

An Analysis of Academic Identity Construction During Doctoral Education

Akademik Kimlik Oluşum Sürecinin Doktora Eğitimi Bağlamında Çözülmesi

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Abstract

This study aims to determine how doctoral students and the faculty members make sense of academic identity, to examine how doctoral students' academic identity is formed, to analyze the academic identity construction of doctoral students by associating them with the views and practices of faculty members on creating academic identity. It was carried out through a case study, one of the qualitative research methods. The study group was determined by maximum variation sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, and consisted of 17 faculty members and 34 doctoral students in a public university in Türkiye. The data was collected using interviews, observation and analyzed using content analysis. The results showed that academic identity is multidimensional, including academic (role), social and individual, and each dimension affects the construction of the academic identity of the doctoral student; the past experiences of the doctoral students affect the construction of academic identity, the economic and spiritual support provided by the family paves the way for the construction of a positive academic identity; the quality of the social environment in which doctoral students grew up and the cultural capital characteristics helped to solve the problems they encountered. It is important for the doctoral student to feel a sense of belonging to the academic community and that congresses, symposiums or scientific events contribute the most to their belonging to this community.

Keywords: Academic Identity, Doctoral Education, Academic Identity Construction, Social Capital, Cultural Capital.

Doctoral education serves as a central hub where a variety of research ideas proposed by emerging researchers are shaped and refined under the mentorship of experienced supervisors. This has led studies exploring the experiences of doctoral students how to develop their identity as researchers and has been a hot topic (Keskin, 2023; Barkhuizen, 2021; Caskey et al., 2020; Qaleshahzari et al., 2020; Xu, 2021). As Bakhshi et al (2019) focused on the challenges they need to overcome on the way to become independent researchers,

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı doktora öğrencileri ve öğretim üyelerinin akademik kimliği nasıl anlamlandırdıklarını belirlemek, doktora öğrencilerinin akademik kimliklerinin nasıl oluştuğunu incelemek, öğrencilerin akademik kimlik oluşumunu öğretim üyelerinin akademik kimlik oluşturma konusundaki görüş ve uygulamalarıyla ilişkilendirerek çözümlenmektedir. Bu araştırma nitel araştırma desenlerinden durum çalışmasında tasarlanmıştır. Amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme ile belirlenen çalışma grubu, Türkiye'de bulunan bir devlet üniversitesinde görev yapan 17 öğretim üyesi ve öğrenimini sürdüren 34 doktora öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. Veriler görüşme ve gözlem yoluyla toplanmış ve içerik analizi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, akademik kimliğin akademik (rol), sosyal ve bireysel olmak üzere çok boyutlu bir kimlik türü olduğunu ve her bir boyutun doktora öğrencisinin akademik kimlik oluşumunu etkilediğini; doktora öğrencilerinin geçmiş deneyimlerinin akademik kimlik oluşumunu etkilediğini, ailenin sağladığı ekonomik ve manevi desteğin olumlu bir akademik kimlik oluşumuna olumlu katkı sunduğunu; doktora öğrencilerinin yetiştikleri sosyal çevrenin niteliğinin ve kültürel sermaye özelliklerinin karşılaştıkları sorunların çözümüne yardımcı olduğunu göstermiştir. Doktora öğrencisinin akademik topluluğa aidiyet hissetmesinin önemli olduğu ve bu aidiyetin sağlanmasında en çok kongre, sempozyum ya da bilimsel etkinliklerin katkı sağladığı belirtilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Akademik Kimlik, Doktora Eğitimi, Akademik Kimlik Oluşumu, Sosyal Sermaye, Kültürel Sermaye.

Gardner (2008, p. 328) asserted that doctoral education is a form of *creation* or *becoming* process in which a student is transformed to an independent scientist or researcher. Shulman (2008) defined doctoral education as an accumulation of experiences consisting of transformation, training, and education dimensions. It is argued that doctoral study is as much about identity construction as it is about knowledge production, because it is emphasized as a process that can change the way individuals see themselves and be seen by others (Green, 2005).

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Through the ideas cultivated in doctoral education, it can be inferred that the combination of advanced study, research, and mentorship enables doctoral students to overcome challenges and construct a strong, qualified academic identity.

The most crucial aspect of doctoral education can be seen in its role in shaping and contributing to doctoral students' academic identities. Previous experiences, cultural, social, and economic capital characteristics of students, practices of faculty members, and opportunities provided by university are influential for forming their academic identity. Identity is experienced and socially constructed over time through participation, action and interaction (McAlpine et al, 2010). Actions and intentions represent the personal interpretation of individuals with the influence of certain socio-historical behaviors, and the stories people tell themselves form their identities (Sfark & Prusak, 2005). Academic (role) identity, social identity, and personal identity, which constitute the main theoretical framework of this study, are defined as the identities that doctoral students form during their doctoral education (Burke & Stets, 2009). Accordingly, social identity refers to individuals' awareness of belonging to a particular group—ingroup—defined as their relationship with outgroups and unrelated groups. Academic (role identity) states that an individual exhibits certain behavior to meet the expectations associated with a particular role adopted. For doctoral students, feeling like an academic happens when they interact with faculty members and peers. Personal identity describes an individual's own traits without necessarily conflicting with a particular group activity or role. All these along with the practices gained during the education, doctoral students construct their own identity to the academic community.

The emphasis on individual work, responsibility, and creativity in doctoral education encourages students to draw on their prior experiences to navigate and overcome potential challenges. Keskin (2023) found that lack of access to necessary equipment and potential study participants can force doctoral students to abandon their interests in favor of topics which are more convenient for them to study. In this sense, the ability of doctoral students to feel independent in terms of academic (role), social and individual identity characteristics, the practices of the department they are studying, and the individual gains or achievements of doctoral students make it easier. It can be stated that academic practices, tendencies and feelings about the process play an important role. The thinking tools, which Bourdieu (1990, 1993) calls habitus (predispositions) and capital (economic, cultural, and social capital), can help to analyze the academic identity construction that take place during doctoral education, in the past, and in the analysis of the experiences gained during the doctoral process. These tools can be helpful in that they reveal inequities in the structure and process of doctoral education as well as patterns of distinction that are set up for and reproduced by

particular types of students (Gopaul, 2016). In particular, students may experience different opportunities and relationships due to accumulated successes (capital). The significance of analyzing the academic identity construction of doctoral students with the tools of habitus and capital highlights the need to understand the expectations and experiences that students bring to doctoral education as well as the activities in doctoral education that reflect the needs and interests of systems of education. Analyzing doctoral education with Bourdieu's concepts, it is thought that the information on doctoral students' previous experiences they bring to, the relationship between the academic, cultural and social capital characteristics they acquire contribute to the literature. Being a member of an academic community, doctoral education can be described the most important stage to internalize of its own rules, values, and academic practices. That can contribute to qualify the work of scientists and faculty members who act as locomotives in the development of a society. In addition, when the literature is examined, it is seen that studies on the crux of doctoral education are relatively limited. This study aims to determine how supervisors and doctoral students make sense of academic identity in a public university, to examine how doctoral students' academic identities are formed, and to analyze the academic identity construction of students and the views of faculty members on creating academic identity in doctoral education by answering the following research questions:

1. How is the concept of academic identity defined?
2. What key traits and attributes define doctoral students?
3. What social and cultural factors influence the construction of doctoral students' academic identities?
4. In what ways is academic identity formed and cultivated throughout the doctoral education process?
5. What strategies and practices do faculty members employ to support the construction of doctoral students' academic identities?

