

# Social Network and Organizational Power Distance: A Mixed Method Research on Academic Staff

## Sosyal Ağlar ve Örgütsel Güç Mesafesi: Öğretim Elemanları Üzerine Bir Karma Yöntem Araştırması

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### ABSTRACT

In the study, which was carried out to compare the perception of organizational power distance of the academic staff working at the university with the social networks they established with their colleagues at the university, the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis processes were carried out simultaneously using the Convergent Parallel Design, one of the mixed methods research designs, and the results of the data analysis were integrated. This research compares the organizational power distance perceptions of the faculty members working at A University, a public university in Turkey, with the social networks they have established with their colleagues at the university. In the quantitative dimension of the research carried out with the mixed method, the research population consists of 1848 academic staff working at A University, one of the public universities in Turkey, in the 2020-2021 academic year. The research sample consists of 319 academic staff. 385 academic staff from 30 academic units, 14 faculties, and 16 colleges/vocational schools, were included in the research. In the qualitative dimension of the research, 27 of 34 academic staff working in the C Department of the B Faculty of the A University were included in the study group. Convergent Parallel Design was used in the research; within this context, the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis processes were carried out simultaneously and the data analysis results were integrated. The quantitative data were analyzed with the SPSS 21 program, the participants' views on organizational power distance were analyzed with the MAXQDA 2022 program, and social network analysis data were analyzed with the UCINET 6.0 program. According to the research findings' conclusion, the academic staff's general social network tendencies in the quantitative dimension were high, and the participants had the highest perception of "liking to connect." It was determined that the academic staff's general organizational power distance perceptions were at a moderate level, and the participants had the highest perception of "acquiescence of power." Another conclusion was that the social network tendencies of academic staff did not differ according to the academic title variable. However, the organizational power distance differed significantly in favor of research assistants. It was revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship between the general social network tendencies of the academic staff and their perception of organizational power distance. In the qualitative dimension of the study, it was observed that the participants expressed their opinions on organizational power distance mostly in terms of accepting power and least in terms of consenting to power. Social network analysis revealed that the professional network had a denser structure than the friendship network, but the friendship network had more structured and stronger ties. In social networks, professors and research assistants were found to be at the center of the network. The study observed that the results of quantitative and qualitative

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data analysis confirmed each other at many points. This study is expected to contribute to the literature, policymakers in higher education management, university senior management, academics, and researchers.

**Keywords:** Higher education management, Organizational power distance, Social network tendency, Academic staff, Mixed method research

## ÖZ

Üniversitede görev yapan öğretim elemanlarının örgütsel güç mesafesi algısı ile üniversitedeki çalışma arkadaşlarıyla kurdukları sosyal ağları karşılaştırmak amacıyla gerçekleştirilen çalışmada, karma yöntem araştırma desenlerinden Yakınsak Paralel Desen kullanılarak nicel ve nitel veri toplama ve analiz süreçleri eş zamanlı olarak yürütülmüş ve veri analizi sonuçları bütünleştirilmiştir. Bu araştırma, Türkiye’de bir devlet üniversitesi olan A Üniversitesi’nde görev yapan öğretim üyelerinin örgütsel güç mesafesi algıları ile üniversitedeki meslektaşlarıyla kurdukları sosyal ağları karşılaştırmaktadır. Karma yöntemle gerçekleştirilen araştırmanın nicel boyutunda, araştırma evrenini 2020-2021 akademik yılında Türkiye’deki devlet üniversitelerinden biri olan A Üniversitesi’nde görev yapan 1848 akademik personel oluşturmaktadır. Araştırma örneklemini ise 319 akademik personelden oluşmaktadır. Araştırmaya 30 akademik birim, 14 fakülte ve 16 yüksekokul/meslek yüksekokulundan 385 akademik personel dâhil edilmiştir. Araştırmanın nitel boyutunda ise A Üniversitesinin B Fakültesinin C Bölümünde görev yapan 34 akademik personelden 27’si çalışma grubuna dâhil edilmiştir. Araştırmada Yakınsak Paralel Desen kullanılmış; bu kapsamda nicel ve nitel veri toplama ve analiz süreçleri eş zamanlı olarak yürütülmüş ve veri analiz sonuçları bütünleştirilmiştir. Nicel veriler SPSS 21 programı ile, katılımcıların örgütsel güç mesafesine ilişkin görüşleri MAXQDA 2022 programı ile, sosyal ağ analizi verileri ise UCINET 6.0 programı ile analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma bulgularına göre, akademik personelin nicel boyutta genel sosyal ağ eğilimlerinin yüksek olduğu ve katılımcıların en yüksek “bağlantı kurma isteği” algısına sahip oldukları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Akademik personelin genel örgütsel güç mesafesi algılarının orta düzeyde olduğu ve katılımcıların en yüksek “güce razı olma” algısına sahip oldukları tespit edilmiştir. Bir diğer sonuç ise akademik personelin sosyal ağ eğilimlerinin akademik unvan değişkenine göre farklılaşmadığıdır. Ancak örgütsel güç mesafesi araştırma görevlileri lehine anlamlı bir şekilde farklılaşmıştır. Akademik personelin genel sosyal ağ eğilimleri ile örgütsel güç mesafesi algıları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki olmadığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Çalışmanın nitel boyutunda ise katılımcıların örgütsel güç mesafesine ilişkin görüşlerini en çok gücü kabullenme, en az ise güce rıza gösterme yönünde ifade ettikleri görülmüştür. Sosyal ağ analizi, profesyonel ağın arkadaşlık ağından daha yoğun bir yapıya sahip olduğunu, ancak arkadaşlık ağının daha yapılandırılmış ve daha güçlü bağlara sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Sosyal ağlarda profesörlerin ve araştırma görevlilerinin ağın merkezinde yer aldığı tespit edilmiştir. Çalışmada nicel ve nitel veri analizi sonuçlarının birçok noktada birbirini doğruladığı gözlemlenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın literatüre, yükseköğretim yönetimindeki politika yapıcılara, üniversite üst yönetimine, akademisyenlere ve araştırmacılara katkı sağlaması beklenmektedir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Yükseköğretim yönetimi, Örgütsel güç mesafesi, Sosyal ağ eğilimi, Öğretim elemanları, Karma yöntem araştırması

## INTRODUCTION

People communicate with the people around them throughout their lives and maintain their relationships through the emotional and social ties they establish with them. Social network refers to the clusters of relationships that emerge due to the ties that individuals establish with the people around them in their social relationships (Christakis & Fowler, 2012; Marin & Wellman, 2011; Marshall, 1999). Through social networks, information and resources flow between actors in a group, and individuals gain various benefits through the connections they establish with each other (Daly, 2012). Social network analysis is a research approach in which the ties between actors in a group are examined, and the behaviors of individuals are evaluated as a whole within the system of networks (De Nooy, Mrvar & Batagelj, 2005; Tichy, Tushman & Fombrun, 1979). Unlike traditional approaches, the social network approach examines the interactions and relationships between actors in a network (Scott, 2000) and addresses the structure and causes of these relationships (Freeman, 2004: 5; Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

Power distance, one of the dimensions of culture, is related to the centralization of authority (Hofstede, 2001). Power dis-

tañce is the degree of acceptance by organizational members of inequalities in the distribution of power obtained through status, financial resources, or prestige (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2005: 60; Hon, 2002; Wu, 2006). In other words, power distance refers to the level of adoption of power inequalities in the organization by individuals and society (Doğan, 2012). Hofstede (2003) divided power distance into high and low levels and stated that at high power distance, employees accept their managers’ right to give orders and impose sanctions (Hon, 2002) and submit to inequality and authority against power inequalities (Farh, Hackett & Liang, 2007). Organizations with low power distance have a more democratic structure as the social distance between managers and employees is low (Tu & Lu, 2016). Therefore, organizations should have low power distance in terms of organizational effectiveness. Power distance in organizations, which impacts managerial processes and interpersonal relations, affects the organizational structure and individuals (Hofstede, 2003). According to research, Turkey is one of the countries with high power distance (Hofstede Insight, 2021). When power distance in higher education institutions is considered, it is thought that power distance is also effective in higher education administra-

tion, considering that culture in universities has many effects on the institution from curriculum to administrative management (Masland, 1985).

