the executive academics; emphasized the negative impact of management on professional development (23/4) and working at home (6/4).

Most of the academicians (23/4) who participated in the interview stated that managerial jobs negatively affect their professional development.

“This management task is a very extra task and takes a lot of time. Therefore, I think it interrupts academic studies a little bit. Being a manager as a manager is a good thing. But it creates an academic disadvantage.” (A3)

The use of the time required for professional development by administrative duties has developed an adaptation mechanism in some (6/4) of the academicians who participated in the interview. While the time spent during working hours was allocated to administrative tasks, the time allocated for professional development began to be spent outside of working hours.

“I work at home on the computer. While working, for example, the lady often says, "Come, let's go on a picnic". So I say you take the kids, go and I'll work here a little more.” (A2)

“But I do not hinder my academic studies in any way. It is not possible for academic studies to be productive during working hours. Because there can be very heavy traffic. Since our department has many staff, students and legal obligations, it is not possible to allocate time during the daytime. However, I can concentrate on academic studies at night or on weekends during vacation periods.” (A1)

#### **4.6. Administrative Affairs Do Not Prevent Educational Activities**

Almost all of the academicians (22/4) who participated in the interview emphasized that their managerial duties do not hinder the teaching activities and that their priority is always the students.

“I can take it apart when needed. University lecturers, the most important thing is contact with the student, so I can devote enough time to this.” (A2)

“There is no obstacle. We have assistants. We have experts. There are faculty members, assistant professors and professors. We evaluate the work and research we have done with them. This is how we ask each other questions. We value our time.” (A4)

“It is my foremost duty. Management is meaningless to me if it will affect this negatively. Therefore, if there are courses that I need to teach in undergraduate, I will definitely give them. There is already. I do not skip my undergraduate courses. I do not miss my master's and doctoral courses. In this sense, thesis consultancy etc. I will definitely do them. I don't make any sacrifices for them. They are the ones that should be at the forefront. It does not adversely affect my teaching activities due to my location.” (A1)

#### **4.7. Administrative Affairs Preventing Educational Activities**

The academicians (16/4) who stated that the management hinders the teaching activities expressed their thoughts and experiences on the subject as follows:

“As educational activities, I try to enter my own master's doctorate and undergraduate courses at certain levels. Other than that, I can't bend too much.” (A1)

“I have lessons, albeit limited. I attend my classes. My course load is less than before. Managerial activities take up more of my time.” (A3)

“We have a load of lessons. Normally let's say 5 hours as administrator. Above that is mandatory. Actually, a good hour so that we can work comfortably. However,

due to the lack of faculty members in the department and the demands, our course load reaches 20 hours. Therefore, we continue in our teaching duty. But sometimes it can be interrupted due to management because unexpected meetings can happen and some sudden situations can happen. Even if we make up for it, it is difficult. Apart from that, our graduate and doctorate courses continue. In addition, I can count counseling as a teaching activity in a way. Something that has to happen. So everything doesn't happen properly or exactly as I want, but it's something I have to do, but I have to go on all three of them together.” (A1)

Some (8/4) of the academicians who participated in the interview stated that the teaching activities of the executive academicians were disrupted due to the workload.

“This is how it affects. When students came to see me outside of class and wanted to ask questions about the lesson, I was more comfortable meeting with them. But now I am interested in all my students, not just my students. Therefore, the time that students spend outside of class, such as office hours, has decreased.” (A29)

“This is because of the workload.” (A15)

#### **4.8. Management Doesn't Prevent Academic Activities**

Some (10/4) of the academicians who participated in the interview stated that the effective use of time and managerial duties do not affect their professional development.

"No. I have no problems. Time is all it takes. A person who is short of time does not save his soul. Hoyrat is using himself. There is not enough time for him. For someone who is on good terms with his soul, time is enough for everything.” (A2)

“No, as I said right now, we only do our own academic work and continue our educational mission. I don't think management affects it.” (A4)

“Because there is a division of labor, that is, there is a division of labor in the division. Since there is a division of labor, only the manager does not have much time. We always share equally.” (A1)

#### **4.9. Barriers to Professional Development**

Academics (3/4) who mentioned the lack of time and opportunity as prominent obstacles to professional development expressed their thoughts on the subject as follows:

