Socialization at Universities: A Case Study[1]

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Abstract
    Socialization process has a significant impact on learning, which is a basic requirement for both the organization and the role performance of the newcomer to the organization. It is considered very important for a new member to socialize organizationally and professionally. This paper focuses on revealing the process of organizational and professional socialization of academicians. In accordance with this purpose, in-depth interviews were conducted with 14 research assistants from various fields as representative of the academician group. The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed by content analysis method and some conceptual determinations were generated. According to the findings, almost all the academicians did not encounter any practice or socialization tool that would make them feel belonging to the profession and the organization or that would ensure their harmony with the institution they were in. The participants, who stated that they try to learn both the requirements of the profession and the problems they encounter in the organization mostly by their own individual efforts, stated that they achieved satisfaction far below their expectations, especially at the entry stage. As a result, it has been revealed that academicians are mostly alone in the process of learning academic life from the pre-entry stage to the settlement stage. It is necessary to establish certain programs at each university in order to socialize research assistants, who are in the first phase of the path to becoming faculty members, both in the organizational and professional context. It is further recommended that activities should be organized that will provide the following: direct assistance for time management, understanding scientific/academic processes, and learning organizational norms and values.

Keywords: Socialization, organizational, professional, academician

Introduction
    Socialization is basically a lifelong learning process. Through this process, the individual becomes an actual member of society, learns culture as a way of life, assimilates and lives within it. Organizational socialization is a state in which the individual is a conscious member of the

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[1] This study's results were presented as an oral presentation at the 12th International Congress on Educational Administration

organization he/she works in. In other words, organizational socialization is the process in which the employee gets out of being an outsider and becomes an insider (Reichers, 1987). Through organizational socialization, it is possible to persuade an employee to stay in the organization and to learn the norms and values of the organization (Champoux, 2011). According to Ashforth, Sluss, and Saks (2007), there are many studies that prove that socialization is especially significant for the newcomers' working life. This is because socialization is a serious process that affects not only the work of the employees but also the group they are in and the organization itself.

There are two basic dimensions of socialization: organizational and professional. Organizational socialization is a process whereby an employee learns basic rules and lifestyle. Professional socialization is another process when employees learn the attitudes and behaviors required by the profession. It is considered very important for a new member to socialize organizationally and professionally. On the other hand, seniors are required to follow the changes and developments in the organization and profession. As a matter of fact, socialization of an employee in both dimensions helps to increase her/his performance, increase the sense of commitment and belonging to the organization, and prevent leaving the job (Balcı, 2003). Therefore, in this study, examining both types of socialization was deemed worthy of research.

The socialization of academicians in Turkey is a process which is usually left to individual efforts of instructors. Compared to teachers, academicians do not go through various educational programs and activities (e.g., in-service training) which facilitate their socialization (Güçlü, 1996). In this regard, it is not possible to say that there is a formal program in the higher education system to support the socialization of academicians. For instance, the socialization of a research assistant both professionally and organizationally is based on what he/she learns from the relationship with the supervisors, as well as the individual efforts and experiences. When senior academicians come to a new institution, their socializations are rather based on the relationships with their colleagues and also knowledge gained from individual experiences. Time, experiences, and observations are important for an individual to acquire knowledge. There are no official regulations regarding the socialization of research assistants in the first phase of the academic life. Thus, it can be said that this issue has not been sufficiently emphasized in the literature. However, it should be noted that universities have different mentality and practices related to socialization within their own structures. Therefore, in the context of organizational socialization, the determination of the practices used in the socialization of research assistants in higher education, how they work, and the culture and values through which they are carried out has been a matter of curiosity. Thus, it is important to carry out this research.

Socialization process has a significant impact on learning, which is a basic requirement for both the institution and the role performance of the newcomer to the organization. In addition, it is clear that socialization makes a significant contribution to the adaptation of the employee during the work process (Ashforth, Saks & Lee, 1998; Bauer, Morrinson & Callister, 1998; Fisher, 1986; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). It was found that an adequate socialization experience, especially on the basis of organizational socialization, is significantly related to issues such as less role ambiguities, higher job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Therefore, it is evident that organizational socialization, performed within the framework of a structured learning or information program, minimizes the uncertainties that an individual may encounter in his first job experience and facilitates his progression in the organization (Ashforth, Saks & Lee, 1998). In addition, employees become compatible with their occupations, work environment, and colleagues through the socialization process (Champoux, 2011).

While some organizations provide adequate support for the newcomer to adapt to the environment, some prefer not to do anything. Newcomers often proactively seek information that will help their adaptation process. However, the socialization tactics developed by both the newcomer and the organization help to reduce the uncertainties experienced during the initial entry phase of the organization (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo & Tucker, 2007). In this context, Feldman (1981), Miller and Jablin (1991), and Bauer et al. (2007) draw attention to three basic factors for the employee orientation/adjustment period. These are defined as role clarity (reference information), self-efficacy (task mastery), and social acceptance.

Role clarity refers to what is expected or desired from the individual regarding his/her duties and roles in the organization. The role clarity provides the structure that outlines how the employee should relate with not only other colleagues and individuals in the organization but also his/her profession. The basic factors that will help the employee while on duty are as follows: Instructions or explanations about the job, organizational and professional procedures, organizational objectives, details of rules, informal networks, responsibilities, and organizational symbols and principles which exhibit the logic of the work (Miller & Jablin, 1991).

Self-efficacy means the confidence to learn the tasks required by the new job and to play the role acquired within the organization. In other words, self-efficacy contains information about how well the newcomer fulfills the requirements of the role (Bauer et al., 2007). This also provides information about the employee's value and capacity. Ashford and Cummings (1985) defined four main contents within this scope stated as performance feedback, progress-development potential, suitability of social behaviors, and competence of basic skills and abilities. Therefore, the self-efficacy of the newcomer facilitates the socialization within the scope of these four basic skills. More specifically, these four basic contents facilitate the adaptation of the employee in the socialization process while revealing the employee's skills and competence (Ashford & Cummings, 1985).