The problem statement of this research, which aims to determine the organizational power distance perceptions and social network tendencies of academic staff working at the university, is as follows: *“What is the role of academic staff’s perceptions of organizational power distance on the social networks they establish with their colleagues at the university?”* In this context, the sub-problems of the research were determined as follows:

1. At what level are the perceptions of academic staff on social network tendency and organizational power distance?
2. What is the level of academic staff’s perceptions of social network tendencies and organizational power distance according to the academic title variable?
3. Do academic staff’s perceptions of organizational power distance affect their social networks?
4. How are the social networks of the academic staff in their departments?
5. What are the academic staff’s views on the organizational power distance at the university?
6. To what extent do academic staff’s views on their social networks and organizational power distance confirm their social network tendencies and perceptions of power distance?

## METHOD

In the study, the mixed method Convergent Parallel Design was preferred to determine the social networks of the lecturers working at the university with their colleagues and to reveal their perceptions of organizational power distance. In this design, the researcher collects quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, analyzes the data separately, compares the findings to determine whether the findings confirm each other (Creswell, 2017b: 219), synthesizes and integrates the results of quantitative and qualitative data analysis in a complementary manner (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2015: 84). In this context, it is thought that this design is effective in addressing the whole university (academic staff working at University A), then analyzing a small group (academic staff working in Department C of the university), explaining the data by comparing them with each other and synthesizing the results with a holistic approach. In the quantitative dimension of the study, the relational survey model was preferred and aimed to determine the relationships between two or more variables through this model. In the qualitative dimension of the research, phenomenology design was preferred in determining the views of academic staff on organizational power distance, and the social network approach was preferred in explaining their social networks.

### Participants

In the quantitative dimension of the mixed-method research, the research population consists of 1848 academic staff work-

ing at University A, one of the state universities in Turkey, in the 2020-2021 academic year, and the study group consists of 319 academic staff determined by proportional stratified and simple random sampling method according to the academic title. The study included 385 academic staff from 30 academic units, 14 faculties, and 16 colleges/vocational schools. In social network research, when it is not possible to reach all actors in the network, the network can be represented to a large extent by reaching at least 80% of the actors in the network (Moolenaar, 2012). In the study, 80% of the 34 academic staff working in the C Department of the university were included in the research by snowball sampling method, and 27 academic staff were included in the study group.

### Data Collection Process

In the quantitative dimension of the study, the “Social Network Tendencies Scale” developed by Cohen, Klein, Daly, and Finnigan (2011) and adapted into Turkish by Er (2017) was used to collect quantitative data on social network tendencies. In the study, the “Organizational Power Distance Scale” developed by Yorulmaz, Çolak, Altınkurt, and Yılmaz (2018) was preferred to measure organizational power distance. In the qualitative dimension of the study, the “Organizational Power Distance Interview Form” and “Social Network Analysis Interview Form” developed by the researcher were used.

### Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed with SPSS 21 and AMOS programs. In the study, the relationship between (1) general social network tendency and general organizational power distance perception, (2) social network tendency and general organizational power distance perception according to academic title variable, (3) social network tendency and organizational power distance perception of the participants were determined through statistical analyses. The evaluation ranges of the scales are 1.00 - 1.79 very low; 1.80 - 2.59 low; 2.60 - 3.39 medium; 3.40 - 4.19 high and 4.20 - 5.00 very high. In qualitative data analysis, participants’ views on organizational power distance were analyzed with MAXQDA 2022, and social network analysis data were analyzed with the UCINET 6.0 program.

### Validity, Reliability, and Ethics

Within the scope of validity and reliability studies in the quantitative dimension of the study, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and reliability analysis were conducted for the Organizational Power Distance Scale and Social Network Tendency Scale. Both scales were found to have “acceptable fit” and “good fit” values. Cronbach alpha values of the scales were calculated as .81 for Social Network Tendency and .88 for Organizational Power Distance. Before the analysis, univariate and multivariate normality tests were performed with the SPSS 21 program, and normal distribution was ensured. In the qualitative dimension of the study, the data obtained were analyzed and compared independently by both the researcher and the field expert at separate times to ensure credibility. After the interviews, feedback on the interviews was obtained from three

participants and expert opinions were obtained from three field experts. In the research, rich and intensive definitions and purposeful sample selection were made. The results of the data analysis were supported by direct quotations from the participants' views. Finally, official permissions were obtained before the research and the research was conducted with ethical principles by giving importance to the confidentiality of the participants' identity information.

### Findings

In this section of the study, quantitative analysis findings, qualitative data analysis findings, and mixed method findings are explained, respectively.

### Findings on Quantitative Dimension

In the quantitative part of the study, firstly, the mean scores of the participants' social network tendency and organizational power distance, then the results of the analysis including the participants' social network tendency and organizational power distance perception according to the academic title variable, and finally the correlation test results addressing the relationship between the participant's social network tendency and organizational power distance perception were included.

### Findings on Academic Staff's Perception of Social Network Tendency and Organizational Power Distance

The findings regarding academic staff's social network tendency and organizational power distance perception are as follows (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics Regarding Academic Staff's Perception of Social Network Tendency and Organizational Power Distance

	Dimensions	n	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Ranking
<b>Social Network Tendency</b>	Liking to connect	372	4.23	.45	1
	Belief in having the right relationships		4.06	.59	2
	Assessing relationships		3.62	.63	3
	<b>General social networking tendency</b>		<b>3.97</b>	<b>.44</b>	
<b>Organizational Power Distance</b>	Acquiescence of Power	372	3.02	.75	1
	Acceptance of Power		2.84	.65	2
	Instrumental Use of Power		2.42	.79	3
	Justification of Power		1.88	.57	4
	<b>The general perception of power distance</b>		<b>2.65</b>	<b>.55</b>	

**Table 2:** Analysis of Social Networking Tendency Levels of Academic Staff According to Academic Title Variable

Dimensions	Academic Title	n	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Sd	F	p
Assessing relationships	a. Professor	45	3.57	.69	4; 367	.72	.58
	b. Associate professor	42	3.49	.61			
	c. Assistant professor	73	3.68	.70			
	d. Lecturer	111	3.61	.63			
	e. Research assistant	101	3.65	.57			
Liking to connect	a. Professor	45	4.23	.41	4; 367	.48	.75
	b. Associate professor	42	4.15	.42			
	c. Assistant professor	73	4.26	.46			
	d. Lecturer	111	4.21	.44			
	e. Research assistant	101	4.24	.48			
Belief in having the right relationships	a. Professor	45	4.10	.61	4; 367	.52	.72
	b. Associate professor	42	4.00	.62			
	c. Assistant professor	73	4.01	.61			
	d. Lecturer	111	4.05	.54			
	e. Research assistant	101	4.12	.61			
General social networking tendency	a. Professor	45	3.97	.46	4; 367	.62	.65
	b. Associate professor	42	3.88	.45			
	c. Assistant professor	73	3.98	.46			
	d. Lecturer	111	3.96	.43			
	e. Research assistant	101	4.00	.43			

Based on the table, it is concluded that the academic staff's general social network tendency level is high ( $\bar{X}=3.97$ ). Considering the mean scores obtained from the dimensions of the scale, it is seen that the academic staff have the highest perception of liking to connect ( $\bar{X}=4.23$ ), then belief in having the right relationship ( $\bar{X}=4.06$ ) and finally assessing relationships (3.62). In addition, it was concluded that the academic staff's general organizational power distance perception level was moderate ( $\bar{X}=2.65$ ). According to the mean scores obtained from the dimensions of the scale, it is seen that academic staff have the perception of acquiescence of power ( $\bar{X}=3.02$ ) at the highest level, followed by acceptance of power ( $\bar{X}=2.84$ ), instrumental use of power ( $\bar{X}=2.42$ ) and justification of power at the lowest level.

### Investigation of Social Network Tendency and Organizational Power Distance Perception Levels of Academic Staff According to Academic Title Variable

The analysis results of social network tendencies and organizational power distance perceptions of academic staff according to the theoretical title variable are below (Table 2).