"Certainly. So thing is happening. Being better at what we are as managers or academically. In the management or the other? People are struggling here. I always keep my eye on my academic studies. In other words, this will be an initiative even when doing managerial work. There is always such an uneasiness in me to finish the work related to management so quickly that it will be over and I will immediately return to my own thing, my own garden, my own lane, my own space." (A1)

## CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

It has been seen that the guiding component of academic leadership is one of the most intense issues of academic leadership. From this point of view, Bryman (2008) also emphasized the importance of guiding academic leaders in accordance with the mission of their departments and that this is important in providing strategic guidance for their departments. In addition, Law and Glover (2000) emphasized the importance of guidance by emphasizing direction and inspiration in academic leadership. As a matter of fact, what is meant here means leadership is more than just guiding activities carried out in a certain field. Comer, Haden, Taylor, and Thomas (2002) stated that guidance activities are a comprehensive concept that includes issues such as finding a position for faculty staff and advancement in the profession.

Another prominent role in the perception of academic leadership roles of executive academicians is transparency. As Hughes (1996) emphasized, one of the important aspects of leadership is the reliability feature gained through the adoption of transparent approaches in practice. Similarly, Jones, et al. (2009) showed that it is possible to build trust and provide motivation with an accessible and transparent academic leadership perception at any time. In this context, it can be said that a transparent management approach can completely change the internal dynamics of the academic unit.

One of the topics that executive academics focus on as a component of academic leadership is to provide motivation to employees (Ramsden 1998, p.3). Also states that academic leaders need to ensure their duties and responsibilities to motivate their colleagues and to increase their motivation in order to overcome the difficulties they encounter. Middlehurst and Elton (1992), who expressed similar views, also emphasized being motivating within academic leadership roles. Motivation, on the other hand, is seen to be a component formed by providing different conditions as a concept. Although the traditional academic manager from past to present has emerged

as an important concept (Gidman, 2013) that emphasizes the need to transform into an inspiring, innovative and highly motivated interactional leader, it has been seen that this concept comes to the fore more in terms of academic leadership. On the other hand, motivation is an important concept not only for getting rid of negative situations, but also for the development of academicians in a positive sense. As a matter of fact, Bass and Riggio (2006) stated that motivation is an inspiring method and is very important for the personal development of academics.

Vision setting, as another dimension of academic leadership roles, is another important concept and was frequently mentioned by executive academics participating in this study. As a matter of fact, the importance of creating a vision for change in higher education institutions has been a concept that has been emphasized independently of the concept of academic leadership (Karip, 1998). Ramsden (1998) also emphasized the importance of academic leaders building the future of the institution by taking steps towards a certain vision or future with a proactive management style. Similarly, Belbin (1997; cited in Yelder & Codling, 2004) stated that it includes "providing direction, purpose, vision and target for the academic future". From this point of view, it is thought that the academic administrators whose opinions were consulted in the study attach importance to the concept of academic leadership in the context of vision determination.

Another academic leadership role highlighted by the academic administrators participating in the research is to provide coordination. When the literature is examined, Siddique, Aslam, Khan and Fatima (2011) also emphasize the function of forming a team in the construction of academic leadership and the function of this team in reaching the determined goals in coordination. Likewise, Bass (2009) emphasizes that coordinated work is an indispensable element for academic leadership and its importance in the effective management of resources. In addition, there are other benefits of coordination between units beyond effectiveness. When a lack of coordination occurs, the group loses its mission and vision by focusing less on core tasks (Flores, 1993). Management means directing results and goals, organizing tasks

and systems, while leadership means directing human relations and organizing people (Kekäle, 2001).

Another role emphasized by the participants is the mediator role. It is important how academic leaders deal with the conflicts that arise in their units. Bozbey (1997) mentioned the importance of conciliation and mediation in conflict resolution techniques in minimizing and managing conflicts. Similarly, Shindler (2010) emphasized the importance of the mediator role in conflict resolution and power struggles to gain a benefit from the emerging conflict and emphasized that conflicts can turn into an opportunity in this way.

One of the prominent roles as a result of the findings obtained from the study is to be a model. Hughes (1996) stated that being a role model is a prerequisite for being a leader. From this point of view, academic leaders are seen as role models with the language and behaviors they use in their units. Likewise, Comer et al. (1992) saw role modeling as a source of motivation and inspiration and defined it as the essence of leadership.