Method

In the exploration of doctoral students' experiences and faculty members' practices, the researchers adopted a case-study design. Case-study is about inquiring, interpretive, and in an effort to understand the form of a problem in a particular context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). According to Creswell (2016), providing an in-depth understanding of the situation is a hallmark of a case study and he defined it as a qualitative approach in which the researcher collects detailed and in-depth information about certain situations by using multiple sources of information. To achieve this, interviews, observations, documents, and audio-visual information can be used as data collection tools. Case study is a method that enables the researcher to reveal real-life events in a meaningful and holistic way when the phenomenon being studied cannot be easily distinguished from its context (Yin, 2009). In this study, the data was collected through in-depth interviews with doctoral students, faculty members and field notes from doctoral course



observations. The data which was collected through semi-structured interview and course observation were analyzed using the tools (habitus, cultural, social and economic capital), so the relationship between the academic identity of doctoral students and their cultural and social capital was built.

Participants

The study group consisted of the doctoral students and faculty members in a public university. They were chosen through maximum variation sampling, a method designed to capture a broad range of perspectives and highlight differences (Creswell, 2016). To ensure maximum variation, faculty members and doctoral students from different disciplines participated in the study. In this context, in-depth interviews were conducted with 34 doctoral students studying in ten different disciplines and 16 faculty members from nine different disciplines. Participants were coded as DS 1, DS 2, DS 3, ... (doctoral students) and F1, F2, ... (the faculty).

Data Collection Tools

In this study, data was obtained from in-depth interviews with doctoral students, faculty members and from doctoral course observations. Two semi-structured interview forms were prepared to be used in the interviews with the doctoral students. The first interview form was applied before the 2020-2021 spring term and the second interview form was applied at the end of the term. The semi-structured form was applied to faculty members during the spring term. For the course observation, the researchers developed a form. The interview forms were sent to the experts, and necessary changes were made according to their views. Ethical consent was obtained from Giresun University Ethical Committee (No: E-50288587-050.01.04-17647, Date: 7.04.2021). The participants were informed about the research and the process and then face-to-face and in-depth interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted using audio or video recording devices (with the consent of the participants). The audio files were converted into written form on the computer. Written data was coded according to the codes determined by the researcher. They were told that the interviews would be tape-recorded and these recordings would only be used for this study. After receiving the consent of the participants, the interviews were tape-recorded. Faculty members were contacted and the researcher attended lectures and observed classes during the 2020-2021 spring term.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by content analysis method. The audio files were converted into written form on the computer and the content of the quotations taken from the participants' responses did not change, and they were organized by ensuring the necessary care in spelling and punctuation. The data was coded according to the codes determined by the researcher.

In content analysis, the data summarized and interpreted in descriptive analysis are subjected to deeper processing, and concepts and themes that are not noticed with a descriptive approach are discovered (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). While analyzing the data obtained from interviews and course observations, they were divided into main categories and subcategories. For the validity and reliability, in addition to direct quotations, the literature on the relevant problem discussed under each theme is also included in the discussion part. During the study, all stages were reviewed by both the supervisor and two independent experts. The coding done by two experts are expressed in the following formula (Miles & Huberman, 1994): Percentage of Agreement (Reliability): $\text{Agreement} / \text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement} \times 100$. As a result of the coding made by both experts, the reliability of the research was set at 80%. The reliability which is set at 70% or over shows that the study is reliable.

Results

A number of themes were identified by the researcher upon the completion of the data analysis stage. Academic identity definition, doctoral students' characteristics, the family, social environment and cultural life of doctoral students, the experiences of academic identity construction during the doctoral process were classified as themes.

What Academic Identity Means

Doctoral students defined academic identity consisting of some dimensions in which describes the roles or responsibilities what is expected as a future researcher. This result showed that due to their roles as doctoral students, future academics, or researchers, their characteristics, role awareness and societal responsibilities can be described parts of their academic identity. The opinions indicating their responsibilities towards the group or society also stand out as a feature of academic identity. Besides, doctoral students reported that individual characteristics have an important effect on the construction of academic identity.

Role (Academic) Identity. Role identity is defined as an identity with certain roles specific to the community in which it resides; and role identity should have some identity characteristics that these roles should have. As the framework used in this study, role identity states that an individual exhibits certain behavior to meet the expectations associated with a particular role adopted (Burke & Stets, 2009). These roles include producing scientific knowledge, specialization, interdisciplinary knowledge, fulfilling ethical responsibilities, academic accumulation, and academic status. Most participants stated that the most highlighted role is to produce knowledge through scientific research. For example, one doctoral student said:

It can be defined as studies, publications, laboratory studies, or the knowledge we have gained in our field of study (DS3).



An identity that contributes academically to science and to its students. An academic title is not only about how much you can contribute to students with this identity and also how much you can contribute to the literature. It is an identity where you show how much you have a say in your work (DS7).

Social Identity. Social identity refers to individuals' awareness of belonging to a particular group—ingroup—defined as their relationship with outgroups and unrelated groups (Burke & Stets, 2009). One doctoral student said the following view which showed his or her awareness:

When faced with a challenge to generate information, make a contribution to politics, society, organizations, and institutions. Our ability to throw one drop of water into the ocean is a sign of our intellectual identity. If we are passionate about research and believe that it will be beneficial. To me, academic identity entails being able to contribute through our research (DS2).

Individual Identity. During academic identity construction, doctoral students' personal characteristics push them into their doctoral journey. Curiosity, drive/emotion, learning motive, intrinsic motivation and critical thinking skills are the characteristics emphasized by most doctoral students.

Academic identity is a process that starts with curiosity and develops with the desire to research something (DS8).

Changes in an individual's way of thinking in parallel with the academic education they receive, I can interpret it as the development of the way of questioning life and the formation of these characteristics (DS16).

The results on academic identity definition of faculty members revealed that academic identity requires to fulfill some expectations consisting of role, social and individual identity categories.