As seen in the table, according to the academic title variable, the social network tendencies of the academic staff do not show a statistically significant difference in the dimensions of assessing relationships [ $F(4-367) = .72$ ;  $p>.05$ ]; liking to connect [ $F(4-367) = .48$ ;  $p>.05$ ]; belief in having the right relationships [ $F(4-367) = .52$ ;  $p>.05$ ] and general social network tendency [ $F(4-367) = .62$ ;  $p>.05$ ]. Table 3 analyses the academic staff's perceptions of organizational power distance according to the academic title variable.

The table shows a statistically significant difference between the perception of organizational power distance of the academic staff according to the academic title variable. According to the academic title variable, academic staff's perception of organizational power distance, acceptance of power [ $F(4-367) = 2.93$ ;  $p<.05$ ]; instrumental use of power [ $F(4-367) = 9.17$ ;  $p<.05$ ]; justification of power [ $F(4-367) = 2.17$ ;  $p<.05$ ]; acceptance of power [ $F(4-367) = 5.47$ ;  $p<.05$ ] and general power distance perception [ $F(4-367) = 7.62$ ;  $p<.05$ ]. In the analysis, Scheffe and LSD multiple comparison tests were used to determine between which groups there was a significant difference. In

**Table 3:** Investigation of Academic Staff's Organizational Power Distance Perception Levels According to Academic Title Variable

Dimensions	Academic Title	n	$\bar{X}$	Ss	sd	F	p	Significant Difference
Acceptance of power	a. Professor	45	2.64	.67	4; 367	2.93	.02*	a < d - e c < e
	b. Associate professor	42	2.74	.74				
	c. Assistant professor	73	2.75	.58				
	d. Lecturer	111	2.92	.66				
	e. Research assistant	101	2.96	.60				
Instrumental use of power	a. Professor	45	2.20	.65	4; 367	9.17	.00*	e > a, b, c, d
	b. Associate professor	42	2.18	.73				
	c. Assistant professor	73	2.27	.72				
	d. Lecturer	111	2.35	.82				
	e. Research assistant	101	2.80	.76				
Justification of power	a. Professor	45	1.71	.42	4; 367	2.17	.03*	a < d, e c < d, e
	b. Associate professor	42	1.92	.62				
	c. Assistant professor	73	1.76	.53				
	d. Lecturer	111	1.94	.66				
	e. Research assistant	101	1.96	.48				
Acquiescence of power	a. Professor	45	2.84	.80	4; 367	5.47	.00*	e > a, b, c
	b. Associate professor	42	2.83	.69				
	c. Assistant professor	73	2.82	.77				
	d. Lecturer	111	3.09	.76				
	e. Research assistant	101	3.25	.66				
The general perception of power distance	a. Professor	45	2.45	.53	4; 367	7.62	.00*	e > a, b, c
	b. Associate professor	42	2.50	.53				
	c. Assistant professor	73	2.50	.51				
	d. Lecturer	111	2.68	.57				
	e. Research assistant	101	2.86	.50				

\*  $p<.05$  level of significance.

the general perception of power distance, it is seen that the mean power distance scores of research assistants are higher than those of professors, associate professors, and assistant professors. In the calculation of the effect size, Green and Salkind (2005: 157) state that the value of 0.01 in the eta square is interpreted as a small effect size, 0.06 as a medium effect size, and 0.14 as a large effect size, and in the study, the effect size of the general power distance ( $\eta^2 = 0.08$ ) shows that this difference is at a medium level.

### Findings on the Relationship between Social Network Tendency and Organizational Power Distance of Lecturers

The results of the correlation analyses regarding the social network tendencies and organizational power distance of lecturers are given below (Table 4).

As seen in the table, there is no statistically significant relationship between the general social network tendencies of the academic staff and their perception of organizational power distance ( $p=0.93$ ,  $p>.05$ ). Based on dimensions, it is seen that the perception of assessing relationships among the social network tendencies of the academic staff have a low level and positively significant relationship with the perception of acceptance of power ( $r= .13$ ;  $p<.05$ ). It is seen that the academic staff's perception of liking to connect have a low level and positively significant relationship with the perception of acceptance of power ( $r= .17$ ;  $p<.01$ ). It is seen that academic staff's perception of belief in having the right relationships have a low level and positively significant relationship with the perception of acceptance of power ( $r= .18$ ;  $p<.01$ ) and a low level and positively significant relationship with the perception of instrumental use of power ( $r= .13$ ;  $p<.05$ ). It is concluded that there is a low level and positively significant relationship between the general social network tendencies of the academic staff and the perception of acceptance of power ( $r= .20$ ;  $p<.01$ ), and a low level and positively significant relationship with the perception of instrumental use of power ( $r= .11$ ;  $p<.05$ ).

### Findings on Qualitative Dimension

In the qualitative part of the study, content analysis was conducted based on the participants' views on organizational power distance, and social network analysis was conducted to determine the professional relationships and friendship networks among the participants. The results of the content analysis on organizational power distance are as follows.

### Content Analysis Results Regarding Organizational Power Distance

As a result of qualitative data analysis, based on codes and categories, four themes were reached similar to the Organizational Power Distance Scale developed by Yorulmaz, Çolak, Altınkurt, and Yılmaz (2018). These are; acceptance of power, instrumental use of power, justification of power, and acquiescence of power. Within the scope of the research, it was first aimed to determine the participants' views on the managers' privileges. Participants' views on the theme of Accepting Power are presented in Table 5.

In the study, most participants stated that it is normal for university administrators to have certain privileges to facilitate their administrative work. However, these privileges should be audited within the transparency and accountability framework. Participants who stated that administrators should not have privileges stated that administrators should not be given financial privileges, should not have the privilege of sitting in the protocol at organized events, and should not be given privileges in scientific publications. The opinion of a participant who stated that university administrators should have various privileges is as follows:

*"If the manager has a vision, if he carries out the actions he needs to do step by step, if they are privileges that will make his life easier to help him see them quickly, I can accept it. However, if he only benefits from his managerial position and uses it for his interests, I do not think he has the right to have these privileges." (Participant 2)*

**Table 4:** Analysis Results on the Relationship between Social Networking Tendencies and Organizational Power Distance Levels of Academic Staff

	ASSE	LIK	BEL	GSOC	ACP	INS	JUST	ACQ	GPOW
ASSE	1								
LIK	.402**	1							
BEL	.402**	.496**	1						
GSOC	.796**	.754**	.809**	1					
ACP	.128*	.167**	.175**	.197**	1				
INS	.088	.025	.130*	.109*	.528**	1			
JUST	.010	.013	-.041	-.009	.435**	.298**	1		
ACQ	-.021	-.049	-.018	-.035	.484**	.515**	.369**	1	
GPOW	.070	.050	.095	.093	.809**	.803**	.567**	.823**	1

**Note**<sub>1</sub>: The names of the scale dimensions are abbreviated in the table. In this context, abbreviated as ASSE: Assessing relationships, LIK: Liking to connect, BEL: Belief in having the right relationships, GSOC: General social network tendency, ACP: Acceptance of power, INS: Instrumental use of power, JUST: Justification of power, ACQ: Acquiescence of power, GPOW: General perception of power distance.

**Note**<sub>2</sub>: The p-value is significant at the .05\* level and the .01\*\* level.

**Table 5:** Acceptance of Power

Theme 1. Acceptance of Power			
Category	Subcategory	Code	f
Privileges of the manager	Lack of privileges	Should not have privileges	13
		There should be no financial privilege	8
		Should not have the privilege of sitting in protocol	5
		There should be no privilege in scientific publication	1
	Restricted privilege	Must have limited privileges	17
		Must have the privilege to sit in protocol	4
		It is usual for the manager to have some privileges due to his/her position.	3

f: frequency.