When asked about the most effective achievements perceived by the academic administrators participating in the interview in the context of academic leadership, the most intensely stated topics are; Contributing to the growth of the department, increasing the quality of teaching, opening communication channels and bringing innovation. Ervay (2006) emphasized that the ideal implementation of academic leadership practices will increase the quality of learning and teaching in today's higher education institutions. As can be seen, academic leadership has an important role in raising academically successful students and improving educational outcomes by increasing the quality of teaching. Likewise, Ramsden (1998) emphasizes the fulfillment of academic leadership roles in order to increase the quality of teaching. These roles are; new courses, programs, finance, staff training, providing resources, monitoring, performance, coordinating mentors.

Some of the executive academicians who participated in the study emphasized that the academic leader should be reliable. Similarly, Cashman (2008) emphasized the importance of accuracy and reliability in the foundation of leadership and the formation of values. One participant emphasized that in order for the feeling of trust to be formed professionally, it should be bilateral. Bryman (2008) also stated that the academic leader should trust the people he works with.

The findings of the study showed that academic leaders should assume the role of providing justice in the units they are affiliated with. Similarly, Bass and Bass (2009) emphasized that the concept of justice feeds the leadership and stated that in an environment where there is no justice, the values provided by the leadership will disappear. Some of the participants emphasized institutional trust rather than personal trust and stated that providing institutional trust would increase the quality. Yiedler and Codling (2004) also stated that injustice hinders the practice of expertise and therefore causes a poor quality management process.

The findings of the study show that raising awareness is also one of the academic leadership roles. In order to come up with suggestions for the solution of the problems, first of all, awareness of the problems should be increased. Siddique et al. (2011) emphasized that academic leaders should fulfill the role of raising awareness in order to ensure academic development and professional autonomy, as well as their knowledge and skills.

He revealed that working and being honest are another role expected from academic leaders. Similarly, Spendlove (2007) considered being honest as one of the attitudes of successful academic leaders. In this sense, the honesty of academic leaders is an important key in stabilizing the momentum of success.



## **5.1. Barriers to the Implementation of Academic Leadership Roles Situations and Overcoming Barriers**

Another issue discussed within the scope of the research is the obstacles to the realization of academic leadership roles. Under this heading, one of the most intensely touched upon by academic administrators is that administrators experience problems in fulfilling their academic leadership roles due to the continuation of their past habits. When examined in the context of the changing and developing situation of higher education from past to present, it is seen that the transformation related to the concept of leadership has become more intense. Similarly, Kezar, Carducci, and Contreras-McGavin (2006) stated that in order to be a successful leader in today's conditions, where change and innovation accelerate, leaders must constantly renew themselves and change the dysfunctional habits of the past.

The other point that the findings obtained from the study point out is that the process of fulfilling the academic leadership roles conflicts with the bureaucracy and management process, causing disruption. The fact that the structures that maintain the traditional management approach cannot keep up with the current rate of change is contrary to the contemporary understanding of innovation and change. Similarly, Korkut (1992) stated that gaining administrative autonomy pushed universities behind the times. In this regard, it is also important that the management system is able to keep up with the pace of change and innovation and that the goals of the academicians overlap with the administrative policies of the unit they are affiliated with.

One of the obstacles to providing the physical infrastructure and catching up with the technological level in developed countries is the lack of budget. Ramsden (1998) stated that academic leaders should be able to provide resources and cope with financial problems in order to achieve the determined goals. It is also seen that it is difficult for academic leaders to fulfill some of their responsibilities with limited budgets. Some participants, who also stated that various sources could be used in finding a budget, also

emphasized the importance of innovative ideas and research in this respect. Similarly, in a study conducted by Flores (1993) in the USA, it was stated that the decreasing financial support of universities had a negative impact on the development of these institutions.

In solving the problems encountered during the fulfillment of academic leadership roles, the theme that the academic administrators who participated in the research focused on the most was determined as reaching a solution by talking, that is, by dialogue. Hughes (1996) stated that interpersonal communication skills are a requirement for academic leadership behaviors. Similarly, Ervay (2006) emphasizes the importance of continuous exchange of information and dialogue in achieving success in preventing problems in the academic leadership process.

