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THE TIME USE OF TURKISH ACADEMICS

TÜRKİYE'DEKİ AKADEMİSYENLERİN ZAMAN KULLANIMI

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ÖZET:
Bu makalede Türk akademisyenlerinin zamanı kullanma alışkanlıkları araştırılmıştır. Bunun için Diamantopoulos ve diğ. (1992) tarafından geliştirilen 20 maddelik ölçme aracı Türk yüksek öğretimine uyarlanarak kullanılmıştır. Anket Ağustos-2007 de internet üzerinden uygulanmıştır. Araştırmanın çerçevesi, 54 farklı üniversiteden 17,756 akademisyeni içermektedir ve araştırmacı tarafından üniversitelerin web sitelerinden toplanarak oluşturulmuştur. Anket rastlantıal olarak belirlenen 6,000 akademisyene gönderilmiş ve % 28,6 cevaplanma yüzdesi ile 1,720 kullanılabilir anket formu elde edilmiştir. Analiz sonuçları akademisyenlerin uzun saatler boyunca çalıştıklarını ve çok farklı faaliyetlerle ilgilendikleri ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca korelasyon matrisinden elde edilen veriler, her bir faaliyet için harcanan sürenin bir diğer faaliyet için ayrılan süreyi doğrudan etkilediğini göstermektedir.
Anahtar kelimeler: Akademisyen, üniversite, zaman kullanımı, zaman yönetimi, profil, Türkiye.

ABSTRACT:
In this article, how the academics in Turkish Universities use their time explored. The context is provided by an examination of individual and institutional demographic factors and time-use of academics. A modified version of the Diamantopoulos et.al.' (1992) 20 - item survey instrument is used to define how academics spend their time. A questionnaire was conducted in August 2007, via the Internet. The sampling frame with 17,756 academics from 54 universities was developed by collecting e-mail addresses from the universities' web pages. A total of 6,000 questionnaires were administered to randomly selected respondents. Of those, 1720 usable questionnaires were returned providing a response rate of 28.6 percent. The findings from frequency analyses show that academics work for long hours and deal with a wide range of work-related activities occupying a significant portion of their time. An analysis of the correlation matrix also suggests that there are trade-offs between the time spent on various activities.
Keywords: Academics, university, time-use, time management, profile, Turkey.

1. INTRODUCTION

Most higher education institutions have a mission to offer a high quality learning experience to all their students. The academics achieve this learning experience and are the main interface with the students. Their performance determines, to a large extent, the quality of the student experience of higher education and have a significant impact

on student learning and thereby on the contribution that such institutions can make to society. Indeed, most attempts to evaluate academic institutions are in one way or another, concerned with staff quality (e.g.Mankelow & Polonsky, 2001; Hetzel, 2000; Oshagbemi, 2000, Rowley 1996). Recently, The Council of Turkish Higher Education (YOK, 2001: 149) also expressed its concern that "The most important challenge for the Turkish Higher Education is the lack of qualified academics". However, despite the crucial role academics undoubtedly play in the quality of higher education, little appears to be known about their characteristics in Turkey.

This study addresses the "time use" of academics in Turkey. It considers the questions of "Who are we?" and "What do we do?". The answer to the question "Who are we?" in addition to being of interest in its own right, provides information to appreciate and fully comprehend the time use of academics. The time use of academics is important for a number of reasons. It may reveal, for instance, the nature of academic work. Many researchers have studied how academics spend their time in order to find out the characteristics of their jobs (e.g. Mankelow & Polonsky, 2001; Hetzel, 2000; Diamantopoulos *et.al.,* 1992). To understand the contents or subject matter of academic work, or academics' roles, a study of academic time allocation has also been performed in a limited manner (e.g. Baker & Erdoğan, 2000). Furthermore, it is beneficial to understand how academics spend their time, by gaining information on how they attach importance to different aspects of their jobs. Since time is a scarce resource, how an academician spend his or her time is vital for productivity and, indeed, for organizational success process. Academic allocation of time, among several activities, can also be used in order to measure the importance attached to those activities by the academics. Finally, without necessarily implying that there is a "right" or wrong" way of spending one's time, a knowledge of the pattern of academic time allocation may provide a limited view of effective and ineffective practices in managing academics' time. Studying the details of his or her actual time allocation is desirable for every academician who wants to be successful in the management of his or her time. This helps to see if time is spent on some activities dis-proportionally with the expected benefits from those activities (Feldman & Hornik, 1981).