Role Identity. Most faculty members reported that one with a title in the academy has to be accomplished some roles. In other words, they focused on the role of researcher identity as the identity can also be stated as a professional status. The role teaching and ethical responsibility are on the front. Some faculty members said:

For me, an academic is an enlightened person. He teaches what he knows to a volunteer. He/she is the one who conducts research, seeks knowledge and learns. Seeking the pure and absolute truth. Sometimes a person who searches for the right information and tries to falsify it...(F2)

As titles I earned as a result of graduate studies (master's and doctoral) I can explain (F4)

Social Identity. Academic identity emerges as an identity to be aware of the problems faced by the society in which it lives and has the competence to produce solutions to

these problems, and at the same time it has a responsibility towards society. One faculty member said:

...A person who helps first himself/herself, his/her family, his/her university, society and finally humanity. A person who opens his/her door to everyone with his/her publications, behavior and attitude. Helping people who want to fulfill a specific need for knowledge. A university student can also run a business an identity to which the owner, a beekeeper, also turned for information (F2).

...A person who sets an example with his/her life, who exhibits the style and courtesy of the community in which he/she lives. He or she should be integrated with his behavior and human relations. As an identity that is also aware of its responsibility towards society, I think (F3).

Individual Identity. For constructing an academic identity, one should have certain traits. It is seen that at the doctoral level disciplined and having a researcher spirit are reported most. One faculty member said:

If a man has dreams, if he transforms his dreams into a vision and disciplines this vision, if he can transfer this discipline to his work in a rhythmic way, if he has determination, if he has tolerant characteristics an identity can occur (F15).

Characteristics of Doctoral Students

Academic, social and individual characteristics are crucial for doctoral students during their academic journey. Having a qualified academic identity needs some certain attributes for coping with the hurdles they face.

Academic (Role) Characteristics. The results showed that doctoral students should have previous experiences in the academic field. This result can be a sign of the importance of the master or bachelor degree acquisition in terms of academic stuff. This also points how important to get academic competences including academic writing, field knowledge and mastery of research steps in the pre-doctoral period. Some doctoral students said:

He needs to know how to do research, that is, he needs to know what to look for and where to look for it. Getting what you want to get to, he also needs to find various solutions. There is only one way to reach but to know that you can reach it in other ways. You need to have time and effort (DS3).

He should know where he can do research, which libraries are there, how to contact them know that they will provide resources for their research (DS12).

Social Characteristics. Among the characteristics that doctoral students should have, social characteristics were the least frequently mentioned by doctoral students. These characteristics are good communication with supervisors and



sharing with external stakeholders. The opinions on these characteristics are as follows; “*He should have good relations with his advisor. He/she should not throw the guidance of his/her advisor behind his/her ears (DS25)*” “*...in terms of education, this is the highest level of this job. To increase his/her contribution to external stakeholders with his/her writings*” (DS30).

Individual Characteristics. Doctoral students mostly stated that individual characteristics are very important in the construction of academic identity. In a different term, it can be said that those traits make a doctoral journey different from peers. These are centered around organized, working regularly, curiosity and desire, making sacrifices and versatility. Some doctoral students said:

They need to love their field and want to learn about it, be open to criticism, be determined, hardworking, patient, open to innovations, value knowledge, think analytically, and express their ideas freely (DS9)

Also, a doctoral student should have a problem in his/her mind, he/she should have a problem and should always try to complete himself/herself (DS11).

Faculty members’ opinions on the characteristics of doctoral students are divided in three categories such as academic (role), social and individual characteristics.

Academic (Role) Characteristics. Academic characteristics include field knowledge and the ability to do research, competence in academic writing and presentation, and ethical responsibility. Some opinions are as follows:

First of all, it is necessary to know whether they are aware of what the purpose of their education is. Is it for an academic career or for a PhD? Do they have a researcher identity, can they do literature research, can they make presentations in front of the public, should be open to interdisciplinary work (F4).

...He should know how to record information. He must be able to relate artifacts and have a very good knowledge of history. He must know very well the sociology of the period in which the work was written (F6).

Social Characteristics. Some faculty members stated that the most important characteristic is the ability to communicate socially. Some of the opinions related to this are as follows: “*They should also be able to provide academic contact and social interaction.*” (F10). “*They should also have the ability to expand their social networks because if you have knowledge and you don’t create environments to share it, it is meaningless knowledge. They should be sociable.*” (F14). “*... should have enough social network to maintain communication with group work and friends*” (F17).

Individual Characteristics. In addition to academic and social characteristics, some of faculty members expressed that the sense of curiosity, effort and desire, objectivity,

research spirit, love for the field and field-specific individual competencies can be listed as individual characteristics. One faculty member said:

The most important characteristic of doctoral students is curiosity and questioning, they should have the ability to question information when they receive it. The information should not be shared somewhere without questioning it (F1).

Effects of Socio-Cultural Elements on Academic Identity Construction

The participants of the study identified a wide array of socio-cultural elements affecting academic identity construction. The results revealed the following themes; family, social environment and cultural capital.

Family

Family Educational Level. It was revealed that the doctoral students’ views on academic identity construction focused on the importance of the parents’ educational level in terms of providing help for their educational life. Out of 34 doctoral students’ fathers, two fathers and two mothers have a bachelor degree. There are 17 doctoral students whose fathers are high school graduates and five doctoral students whose mothers are high school graduates. There are nine students whose fathers are primary school graduates and 21 students whose mothers are primary school graduates. There are also four students who did not graduate from an educational institution but can read and write. There are three illiterate parents.

In terms of occupations, one father is a lecturer. Considering the education levels of siblings, there are four students whose siblings have a master’s degree or a PhD. These results showed that the number of parents who have access to higher education is quite low. When the information on the education level and occupations of grandmother/grandfather/father/grandmother/grandfather is analyzed, it is seen that one of the grandfathers graduated from higher education. In this context, it can be stated that doctoral students in this study -as the 3rd generation- are the first generation to access the graduate level. This can be interpreted that the lack of experience in guiding and informing other generations in the context of doctoral education in the society in which the individual was raised has a negative effect on identity construction.

Family Support. The opportunities offered by the family in the past and present are classified as spiritual support, academic support and economic support.

I always received support from my mother, father and sister. When I told my father that I could not be appointed after my undergraduate studies and that I wanted to continue my education, he never refused and continued to support me (DS5).

My family's school choices provided me with a qualified education in good schools. In secondary school, while I had the opportunity to go to a school in the neighborhood, they sent me to a school in a more distant place where students were selected by lottery and although there was a service cost, they sent me there. I am glad they sent me there. I received a very good education, and although my friends studying in different schools had better grades than me, I was the one who won the Anatolian High School with my education. I think my mother instilled in me the love of education by explaining the education understanding and culture of her time (DS16).