Another topic emphasized by the participants about overcoming the obstacles that arise in the provision of academic leadership roles is the use of personal relationships to overcome these obstacles. In realizing this, it is seen that the concepts of being open to information sharing, being supportive, accepting, valuing, providing development opportunities (Siddique, Aslam, Khan, & Fatima, 2011) come to the fore. From this point of view, it is seen that the support received within the unit is also very important for academic development.

Another point emphasized is the use of a libertarian working environment to be created in overcoming obstacles. As a matter of fact, Yelder and Codling (2004) emphasized that academic freedom is an important problem in today's commercialized higher education environments. Assuming that academic freedom is an important problem in our country, where a central higher education administration is implemented, it is thought that academic freedom is even more important in the effective fulfillment of academic leadership roles.

Executive academics participating in the study emphasized that the experiences of their colleagues guide them in administrative and academic terms. Emphasizing the importance of experience and sharing experience, the managers stated that it is also

important to adapt the past to today's conditions. Bolden (2004) stated that academic leaders are pioneers in experimentation. From this point of view, it can be said that it is important for the academic leader to share his experiences with his colleagues. In this context, Ervay (2006) stated that academicians can become more effective and successful individuals with the guidance of their more experienced colleagues.

One of the points emphasized by the academics participating in the study is that the academic leadership roles can be implemented more easily in the academic units where the corporate culture has developed and all academicians feel that they belong to this culture. Nielsen, et al. (2008) stated that acting together in achieving success is possible with the existence of a common culture. Assuming that culture is the factor that will make the greatest contribution to the institutionalization of higher education, academic leaders should be a pioneer in the formation of organizational culture in order to ensure institutional success.

Research findings show that the growth and development of the department has been the most emphasized achievement by executive academics. Similarly, Gmelch and Miskin (2010) discussed the growth and development of academic units within the scope of the roles of academic leaders and emphasized that academic leaders would supervise the development of the department by encouraging all behaviors that would contribute to the growth of the department (Act. Dickson, Ott, Paulus, Wild, & Mitchell, 2012). Similarly, Ambrose (2005) stated that academic leaders can contribute to the development and growth of the department with appropriate and constructive feedback, while Bryman (2008) similarly emphasized the growth of the academic unit. Bryman (2008) has associated the growth of academic units with globalization and emphasized that academic leaders can improve their units in this context.

One of the most emphasized achievements of the executive academicians participating in the interview is the opening of communication channels. Bland (2005) stated that communication is very effective in increasing educational output and research in academic units. The findings of the research show that it is important to

keep communication channels open for the successful completion of administrative processes and increasing the quality of teaching. Similarly, Bryman (2008) stated that participation in the decision can be ensured by keeping the communication channels of academic leaders open. Spendlove (2007), on the other hand, emphasized the behaviors of successful academic leaders, emphasizing that communicating clearly is unique to successful academic leaders. Cowburn (2005) emphasized that providing communication is important in ensuring internal consistency and harmony of goals in the department. Similarly, Ervay (2006) states that academic leaders are people who exchange ideas and in this way can break academic patterns.

Some executive academicians, who believe that the development and growth of academic units can be possible with innovations, aim to go beyond conventional thoughts in this sense. Kochan, et al. (2002) stated that innovative strategies will contribute to the development of academic units. In this sense, it can be said that material and moral innovations will eliminate institutional and individual deficiencies. Gidman (2013), on the other hand, emphasized that traditional academic administrators need to be transformed into innovative leaders today.

The findings obtained from the study show that a peaceful and peaceful working environment can increase the quality and quantity of production. It can be said that the working environment and corporate culture are important in achieving the highest possible work efficiency. In this context, Yukl (2010) stated that it is the primary duty of leaders to create an environment that will ensure the formation of vision and the successful fulfillment of academic goals.

In the study, it was concluded that academic leaders have important duties in overcoming the obstacles encountered in the process of reaching the determined goals and in solving the problems. Scott, et al. (2008) emphasized the importance of acquiring knowledge for the solution of experienced problems for the development of academic leadership. From this point of view, if it is assumed that problem solving is a great success, it can be said that sharing experiences about solving problems is also very

important. Similarly, Gmelch (2013) stated that academic leaders have a key role in solving problems that arise during practice.