2. LITERATURE

A review of relevant literature through the Bibliography of Articles in Turkish Periodicals in the National Library of Turkey revealed that only thirty-four articles were published between 1995 to 2007. The search used " time management", "time use" and "time planning" as words in title during the investigation. Twenty-four, nine and one successful records were obtained for the words in title during the search period respectively. When this search was repeated through YOK thesis database, twenty-two thesis were recorded. The review at this stage included all sectors. When time-use studies relating to the academics were specifically sought both Bibliography of Articles in Turkish Periodicals of National Library of Turkey and YOK Thesis Database revealed that there were no articles or thesis regarding this subject. Motivated in part because of the identified gaps in the knowledge, the current research was conducted.

However, in developed countries, some studies have been carried out on "time-use" of academics. For example, the Journal of Marketing Management has included a

series of articles that focused on time-use among marketing academics in the United Kingdom (Diamantopoulos *et.al.,* 1992; Baker & Erdoğan, 2000), the United States of America (Polonsky & Mankelow, 2000), France (Hetzel, 2000), Austria, Germany and Switzerland (Sinkovics & Schelgelmich, 2000), Australia and New Zealand (Mankelow & Polonsky, 2001). In all those studies, researchers tried to visualize the current situation of marketing academia and to find out its future status in terms of time use.

The research presented within this paper broadens the above discussion by examining the time-use of all academics in Turkey. However, the study is primarily descriptive in nature and the coverage of all the relevant literature on the time-use of academics is beyond the scope of the study.

3. METHODOLOGY

There are both direct and indirect approaches to collect time-use data. The direct methods are of two main kinds – the diary and structured observation. Generally, the advantage of direct methods are those of greater reliability. However, they have the disadvantage of greater cost in terms of money and effort. In addition, the sample size obtainable from direct approaches is generally small and it prevents generalizing the results obtained. On the other hand, by using indirect approaches such as interview and questionnaire administration, many more respondents can be reached. Additionally, indirect methods are faster and more amenable to analyze easily.

In this study, questionnaire administration is used to benefit from the given advantages of indirect approaches. However, it is essential to remind that indirect methods also suffer from the great disadvantage that people's estimates of how they spend their time may be wrong and the researcher may not be able to judge to what extent they are wrong, or in what direction.

3.1. Questionnaire

This study used a modified version of the Diamantopoulos *et.al.* (1992) survey instrument. This contained 20 questions (See: Appendix) which can be classified into academic background, individual activities and demographics (Stinson, 1999).

3.2. Sample

The questionnaire was conducted in August 2007, via the Internet. The population for this study comprised academics in Turkey. The sampling frame which has 17,756 academics from 54 universities was developed by collecting e-mail addresses from universities' web pages. A total of 6,000 questionnaires were administered to randomly selected respondents. 1,720 usable questionnaires were returned yielding a response rate of 28.6 percent.

3.3. Statistical methods

Given the study's focus, the examination of the data is primarily descriptive. So, the analyses of data were generally restricted to simple descriptive statistics – means, percentages, standard deviations and frequency distributions. In addition, correlation

coefficients were used to depict trade-offs between the time spent.

3.4. Demographic characteristics of the sample

Some relevant demographic characteristics of the sample are summarized in Table I. These characteristics are academic titles, age, gender, length of service in higher education, length of service in present university, marital status, areas of academic discipline and administrative duties carried out.

The first variable to be examined is the academic title of the respondent. This variable is relevant as it enables a preliminary examination of the "representatives" of the sample in terms of all academics employed in Turkish universities. Table I shows that majority of the respondents were research assistants as expected (about 22 percent). But there is also considerable number of associate professors (about 10 percent) and professors (about 14 percent) appearing to be representative of the percentage of these top academics in the target population. The percentage of readers and assistant professors (about 23 and 20 percent respectively) were also similar to the overall distribution of Turkish academics (YOK, 2005).