My family has always been very supportive. They sent me to classrooms, made me take private lessons, etc. they offered whatever they could. Providing a study at home, for example, I'm unemployed now, but they never said you need to find a job, you need to work (DS1).

The Impact of Family on Higher Education Decision.

The family environment in which individuals are raised and shaped is important. The accumulated knowledge of the family has an impact on the academic achievements and educational decisions on their children. In this context, the participants were first asked questions about how they made their university and graduate education decisions and the factors affecting these decisions. Some participants were asked about their university, master's degree and doctoral education, and their views on the decisions regarding their educational life. One of the parents- having a bachelor's degree- has a great role in their children's educational-related decision-making process. In other words, some participants' decision to continue higher education is also a goal of the family. At the same time, the participants' siblings' educational level and being raised in an academically-oriented family also have an impact on their decisions to continue higher education and to choose their major.

...My mother is a lawyer and she directed me to business administration by observing me and saying that I should be in a more creative business and be in the kitchen. I studied English Business Administration at a private university. I did not have a postgraduate dream during my undergraduate education, in fact, my mother wanted it very much and her professors at the time stated that she should stay in school. However, she could not continue and had to work. With my mother's guidance, I did not look for a job, I said I should do this first and I turned to academia (DS 2).

There are many people in our family who are studying at university. My uncle is a teacher, my sister is a teacher and my brother is a teacher. This followed as a sequence (DS 5).

Social Environment

The results showed that the participants' social environment played an important role in their educational life and how it influenced their higher education decisions.

Social Environment Support. The support by the social environment on the participants' academic identity construction can be classified as spiritual support and academic support. Some participants stated that they did not receive the support of their environment before entering an academic community.

My best friend and I have been managing the process together. She also studied for his bachelor's degree and became a lecturer. I actually don't have much of a social circle. But when you enter business life, the people around you are always interested in academic studies, so seeing people around me like this encourages me. There are people around me who show the way (DS21).

My social environment at the university was always my friends who pursued academic studies, and they had an impact on me, and the encouragement of my professors also guided me in this process (DS18).

The Impact of Social Environment on Higher Education Decision.

Social environment has more influence on the participants' graduate education decisions than the family. It can be stated that this situation is due to the fact that there are no family members who pursue graduate education and, in this sense, the social environment has an impact on the guidance and decision-making process.

I decided to pursue my master's degree with the encouragement of my undergraduate department head and guided me to pursue an academic career. When I started my master's degree, I had already decided to continue my doctoral education (DS 4).

Cultural Life

Cultural capital is one of the capital types that individuals acquire from their family or environment and that indirectly affects their current life actions. Cultural tendencies reflected in the behavioral patterns of the individual include all the acquisitions accumulated by reinforcing them throughout their social life, starting from school and family. The physical and mental skills acquired by sports and artistic activities are reflected in the communication and behavioral patterns of the individual and provide them with benefits in socialization. It is effective in directing PhD students' academic identity construction and their communication and social relations with the academic community. cultural tendencies in which they participate are some activities such as going to the theater and cinema, being a member of sports teams, participation in scientific activities. One said:



I liked activities that could be done in groups more. I used to love attending conferences or these kinds of events. I had a 1–2-minute role in a play in a prepared theater event. Teachers and it was an event where students watched us. I think it had a positive impact, because these activities contribute to people's socialization and communication with each other. Mutual information being in an environment where you provide an exchange is also a facilitator in my current relationships I think (DS1)

Some culturally acquired behaviors also manifest themselves in the way individuals think and form their lifestyle. These actions, which also facilitate the way the individual struggles with the problems that the individual may experience in the future, also give individuals the power to survive and overcome problems on their own during their doctoral journey.

I played taekwondo for a long time, and sometimes I even substituted for my teacher. I think taekwondo disciplined me. I think Far Eastern sports have such a feature. Although my jaw slipped in one of my matches, I did not quit the match and continued. You learn to respect the people around you and learn order. If you know what you want, you make all kinds of sacrifices, you learn not to give up at the slightest problem, to keep going and reach your goal. At this moment I am like this in every step I take, when I have a problem, I do not get stuck, I move on. I know that there will be problems in the academic process, but it doesn't affect me, on the contrary, it makes me more it also whips me (DS2).

The views of the participant highlighted one experience that had a positive impact on their academic identity was the scientific activities they participated in. Acquiring knowledge about the academic community through scientific activities helps individuals to socialize with the new community and also provides them with new insights with the behaviors and life practices of the community they are in.

In fact, the one that affected me the most was a physics congress I attended in graduate school. I was very impressed by the lecturers there as a speaker. I felt that I needed to progress in this field and I became very motivated (DS4).

In 2018, I participated in a symposium and made a presentation. I had a different experience in front of the audience. My self-confidence about my work increased. I felt that I was developing academically and it motivated me for my studies and made a nice contribution (DS7).

Doctoral Experiences on Academic Identity Construction

Analysis of the doctoral experiences showed that there are positive and negative factors that are effective in academic identity formation. Those are student- unique experiences, experiences making feel belonging to the academic community, teaching-related experiences, and social environment-related experiences.

Positive Factors

Student - Unique Experiences. The academic, social and individual characteristics of doctoral students are effective in constructing academic identity. In this context, the participants were asked which of their characteristics facilitated their work in their doctoral studies. The results revealed that some of the individual characteristics, academic characteristics and social characteristics of the participants contributed positively to them while conducting their academic studies in the doctoral process.

I am not a person who avoids working in any way, and when my teachers have something to do, I always say I will take care of it. I am not self-sacrificing (DS10).

I am a responsible person first and foremost. Doing a task or assignment given to me in the best way possible is the first thing I want (DS 12).

My foreign language skills enabled me to scan the literature well, and living life by making specific plans always made things easier for me. For example, I traveled abroad for 1 year for my PhD research and this was among my plans (DS16)

Experiences making feel belonging to the academic community. It is important for doctoral students to have experiences that make them feel belonging to the academic community. In this context, doctoral students were asked to share the experiences that stick to an academic community during their doctoral education and how these experiences affected their academic identity formation. The participants were asked this question twice, once before and once at the end of the semester. According to the views of the participants, participating in scientific activities, conducting studies, being accepted/valued/approved, having an academic title, and academics and peers the feeling of belonging to an academic community that they share about communicating with as experiences. Some said:

When I attended a congress, when I participated in a scientific event, I felt it more when I presented something. I felt that it was useful. In such events, you develop your academic environment. We want you to have greater one-to-one contact with our professors in the sessions. you are passing (DS33).

Yes, it happened, for the first time I had an article published that I carried out all the processes myself. I found the journal myself and uploaded it. I am continuing my PhD field process and being in that field process and the reports I prepared at least make me feel a sense of belonging (DS 27).