In our globalizing world, it is also important for higher education institutions to follow technological developments. Some of the executive academicians who participated in the study also emphasized that universities should follow educational technologies and include them in their own structure. Similarly, Ramsden (1998) states that one of the difficulties that may be encountered in the field of academic leadership is to follow the rapid developments in technology. Some executive academics also cited the provision of physical infrastructure as their greatest and most effective achievement. Erçetin (2001) also emphasized the importance of new generation academicians following technological developments closely. In addition, Rowley and Sherman (2003) emphasized that the effective use of resources and technology as a requirement of academic leadership will provide a practical management approach.

Ramsden (1998) stated that workload distribution is one of the difficulties encountered in the field of academic leadership. Emphasizing the importance of effective workload distribution, the executive academics emphasized that this situation has a motivational effect on their colleagues. In this context, Law and Glover (2000) emphasized the importance of task sharing so that academic leaders can coordinate teamwork effectively. From this point of view, it can be said that workload sharing is important in terms of providing a healthy academic environment and increasing study efficiency.

The findings obtained from the study show that individuals feeling that they are valuable will increase their working efficiency. In the research conducted by Mason, Enyeart, Vlajic, Miller, and Matovich (2011) among the competencies required for academic leadership, listening to and consulting colleagues is considered as a behavior of successful academic leaders. From this perspective, it is important that academic leaders listen to the problems of their colleagues and consider their needs.

The findings show that a fair management approach and ensuring equality among all academics is the greatest and most effective achievement for some of the executive academicians who participated in the interview. Yelder and Codling (2004) emphasized the workload and role confusion and stated that an unfair management approach would not be compatible with academic leadership competencies. On the other hand, Bryman (2008) argues that academic staff should be treated equally and integratedly as a path that academic leaders should follow for their units.

## **5.2. Academic Leadership in the Context of Organizational Culture**

In the light of the findings obtained from the questions asked within the scope of academic leadership in the context of organizational culture, this theme was examined under four sub-themes.

Organizational change and innovation are at the forefront of the issues that executive academicians express their opinions most intensely. Today, universities need to lead change and innovation and determine their direction. Similarly, Debrowski and Blake (2004) emphasized the importance of training academic leaders in universities for the management of organizational change and innovation. The findings show that the two most important factors that will ensure change are education and persuasion management. The National Information Commission (2008) stated that leaders cannot become academic leaders without training. From this point of view, it is clear that academic leadership training is an element that will guide change and innovation in universities. On the other hand, Comer et al. (2002) states that at the core of academic leadership lies the role of determining the direction of change by creating a vision through communication. In this respect, the findings of the present study support the literature.

The findings obtained from the study show that resistance to change and innovation is divided into two as personal and institutional. Most of the executive

academics stated that personal resistance was more dominant than institutional resistance. As stated in the previous title, education is very important for change and innovation to take place. It is assumed that it is important that first of all, people's thoughts change and then old habits can be replaced by adaptation to innovation. Belieklie and Henkel (2008) stated that academic leaders have important responsibilities in terms of internalizing new values. Considering that it is one of the responsibilities of academic leaders, it is thought that innovation and change can be achieved with the acceptance of the people who make up the units. Similarly, Bryman (2008) stated that change and innovation can be achieved by taking people as a basis and encouraging them. On the other hand, when considered on an institutional basis, the findings obtained from the study show that the rapid realization of change and innovation will be possible with the reduction of bureaucracy and hierarchy. From this point of view, Blau and Scott (1962) emphasized that innovative and change-guiding universities can gain momentum by employing formal resources as well as informal resources. Similarly, Henkel (2002) stated that academic leaders who direct change and innovation should stay away from hierarchy and bureaucracy. Only in this way is it possible to talk about a personal and institutional-based innovation and change movement.

The academics who participated in the study emphasized primarily the physical infrastructure as an example of the change and innovation in the units they are affiliated with. It can be said that it is important to determine the needs required for the successful and rapid continuation of academic studies by academic leaders and to take necessary actions to meet these needs. Supporting the findings, Bryman (2008) also emphasized that academic leaders have a large share in determining the profile of the unit, and for this, they should be aware of the needs of the unit and its contributions to the unit. Similarly, while Bolden (2004) states academic leadership roles; stated that academic leaders should motivate their colleagues in their units and meet all their professional needs.