The area of academic discipline is the second variable providing support for the representatives of the sample. The information in Table I shows that the academic backgrounds of the respondents were very wide and cover almost all subject areas at the universities. Similar to YOK's data, the largest population of academics belongs to "social sciences" (about 35 percent) and "medicine/pharmacy/dentistry" (about 23 percent). Next come the technical sciences with 14 percent. Other areas of academic disciplines such as literature, agriculture, arts etc. amount to about 19 percent also consistent with YOK's data (2006). Consequently, based on the distribution of academic titles and area of academic discipline, the sample appears to be representative of the academics in Turkey.

The Approximate Position of Table -1

However, our report indicates a much higher population of academics working in private universities (about 10 percent) than that of the YOK's (about 6 percent) data (2000). This is the only striking difference between the two reports. It implies that private university academics were over represented in our survey. This variation is primarily due to sampling methodology. Since the academics in private universities have more technological resources, higher response rate compared to public universities to the Internet surveys can be accepted as normal. Furthermore, since the difference is just four percent, it will have limited effect on the research findings.

The distribution of the length of service spent in higher education shows that respondents including relative new comers who had spent less than five years (about 23 percent) to academics who had spent more than 30 years in the university system (about 4 percent) and even to academics who had spent more than 20 years in the university system (about 21 percent). As expected, a large number of academics (about 72 percent) fall in somewhere between new comers, and the academics with a long period of

service.

It is necessary to state that 35 percent of the academics had not worked for more than five years in their present universities. The percentage is about 2/3 times larger than the corresponding percentage of academics who had worked in higher education for the same length of time. This comparison suggests some rates of staff turnover, retirement, or new recruitment necessitated maybe because of expansion of universities, which makes about one third of the academic staff relatively new in their present institutions. In fact about 63 percent of the respondents had worked for only ten years or less in their present universities. The corresponding figure for those who had worked in higher education during the same period is 42 percent .

About 18 percent of respondents held managerial posts as a head of department or division, director of school, dean of faculty or head of a unit e.g. an institute or a centre. The percentage of those who held other management posts, such as chairperson of research group, project coordinator, director of undergraduate programs, etc was about 21 percent. With 60.7 percent, it is clear that the majority of respondents were not currently in charge of academic unit or group. However, it does not follow that this group did not have any administrative assignments, at least occasionally, if not on regular basis.

It was observed that the percentage of respondents who were less than 40 years old were about 66 percent. It's markedly skewed towards to "younger" ages with only two percent of respondents above 60 years of age. This rather pleasing picture, gives the answers to the questions about effective long-run replacement within the profession.

The last demographic variable to be examined is the gender. Only about 26.2 percent of respondents were females. In other words, men outnumber women by ratio of 3 to 1 indicating that "academia is a man's world!" (Diamantopoulos *et.al.*, 1992). According to Hetzel (2000), the time factor, the passing of time, is a critical variable in bringing about gender equity in academia. But our data do not provide support for this hypothesis. About 69 percent of female respondents are younger than 40 whereas about 64 percent of respondents are under the age of 40. Thus, it seems very difficult for the Turkish Higher Education to become gender balanced in the near future.

4. THE TIME USE OF ACADEMICS

Academics were asked about their total hours committed to their academic role, and this is found to be 54.6 hours per week on average. It is interesting to note that 56 percent of respondents worked more than 50 hours per week, while legal employment conditions[1] in Turkey specify 40 hours of work per week.

Table II illustrates that academics undertake a diverse but a broad range of role related activities: teaching undergraduates and postgraduates, teaching preparation, extracurricular activities, administrative duties, research and writing, keeping up with developments, and outside work. Furthermore, there was strong anecdotal evidence that increasing work demands were being placed on academics, as several respondents commented that some of the activities were not included in the survey.

[1] Article 657 state officers' code.

4.1. The time spent on different activities

In terms of allocation of time by Turkish academics, the single most time consuming activity is teaching undergraduates with a percentage of 20 all of the samples. If, however, we combine undergraduate teaching with postgraduate teaching (9 percent) and teaching preparation (13 percent), the teaching related activities would be 41 percent of total time.

The second priority was research and writing (17 percent), and, if combined with keeping up with new developments (10 percent), overall research activities would take 37 percent of total time. This statistics can be explained by the fact that the widespread American maxim "publish or perish" is becoming more and so true in Turkey.