Experiences about courses. Doctoral students contribute to their academic identity construction by taking various courses. In this context, the participants were asked about the content of the courses and the studies carried out in the

courses, the diversity and adequacy of the courses and how the studies contributed to their academic identity. According to the results, studies related to practicing, specialization, completing theoretical knowledge deficiencies and gaining different perspectives in contributing positively to academic identity construction, courses are more developmental and complementary.

In my courses, we did more studies like articles or book chapters instead of exams. I think that instead of exams, such studies improved me more in my PhD. A book we wrote as a class is now on sale, which is a great pride for all of us. (DS 2)

I think that the period of qualifying and thesis preparation period are very productive because it is a period in which I am at the beginning of your research and applied and constantly at the laboratory (DS10).

I think my seminar process improved me more, because it was a process I managed with my advisor, I worked on texts written in old script and completed my deficiency in this field. It was a process in which I did different readings and I saw many of my deficiencies (DS 12)

Social Environment-Related Experiences. According to the results, it is seen that positive interaction with people in doctoral education helps to overcome some of the difficulties encountered.

My advisor, who made the biggest contribution to my academic evolution. Whenever I pursued a topic, he researched it with me. I have published six or seven articles so far and my advisor has always encouraged me. He always assured me that I was on the right track and that he would help me showed me methods to pave the way for me (DS 30).

Social communication is better, and there is always an understanding of help in accessing resources in my department. My professors or my supervisor who says my work is good (DS 11).

Negative Factors

Doctoral students' previous experiences and doctoral education experiences negatively affect their academic identity construction. The results obtained from the participants include students' characteristics-related experiences, Covid-19 pandemic problems, time-related problems, role conflict problems, social environment problems, and negative perception about academic community.

Characteristics- Related Problems. Doctoral education experiences showed that academic, social and individual traits negatively affect them. In this context, the participants were asked which of their characteristics make their work difficult in their doctoral studies and the results revealed that individual characteristics, academic characteristics

and social characteristics negatively affect them while conducting academic studies. Some participants who had difficulty said:

It was financially difficult. I had financial difficulties. I had worries such as I have no job, I have no power, let's go to school, you have finished, if I can't find a job again, I am getting older (DS25).

Being still unemployed and a student as a hindrance. Impatience. The ambition to finish as soon as possible. Doing my homework while I'm doing it, I still have courses to take, I need to finish them as soon as possible and write a thesis. impatience to get to the stage (DS 1)

Some of the views that the social characteristics of the participants negatively affected the formation of academic identity are as follows: ... *The perspectives of my own family and relatives* (DS25); *the fact that there is no one around me to guide me sometimes causes me to postpone the process* (DS5); *the fact that some people in my environment do not understand me* (DS17); *you should not always say wrong is wrong; I had problems when I did this* (DS16); *what is hindering me now is my husband and family; fulfilling many responsibilities as a mother; I cannot say, "Let me do this work when I feel like it"* (DS15); *reluctance, writing, reading, doing the same things. I am affected by my environment in this sense. I am affected when there is chaos or negativity in my environment.* (DS33).

COVID-19 Pandemic- Related Problems. The Covid-19 pandemic affected education as it affected all fields. While courses at all levels were transferred to online environment, courses in doctoral programs were also held online.

Because of the pandemic, I couldn't participate in anything, I mean, we were usually at home all the time, our studies stopped more, in a way, we kind of froze the PhD because of the pandemic, so I couldn't participate in anything. Our experiments stopped. There was a lockdown, our materials deteriorated, we could not do any academic work (DS3).

During the PhD process, I did not feel warmth or sincerity as a student. When the class time comes, I enter my class and leave. It's not that I don't want to learn, but the subjects lose their interest. I don't get a sense of belonging (DS24)

Time-related Problems. Some participants stated that time was one of the negative factors. One expressed about the problems they experienced in terms of lack of time are given below:

I have some studies I did during the course period and I could not publish them. It was not a productive period in terms of academic production. I'm working in the private sector and this kind of and I haven't had a lot of extra time to work on it. My knowledge I never had a time to crown it (DS 5)



Role conflict-related Problems. The participants' views on whether they experienced conflict between the roles revealed that some participants experienced this conflict. And one research assistant said that she or he is having conflict between the roles.

When you are both a PhD student and a research assistant, sometimes there are times when I have to do intensive PhD studies, and I delay my studies or cannot do them as I want due to the burden of departmental work. Producing a qualified study, I am experiencing stress about (DS12).

Social environment-related Problems. One problem some participants experienced was the lack of a supportive environment. One said:

Since my spouse is from a different sector and has no knowledge of the processes I am going through, I have problems in terms of support and sometimes I experience breaks in my studies. I have an environment like why I am even doing my PhD and this prevents me from producing studies (DS5).

Faculty members' Views on Academic Identity Construction in Doctoral Education

Interaction helps individuals understand and make sense of what is happening around them. As researchers or academics, doctoral students need support and guidance in their experiences of being potential members of an academic community.

The interaction with faculty members is important. In these experiences, the role and practices of faculty members who will guide them in acquiring academic knowledge, skills and actions and making sense of the values and culture of the academic community are important. In this context, the opinions of faculty members regarding the practices of academic identity formation in doctoral education were sought and the data obtained in line with the responses were analyzed. The data were analyzed in terms of positive and negative factors affecting the academic identity formation and shared with various sub-themes under the headings of positive practices and negative practices.

Positive Practices

Role Specific Practices. Every student enrolled in a doctoral program is required to complete some structured processes such as taking and succeeding in certain courses as part of their role as a doctoral student. The doctoral student needs to enhance his/her knowledge in his/her field to be able to develop and reach original results by using this knowledge, these structured activities are expected to be transferred through faculty members. It is important for doctoral students to gain a certain perspective as a candidate to be a member of the academic community with field-

specific knowledge and skills, academic knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge. Faculty members try to provide this perspective by making different applications during the course period. In this context, the results released that their practices were creating a theoretical background, enhancing students' practices on how to conduct research and share it through academic activities. One faculty member said:

I have reading lists; I have two different reading lists. One is what they should read as a PhD student and one is what they should read as part of the course. It is not compulsory for them to read the books they have to read as a PhD student, but I give them books such as *Advice for Scientists*, *Scientific Blunders*, *Einstein*, etc. to provide them with a scientific perspective, to look like a scientist. However, there are books that I make compulsory within the scope of the course, I give these books after a certain week of the course to create a basis for discussion. (F1)

Doctoral students need to develop scientifically and contribute to their academic identity formation by fulfilling the responsibilities required by their roles. In this context, faculty members' views on academic writing and presentation practices are emphasized. The studies conducted with this competency emphasize academic identity how it contributes to the formation of the society and the views on their own practices are as follows given;