Social acceptance is related to the quality of the relations with the members of the organization. In other words, social acceptance is defined as the feeling of being accepted and approved by the peers and an effort to organize themselves according to the group (Bauer et al., 2007). It is clear that these three basic elements that become prominent during the employee's adaptation process contribute to the individual in the socialization process.

When the literature is analyzed, it is understood that socialization is examined as a three-stage process, namely pre-entry (anticipatory), entry (encounter), and settlement phases (Champoux, 2011; Balcı, 2003). Nelson (1987) describes the pre-entry stage as the information that the individual has gained about the organization before joining the organization and the expectations that have been created as a result of this information. The entry/encounter phase is the process in which the employees obtain the necessary information usually in the first few months, which helps them organize their roles in the organization accordingly (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). The settlement stage, which is also called change, is a process in which individuals create their own values and a new role, along with the demands of the organization and the necessities of the job (Champoux, 2011).

Some authors (Bauer, Morrison & Callister, 1998; Feldman, 1976; Louis, 1980) use the terms "anticipatory socialization, accommodation, and adaptation/role management" in response to pre-entry, encounter, and settlement phases, respectively. According to Allen (2006) who uses similar concepts, socialization is a multistage process consisting of at least these three steps. Therefore, the socialization stage that is expected or designed in the mind before entering the organization, i.e., the stage where the newcomer enters the organization which can be called

encounter or accommodation, and the stage where the employee largely conforms and now manages the role are the steps that must be managed well in the socialization process (Allen, 2006). Consequently, it is important to manage the employee's socialization phases correctly. This is because the socialization process through which the newcomer enters the organization determines how he tries to make sense of the new environment. Subsequently, the way the organization has been established and made sustainable can also result to permanent effects organizationally.

Socialization of Academicians

The role of academicians, which is the focus of this study, has two dimensions: "teaching" and "research" in general. Although it is not well known as a third dimension, academicians also have a role of "serving the public" (Bogler & Kremer-Hayon, 1999). Academicians continue to work both as instructors and students throughout their careers in higher education institutions. Particularly, doctorate education is the first stage that enables these two functions to coexist. Prospective academicians often acquire information through research, which enables them to explore the reality (Austin & McDaniels, 2006). In some cases, they enter the class and give a lecture. More so, providing a supportive environment and climate for young faculty members for both institutional and professional socialization is an investment that will enable them to become better academicians in the future (Bogler & Kremer-Hayon, 1999).

While Austin (2002) considers doctoral education as a socializing tool to prepare for academic profession, she stated that the experience gained in doctorate is the first stage for academic career. Accordingly, this stage in which critical learning is required for the preparation of faculty members should be considered both in the context of the workplace (organizational) and in the context of the responsibilities required by the profession (professional). Similarly, when the literature is reviewed, it is seen that many authors (Anderson & Swazey, 1998; Golde, 1997; Nyquist & Sprague, 1992; Sprague & Nyquist, 1991) states that the postgraduate education process including assistantship (research assistant) should be considered as the first career stage of academic profession.

How easily a new faculty member adapts to academic life can vary according to the type of relationship an individual has with his/her colleagues. In addition, the senior faculty members' willingness to bridge over the newcomer to learn both outside and inside of the academic world is an important factor. Therefore, the newcomer who tries to be a part of the organization may be faced with a challenging process if he/she does not get enough support from the environment (Cawyer, Simonds & Davis, 2002). Some research on faculties indicates that academicians experience uncertainties about their performance expectations (not knowing what is required to successfully fulfill their professional responsibilities), and they constantly feel isolated or lonely at work (Bowen, 1986 cited in Cawyer et al., 2002; Olsen, 1993). As a result, Saks and Gruman (2018) examined newcomers' work engagement in the context of uncertainty reduction theory. According to the researchers, instead of providing the necessary resources to facilitate the newcomer's engagement and socialization, the focus should be on minimizing and reducing the negative effects of the job.

It can be said that research assistants, i.e., young academicians, experience a lot of stress both for the academic profession and the institution they work for. The lack of permanent staff state (job security), the inadequacy of their incomes to cover the expenses they need to make in order to continue their academic and social lives, and the anxiety of completing their postgraduate studies in a determined period are just a few of the reasons for accumulated stress. In addition, adaptation to a new role such as transition from student to faculty member, balance between work and family

life, self-confidence in the scientific environment, and being successful are other causes of stress (Bogler & Kremer-Hayon, 1999). With a successful socialization process, research assistants can get rid of extreme stress situations and easily adapt to both the academic profession and the institutional life of the faculties they work with.

Through the study of Kondakçı and Haser (2019) on 40 faculty members, the socialization of newcomers at universities was analyzed based on contextual and process factors. The research findings suggest that contextual factors are power dynamics, role models, organizational trust, and trust in top management. On the other hand, process factors include social interaction, information seeking and knowledge sharing, and participation. When the institutions provide these contextual and processual factors, the new faculty members express positive statements about their adaptation to the new work setting. Socialization agents (leaders, coworkers, mentors, etc.) are important contacts during socialization since these agents often interact with the newcomers, support them, and may play a responsive role when needed. These attitudes leave a positive effect and facilitate newcomers to seek information (Wang, Kammeyer-Mueller, Liu & Li, 2015).

Mishra (2020) suggests some strategic factors in higher education such as social networks, social capital, and social support. Conversely, Cranmer, Goldman, and Houghton (2019) suggest that self-leadership influences organizational newcomers' adjustment and subsequent commitment by assisting them in seeking organizational resources. Hence, organizations should enhance the self-leadership abilities of newcomers. Consequently, the newcomers contribute to their own socialization by been proactive.