**Table 6:** Instrumental Use of Power

Theme 2. Instrumental Use of Power		
Category	Subcategory	f
Solution of problems with the manager	Positive impact of close relations with the manager	19
	Advantage of people with high titles	3
	Intermediaries being effective during communication	4
Conflict with the manager	Concern that career will be jeopardized in case of conflict with the manager	15

The number of participants who stated that administrators should not have privileges is close to that of participants with positive views on privileges. Some participants stated that privileges distanced managers and employees from each other and caused inequalities at the university. The views of some participants on this issue are as follows:

*"...The administrator at the university is an academic like me. Therefore, it bothers me that he/she has various privileges different from me." (Participant 1)*

*"Administrators at the university are given office vehicles. I am against them using their office vehicles even within the university campus. Managers should only use this vehicle if there is an official justification because they are paid for doing this job. They cannot use the opportunities given to them by the state for their purposes" (Participant 24)*

*"Why should an administrator at a university have a financial privilege? He/she already gets that salary because of his position as a rector. He/she does not need any other privilege. There is no need for that kind of privilege in a scientific institution." (Participant 21)*

In the study, the participants stated that university administrators should be appointed according to merit and that the employees will accept the power of the administrators appointed on merit. The second theme, Instrumental Use of Power, is related to the employees' thinking that they can easily carry out their jobs by being close to their superiors and acting when necessary. Employees who use power instrumentally believe they will gain an interest when they are close to their managers (Yorulmaz et al., 2018). Almost all participants stated that

close relations with the manager effectively solved the problems. If positive relations were developed with the manager (in friendship or a relationship of interest), these problems could be solved as soon as possible. The findings on the instrumental use of power are as follows (Table 6).

The opinions of some participants who think that close relations with administrators are positively effective in solving the problems experienced are as follows:

*"Even in micro-scale managerial positions, the closeness with the manager makes your job easier and solves your problem. I could easily handle my work if I had close relations with the manager." (Participant 6)*

*"It is like this in all institutions in our country. Not only in academic institutions. If your communication and relations with managers are good, you are more likely to solve your problems. It is like this in 3rd world countries." (Participant 13)*

Within the scope of instrumental use of power, participants expressed that they were worried that their work life or career would be jeopardized if they argued with the manager. The views of some participants on this issue are as follows:

*"In recent years, not only me but everyone is experiencing this anxiety. You inevitably experience it because those above you have much authority, so of course you experience anxiety." (Participant 27)*

*"If we voice something against the management, if there is a problem, it will hinder our career. It will prevent academic promotion; it will prevent appointments. Therefore, I always experience this fear." (Participant 8)*

The study's third theme, "Justification of Power," refers to the employees' efforts to justify the unequal distribution of power in the organization on an acceptable basis. Justification of power legitimizes the power exercised by the manager through legally accepted rules and regulations (Giddens & Sutton, 2016). Table 7 presents the participants' views regarding the privileges enjoyed by the groups close to the managers.

During the research, participants stated that privileged groups were given the most privileges in recruitment. In addition, the participants stated that privileges were provided to the privileged group in the distribution of tasks and access to information and organizational resources. The views of some participants regarding the privileges provided to groups close to the management in obtaining staff are as follows:

*"People close to the manager get tenure faster; whether there is a need in that unit or not does not change anything. On the other hand, those who do not have close relations with the manager, even if there is a need, have severe problems in getting tenure and cannot be assigned."* (Participant 22)

*"Although I worked as a research assistant at the faculty for 11 years, although I had more scientific studies, another person from a different department, who finished his PhD after me, was given a position. I was treated unfairly"* (Participant 18)

As a result of the privileges provided to groups close to the managers, the participants stated that the managers treated them unfairly, their trust in the manager and the organization decreased, and their organizational commitment weakened.

The last theme that emerged within the scope of organizational power distance, Acquiescence of Power, is that employees in an organization have low beliefs that management can change undesirable practices or adapt to the current situation due to possible risks. The acquiescence of power is the individual's submission to the practices of the power holder, even if he/she does not adopt them (Yorulmaz et al., 2018). The participants stated that they expressed their discomfort to the manager when the manager displayed a domineering and authoritarian attitude toward them. Participants stated that the problem in such a situation they stated that they tried to solve the problem by talking. The findings related to the theme of Acquiescence of Power are as follows (Table 8).

While most of the participants stated that they prefer to solve the problem by talking when they encounter such a situation, the majority of them stated that they remain silent in such a situation. The views of the participants on this issue are as follows:

*"I have encountered minor situations, but in these cases, I would first choose to go to him/her and tell him/her one-on-one that such a thing has happened and that he/she is wrong or unfair to the manager in this situation."* (Participant 1)

*"Unfortunately, in countries like ours, you have to keep silent or tie your hands with the thought and foresight that you will be exposed to more difficult conditions. Moreover, I have always been the victim of such situations in my academic life."* (Participant 13)

**Table 7:** Justification of Power

Theme 3. Justification of Power			
Category	Subcategory	Code	f
Privilege of groups close to the manager	Privileges granted to groups close to the manager	Providing privileges to the privileged group in obtaining tenure	27
		Privileging the privileged group in the distribution of tasks	6
		Providing privileges to the privileged group in accessing information	3
	Consequences of privileges granted to groups close to the manager	The manager's unfair treatment of other employees	10
		The belief that the privileged group will subsequently suffer losses	4
		Keeping distance and not interacting with the privileged group	4
		Motivating effect in dealing with challenges	2
		Negative impact on organizational commitment	2
		Reducing trust in the manager	1

**Table 8:** Acquiescence of Power

Theme 4. Acquiescence of Power		
Category	Subcategory	f
Attitude toward the manager's overbearing and authoritarian behaviors	Trying to solve the problem by talking	15
	Keeping silent by not reacting	14
	Complaining by taking legal action	10
	Reacting with gestures and facial expressions	5
	Taking revenge	2
	Gossiping about the manager	1

"I mean, there were times when I kept quiet so my academic career would not be jeopardized. Unfortunately, there were times. But actually, you want to speak out, oppose, and say, "You are wrong! but saying that will not change much. Moreover, you will be harmed. I have preferred to remain silent in that situation. Many people do not accept this, but I did" (Participant 21)

To summarize, in the qualitative dimension of the study, the participants mostly expressed opinions on the theme of acceptance of power (accepting the power/authority of the administrator, respecting the power, accepting the privileges of the administrator, etc.). Then, the participants mostly expressed their views on justifying power (accepting the privilege of groups close to the administrator, recognizing privileged groups, etc.). The participants mainly emphasized these two themes. They shared their views and experiences on the themes of instrumental use of power (using instrumental power to reach management, etc.) quiescence of power (responding to the power and sanctions of the administrator).

### Findings on Social Network Analysis

Findings on academic staff's professional relationships and friendship networks were presented within the scope of social network analysis. Then, findings on the structure of the professional relationship and friendship network and the strength of the ties between the actors are presented.

### Findings on the position of academic staff in professional relationship and friendship networks

The study used social network analysis to determine the professional networks and friendship networks of the academic staff in their departments. Social network maps of professional relationships and friendship networks are as follows (Figure 1).

In the network map in the figure, the shapes show the actors, the lines show the relationships between the actors, and the arrows show the direction of the relationships (unidirectional or reciprocal). In the network map, male participants are colored blue, and female participants are colored red. The code names of the actors were created according to the initials of their academic titles (Professor: PROF, Associate Professor: ASSOP, Assistant Professor: ASSIP, Lecturer: LEC, Research Assistant: REAS). It is observed that the friendship network is an intense relationship network with 177 ties established between 34 actors. Based on the connections in the network map, there is a high level of interaction between the actors. According to this map, all actors are included in the relationship network, so no isolated actor exists outside the network. In addition, it can be said that there is not much transitivity in the professional relationship network according to gender; in other words, the gender factor does not cause groupings in relationships. When the professional relationship network is examined, it is seen that the participants with code numbers PROF1, PROF5, REAS2, REAS6, REAS7, REAS8, and ASSIP3 are at the center of the network and have established relationships with many participants. The participants at the center of the network are