...They need to write constantly to gain scientific confidence. I make sure they write every week. I give them a specific topic to write about. I always give feedback on their writing before the lesson. It is important for me to create an academic text. (F9)

Results obtained from course observations also support the aforementioned results. In some courses, lecturers discuss the rules of academic life and they also gave information about his professional practices on how the rules are applied in academic life and what he should do professionally as an academician. The discourses (12.04.2021) are as follows: "*A journal asked me for an article for one of its issues, I submitted my article I couldn't finish it, I have to submit it to the journal. I'm going to participate in the master's defense and I am reading; I am very busy.*" A faculty member during lesson observations (07.04.2021) stated that the academician has great responsibilities with the following words (21.04.2021) "*Scientists need to be self-sacrificing, we are training scientists. All resources should be shared, should not be kept to oneself.*"

Social Networking and Peer Interaction. During doctoral education, academic participation in social networks is important. This participation has an impact on students' learning experience and their sense of identity. In this context, faculty members' views on what doctoral students practices to expand their social networks and provide peer interaction with the academic community and forming study groups were emerged as practices. Practices that contribute to the process of creating an academic identity in PhD. One faculty member said:



I ensure that my students are aware of each other's work. With the subject they will study if they have someone to communicate with, I make sure they communicate with them to support them in their studies. This increases their motivation and they learn how to access information and resources more easily (F6).

Practices for Feeling Belonging to the Academic Community. Social identity, an important component of academic identity, is an important aspect of doctoral students' sense of belonging to the academic community. Communication with peers and faculty members, other members of their academic community activities will make them feel they belong to. In interaction with the academic community being a part of a community is a way for students to expand their social networks, feel like a member of the community, and it supports them to create an academic identity in the context.

In addition, the opportunity to discuss and work together with a faculty member is provided. They need to experience processes such as attending conferences and preparing papers. For example, today you that there is an International Relations Conference after the class and if they want, they can come together. I told him that we could work. In this kind of work, at the end of a process in which he works hard, the product seeing an output makes him very happy (F1)

The activities that will enable the doctoral student to feel belonging to this community are preparing papers, participating in congresses, symposiums and workshops, participating in projects and becoming a member of associations specific to their field. It can be stated that the results obtained from the course observations also support the results obtained from the interviews. The content of the courses and how much space is given to production emerged from the interviews with faculty members. According to these opinions, doctoral students' acquiring academic writing and presentation skills, and realizing this in an academic community improve their social capital and publishing improves their cultural capital.

Practices for Utilizing Field/Department/University Opportunities. Each doctoral program differs from each other due to the difference in ongoing practices and the different perspectives of faculty members. When the opinions of the participants are analyzed, each faculty member influences the doctoral students' sense of identity based on their own experiences. It is seen that faculty members support interdisciplinary studies with their efforts to guide and be role models. Some of these opinions are as follows.

Faculty members in our department have the experience of guiding students in terms of academic identity formation. We have been supervising doctoral students for more than ten years (F1).

Our department has a tradition in which students prepares their thesis with a supervisor they want. Otherwise, it can lead to students quit. Supervisor-student fit is important (F9).

Negative Practices

Analysis of faculty members' views showed that regarding the problems they encountered in doctoral education can be categorized as student-related problems, university-related problems, program-related problems and COVID-19-related problems.

Students-Related Problems. According to the opinions on student-related problems, inadequacy of past academic background, perspective on doctoral education, economic concerns and being from different fields of study emerged as factors that negatively affected their academic identity. Some participants' views on inadequacy are as follows: *About reading culture they are weak; they have very little command of the old script. We don't have a selection system that can measure this, until I come across, I don't know how much* (F6). *A student who does not read cannot do this job for a certain period of time, fails and quits* (F8)

It was emphasized by most participants that economic concerns were the main factors affecting the students' ability to continue their doctoral education and to afford the educational materials required for doctoral education.

Most of the students are unemployed, they can't stay here or they need a job to make ends meet. They are working, and since there is no work related to their field, they put all their energy into their work. they cannot allocate the necessary time (F6).

University Facilities-Related Problems. The problems are the limited institutional budget needed to conduct research, the limited scientific resources in the university library and a suitable working environment for doctoral students.

There has been no such support so far. It seems very difficult in these economic conditions. Budget is limited due to the lack of support for projects (F4).

Program/Discipline/Department Culture-Related Problems. Changing policies or the doctoral culture has a negative impact on doctoral education were stated by two faculty members.

PhD students need to interact with faculty members not only from their own departments but also from different disciplines. An interdisciplinary work culture needs to be established (F3).

The current situation is not sufficient in terms of opportunities for social and scientific interaction. Interdisciplinary studies are essential for the student's academic identity. is very effective in its formation (F5).



COVID-19 Pandemic- Related Problems. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online education caused some problems in managing the doctoral education such as the difficulty of accessing information accurately in the digital environment and role modeling. The lack of an environment where they can observe faculty members makes it difficult to learn by seeing and experiencing.

Students create a different identity in the digital environment, especially in the online process I think they have difficulty in accessing information. When they get the information learn, I tell them that it is important that they should question the sources (F1).

Discussion

Academic identity is constructed by producing knowledge, specializing in a particular field, having ethical responsibility, using interdisciplinary knowledge and it is influenced by role, social, and individual context. Previous experiences have had an impact on academic identity construction. This study found out that academic identity expected some roles from doctoral students. This result agrees with the discussion in the literature stating that academic identity has a role dimension (Burke & Stets, 2009). It is also reflected in the definition of doctoral students to play a role in the community and that their role should fulfill some academic responsibilities and tasks.

Academic identity wants doctoral students to create a social network by sharing their work in local, national, and international contexts. In addition, the results also showed that academic identity is not formed at a certain moment, but is a process. Literature on the definition of academic identity confirms these results. Henkel (2000) stated that the basic elements of academic identity are a unique background, certain knowledge accumulation, and belonging to a community, and that it is formed depending on the choices of individuals, and thus they enter areas where they can contribute to the community. These interrelated communities make individuals feel that they belong to different worlds with clear boundaries. The results proved that academic identity is an identity that produces and publishes knowledge, shares it with various institutions, and contributes to society. This assured that an academic has role in which they serve the society, which is one of the roles of university. The understanding of identity as a phenomenon shaped within social institutions and relationships in existentialist identity theories (Henkel, 2005; Waitere et al, 2011) overlaps this result.