It is considered significant how the research assistants working in state universities socialize both organizationally and professionally at all stages. Since there is limited availability of studies on this subject, it is important to carry out this study in order to eliminate this gap, and to assist politicians and practitioners on this point. Thus, the aim of this study is to describe, as a whole, the organizational and professional socialization process of research assistants who are in the first phase of academic profession. Therefore, the following general questions have been raised:

1. What were the expectations and thoughts of the research assistants about the profession at the pre-entry stage? (b) How were their socialization experiences for the profession at the entry stage? (c) How do they socialize professionally during the settlement stage?
2. How were the institutional and organizational socialization experiences of the research assistants in the pre-entry period? b) How were the organizational socialization experiences of research assistants during the entry phase? (c) How do they socialize organizationally during the settlement phase?

Method
Research Design
The case study, which is one of the qualitative research patterns, was used in this research. The aim is to reveal the experiences of research assistants working in state universities regarding professional and organizational socialization processes. Case study is actually a way of looking at what is happening in the environment, gathering data systematically, analyzing, and revealing the results. The revealed knowledge or output enables one to understand why the event took place that way and what to focus on for further research (Davey, 2009). Case study is a detailed analysis of one person or a group of people. However, in case studies, a case or a situation is more than just an easily identified individual or activity. The case being researched may be in the form of an activity (e.g., a campus celebration, learning to use a computer) or an ongoing process (student learning/teaching) (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012).

Case study research may include several cases, i.e., multiple case studies (Gerring, 2007). This study is also designed to investigate the status of research assistants on more than one subject, including pre-entry, entry, and settlement periods. Therefore, this research is handled with holistic multiple case assessment method, which is one of the case study types. Through this design, it is possible to reveal how research assistants socialize and attribute meaning to it. According to Merriam (2013), qualitative case studies have three main characteristics, namely certainty, intuition, and description. Certainty focuses on a particular event or phenomenon while description enables intensive depiction of the final output obtained from the case study, i.e., the case under investigation. Intuition, on the other hand, enables the reader to better understand the case in the study which increases the experience or confirms the knowledge gained through the case study (Merriam, 2013). Nonetheless, much attention has been given to the study to ensure that it has these three characteristics.

Study Group/Participants

In this study, the organizational and professional socialization processes of research assistants were investigated. This group, which is accepted at the beginning stage of the academic profession also learns what the profession requires, along with the basic values and norms related to the organization and its duties. A working duration of at least three years has been accepted for the research assistants in order to provide the condition to determine their experiences regarding all stages, including the settlement stage which is the last stage of organizational and professional socialization. During the study, interviews were made with the research assistants working in different departments of the education faculties in three state universities in Ankara.

The study group was formed by the "maximum diversity" method. This method, which is used within the scope of purposive sampling, gives researchers an idea about how maximum differences can be obtained in a small sample. In other words, this method can identify a common pattern or phenomenon from different characteristic structures (Patton, 2014). For this purpose, interviews were conducted with 14 research assistants. Two assistants represented the following departments: the education administration, program development, assessment and evaluation, pre-school teaching, primary school teaching, computer and instructional technology education (CITE) and special education. The distribution of the research assistants participating in the study in terms of various variables was given in Table 1.

Table 1. *Distribution of Research Assistants*

Department	Number of participants	Seniority at the university (year)
Assessment and Evaluation	2	4-3
Special Education	2	4-6
Education Administration	2	6-5
Preschool Teaching	2	4-3
Program Development	2	5-6
Primary School Teaching	2	3-5
CITE	2	6-6
Total	14	

In qualitative studies, study group should be preferred instead of sample since such studies are conducted with few individuals or units. The individuals or units forming the study group should be introduced with all relevant characteristics. Information regarding the context of the study group should also be explained here.

Data Analysis

The interview results obtained during the research were analyzed through content analysis. The opinions obtained from each question in the interview form were deciphered. This was later coded independently by two researchers. Thus, the data were analyzed and coded in a "blind" format for the reliability of the study (Cresswell, 2014). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985 cited in Merriam, 2013), auditing technique is a method recommended for ensuring internal validity and consistency. With this technique, an independent reader can verify the research findings by following the methods and ways used by the researcher. Accordingly, an independent researcher who is an expert at qualitative research checked the codes, themes, and quotations in this study.

In order to increase the validity and reliability of the research, rich and dense definitions were included. Rich and dense description is a technique in which the researcher describes his experiences during data collection in a detailed way (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 cited in Arastaman, Öztürk-Fidan & Fidan, 2018). In this study, the views of the participants were included with direct quotations, and the categories created with these views were clarified. Subsequently, the validity of the study was tested also. In addition, participant confirmation was used in this study. The participant confirmation process involves testing the comments made by the researcher based on the data obtained from the participants. This is achieved by sharing them again with the participants in the research. This process gives the researcher the opportunity to determine whether the comments made by the participants based on their views really reflect the experiences expressed by the participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 cited in Arastaman et al., 2018).

Interviews were recorded on a volunteer basis for the validity of data collection and analysis. In this way, data loss was prevented and the data obtained from the interviews was controlled. As suggested by Freankel et al. (2012), the context of the questions in the interview form was explained when needful. Also, based on request, questions were repeated in order to make the data understandable and consistent. To assess the validity of the data analysis, the codes and the categories' rationality has been continuously examined. In addition, the developed codes and categories have been reported in detail. Furthermore, the opinions of the participants were quoted partly. The findings obtained from the study have been associated with the relevant research findings as the occasion arises. Participants were also coded as A1, A2… A13, A14 in the text.

Findings

In the research, the content analysis results of the information acquired for each question in the interview form are given below.