"Extracurricular activities" also appear to be a relatively high priority (12 percent), suggesting that many academics spend noteworthy period of time with activities such as psychological counseling of students, attending meetings or seminars, preparing exam questions, doing surgery or physical examination etc. Since extracurricular activities are wide and differ from discipline to discipline, it would be difficult to make meaningful interpretation of this statistical analysis. On the other hand, "medicine/pharmacy/dentistry" comes first with the ratio of 26 percent, as expected. It is followed by "technical sciences" with 14 percent. The academics in other than these two disciplines, spend 8 to 11 percent of their time for extracurricular activities. It is also interesting that, on average, "administrative duties" accounted for 11 percent of an academician's time, the fourth most time consuming activity behind teaching, research and extracurricular activities. The time used for administrative duties is also important because many short and various activities, especially where they occur intermittently hamper sustained concentration, which is desirable to deal properly with academic issues.

The Approximate Position of Table -2

The fifth highest priority was "keeping up with developments" (10 percent), which may suggest that many academics spend some of their free time considering their discipline with related disciplines with greater perspective. Consequently, this time use habit may contribute to academics' general understanding of how their discipline integrates with others and, accordingly, broadens opportunities to draw from a more diverse set of literatures.

The activity attracting relatively small proportion of academics' time is "outside work" (6 percent). Limited involvement in outside work may be important within a bigger picture, for this activity might provide opportunities for Turkish academics to keep up with the current practices and interact with the real word. Globally, the importance of these linkages has also been highlighted in the professional literature, for

example many firms suggest that academics do not understand the realities of business environment within Turkey**.**

4.2. The trade-offs between the time spent

The correlation coefficients in Table III indicates that 23 of the 28 pairs of correlations are significant; there is a positive or negative relationship between these pairs. Except for the correlation between "keeping up with developments" and "research and writing", all other correlations have negative signs, indicating that the more you undertake one activity the lesser participation you spend in another.

It is noteworthy that the amount of time spent on "keeping up with developments" is positively correlated with time spent on "research and writing". This may suggest that these two variables create synergies with each other. Academics who are interested in keeping up with developments are motivated to participate in research studies and writing.

The strong negative relationships between "research and writing" and teaching activities – "teaching undergraduates", "teaching postgraduates" and "teaching preparation", relate to the question of "Are we turning academics into teachers?".

As might be expected, an increased administrative duty reduces the amount of time spent for all other activities. Especially, they have strong negative effects on research and writing activities.

No significant correlations, however, could be found for "teaching preparation" with "teaching undergraduates" and "teaching postgraduates". While this was surprising at first, the fact that the teaching preparation is related to lecture variety, not period, was considered to be an explanation for the insignificant results.

4.3. The demographic classification of time use

Our findings also show that the academics at administrative positions tend to work for longer hours than those who does not have such responsibilities. Another finding is that academics who work in private universities spend more time than those who work in public universities. Our findings also reveal that male academics work longer hours than their female counterparts.

Interestingly, academic title, age, length of service in present university and length of service in higher education are negatively correlated with the time spent. In other words, senior academics, who have longer service in present university or in higher education tend to spend less time when compared with inexperienced academics. This can have several explanations: it can be due to the academician's work motivation. Most younger academics have personal motivation to promote through their careers. Hence, they put in many hours of work. The motivation is strengthened by the conviction that they are working for themselves. However, some of their excessively long working hours may be explained in terms of their poor working habits, in particular, inefficient use of time.

However, with regard to all time estimates, one has to keep in mind that respondents were asked to answer the questions in relation with the "term time". Thus,

it may well be true that the length of the working week and the time spent on research are substantially different during the teaching-free period of the year. Furthermore, average working hours should, however, is interpreted with caution as these often do not reveal variations. Yet, the variability in working hours by academics could be substantial. Even in the case of the same academician, different working hours may be obtained from one week to the next. Finally, for most academics, work is present in their minds during leisure time and therefore, measuring how much time they spend at work has to be taken cautiously.

The Approximate Position of Table -3

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper offers an examination of Turkish academics, who they are and what they do. The findings from frequency analyses show that academics work long hours and deal with diverge range of work-related activities that consume varying amounts of their time.