Findings from the study show the persuasion of higher institutions in a hierarchical sense as a way of avoiding obstacles at all. Marshall, et al. (2000) observed in his study that there are conceptual and perceptual differences between academics working in higher institutions in a hierarchical sense and academics working in other sub-departments. From this point of view, it can be said that ensuring change and innovation in academic units is again through communication and persuasion. Bass (2009) emphasized the importance of communication in his study and argued that softer relationships and revealing oneself on the basis of unit and person are necessary for both parties to understand each other.

The findings of the study show that academic leaders use personal relationships more than other ways to ensure the participation of all their colleagues in the decisions taken within the units. The executive academics who participated in the interview stated that especially the softening of bureaucratic obstacles and the way of persuasion accelerated change and innovation. Similarly, Flores (1993) concluded in his study that it is possible for the units to gain momentum in meeting their own needs if they have a flexible structure, and this situation will positively affect the bond between the academic leader and their colleagues. In addition, Blau and Scott (1962) stated that academic leaders should be free in bureaucratic task sharing. Considering that ideas can be expressed more objectively in an academic unit where task sharing is free, it can be said that an academic unit that is more open to innovation and change can be created.

The academic administrators who participated in the interview stated that their participation in the decision-making process for change and innovation was not only done informally, but also through meetings they held within their academic units. Considering that it is important to ensure the participation of all academics in the decision as a requirement of a democratic management approach, it can be said that in-unit meetings are important in terms of listening to the opinions of all academics regarding the decisions to be taken. Similarly, Dickson, et al. (2012) emphasized the importance of the meetings held by academic units in order for academic leaders to



enable the development of their own units, and stated that these meetings also provide important information about external focus of attention. Likewise, Bryman (2008) stated that the meetings held within the unit are important in terms of determining the mission of the academic units and following the determined mission. From this point of view, it is seen that the findings of the study support the literature.

Findings from the study show that academic leaders should be aware of the needs of all academics to ensure participation in decision making. Yukl (2010) defines academic leadership as the person who manages shared goals. In this context, it is considered important to provide resources, guide and meet the needs, and it can be seen that it is important for academic leaders to provide consensus in the decisions taken. Similarly, Yelder and Codling (2004) emphasize that academic leaders have an inspiring role in ensuring partnership.

Some of the academicians who participated in the interview stated that only informal or formal ways alone are not sufficient to participate in the decision. Instead, they stated that using both informal and formal ways would ensure a healthier and more efficient process. Similarly, Bass (2009) stated in his study that all necessary means should be followed in order not to break the connection between academic leaders and their colleagues. From this point of view, the use of informal and formal ways together can provide timeliness in determining needs and ensuring cooperation.

Cooperation of academic units is also among the findings obtained from the present study. It is thought that the guidance of academic leaders is important in making organizational change and innovation sustainable. In this context, Conger and Kanungo (1987) stated that academic leaders have important roles in sharing innovations and changes so that academic units whose goals and needs match work together. However, Katz and Kahn (1978) emphasized that organizations where actions that appeal to the majority are shared are more effective. From this point of view, the research findings also support the literature.

Research findings also revealed different aspects of electronic access, which replaced physical access over time. Considering that academic leaders should be followers of change and innovation, it can be said that academic leaders should make extra efforts for this. Kezar, Carducci and Contreras-McGavin (2006) stated in their study that being a successful academic leader in today's conditions where technological developments are questioned requires training in this direction. The present study also revealed that electronic access relieves management activities in making decisions. In this context, Rowley and Sherman (2003) stated that by providing the technological opportunities that academic units need, they also relieve the administrative activities in the teaching and research process.

It is among the results of the research that the lack of cooperation is attributed to the fact that academic leaders require expertise in certain fields. Similarly, Nielsen, et al. (2008) states that the inability of academic leaders to show expertise in areas such as communication, purpose, change and innovation prevents the synchronization of academic units. As a matter of fact, Raines and Alberg (2003) classified people according to their field of expertise and stated that the necessary skills can be provided in the academic leadership model. In this sense, in cases where participation in the decision cannot be ensured, it can be thought that it may be beneficial to provide developments in the areas of expertise of academic leaders.

### **5.3. Academic Leadership in the Context of Professional Development**

In the light of the findings obtained from the questions asked within the scope of academic leadership in the context of professional development, this theme was examined under eight sub-themes.