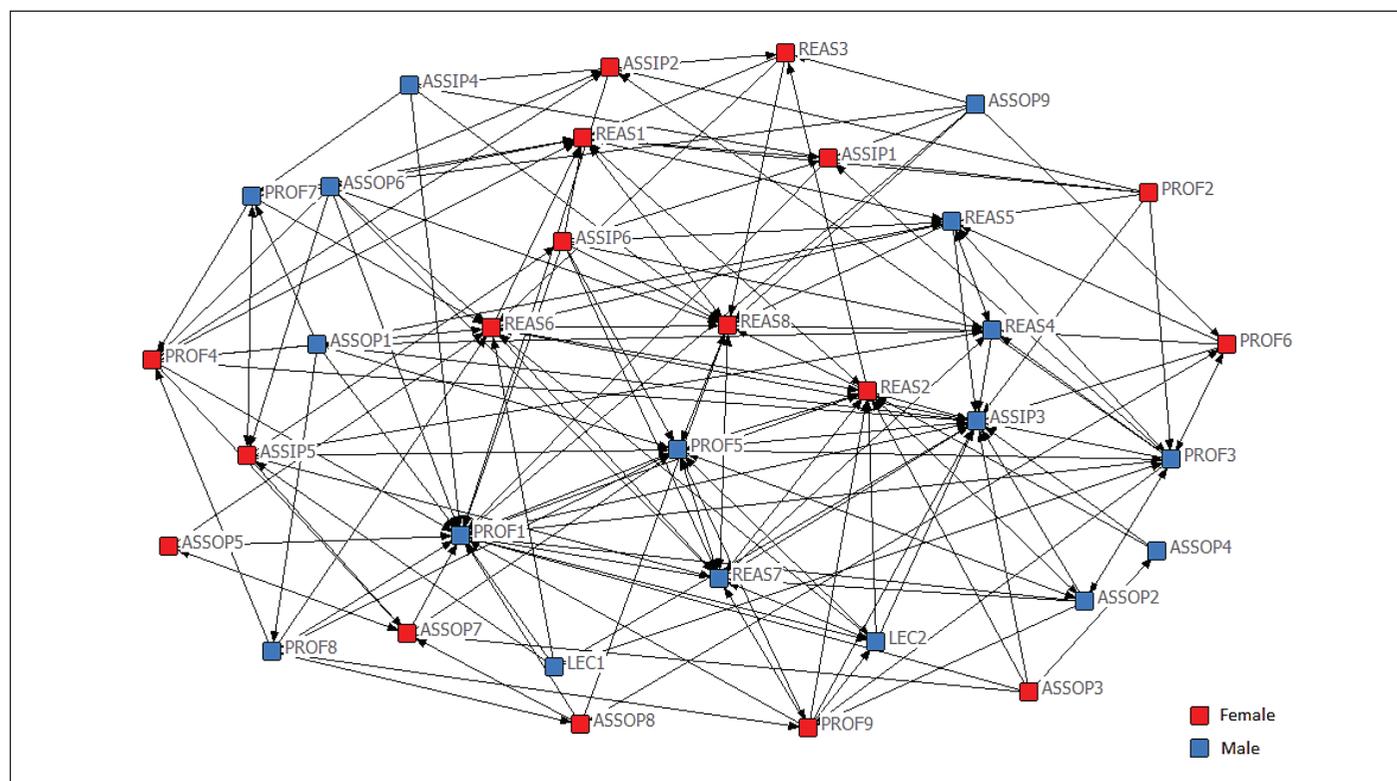


Figure 1: Professional relationship network of academic staff.

mainly those with the title of professor and research assistant. It is seen that the participants with the title of associate professor are generally away from the center of the network, and their connections are less than the participants with other titles (ASSOP3, ASSOP5, ASSOP7, ASSOP8). The friendship network of the academic staff is presented below (Figure 2).

Based on the figure, it is seen that the friendship network of academic staff consists of 34 actors and 83 ties. The friendship network of academic staff has fewer ties than the professional network; in other words, it has a weaker network structure. Like the professional relationship network, PROF1, PROF5, PROF9, REAS7, REAS8, and ASSIP3 actors are at the center of the friendship network. Similar to the professional relationship network, PROF1, PROF5, PROF9, REAS7, REAS8, and ASSIP3 actors are at the center of the friendship network. In addition, the participant with the code number ASSOP6 was observed to be an isolated actor and did not establish a relationship with other actors by staying outside the network. Similar to the above finding, it was concluded that three participants with the title of professor were at the center of the friendship network and established one-way and two-way ties with the actors. When the social networks are analyzed, it is seen that the professional network has a higher proportion of relationships, contains more reciprocal relationships, and has a more centralized structure than the friendship network. In summary, both networks are analyzed briefly; PROF1, PROF5, REAS7, REAS8, and ASSIP3 actors may have a significant and influential position in the social network. During social network analysis,

in addition to network maps, measures such as the centrality of actors' positions in the network, the density of the network, or the closeness between actors can be revealed as a result of various analyses.

#### Findings on the professional relationship network and friendship network structure of academic staff

Network size, network density, clustering coefficient, reciprocity, and transitivity values were calculated in the analysis of the professional relationship network and friendship network structure of the academic staff. The structural characteristics of the professional and friendship networks of the academic staff are given in Table 9.

A comparison of the structural characteristics of lecturers' professional and friendship networks reveals that although the number of actors is the same, more connections are established in the professional network. The density value in social networks takes a value between 0 and 1; a density of 0 indicates that there is no interaction, while a density of 1 indicates that there are close relationships (Carrington, Scott & Wasserman, 2005; Eren, 2018; Everett & Borgatti, 2005). Therefore, both networks have low density and loose ties. In addition, the friendship network has higher levels of bilateral and trilateral connections than the professional network, suggesting that the friendship network is more structured and robust than the professional network. The low density in both networks indicates weak ties in the network; therefore, there are divergences and clusters among the actors. Groupings and cliques emerge