In terms of pressures placed on Turkish academics, "teaching undergraduates" were associated with the highest mean amount time (20 percent), and if combined with "teaching postgraduates" (9 percent) and "teaching preparation" (13 percent), "overall teaching" would be the first ranking (41 percent) activity. The second-highest priority is research (19 percent), and it is followed by "extracurricular activities" (12 percent). The time spent on administrative duties (11 percent) comes prior to time spent on "keeping up with developments" (10 percent). Interestingly "outside work" is the least time consuming activity (6 percent).

An analysis of the correlation matrix suggested that there are trade-offs between the time spent on various activities. Especially the detrimental effects of administrative duties on all other academic activities are apparent. The other important trade-off is between "teaching undergraduates" and "research and writing" which should be taken into consideration when allocating limited resource-time.

This paper, although the development of country-based "time-use" profiles is an important step, leaves room for interpretation and calls for future research: a more in-depth look into the nature of academic jobs may provide interesting insights. Notwithstanding the fact that the academics spend relatively less time with outside work, future investigations may try to identify the causes and effects of this situation. Additional insights may also be obtained from analyzing time-use patterns of academics at different locations – home , university, field, etc. and with different groups of people.

Yet, the importance of the effective use of time can not be over emphasized. Time is important and the only economic resource which is commonly accepted by all academics.

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Table 1 Breakdown of respondents by academic title, area of interest, pulbic-private affiliation, teaching experince in higher education, years of employment in the current institution, administrative works, age and gender.

		Frequency	Percent
Titles	Research Assistant	573	33.2
	Reader	396	23.0
	Assistant Professor	347	20.1
	Associate Professor	161	9.5
	Professor	243	14.1
Areas of Academic Discipline*	Literature	84	4.8
	Mathematics/physics/chemistry/biology	164	9.5
	Medicine/pharmacy/dentistry	390	22.6
	Social Sciences	594	34.5
	Technical Sciences	246	14.3
	Agriculture	150	8.7
	Art	32	1.8
	Other	60	3.4
Affiliation	Public	1560	89.8
	Private	160	10.2
Teaching experince in higher education	Less than 5	396	23.2
	6-10	336	19.5
	11-20	617	35.9
	21-30	301	17.3
	Over 30	70	4.1
Length of service in present university	Less than 5	610	35.4
	6-10	461	26.8
	11-20	399	23.1
	21-30	203	11.7
	Over 30	47	2.7
Administrative responsibility	Head, director, dean etc.	308	17.9
	Holding other managerial posts	368	21.3
	Not currently in charge of an academic group	1044	60.7
Age	Less than 30	354	20.6
	31 – 40	778	45.2
	41 – 50	360	20.9
	51 – 60	190	11.0
	Over 60	38	2.2
Gender	Male	1304	75.8
	Female	416	24.2

Note: **The classification of area of academic discipline is consistent with YOK's classification.*

Table 2 Allocation of the Time of Academics

		Frequency	Percent
Teaching undergraduates (% 20.3)	nil	16	0.9
(x_{ort} = 10.9, sd = 7.6, n = 1720)	1-5 %	170	9.8
	6-15 %	512	29.7
	16-30 %	658	38.2
	31-50 %	322	18.7
	50 % +	42	2.4
Teaching postgraduates (% 8.7)	nil	50	2.9
(x_{ort} = 4.6, sd = 4.1, n = 1720)	1-5 %	612	35.6
	6-15 %	822	47.8
	16-30 %	216	12.5
	31-50 %	20	1.2
	50 % +	0	0
Teaching preparation (% 13.4)	nil	6	0.3
(x_{ort} = 7.2, sd = 4.5, n = 1720)	1-5 %	216	12.5
	6-15 %	920	53.4
	16-30 %	516	30.0
	31-50 %	62	3.6
	50 % +	0	0
Extracurricular activities (% 11.9)	nil	24	1.4
(x_{ort} = 6.8, sd = 7.2, n = 1720)	1-5 %	458	26.6
	6-15 %	816	47.4
	16-30 %	316	18.3
	31-50 %	96	5.6
	50 % +	10	0.6
Administrative duties (% 10.8)	nil	66	3.8
(x_{ort} = 6.1, sd = 7.7, n = 1720)	1-5 %	700	40.7
	6-15 %	538	31.2
	16-30 %	282	16.4
	31-50 %	120	6.9
	50 % +	14	0.8
Research and writing (% 18.6)	nil	4	0.2
(x_{ort} = 10.0, sd = 7.4, n = 1720)	1-5 %	106	6.1
	6-15 %	754	43.8
	16-30 %	580	33.7
	31-50 %	240	13.9
	50 % +	36	2.1
Keep up with developments (% 9.9)	nil	6	0.3
(x_{ort} = 5.4, sd = 4.5, n = 1720)	1-5 %	452	26.2
	6-15 %	1000	58.1
	16-30 %	238	13.8
	31-50 %	24	1.4
	50 % +	0	0
Outside work (% 6.1)	nil	110	6.3
(x_{ort} = 3.3, sd = 3.8, n = 1720)	1-5 %	938	54.5
	6-15 %	560	32.5
	16-30 %	98	5.7
	31-50 %	12	0.7
	50 % +	2	0.1