Reasons of Being Research Assistant

The reasons that led the participants to become research assistants are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Reasons of Being Research Assistant*

Theme	Basic Quotes	Total View (f)

Career desire	• Desire to reach more people. • Being a dream job. • To advance in the career.	14
Desire to contribute to science and discover	• To live life meaningfully and to answer the question of what is real. • Feeling free. • Intense curiosity to science, learning, and research. • The desire to be in touch with academics, to produce and to participate in scientific activities.	8
Desire to take more opportunities	• More opportunities than school teaching. • Providing convenience for self-improvement. • Participating in scientific activities more than school teaching. • Being more active than other professions.	6
Attractiveness of the profession and external factors	• Appearing more attractive and reputable than school teaching or other professions. • The impact of the environment and point of view to the profession. • Feeling free compared to school teaching and having a desk job. • Higher salary than public school teachers.	5

As seen in Table 2, the desire to have an academic career is the most stated motivation among the reasons why the participants become academicians (f: 14). Accordingly, the most important factor for the participants to choose this profession is because it is their dream occupation. In addition, the desire to reach more people and the presence of steps in the fields of this profession are among the other factors that make the profession attractive.

It has been understood that the research assistants' ways of obtaining pre-entry information about their profession are mostly through individual efforts (internet, consulting teachers, reading relevant regulations, observing teachers in the university, etc.). Their interest in the profession is seen as the most important reason for their research on this issue. In addition, the academic profession looks more attractive and more reputable than some profession groups, the effect of the environment and the point of view to the profession, as well as the thought of having a desk job are among the reasons for choosing this profession. However, it seems possible to say that there are still some research assistants who do not put in any effort to learn something related to the profession in pre-entry stage. There are also research assistants who learn by letting things flow during master and doctorate education process.

Problems Encountered in the Professional and Organizational Context
The themes in Figure 1 were collated when the expectations of the researchers regarding the socialization practices in the organizational and professional context were examined.
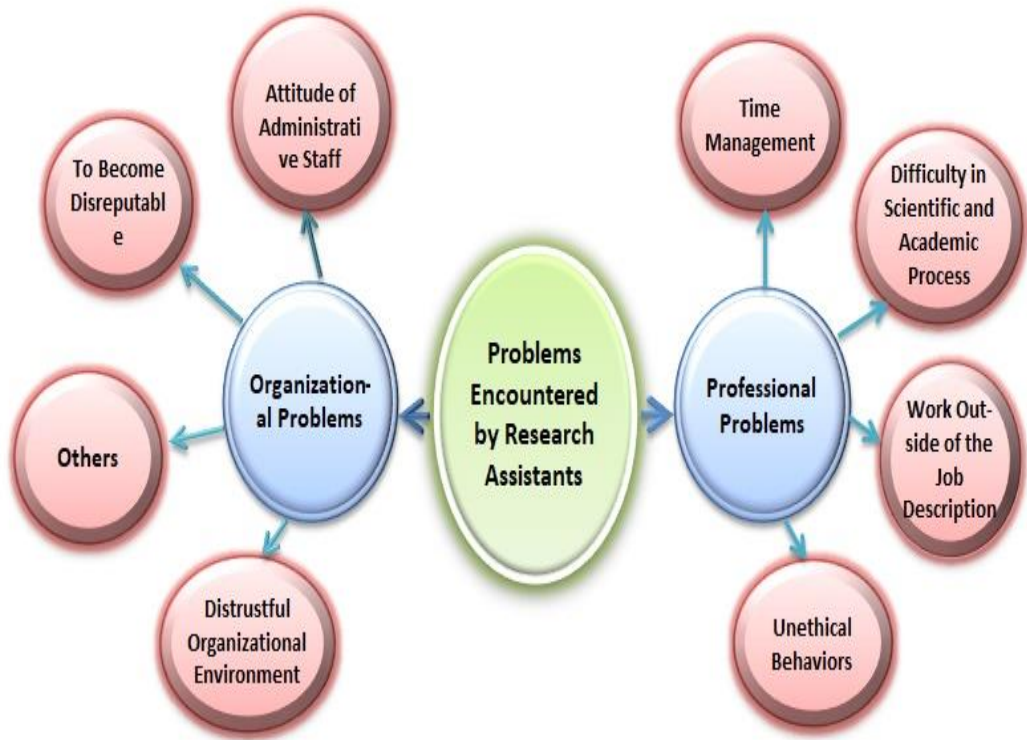
Figure 1. *Problems Encountered by Research Assistant*

As seen in Figure 1, the themes related to the problems faced by the research assistants in the entry stage are dealt with in two different contexts: the organizational and professional context. When the problems related to the profession are analyzed, four basic categories, namely time management, difficulty in scientific and academic processes, work outside of the job description and unethical behaviors, have been created. Similarly, four basic categories have been created within the context of organizational problems such as the attitude of administrative staff, disreputability, distrustful organization environment, and others.

The formatted quotations regarding the contents of general themes related to the problems faced by research assistants are given in Table 3.

Table 3. *The Problems Encountered both Professionally and Organizationally*

Theme	Basic Quotes	Total View (f)
Time Management Problem	• Retard the works, doing things when going home. • Inability to have time for himself/herself and for other works. • Need to study out of working hours. • Too little time left for family and private life.	14

Having Difficulty in Academic or Scientific Processes	• Become distanced from the basic information of the field, having difficulty. • Inability to attend to surroundings to do research. • Inability to participate in discussions about practices in lessons. • Being unfamiliar with the scientific research processes. • Having difficulty in scientific processes such as academic writing and data analysis. • Not knowing exactly what to do during the research processes. • The laboriousness of catching up the studies and making contributions to the field.	12
Working not including Job content	• More paperwork than expected. • Too many administrative duties. • Too many works on the basis of departments rather than courses. Working like a civil servant. • Having too many undefined workloads.	18
Drifting into Unethical Situations	• Witnessing unethical behaviors of academicians (facilitating the processes of those they see close to themselves, giving high scores in graduate courses, and helping them to be tenured). • Feeling being used in research activities. • Being subjected to doing work behaviors such as substitute for lecturing and reading paperwork. • Being forced to give a lesson for undergraduate students without feeling ready.	11
Attitude of Administrative Staff	• Being ignored by administrative staff. • Gossiping about themselves with other academicians. • Communication problems and conflicts with administrative staff.	6
Distrustful Organization Environment	• Establishing benefit-based relationships. • Occurring groups, being labeled. • Having a remote organizational climate. • Lack of trustworthy people in the academic community. • Failure to keep a given secret, spreading rumors, gossiping a lot. • Knowing everyone by sight only but not getting to know in real. • Inability to express oneself freely. • Excessive respect and obedience expectations of superiors. • Relationships changing from person to person, based on nepotism.	24