Almost all of the executive academicians who participated in the interview stated that they did not receive any leadership or management training. In this sense, executive academicians continued their professional development within the scope of their

personal preferences. Bakioglu (1998) stated that management has left its place to a postmodern understanding today and has ceased to be an official unit. In this sense, it can be said that the professional development of executive academicians is important in terms of meeting both their institutional and individual needs. On the other hand, Comer et al. (2002) drew attention to the relationship between leadership and managerial skills while addressing the professional development of executive academics. In this context, it is seen that the development of academic leadership skills within the scope of professional development of managers is also important in terms of meeting the needs of external focuses. Considering that the needs of external focuses are determined by developing technological and social structures, the importance of academic leaders' professional development can be understood once again. Similarly, Yelder and Codling (2004) stated that academic leaders, where globalization is felt more and more each day, need professional development of academic leaders in order to adapt to new situations.

The findings of the study indicate that executive academics make personal efforts to improve their academic leadership skills. This effort to develop personal academic leadership skills includes following the internet environment, congresses and seminars, related articles and academic publications. In this context, Richards (2012) states that academic leadership is a comprehensive concept and academic leaders should provide their own professional development as well as their colleagues. Also, in support of the findings of the study, Gmelch (2013) is of the opinion that it is important for academic leaders to adopt clinical approaches such as seminars, e-sessions and workshops to ensure the continuity of their professional development.

Some of the executive academicians who participated in the interview stated that they received management training. However, it was emphasized that the trainings mentioned were not trainings for academic leadership and were short-term trainings. McDade (1987) emphasized the importance of professional development of academics in the context of academic leadership and stated that these trainings should include

planning, resource acquisition, time and conflict management. Similarly, Kohtamäki and Hölttä (2013) stated that although academic leadership functions differ on the basis of institution and culture, academic leaders can specialize with the experience gained from all internal and external focused problems. On the other hand, it can be said that it is within the responsibility of executive academicians to ensure their own professional development as well as to ensure the professional development of their colleagues. In this regard, Gmelch and Miskin (2010) stated that they contributed to the development of academic leaders, faculty and academicians, thus increasing the motivation of the unit they are affiliated with.

The findings obtained from the research show that executive academicians benefit from academicians who are more experienced than themselves in the same field. In this regard, it can be said that executive academicians can benefit from their experienced colleagues in providing professional development in the context of academic leadership. Similarly, Kochan et al. (2002) states that academic leaders can form professional learning communities by learning in harmony with their colleagues. Henkel (2002) also stated that higher education culture is a result of collective professionalization and emphasized that academic leaders can benefit from different experiences.

Majority of the executive academicians who participated in the interview stated that they often benefited from their own experiences as well as providing their professional development in the field of academic leadership. In this regard, Crudo-Capili and Concepcion (2013) stated that academic leaders should develop their innate abilities and they do this by gaining experience. Similarly, Bolden (2004) stated that academic leaders are at the forefront in gaining managerial experience. In this context, Yelder and Codling (2004) also stated that academic leadership should be filled by experienced people in the administrative field and emphasized that academic leadership is an authority based on experience. Considering the findings of the study, the executive academicians who participated in the interview emphasized the importance of the

experience they gained most intensely. From this point of view, it is seen that the findings of the study and the literature are compatible.

The findings obtained from the study show that the heavy workload of executive academicians in administrative matters hinders their academic studies. Middlehurst and Elton (1992) state that leadership functions operate together and these functions are divided into three: educational, academic and administrative. It can be thought that any of the other functions will be interrupted under conditions where the load distribution of the specified functions is not done in a balanced way. In this case, the importance of academic leadership training emerges once again. In the context of professional development, it is thought that academic leadership training will contribute to the development of academics' self-management skills. Behling and Rauch (1985) also described leadership from a functionalist perspective; defined as the management of the process towards the goal of an organized group. Considering that the management of the process can be achieved by ensuring coordination, it can be said that academic studies can be carried out with balanced workload distributions.

The findings obtained from the executive academicians during the study process show that the administrative workload complicates the professional development of the executive academicians, and often hinders them. On the other hand, the study conducted by the National Information Commission (2008) emphasizes that a manager academic should receive academic leadership training even if he or she has leadership skills. In the same study, he also states that academic leadership is not a type of leadership that can be done without training. In this context, it is thought that it would be beneficial for executive academics to receive academic leadership training by ensuring their professional development so that they can be more beneficial to their unit and colleagues and to use their skills more effectively.