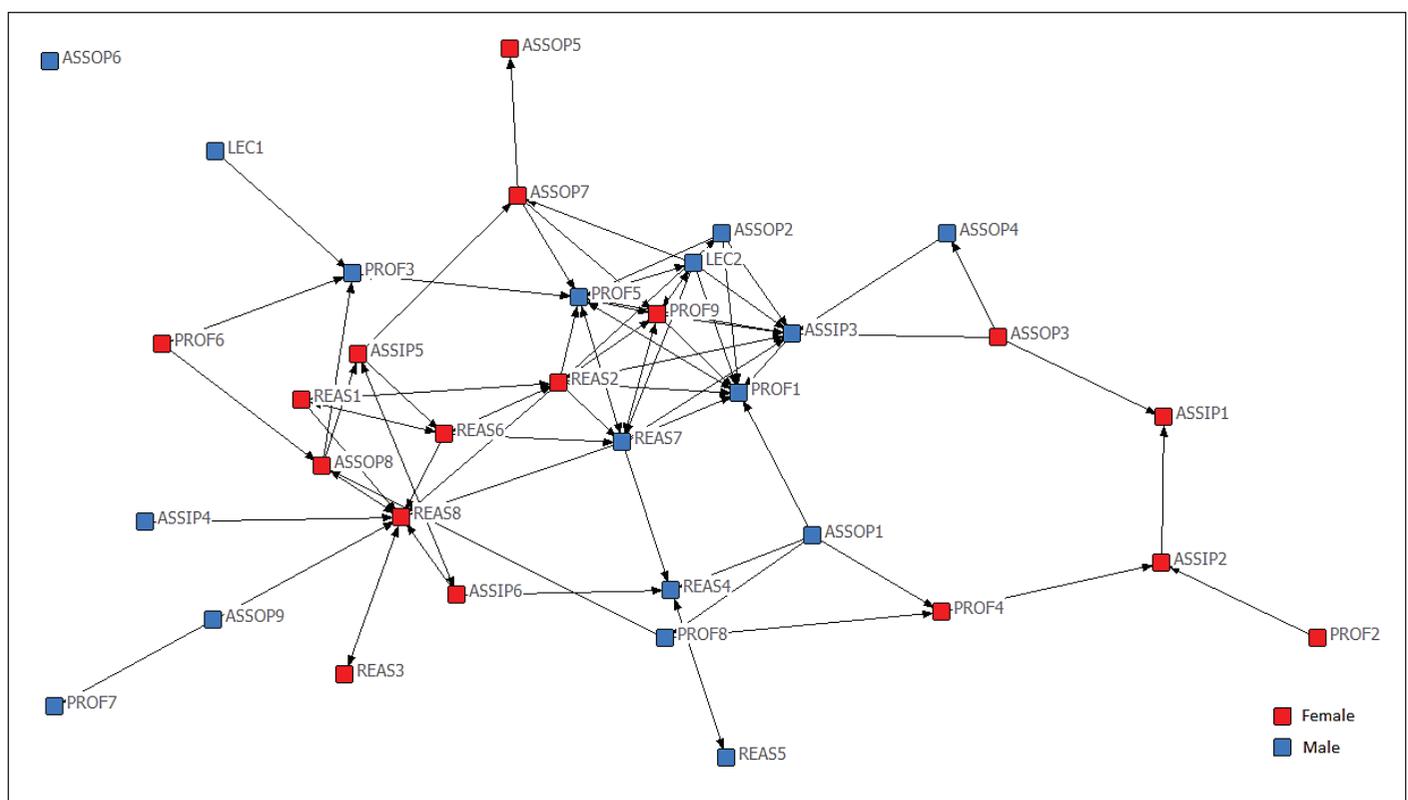
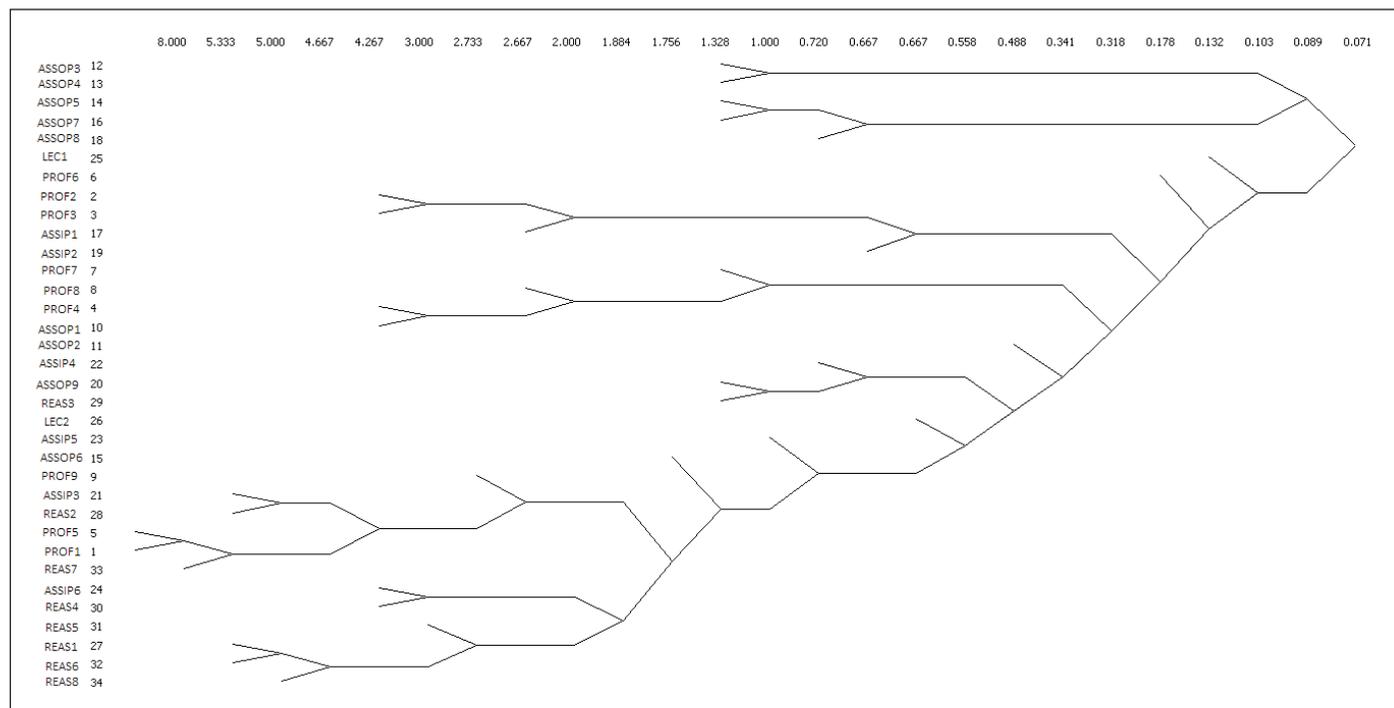


Figure 2: Friendship relationship network of academic staff.

**Table 9:** Network Structural Characteristics of Academic Staff's Professional Relationship and Friendship Networks

	Network size	Ties	Reciprocity (diad)	Reciprocity (triad)	Transitivity	Density	Cluster Coefficient
Professional relationship network	34	177	0.188	0.316	0.409	0.158	0.275
Friendship network	34	83	0.239	0.386	0.453	0.074	0.248

**Figure 3:** Cliques diagram of academic staff's professional relationship network.

when the network's density is low or high. Cliques include only the direct connections of each actor with all other actors (Borgatti, Everett & Johnson, 2013). Below are the cliques related to the professional network (Figure 3) and the cliques related to the friendship network (Figure 4), respectively.

As a result of the analysis, 58 cliques were found in the professional network of academic staff and 9 cliques in the friendship network. It is seen that there are more cliques in the professional relationship network of the academic staff. According to the clique diagram, it is seen that there is a more branched and differentiated network structure in the professional relationship network than in the friendship network. Another critical issue that needs to be addressed is the cliques, in which actors are at the center of the network and connect with other actors. Various centrality measures are used to determine the position and characteristics of actors at the center of the network.

*Degree centrality* refers to the number of direct connections each actor has with other actors in the social network (Everett & Borgatti, 2005). According to the degree centrality measures, the highest-ranked actors in the professional network are PROF1 (deg=26), PROF5 and ASSIP3 (deg=22), REAS2 (deg=19)

and A7 (deg=17). In the friendship network, the highest-ranked actors were PROF5 (deg=14), REAS2, and REAS7 (deg=12). When both networks were analyzed, it was found that the actors with the highest number of ties and, thus, the highest degree of centrality were PROF5, PROF1, ASSIP3, 2, and A7, respectively. Based on this finding, the actors listed above are at the center of the network and occupy an important position.

*Closeness centrality* is the degree of direct proximity or distance of an actor in a network to others. This degree refers to the actor's ability to reach others in the network quickly and access information (Carrington et al., 2005; Marsden, 2005). In the professional network, PROF1 (Clo=0.947), ASSIP3 (Clo=0.904), PROF5 (Clo=0.867), REAS2 (Clo=0.823), and REAS8 (Clo=0.803) are the actors with the highest access to information and the ability to connect with other actors in a short time. In the friendship network, the actors with the highest closeness centrality are PROF5 (Clo=0.420), PROF9 and REAS7 (Clo=0.402), LEC2 and REAS2 (Clo=0.393), respectively. When both networks are analyzed, it can be said that PROF1, PROF5, REAS2, and REAS7 actors can connect with other actors directly or indirectly in a short time and access information.