Doctoral students may experience various difficulties due to their individual characteristics. In order for doctoral students to be successful for overcoming these difficulties and to complete the requirements of the program on time, the characteristics such as sense of belonging, drive to succeed, academic integration, presence in academic environments, autonomy and choice, ability to overcome

adversity and personal commitment are essential (Rockinson- Szapkiw et al., 2014). It is also important for doctoral students to develop competencies related to the researcher role such as defining research questions, solving methodological problems, collecting and analyzing data (Castelló et al., 2013; Cotterall, 2013). A healthy relationship with their supervisors (Lovitts, 2001), financial support, positive and supportive family relationships, and having resilient and persevering personality traits (Maher et al., 2004) seem to be effective in helping doctoral students cope with the problems they face. Based on the experiences of the participants in the present study, it was revealed that doctoral students should have academic competencies such as a deep knowledge of designing research, their major, and academic writing; social characteristics, such as the importance of relationships with the advisor, and regular, planned work, curiosity, and desire.

According to Coleman and Hoffer (1987), parents with a higher level of education are more likely to value educational outcomes; therefore, their attitudes and actions tend to reflect their interest in education. In other words, parents with higher levels of education tend to emphasize the importance of education and are more likely to seek information about educational options. This study found out that the doctoral students whose mother or father's educational level is high can be supported by their parents on educational decisions. Family income is another demographic indicator that is positively associated with school choice. According to another study, family income is often considered as an indicator of the resources available to the child (Yang & Kayaardi, 2004), and higher family income increases the chances of receiving private education. The present study showed that one doctoral student who studied in a private university stated that she or he overcame the difficulty of reading studies in English through the ability acquired through private university education and used that advantage. This result supports that it provides a doctoral student advantage if the family income is higher compared to the peers.

According to the results, the support provided by the environment in which they were raised or lived varies from individual to individual. Some participants stated that they received the support of their social environment in a spiritual or academic way that this support contributed positively to their academic studies. However, some participants stated that the family and the environment in which they lived had a negative view of education and did not receive support. However, these participants stated that as they increased their level of education and entered the academic community, they both received the support of the new community and the behaviors of the family and environment in which they grew up changed. This result stands out in terms of showing that the support offered to each other by groups that share the same goals and feelings in the social environment is important. Social support refers



to the actions by which individuals and groups provide resources to others, and social identities are valuable resources that people can utilize when experiencing stressful events (Haslam et al., 2012). Support providers are usually family, coworkers, friends (House & Kahn, 1985). The resources provided can take various forms (House, 1981)-material, such as giving money or tools; emotional, such as being sympathetic; and informative, like giving advice. When the person receiving support succeeds, this can be used to encourage others to be cared for by others, forming a group belonging and being part of a network of cooperation feeling of social support (Taylor, 2007). However, the positive effects of social support on the social context in which recipients and providers of support are embedded are due to its characteristics (Haslam et al., 2012).

It is important to join a community with the characteristics such as having the language, lifestyle, expectations, intellectual and social skills of the academic community. In the context of doctoral education, it is seen that the fact that doctoral students come to academic environments with the experiences they have gained from activities contributes positively to their identity construction as a future academic. In addition, it could be said that with the various certificates they obtain from the academic activities they participate in, they can gain an advantage by using these documents when entering an academic community in the future. Johnson et al. (2000) found that people with high levels of cultural and social capital continue their doctoral education with less support from advisors.

The results revealed that only one activity with the family was mentioned in the context of cultural activities. This result is consistent with the results regarding the education level of most of the participants' families and the support they provided to their children. It has been previously stated that factors such as the occupation of families and the characteristics of the community in which they live affect their interactions with their children and spend quality time together. Another finding is that economic factors affect the type of cultural activity. The literature provides rich data on this issue. Unlike children from high-income families, those from poor families have little access to materials and resources (Şirin, 2005). They have few opportunities to visit local libraries, museums, educational centers or theater events (Milne & Plourde, 2006). Some participants revealed that meeting leading scientists in their fields and presenting their academic work at the scientific events they attended increased their self-confidence and motivated them to progress academically. In this context, each participant defined the effect of the activities they attended on the formation of academic identity differently. Geijsel and Meijers (2005) stated that identity or sense of self represents an ongoing effort to make sense of who we are from past, present, and future experiences. Identity therefore involves a subjective interpretation of our individuality in the context of activities while constantly changing. In this way identity

is learned and relearned. The results showed that different activities have an impact on academic, social and individual identity, it is seen that they have a direct and indirect impact on academic identity construction in the doctoral study.

The academic characteristics of the doctoral students can be stated as previous academic success, foreign language knowledge, and transforming theory into practice. Their social characteristics are that their environment consists of people who can guide them academically and that some participants who are members of an academic community can use this superiority, in other words, they benefit from the characteristics of the social environment they have. It can be stated that individuals are motivated to facilitate their work in the academic process. This result coincides with the finding in the literature that self-regulated learners are the characteristics of people who have motives that awaken the desire to fulfill and maintain a task and various adaptive beliefs for different situations (Wolters, 2003). Self-regulated learning has important effects on social forms of learning (seeking help from peers, teachers, others) as well as on individual-oriented learning (e.g., electronic resource searching, discovery learning) (Zimmerman, 2008).

The doctoral students stated that they felt a part of the academic community when they joined academic events such as congresses and symposiums where they exhibit their scientific studies. Because in such events, the status associated with the academic work done as an academic candidate, in other words, professional recognition, is clearly recognized by others. It is emphasized that they are important for the construction of academic identity. Such experiences emerge as moments when the work done alone during the doctoral process can be shared with others going through the same process of developing academic practice (Alexander et al., 2014). This finding is in line with the results of research that such activities enable doctoral students to feel part of an academic community by building wider relationships (Tonso, 2006; McAlpine & Amudsen, 2009). Bourdieu states that people must have certain characteristics in order to enter a field and be considered legitimate in that field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). It is also similar to the results of studies (Carlone & Johnson 2007; Emmioğlu et al., 2017), which show that doctoral students' self-identification as academics is not only related to their actions, performances and competencies, but also to their recognition as academics by others.

Considering the doctoral students' views, it can be seen that the online courses caused by the Covid-19 pandemic have negative consequences in terms of academically, socially, and individually. In the academic context, the participants stated that they could not go to the laboratories where they carried out their studies, so they had difficulties in completing their studies. They also reported that they could not access libraries to access the resources required for their studies. Doctoral students in their thesis period



reported that they had difficulties while collecting their data, especially they told that the data collection period took longer than was planned. In this process, the participants stated that they could not establish healthy communication with their peers and faculty members, which resulted in problems such as sense of belonging. Wang and DeLaquil (2020) characterized microsystems as instant environments in which we experienced daily life in direct interaction with peers, faculty members, and extracurricular activities, roles, and goals. Individual life and socio-historical intersection are important for educational outcomes as they are shaped by the period in which students attend university (Renn & Arnold, 2003). Therefore, Covid-19, a macro-system catastrophe and time-specific event in our era, affects our work and choices, especially in our microsystems. The virtual environment is a more challenging space to maintain relationships and has had impacts on graduate students and early career academics.