Becoming Disreputable	• Feeling to be made inferior. • Not being able to get the respect deserved, to get short shrift. • The lack in understanding of superiors. • Getting physical appearance to intervene like clothing, mustache, and beard. • Interpreting the requirements of the research assistant position according to their own.	10
Others	• To question the nature of the work done. • Feeling the superiors fall short of the mark. • Not receiving the necessary academic support from superiors. • Official communication channels are not respected or given importance. • The job is not being done professionally. • Feeling as if one is flogging a dead horse. • Believing that the studies done at the university do not reach the basic problems.	10

It is observed from Table 3 that the theme which reveals the major problem encountered by research assistants in regard to the profession is the aspect of working beyond the job description (f: 18). Participants state that they are burdened with too much undefined work and they are given too many administrative duties that hinder their academic life. In addition, they express that research assistants have difficulties in their academic life and do not know exactly what to do in scientific processes, especially at the entrance stage. The views of one of the academicians who stated that he could spare little time for his private life and that his work was constantly disrupted or taken home was gathered under the theme of time management.

In the context of organizational problems, it is important to note that research assistants express their opinions the most on the theme of distrustful organizational environment (f: 24). Participants who stated that there are groupings in the organizational environment, whereby nobody actually knows each other and relations are developed based on self-interests, mostly complain that they could not express themselves freely. On the other hand, research assistants who think that the organization they are in makes their profession and their position worthless also state that they are not respected sufficiently within the organization. The expressions containing these thoughts are gathered under the theme of becoming disreputable. Other themes in the context of organizational problems are the attitude of administrative staff and other categories that include various expressions.

Problem Solving Tactics during Organizational and Professional Socialization

Two types of responses were developed when the problems faced by research assistants based on organizational and professional processes were examined. These reaction types are presented in Figure 2.
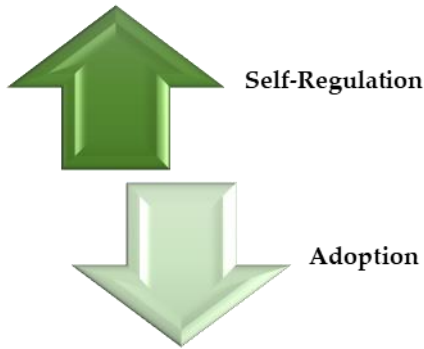
Figure 2. *Problem Solving Tactics*

It has been determined that research assistants cope with the problems they encounter during organizational and professional processes by adopting them or by self-regulation in their own lives. Considering the information obtained from the participants regarding these two strategies, it is seen that research assistants mostly tend to regulate themselves (f: 20) to solve problems. Participants organize their private lives according to the problem they encounter by changing their priorities and developing behaviors such as coming early, leaving late, and sleeping less. Also, they try to cope with the problems they encounter through certain ways such as counseling, getting help from experienced people, observing, and cooperating. However, it is observed that behaviors such as not questioning, accepting, withdrawing, and not reacting to the problem they encounter are also developed. These statements are gathered under the theme of adoption (f: 10). The process of how research assistants learn academic life was examined and the following statements were obtained in Table 4.

Table 4. *The Ways of Learning Academic Life*

Theme	Basic Quotes	Total View (f)
Experiences-Initiatives	• Learning through experiences. • By making mistakes. • By trying to get information from every relevant unit and person in the organization. • By individual efforts. • Observing. • Talking to other colleagues, getting opinions, and asking questions. • With experience gained over time. • Endeavoring to enter academic environments.	23
External Directions	• Via guidance of supervisor. • Through reprimands and warnings for mistakes made. • Urged by obligation in line with the assigned duties.	7

It is observed from Table 4 that the learning styles of research assistants about academic life takes place in two ways, namely experiences or initiatives and external orientation. The lack of a clear job description for research assistants in general can be regarded as an important problem. Based on the opinions examined, it is clear that research assistants learn what their profession expects from them and how they will enter into a learning process through experiences.

Organizational Activities and Individual Initiatives in Socialization of Research Assistants
According to the opinions received, it is understood that the universities do not organize any programs or launch initiatives for research assistants in terms of learning about university life. Almost all the research assistants stated that no activity or event was organized for them by their organization in the context of socialization. For example, one of the participants (R2) stated his views as follows:

Mostly, it didn't happen. As soon as I arrived, I was given administrative duties from four branches and I get membership in four commissions. I learned how things work in these commissions while I was doing those works. I did not participate in any orientation work. Therefore, my learning and initiatives completely happened due to reasons beyond my control in line with the tasks assigned to me.

Another participant (A4) expressed her opinion on this issue as follows:

No arrangements such as any event or orientation program were made for us. Learning about the culture of the organization was also something I learned through experiences. It was very scary at first to find myself involved in works that I did not know or were directed. Actually, it's still stressful and scary for me. But I admitted that I was entirely on my own to learn about works or any task given to me. If only someone had told me where the library or the cafeteria was when I first arrived at least. For example, someone could come to my room and give a welcome. At those days I felt so despised.

Occupational Integration
The data in Table 5 were collated when the reasons to feel or not feel a sense of belonging to the profession was examined.