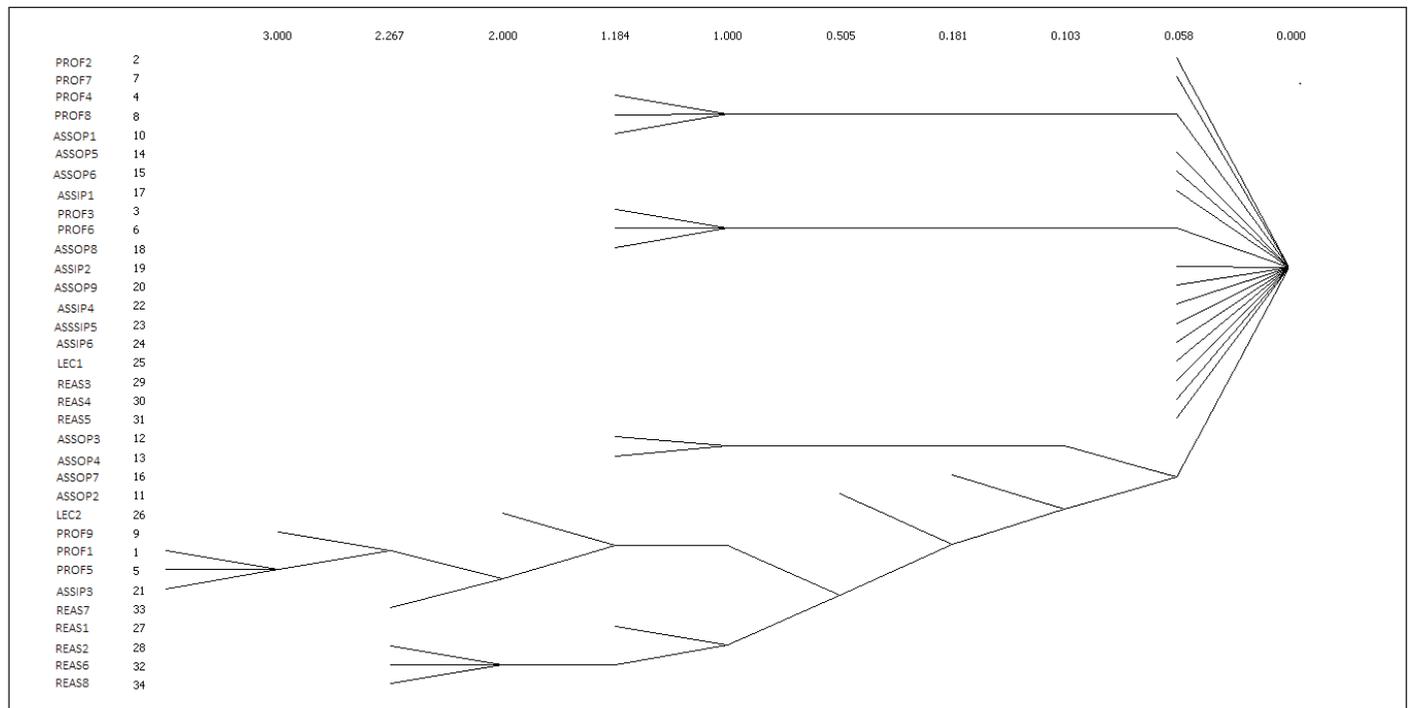


Figure 4: Cliques diagram of academic staff's friendship network.

According to *betweenness centrality*, actors who act as bridges in the network can have an important position in the network because they control the flow of information (accessing information before anyone else, blocking the flow of information, or directing it in the direction they want) (Borgatti et al. 2013: 174-175). In the professional relations network, the actors who act as a bridge between other actors the most are PROF3 (Betw.=165.281), PROF5 (Betw.=150.577), PROF6 (Betw.=80.725), REAS2 (Betw.=80.667), PROF1 (Betw.=69.657), respectively. In the friendship network, PROF5 (Betw.=195.167), PROF3 (Betw.=97), REAS7 (Betw.=69.833), ASSOP8 (Betw.=68.833), and PROF1 (Betw.=67.167) are the bridges, respectively. When both social network structures are analyzed, PROF1, PROF3, PROF5, PROF6, and REAS2 are the actors who play a critical role among the actors who do not connect by acting as a bridge between other actors.

*Eigenvector centrality* is a composite of all degree, closeness, and betweenness centrality measures. Eigenvector centrality means that not all ties between actors are of equal value and that the quality of ties is as essential as the number of ties for an actor to be at the center of the network. In other words, it is more important for an actor to have a small number of high-quality ties than many low-quality ties (Eren, 2018; Marsden, 2005; Öztaş & Acar, 2004). PROF1 (eigenvector=0.332) has the highest eigenvector centrality in the professional network. In the friendship network, PROF5 (eigenvector=0.368) was found to have a high eigenvector value. In summary, when both the professional relations network and the friendship network are analyzed, it is seen that the eigenvector centrality of PROF1, PROF5, ASSIP3, REAS2, and REAS7 actors is high. Since these actors are close to those who are active in the network

and at the center of the network, they are also expected to provide various advantages (access to resources such as information, etc.).

#### Findings on Mixed Methods

In mixed methods research, visualizing the research processes (data collection, analysis, combination, and interpretation processes by the mixed methods research design) with a flow diagram facilitates understanding the research process (Creswell, 2017a: 53-54). The data collection process and analysis results in the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study are presented in the diagram in Figure 5 concerning Creswell and Clark's (2015: 129) visualizations.

In the study, it is seen that the results of quantitative and qualitative data analysis confirm each other at many points, and three main conclusions were reached when the findings of the quantitative and qualitative sections were integrated within the scope of mixed method research. These are: (1) Academic staff perceive the organizational power distance at the university at a medium-high level. (2) Academic staff tend to establish professional relationships and friendship networks with their colleagues highly. (3) Academic staff's friendship relationships have a firmer structure than their professional relationships.

#### DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

When the mixed-method findings of the research, which was conducted to compare the perceptions of organizational power distance of academic staff with the social networks they established with their colleagues at the university, are considered, it can be said that both quantitative data analysis and social network analysis results confirm each other. In the study,

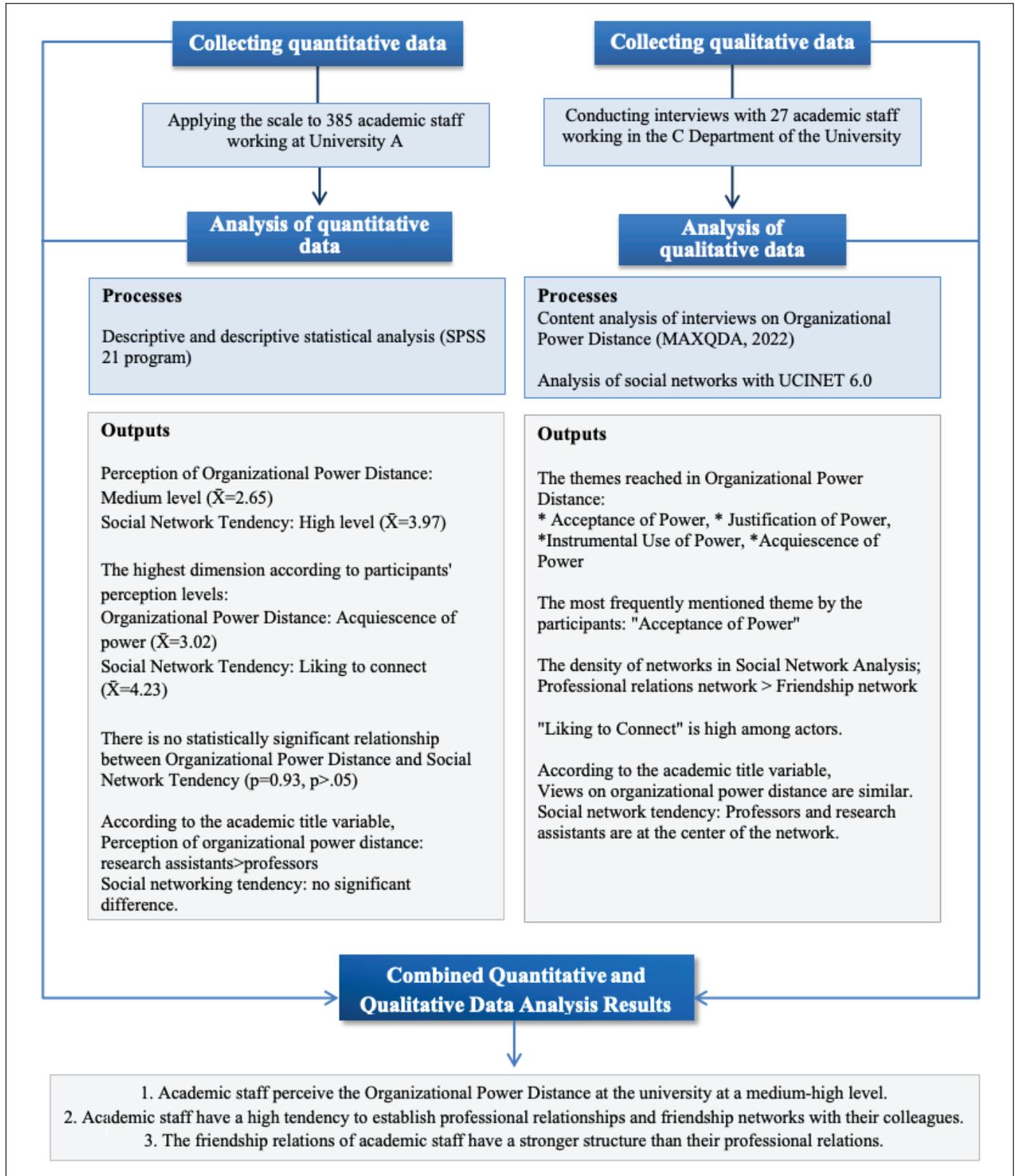


Figure 5: Organizational power distance and social network tendency: mixed method research findings.

within the scope of organizational power distance, it is seen that the participants' perception of acquiescence to power and acceptance of power is at a high level. The academic staff accepts the university administrators' unfair practices and power inequalities and remains silent by not opposing the injustices experienced. In organizations, centralization and hierarchy showing obstructive or coercive features are called "*obstructive bureaucracy*" (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). In this structure, organizational members are forced to accept the rules without questioning; individuals are frequently controlled/supervised, and employees are not allowed to participate in decisions. Different opinions are considered conflict factors (Sinden, Hoy & Sweetland, 2004).