Based on the doctoral students' views, problems as a result of unhealthy communication with faculty members or lack of adequate support from the family emerged as difficulties encountered during doctoral education. The results of this study are consistent with the results of other studies on doctoral students mentioned the lack of encouragement and feedback as challenges they faced during their doctoral studies (McAlpine et al., 2010). Doctoral supervisors' indifference is related to doctoral students' intention to drop out and attrition (Lovitts, 2001).

Doctoral students have made attempts to change their roles in the academic field, but it is seen that their perceptions of some difficulties experienced in entering this field have changed. The field, in its most general definition, is a place that creates and sustains its own existence through the presence of actors who enter the environment, believe in the rewards it offers and make an active effort to obtain them (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2003). The findings of this study can be shown as an example of the problems faced by new actors who want to gain permanent positions in the academic field. The power of actors depends on their position in the field, their strategies, the form of their behavior, the amount of capital they have and the capital structure that is appropriate to the field, as well as their perspective on the field from the point where they stand in the field (Bourdieu, 1989; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2003). Capital is an important concept in field theory. Having valid types of capital appropriate to the field makes it possible to reach the interests and power to be obtained from the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2003). Types of capital are economic, cultural and social, which is addressed under three different headings. Social capital, as a set of potential resources that an individual or a group has as a member, such as recognition in the field, can be said to be an important condition for entry into the field. In this context, it can be stated that the doctoral students in this study told that they had difficulties in gaining a place in the field because they did not have the necessary social capital.

Faculty members' views showed that both the processes carried out officially through the courses and the discourses, behaviors and sharing of their own experiences contribute positively to the construction of academic identity. It can be stated that the practices they carry out in the context of developing their academic knowledge will affect the role identity of the doctoral student, their social identity by indicating the responsibilities of a faculty member from the experiences they share, and how they will position themselves individually in the future. Hall and Burns (2009) stated that the clear communication of the values of the profession by faculty members contributes to the recognition of the identity characteristics that cause the failure of doctoral students or contribute positively to their success in order to form a professional identity. And also, as being a role model, academics play a crucial effect on doctoral students' academic identity (Karsantık, 2019).

The content of the doctoral courses is important. Doctoral students' ability for writing a paper and enhancing presentation skills are acquired during courses, hence the content should be designed following aforementioned skills. As being in an academic community develops their social capital and cultural capital, faculty members can encourage doctoral students to attend academic activities. Analysis of the course observations proved that they were urged to be included or directed activities to gain academic writing and presentation skills in this context, which is in line with the results of the interviews. The need for autonomy is related to the experience of will and freedom (Devos et al., 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Autonomy support is important for individuals to experience this need. In the doctoral context, autonomy support can be understood as giving the doctoral student the space and opportunity to make his/her own choices, to acquire autonomous behavior, and to treat the doctoral student's perspective and opinions with respect (Overall et al., 2011). Research has shown that perceived autonomy is associated with doctoral retention, satisfaction and greater research self-efficacy (Mason 2012; Overall et al., 2011). Tinto (1993) states that students need academic and social integration in order to dedicate themselves to their studies. Academic integration can be achieved through participation in professional events and opportunities, collaboration with researchers, frequent contact with colleagues, integration with the departmental community and other PhD students and means receiving and providing academic assistance from faculty members (Lovitts, 2001; Meeuwisse et al., 2010). Another study revealed that doctoral education should provide knowledge of fundamental principles and theories related to the field knowledge of scientific research techniques, ability to conduct scientific research, ability to apply practices related to the field and competence in providing supervision (Karadağ & Özdemir, 2017). In this context, this study suggests that faculty members and supervisors should actively encourage doctoral students to engage in academic activities, thereby fostering their sense of belonging and commitment to the academic community.

Faculty members stated that institutional support is important for doctoral students to be able to conduct their research, to support them to gain different perspectives, and to have the resources in place and in the fastest way possible. In a study conducted by Özmen and Aydın Güç (2013) with doctoral students, doctoral students stated that the resources allocated for the graduate education were insufficient and their access to databases was limited. Sevinç (2011) concluded that the graduate education has equipment and resource problems. It can be stated that online environment causes difficulties in creating students' own method how to access and question resources, observe the attitudes and behaviors of the academics and not creating a qualified socialization process. In the context of doctoral education and doctoral student development at the time of Covid-19, interpersonal relationships are important, but the virtual environment makes the process difficult in terms of peer support, supervision, and research and publication (Wang & DeLaquil, 2020).

Conclusions

Having influenced by role, social and individual identities, the academic knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by doctoral students during their undergraduate or master are necessary for them to form a qualified academic identity. It also bears traces of experiences related to the individual's family, social environment and cultural life. Doctoral students who are not guided about graduate education by their family members or the environment in which they grew up need more guidance and support in academic terms. Social environment has a greater influence on decisions to follow doctoral education than the family. The family with low educational level supports their children during their educational life by using spiritual and economic ways while the family with a high level of education supports academically and economically. It was concluded that as the level of education increased, the social environment of individuals changed and they felt safer in this environment. Among the role, social, and individual identities that make up academic identity, the individual identity dimension emerged as the dimension that contributed most positively to doctoral experiences. Taking part in academic activities such as congresses and symposiums make doctoral students feel like an academic and contributes positively to their academic identity by giving a sense of achievement and a sense of facing and overcoming difficulties individually. Being unemployed, having a job outside academy, and not having the necessary economic resources while conducting their doctoral studies prevent them from focusing on their academic studies. It was revealed during the observations that the doctoral student has responsibilities such as criticizing and creating original studies as a PhD candidate, which is the highest educational degree. Faculty members provide doctoral students with a social network by including doctoral students in their own research groups and introducing them to other academic members of the field.

Based on the results, some suggestions can be made in terms of pedagogical and methodological. Faculty members should contribute to the construction of social identity by forming online research groups and communicating with doctoral students at their own institution as well as other universities in order to ensure peer engagement and grow the social networks of doctorate students. During the doctoral course period, the number of courses should be reduced due to the anxiety of students to perform the academic studies required by the courses they have to take in a year in a qualified way. In order for doctoral students to develop a sense of belonging to the university and an academic community, it was suggested that facilities such as providing them with a working environment and diversification of tools and equipment should be improved. As financial concerns are a major factor in academic studies, it is suggested that in order to be able to carry out academic studies, increasing the opportunities of scholarships provided to doctoral students should be extended. For future research, it is recommended to conduct research to reveal the doctoral process academic identity formation experiences of doctoral students at a private university. The social, cultural, and social identity formation experiences of students enrolled in doctoral programs at universities abroad can also be examined and comparative studies can be conducted. Doctoral students' academic identity scale can be developed.



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