Table 5. *Reasons to Feel or not Feel a Sense of Belonging to the Profession and Organization (Integration) States*

Theme	Basic Quotes	Total View (f)
Reasons to Feel a Sense of Belonging to the Profession	• Doing scientific research and studies with superiors and other colleagues. • When learning more about the profession academically. • When learning and self-improvement is acquired as a lifestyle. • Collaborating or carrying out a project with people from other departments.	7

	• Attending congresses, writing articles, and participating in projects and scientific events.	
Reasons to Feel a Sense of Belonging to an Organization	• Getting support of the organization and feeling like a part of the group. • More interaction with faculty members of the department. • Celebration of special days.	7
Reasons to not Feel a Sense of Belonging to the Profession	• Demands beyond professional qualifications. • Showing the practices as if done ideally, but not actually. • Worrying about the future position. • Constantly changing laws create insecurity for the profession. • Failure to reveal and determine exactly what is expected from the profession exactly. • Encountering changeable demands, not having fixed task content.	19
Reasons to not Feel a Sense of Belonging to an Organization	• Feeling out of the organizational culture. • Too many rumors and gossips. • Making research assistants undertake the tasks which officials need to do. • Inconsistency between what is done and what is said. • Staying in a room far from the department professors' rooms, experiencing disconnection. • Lack of trust to organization members and distrustful environment.	14

According to Table 5, research assistants mostly express their opinions on the reasons to not feel a sense of belonging to the profession (f: 19). Reasons such as the lack of an explicit job description regarding the profession, changeable demands, worrying about the future of the job, and having no constant law to protect the job are listed under this theme. More so, the fact that the research assistants do not feel the sense of belonging to the profession is mostly affected by their future anxiety.

Furthermore, research assistants are faced with some difficulties that make them not feel a sense of belonging to the organization. For instance, some research assistants feel left out of the organization culture and think there are too many gossips and rumors in the organizations. According to the assistants, there is also lack of trust between organization members and living in a distrustful environment. Therefore, undertaking faculty officials' tasks, the inconsistency between what is done and what is said, and having a study room far from other senior members of the department are listed under the theme of the reasons to not feel a sense of belonging to the organization.

Although some participants encounter adverse conditions, they think they feel integrated with the profession or they belong to the job. However, it has been stated that being in a distrustful and insecure environment makes them feel like an outsider in the organization. In particular, when

no effort is made to solve this situation, it makes their organizational commitment decrease. Thus, through examined opinions, it is evident that research assistants feel integrated with the profession because of the willingness to work. However, they do not feel a sense of belonging to the organization even though they encounter certain difficulties. One of the participants (A9) presented his opinion on this point as follows:

> I may say that I have a great integration with academic profession. I love searching. I love attending congresses, writing articles, writing projects, and participating in scientific projects. I may say I have a job that I feel good with. Of course, even if we have some troubles, fatigue and intensity, I feel mostly integrated with the work. But I cannot say that I feel a sense of belonging to the organizational environment. Because the culture I need to be in is far from the culture I was used to or imagine until now. There are a lot of rumors and gossip in faculty. In other words, I am not in an organization that I can lean on and trust. Unfortunately, I cannot trust most of the people here. Therefore, I may say that I do not feel myself belonging to the organizational environment to a great extent.

The question of "If you had the opportunity, would you like to quit academy or change your profession?" is posed to the participants and most of the research assistants (7 of them) replied that they would not want to quit at all. They prefer to cope with the stress, intensity of the work, and to make an effort to overcome even if they have difficulties at times. In line with the opinions received, it is understood that these research assistants preferred the profession long beforehand, willingly and fondly, and did not want to give up their ideals easily due to the difficulties they encountered. Instead of thinking about leaving the profession, research assistants choose to develop strategies or make some sacrifices to deal with the difficulties they face. The views of the two participants (A2 and A5, respectively) in this regard are as follows:

> No, I wouldn't want to. I already wanted this job very much, so I want to do good things in the future. I do not regret picking this job. From time to time, I complain a lot. I cannot spare time for myself. I cannot spare time for my loved ones. Still, I would like to be a part of this profession.

> I thought about this a lot. In fact, even though I want this profession so much, the things that made me think like that are our status deprivation, the mobbing we experienced, and satisfaction of very few of my expectations. And all these led me to think about whether I should go back to teaching. But I did not want to give up my ideals by saying that I can live the same things there. I am trying to motivate myself in this way because we have to deal with these difficulties. Therefore, the main thing that kept me in this profession was to show that people can be raised without mobbing, while living with their own truths.

Among the participants, there are also research assistants who stated that they might consider leaving the profession when they get a chance or another opportunity. For example, one of the participants (A4) expressed his views as follows:

> Yes, I would. The main problem is that it is a very tiring and very stressful environment. I'm becoming a very panicky person day by day. From this point of view, I am thinking it's actually not the right profession for me. If I had the opportunity, I would consider teaching at schools.

The opinions of another participant (A6), who was indecisive about her profession and was hesitate due to the difficulties she experienced, are as follows:

I alternate between these thoughts. It is back breaking to continue working constantly. Concerns about exams and completing unending works keep going. The work taken home never ends and is constantly repeated. When you get exhausted and there is no energy, you feel both occupational and personal burnout. In addition, you are in a constant race since it operates a performance-oriented system. Preparing for exams, writing articles, as well as faculty works and courses you give to undergraduate students… I guess it's only after the associate professorship is finished that you get satisfaction. There is a good while for it... Sparing time for my family and me is very limited, and in this respect, question marks really fly in my mind.

In regard to socialization, academicians have expressed various expectations about what should be done both organizationally and individually. The main quotations for the stated statements are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. *Professional Expectations-Recommendations*

Themes	Basic quotes	Total view
Organizational Context	• Conducting orientation meetings for newcomers. • Preparation of the first step booklet or guide to becoming an academic. • Informative meetings on administrative tasks. • Arrangement days for improvement of informal relationships such as doing dinner. • Establishing a standard at a level of university for orientation and updating or increasing it with changing needs. • Encouraging interdisciplinary studies. • Organizing seminars that teach academic study and scientific research. • Holding annual review meetings. • Holding experience sharing meetings. • Arranging acquaintance meetings. • Attaining mentoring and ensuring this process is formally implemented. • Have the opportunity to choose their own advisor.	29
Individual Context	• Communicate directly with teachers and other colleagues. • Study and do research a lot. • Developing extraverted behaviors, not being shy, and communicating correctly. • Improving acceptance or adoptive behaviors, ignoring problems. • Observing behaviors in the organization, following clues.	14

- Participating in congresses, scientific activities, and publishing articles.