In the study, based on the participants' views that they kept silent about the inequalities they experienced at the university and were worried about conflicts with administrators if they expressed their different views and opinions, it is thought that there is an obstructive bureaucratic structure at the university. Organizational silence is defined as individuals keeping their concerns and thoughts about the problems experienced in the organization secret for fear of being ignored or receiving negative feedback from managers (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Organizational silence refers to individuals' conscious avoidance of expressing information, ideas, and opinions about their work (Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003). Employees in an organization may exhibit organizational silence behavior against unequal and unfair practices they experience in the organization (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). From this point of view, academic staff exhibit organizational silence when they encounter such situations.

In the study, the participants emphasized that administrators provide privileges to groups close to them in legitimizing the power dimension and injustices experienced at the university. Most participants stated that privileges were provided to interest groups close to the administrators, especially in academic promotion and tenure. In an organization where inequality is experienced, a group can rise by using their illegitimate privileges, while others can be prevented (Tatlı & Özbilgin, 2012). Therefore, other lecturers are expected to feel that they have been wronged in the face of privileged groups. According to Bourdieu (1980), cultural and social assumptions and routines are the basis of accepting inequality in organizations. Individuals do not see inequalities in the organization under the influence of these assumptions, and they accept it as a normal situation. To prevent this, individuals should be informed about social and universal equality; inequalities in the organization should be revealed, and these problems should be discussed (Özbilgin, 2019: 296).

During the research, participants similarly stated that the perspective on privilege is related to the cultural structure of the society. In short, individuals' perspectives on privilege are related to their social, societal, and cultural acceptance. Consistent with Hofstede's research results, the participants stated that Turkish society likes power and influential individuals, accepts the power of the rulers, and obeys them. It is known that every manager has a specific power due to the power culture

in the organization. Power emerges as a necessity for life in societies (Balandier, 2010: 35-39, 101) and effectively organizes and maintains the social structure (Beşirli, 2011). Power and equality, the antecedents of organizational power distance, are the basic components of a social structure or culture (Oyserman, 2006). Therefore, as stated in the participants' views, power distance is a component of culture and reflects society's social and cultural values.

Power and the use of power are essential elements of culture. Like many other Asian-type cultures, Turkish culture has a high orientation towards power and power. This orientation is reflected in management practices in many institutions in the society. In Turkish culture, the use of power is not in a collective structure, but in the form of individual power acquisition (Halıs, Şenkal & Türkay, 2009). The dynastic system in the Ottoman Empire, the concentration of power in a single person, the people's acceptance of the power of the rulers, and their submission to power inequalities are similar in today's Turkey. In this regard, some authors argue that the understanding of "dominating the society" that emerged in Turkish society with the Tanzimat era continues today; that there is little merit and delegation of authority due to the dense bureaucratic structure in the administration, and that communication and coordination in subordinate-superior relations cannot be ensured (Gökçe & Şahin, 2002; Gökçe, Şahin & Örselli, 2002). It is possible to see the impact of the cultural structure of Turkish society on the cultural structure of universities. Higher education culture is the values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions that effectively make sense of the experiences and activities that take place at the university and guide the behavior of individuals and groups at the university (Kuh & Witt, 2000). Universities, which include many infrastructures, are institutions with a dynamic character (Alvesson, 1993) and are affected by environmental, social, and technological developments as well as the political and economic policies of the country. Therefore, based on the participants' views, the practices related to power distance in top management are also effective in universities.

In the study, it is seen that the general social network tendencies of the academic staff are at a high level. In support of this finding, the social network analysis revealed an intense and interactive network structure among the academic staff in both professional relationships and friendship networks. Academic staff establish a network of professional relationships with their colleagues at the university in many areas, such as exchanging ideas, consulting on specific issues, and conducting joint studies (scientific research, projects, congresses/conferences, etc.). Workplace friendships generally consist of supporting co-workers and sharing information and do not involve intense emotional bonds of friendship (Chang et al., 2016). Workplace friendship consists of mutual commitment, trust, shared values, and interests among employees in the workplace (Berman, West & Richter, 2002); this friendship provides emotional support to individuals within the organization (Kram & Isabella, 1985) and has an impact on individuals' motivation, job satisfaction, and performance (Lee & Ok, 2011). At the same time, workplace friendship effectively reduces work-related stress

(Sias & Cahill, 1998) and provides emotional support (Methot et al., 2016). In this context, the network of professional relationships established by lecturers at the university in terms of workplace friendship is vital for their performance. According to the study, academic staff want to connect with colleagues and develop friendships. Similarly, Er (2017) concluded that school administrators and teachers working in primary and secondary schools highly desire to connect.

When the social network analysis findings are examined, it is seen that professors and research assistants are at the center of the professional relations and friendship network. Actors with these two titles are at the center of the network and act as bridges that enable communication between other actors. As a result of the social network analysis, the fact that professors and research assistants are at the center of the network can be explained by the Social Capital Theory. According to this theory, people possess both tangible and intangible resources through their social networks and interactions with others at the individual, group, or organizational level (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2000). Social capital is the existing and potential resources that an individual obtains from the connections and network of relationships with other members of the organization (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Academic staff with the title of professor have relatively more knowledge than those with other academic titles and often guide other lecturers with their experience. From this point of view, professors can be considered social capital by academic staff with other academic titles. In this context, academic staff may establish friendships with professors to conduct joint projects/scientific research and receive peer support. In addition to professors, research assistants are also at the center of the network. Research assistants are academic staff who assist in research, examination, and applications in higher education institutions and perform other duties assigned by authorized institutions (Yükseköğretim Kanunu, 1981). Research assistants can be seen as social capital by other academic staff due to their academic position, knowledge of the university's information flow, duties and responsibilities in the faculty, and the ties they establish between the administration and academic staff. Therefore, research assistants are expected to interact with other academic staff, communicate with them frequently, and develop professional relationships.

Social network analysis can be used as an effective tool by managers as it provides researchers and practitioners with social networks between individuals and actors acting as bridges. Based on these network maps, university management can identify informal leaders and direct central actors as team leaders toward organizational goals. At the same time, it can involve isolated actors outside the network in organizational processes. According to the research results, faculty members with the title of professor and research assistant can be supported by the management as team leaders. They can be evaluated to strengthen the social network. In addition, individuals with the title of associate professor who are outside the network and have weak ties with other actors can be motivated by the management. They can be included in the social network

with various directives. University administrators can organize activities to increase cooperation among academic staff to strengthen their professional relationships and friendship networks. They can also implement various practices to create a learning ecosystem in universities and turn their universities into learning communities. Based on the participants' views within the scope of power distance, it can be said that it is necessary to set new criteria for the privileges of university administrators to be limited, auditable, accountable, and transparent within the framework of the objectives of higher education and the university. These privileges granted to administrators should be audited by senior management at specific intervals. Participants emphasized that university administrators should be appointed based on merit. Participants stated that it would be more democratic if rectors were elected from among the academic staff at the university instead of being appointed. This study is expected to contribute to the literature, policy-makers in higher education administration, university senior management, academics, and researchers.

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