The executive academics who participated in the interview mostly stated the lack of time and financial means as obstacles to professional development. Similarly, McDade (1987) mentioned time management while stating the needs of academic

leaders for professional development areas. In this context, it can be said that it is among the expectations that academic leadership education improves the self-regulation skills of academicians. On the other hand, Henkel (2002) emphasized that only half of the academicians can determine the time required by the administrative workload and stated that including their professional development in this time is a big problem to be overcome. It is thought that a comprehensive academic leadership training will improve the leadership and management skills of executive academicians. In this context, the findings obtained from the research are similar to the literature.

It is very important for universities, which are the visible face of modern understanding, that higher education institutions adapt to the change and innovation movements that are gaining momentum day by day. Ensuring the development of academic leadership skills and academic leadership activities are also considered important in order to keep higher education institutions modern. In addition, academic leadership training should be provided in order to provide the prerequisites for the effective and efficient management of academic units. The findings obtained from the study show that the development of academic leadership skills is only due to experience. For this reason, it is important to organize trainings that will develop academic leadership skills. Considering the dynamic effect of professional development, organizational culture and academic leadership on each other, it is thought that the education that will be designed will enable cultural change in universities and turn academics into individuals who are compatible with change. The importance of the concept of academic leadership is increasing day by day for the management of innovation and change both in organizational and individual terms, self-regulation, self-management skills, lifelong effective learning and collective learning awareness. In this sense, it is obvious that not only modeling but also guiding the change and innovation process will contribute to our day.

## **Recommendations for future research**

It has been deemed appropriate to offer the following suggestions to researchers who will work on this subject in the future:

- In this study, academic leadership perceptions of academic administrators at Khazar University were examined. The studies to be carried out after this can be repeated by including academic administrators working in other private universities.

- The data in this study were collected through interviews. In future studies, it is recommended to diversify data collection methods by examining the documents containing the relevant regulations. This study is aimed at understanding the perceptions of academician administrators. In future studies, it can be aimed to understand the perceptions of academicians who do not have managerial duties.

- This study was carried out based on qualitative data. In future studies, studies that deal with academic leadership in more detail can be carried out by using mixed pattern studies. In this study, academic leadership perceptions of academic administrators were examined. In future studies, relational screening studies can be carried out to examine the relationships between academic leadership and other types of leadership, and the organizational behavior and professional development of employees.

- When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that there is no measurement tool to measure academic leadership perceptions. In this context, it is thought that scale development studies to measure academic leadership perceptions would be appropriate. This study was carried out at the Khazar University, which is located in Baku and has been operating for a long time. It is recommended that future studies be repeated in small cities or newly established universities.

- In this study, it was not examined whether the perceptions of the academicians involved in different managerial tasks differed. These comparisons can be made in future studies. According to the findings obtained as a result of the research, it has been observed that academic administrators have limited views on using initiative. It is

suggested that administrative arrangements should be made that will pave the way for academic administrators to use more initiative.

- The findings obtained as a result of the research show that there is no in-service training for executive academicians. In this sense, it is recommended to design an academic leadership program. In the research, the importance of experience sharing has been mentioned extensively. It is recommended that the necessary administrative arrangements be made in order to create a higher unit that can guide the academic leadership in the context of academic leadership.

- Arrangements can be made to create practice-oriented learning environments where joint discussions based on experience sharing can be carried out in cooperation with executive academicians. Arrangements can be made to provide executive academics with time for practice where joint discussions based on experience sharing can be held in cooperation.

- Necessary arrangements can be made for the development of management skills and professional development of executive academicians, thus paving the way for the development of academic units.



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## **Appendix**

### ***Interview questions***

1. As an academician working as a manager, what do you do to ensure your professional development and do you think you can spare enough time for academic studies and educational activities? Why?
2. As a department/faculty/institute, do you encounter obstacles during the implementation of the decisions taken for change and innovation?
3. Have you received any training for the development of your knowledge and skills in the context of management?
4. What kind of studies do you carry out in your academic unit to implement and develop academic studies in cooperation?
5. What do you think are the academic leadership roles that a department/faculty/institute manager should play at universities?