It can be seen from Table 6 that research assistants express their expectations and suggestions about their profession under two different topics in the organizational and individual context. Orientation practices become prominent and it is stated that a standard should be formed for these practices in universities. Such programs should be updated according to chancing conditions and needs. In addition, formal mentoring practices and organizing seminars to produce academic and scientific research are among the suggestions. In the individual context, some suggestions are offered for research assistants such as reading a lot and doing research, following the clues by observing the behaviors in the organization, not being afraid to communicate, and ignoring the problems.

Discussion

In consideration of research findings, it is obvious that research assistants face many problems in both professional and organizational context. These basic problems affect both the personal and professional lives of the assistants, and they face situations such as job stress, decrease in job satisfaction, and burnout. In addition to this, other problems include adapting to a new role in the passing phase from student to a lecturer, inability to balance between work and family life, the feeling of unpreparedness in the science environment, having low self-confidence, and not being sufficiently supported and guided. In this study, some organizational and professional problems experienced by academics are similar to Murray's (2008) research results. Murray (2008) revealed that new staff in faculties mostly faces issues such as time problems, having to do a lot in less time, changing priorities, not getting enough support from faculty and members, and staffing problems. More so, the problems in this context are similar to the results of this study.

Trowler and Knight (2000) revealed in their study that newcomers in the faculty are quite confused about how to work, who is/are the relevant one for some issues, or where to apply. Researchers state that some of the participants in their study reached the functional information they needed by making a lot of mistakes. Similarly, many research assistants in this study stated that they acquired the information they needed and learned by making mistakes or by experiencing it. To put it more clearly, it is possible to state that newly arrived academicians in universities are mostly left on their own or they encounter very few referrals. Thowleer and Knight (2000) emphasize that it is not always possible to simply convey information since individuals learn by inference in a way. Nonetheless, it can be stated that this should not happen in every respect and learning. It will not be correct to expect that the academicians who have just started to work should learn the organizational and professional process by accessing information completely by themselves. However, expecting the employee to access information by making inferences on important issues concerning the profession and the organization may cause alienation in the organization and may also cause things to go wrong.

According to the research findings, both organizational rituals and the requirements of the job can be quite confusing and challenging for newcomers. Any uncertainty could make the socialization process more beneficial and uncomplicated. As a result, Saks and Gruman (2018) suggest that instead of providing the necessary resources to facilitate the newcomer's engagement and socialization, the focus should be on minimizing and reducing the negative effects of the job. They further discussed within the framework of uncertainty reduction theory. In line with this, it is

necessary to eliminate the situations and issues that create uncertainty in the socialization process of research assistants.

According to the results of the research, almost all the research assistants do not go through a defined (formal) process or program to understand and learn about the profession and the organization they are in. Furthermore, research assistants did not receive significant help from members of the university, faculty, or department in this process. They mostly tried to get through this period with their own individual efforts. Wulff and Austin (2004) emphasize that the preparation of future faculty members is a process that requires the efforts of current academic leaders or faculty members. In addition, they regard the training and preparation of this staff as one of the most important responsibilities of universities. As a matter of fact, the support given to young academics in this process is of great importance (Austin& Wulff, 2004).

It is known that feelings of alienation first emerge during the first phase for research assistant and anxiety occurs reactively in individuals (Cawyer et al., 2002). Therefore, mentoring is one of the most effective ways suggested by many authors (Murray, 2008; Cawyer et al., 2002, Balcı, 2003; Austin, 2002) to prevent this issue. In addition to this, Murray (2008) who emphasizes the importance of organizational support and the support of other faculty members further recommends the development of programs that will reduce stress and give the newcomer a sense of job satisfaction. However, when the opinions were examined, it is clear that research assistants are left alone in both organizational and professional development processes. Therefore, this loneliness or being left by oneself during the socialization phases may also affect professional productivity and organizational effectiveness in the future.

According to the findings, research assistants obtain satisfaction far below their professional expectations when they first enter the organization. This is because they think that a significant part of their work is within the scope of "officer" duties, not research and development. As a matter of fact, some studies show that new faculty members are not satisfied in their work environment due to the difference between the expectations of many academicians and what they encounter in real academic life. Inevitably, this will affect their sense of trust and commitment to the organization. Hence, they will not be able to have a positive view to their work environment. This is revealed in the research of Kondakçı and Haser (2019). Cawyer and Friedrich (1998), on the other hand, revealed in their research that the differences between expectations and the realities encountered in academic life generally result in individuals being dissatisfied with their work environments. Particularly, the introductory stage of academic life can be challenging for individuals (Cawyer et al., 2002).

According to Rosser's (2004) research, the perceived quality of working life affects the satisfaction level of instructors. In other words, the satisfaction obtained from work life or the problems experienced at work directly affect the intention of individuals to quit their job. Rosser (2004) revealed that besides the individual characteristics, the reason that affects the intention to quit the job of the instructors is the combination of organizational and professional problems and satisfaction. Therefore, the problems faced by academicians in the process of organizational and professional socialization reduces job satisfaction and introduces the risk of alienation from the job. Similarly, in this study, it is understood that most of the research assistants stated that the problems they encountered in academic life affected their motivation to work and those that achieved satisfaction are relatively few.

In a study conducted by Tierney (1997) on university employees, the participants who expressed their opinions about the effectiveness of the faculty stated that they questioned the nature of the work they did and sometimes saw it as a "time-consuming" job. Contrary to those who think

that there is a free and peaceful environment at the university, academic life can be very different. The participants claimed that they do not have a job perceived to be within the time frame of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and their work goes far beyond these hours (Tierney, 1997). In this study, research assistants who had problems with time management stated that they had similar problems (f:12). It is obvious that academicians who need to work constantly to get things done and who cannot spare time for themselves, their families, and their private lives have the problem of not being able to establish a healthy work-life balance.