Table 3: Correlation Matrix – The Time Spent on Different Activities

Pearson correlations	Teaching undegraduates	Teaching postgraduates	Teaching preperation	Extracurricular activities	Administrative duties	Research and writing	Keep up with developments	Outside work
Teaching undegraduates	1							
Teaching postgraduates	-.109**	1						
Teaching preperation	.004	0.09	1					
Extracurricular activities	-.233**	-.090**	-.196**	1				
Administrative duties	-.217**	-.068*	-.135**	-.129**	1			
Research and writing	-.368**	-.211**	-.207**	-.181**	-.321**	1		
Keep up with developments	-.325**	-.156**	-.144**	-.144**	-.173**	.273**	1	
Outside work	-.156**	-.060	-.116**	-.028	-.106**	-.093**	-.025	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Appendix Time Use of Academics Questionnaire

The rapid developments in higher education, in recent years, have considerable effect on several areas expertise, especially in education of research activities.

Still, the number of research made, regarding the degree of impact and direction of subject is very limited.

We believe that, below "Time Use of Academics Questionnaire" consisting 20 questions, will supply useful information for the evaluation of existing academic environment and will be the cornerstone for future research.

You may check the actual results of the research by selecting "Show Questionnaire Results" button after sending the form.

We thank you in advance for your contribution.

Dr. Türker BAŞ

Time Use of Academics Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions taking into consideration the time spent in an academic year.

1. Time spent for lecturing undergraduate courses (Answer the question considering whether you have to give someone else's lecture or just the opposite).

….. hours per week in average.

2. Time spent while lecturing postgraduates (Take into consideration the particular condition in previous question).

….. hours per week in average.

3. Time spent for the preparation of the course

….. hours per week in average.

4. Time spent for extracurricular activities in your university (e.g. preparing exam questions, surgery etc.).

….. hours per week in average.

5. Time spent for administrative duties.

….. hours per week in average.

6. Time spent for the research of a predetermined subject.

….. hours per week in average.

7. Time spent to follow-up the innovations in your area of expertise.

….. hours per week in average.

8. Time spent for outside work.

….. hours per week in average.

Title
[ ]Research Assistant [ ]Reader [ ]Assistant Professor [ ]Associate Professor [ ]Professor

Areas of academic Discipline*
[ ] Literature
[ ] Mathematics/physics/chemistry/biology
[ ] Medicine/pharmacy/dentistry
[ ] Social Sciences
[ ] Technical Sciences
[ ] Agriculture
[ ] Art
[ ] Other

University
[ ] Public [ ] Private

Length of service in higher education
[ ] Less than 5 [ ] 6-10 [ ] 11-20 [ ] 21-30 [ ] At least 31

Length of service in present university
[ ] Less than 5 [ ]11-20 [ ] 21-30 [ ]At least 31

Leadership or management responsibility
[ ] Head, director, dean etc.
[ ] Holding other managerial posts
[ ] Not currently in charge of an academic group or unit

Age
[ ] Less than 30 [ ] 31–40 [ ] 41–50 [ ] 51–60 [ ] At least 61

Gender
[ ] Male [ ] Female