Gainen and Boice (1993 as cited in Jackson, 2004) revealed that the increase in faculty performance is largely affected by the socialization of faculty members with different ethnic groups. Therefore, the existence of different groups and various ideas in higher education should be seen as an advantage for organizational efficiency. Also, it should be accepted as an element that will increase the effectiveness of socialization processes. However, in the study, it is understood that the members of the organization who have "trouble with others" and have problems with different thoughts or appearances make participants feel worthless. This organizational problem experienced by young academics who think that they do not get the respect they deserve will cause individuals not to feel a sense of belonging to their organization, which will lead to low performance delivery. Consequently, this issue, which affects the nature of socialization, should be seen as an important problem. Thus, it is not surprising that when the reasons for the participants to feel a sense of belonging to the profession and the organization are examined, more opinions are presented on not feeling a sense of belonging (f: 24).

According to Corcoran and Clark (1984), the most important and basic preparation for becoming a faculty member is acquired during the postgraduate education process at universities. In this process, the department enables postgraduate students to acquire university discipline, convey knowledge and skills, and shape their values and attitudes about the faculty role. The basic form and functions of postgraduate education are similar in most departments of universities. In reality, however, it varies by disciplines, departments, and even between faculties and student pairs. This is because in mentoring and teaching processes, faculty members apply different approaches and contents. Therefore, this enormous diversity in the working processes of doctoral education is not well known or understood even by policy makers, administrators, and civil servants who affect academic life, including academicians (Trow 1977, as cited in Corcoran and Clark, 1984). Undoubtedly, this different functioning of every academic environment in universities may cause employees to never be sure of what awaits them before entry. The fact that the employee's pre-entry expectations do not match up with the expectations and disappointments encountered in organization may be the result of these differences. The different functioning and structure of academic environments in universities may be due to the autonomous nature of such structures. Undoubtedly, the existence of free practices in educational environments also reflects the nature of what should be in academe. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that political or malicious manners and approaches may be carried out.

It is significantly important to see the profession of academicians and the system they are in as a key job since they prepare and train members of almost all occupational groups in the society (Clark, 1986). However, the fact that there are different practices and expectations regarding preparation, the improvement, and conducting or discipline of the academic profession causes this occupation to be greatly affected by the interests and career steps of the institution. More than half of the participants in this study are worried about whether their position will be steady in the future. Employees also state that constantly changing laws or regulations create insecurity for the profession, and this situation is increasing with the experience of favoritism within the

organization. For this reason, the uncertainty or fluctuation of the career steps on the basis of universities significantly affects the integration of research assistants with the profession and the organization.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Socialization in higher education does not go through an apprehensible or explicit process completely. Understanding the existing culture, symbols or instrumental activities and working in the organization is mostly left to the employees to make sense of it. The fact that the majority of academicians trying to understand both professional and organizational life by accessing tacit knowledge by themselves indicates that socialization processes do not work or are not carried out effectually. Accordingly, there is a need to implement formal practice and a detailed discussion on organizational socialization in universities.

In the study, it is observed that participants are mostly alone during their academic life. This information needs to be supported by quantitative research. The fact that the ways of obtaining information about the profession and their organizations before and after the entry period are usually learned by individual efforts proves this argument. Research assistants who cannot learn their roles adequately face many challenging situations individually. To overcome these problems, academicians make concessions to their private lives and spend most of their time to complete their works. This seems to be the result of academicians' failure to establish a work-life balance to a large extent.

Socialization agents such as co-workers, mentors or senior faculty members should be appointed. This practice whereby the newcomer can learn organizational and professional roles from a senior colleague may also strengthen the supervisor-assistant relationship at universities. However, as stated by the participants, factors such as workload, conflict of interest, and indifference or inadequacy of the supervisor causes the quality of this relationship to be questioned. During the entry period, it could be compelling and even threatening for the newcomers. Therefore, a mentor is needed to overcome the alienation, learn the profession completely, and facilitate engagement in the organization. Furthermore, there is a need to implement certain programs in each university regarding the socialization of research assistants. It is also recommended that the socialization process itself should be carried out within an accredited program. The autonomous structure of universities and even the fact that each department has different functioning and perspective from each other makes it difficult to adopt common or similar attitudes. However, the first phase for the research assistant, which is considered as the beginning of the academic profession and when the basic feelings about the profession are shaped, is so important that it cannot be ignored. It is understood that direct assistance, guidance or mentoring are needed especially for time management, understanding scientific/academic processes, and learning organizational norms and values.

In the study, it was stated that an in-service training or meetings are not held for them. Although some activities are carried out, it is clear that this is not enough. Programs offered at universities such as in-service training and seminars should be considered as a socialization tool for both newcomers and seniors. This is because the meetings and events present an opportunity to share values and socialize more effectively.

In the study, some research assistants stated that they loved their profession and believed that they will do it without venting out. These research assistants inspire hope for universities. This could be the result of adopting self-leadership behaviors even though they encounter some uncertainties, drawbacks or lack of a guide. Through this means, they can manage the process

easily and overcome the challenges. Therefore, it is suggested that research assistants should be encouraged to adopt self-leadership attitudes and directed accordingly. Thus, they could behave proactively, contribute their own socialization, and improve organizational commitment and adjustment.

It also seems very important to have labor-job protection for the profession and to take legal decisions in this regard. In the study, it is observed that the research assistants' anxiety about the future mostly affects their sense of belonging to the organization and profession. There is a need to understand the nature of higher education today. For this reason, it is recommended that extensive studies should be carried out on not only research assistants but also on other staff members in universities.

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any of the authors.

Conflicts of interest.

The authors of this paper certify that they have NO affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial or non-financial interest (such as honoraria; educational grants; membership, employment; affiliations, knowledge or beliefs) in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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