

The Lived Experiences of Faculty Members with Disabilities in Turkish Universities: Implications for Higher Education Leadership and Management

Havanur Aytas

Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey

Serap Emil

Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey

Abstract	Article Info
<p>One of the most neglected forms of diversity, disability, often results in discrimination in a community. Nevertheless, more higher education institutions are working toward creating more inclusive settings, even though this work predominantly regards students with disabilities, not much of faculty members. The study examined the faculty members' lived experiences with disabilities in their work-life in higher education institutions in Turkey. Faculty work and disability are the two main issues of this study. While the social model of disability mainly guides the research to examine the concept of disability, faculty work theory helps to contextualize the concept in a higher education setting. This study is phenomenological research carried out with semi-structured interviews with 15 participants. Overall results showed that the faculty members mostly experience exclusion shaped by colleagues, administrators, and institutions. Both encouraging and inhibiting faculty members' experiences depend on their colleagues, university, type of institution, type of disability, and mainly the administrative attitude. To promote faculty members' full participation in academic life, higher education</p>	<p>Article History: <i>Received</i> April 24, 2020 <i>Accepted</i> October 25, 2020</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords: Higher education in Turkey, Faculty members, Job satisfaction, Inclusive education, Disability, Academic work-life.</p>

leaders are expected to restrain the exclusion of the faculty members with disabilities and be committed to offering complete accessibility on campuses.

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Introduction

"Don't disable people who are already disabled."

TRT2 Yeryüzleri: Muhammed Yalçın (2019)

Individuals with disabilities have been left with no other choice than struggling against disabling societies created with stigma, prejudices, and discrimination throughout history. Socially reproduced attitudinal and environmental barriers have prevented individuals with a disability to participate in daily life as freely and independently as possible. To be free and independent in everyday life, individuals with disabilities face attitudinal and environmental barriers that are socially produced and reproduced. While universities are getting more diverse places, the faculty members with disabilities are still forced to stand up for their legitimate right to be a part of universities and hide their disability to have active roles in academic work-life (Waterfield et al., 2018). The faculty members with disabilities are excluded from some significant parts of their work, provided with inadequate support by their institutions, are expected to work hard to confirm their competency for their positions, and are treated differently in academia (Waterfield et al., 2018). Thus, we need to advocate for their rights and highlight the



importance of inclusiveness for all higher education members, including faculty members with disabilities. This study examines the lived experiences of faculty members with disabilities in higher education institutions in Turkey.

There are three primary laws in Turkey that assure the legitimate rights of individuals with disabilities: The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, the Turkish Disability Act No: 5378 (TDA), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, it can be inferred that the faculty members with disabilities are basically invisible to higher education institutions in Turkey since there are no available statistics on their numbers or working conditions. More than six hundred million people, which is nearly 10 percent of the world population, have some disability (Quinn et al., 2002). The statistics of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) presents that about ten thousand students with disabilities graduate from universities every year in Turkey (Yükseköğretim Bilgi Yönetim Sistemi, 2018). On the other hand, the exact number of faculty members with disabilities at universities in Turkey is unknown to the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). Thus, to explain the problems, ensure the presence, and elaborate on the value of faculty members with disabilities, this study seeks to contribute to higher education studies and the policymaking process. Discovering and reflecting upon their work experiences and work-life issues will help create inclusive universities as inclusive workplaces for faculty members. Rather than working on some postulated problems or solutions, this study will let the decision-makers face the main problem areas by relying on the experiences of faculty members with disabilities. We need to promote a more profound understanding and acknowledgment of disability at all educational service levels in higher education.

This study seeks an answer to "How do the faculty members with disabilities experience academic work-life in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Turkey?" This research has two main issues as faculty work and disability, and it is built upon two main theoretical aspects. While faculty work is discussed through the interactive relation between self-knowledge and social knowledge of Blackburn and Lawrence (1995), the concept of disability is elaborated through the social model of disability by Oliver (1996).

Faculty Work in Higher Education

Faculty members are the operating core of higher education institutions. According to Marsh and Hattie (2002), they are expected to carry out four responsibilities: teaching, research, administration, and community service. HEIs are success-oriented work environments, where we can talk about two main factors impacting their work behavior and productivity: *individual faculty characteristics* and *the environment*. Individual faculty characteristics are considered with regard to *socio-demographic characteristics* (age, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.), *career* (academic discipline, preparation of career, type of institution, etc.), *self-knowledge* (understanding of self, self-referent, etc.), and finally *social knowledge* (how individuals perceive their environment). In terms of properties of the environment, they discussed three main features: *environmental conditions* (the structural and normative features of the university), *environmental response* (different formal feedback that faculty receive), and *social contingencies* (events that happen in faculty members' life and affect their work) (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995).

The faculty members' performance and motivation depend on the continuous interactivity between their self-knowledge, which includes their self-perception of academic roles, commitment,



competence, and preference for work effort, and their social knowledge, which consists of their perceptions of the work environment and professional relations) (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). These key premises provide a baseline for this study in understanding faculty members' work environment, how they change their self-understanding as well as their self-referential thoughts. Eventually, these key premises may offer us an explanation for faculty members' motivation or job satisfaction that will affect their knowledge production, teaching performances, or engaging with the community.

Disability Models

We know that disability is a complex concept explained through various definitions according to different interpretations or perspectives. According to the medical model, disability is described through a medical understanding and stated as a personal issue stemming from a medical problem such as a mental or physical disorder. The medical model emphasizes the functional limitations of a disabled body, and these limitations are expected to be healed. Since the medical model sees disability as a bodily abnormality, treatment implies the normalization of the body. However, we focus on the social model of disability in this study (Oliver, 1996). Within this framework, a disability includes all the limitations of individuals with disabilities, such as negative discrimination, judgments, biases, isolating systems, and lack of accessible accommodation and transportation (Oliver, 1996).

The social model reveals the discrimination against, social exclusion, and oppression of individuals with disabilities in society. Social model theorists object to the medical model of disability since they differentiate disabilities from illnesses. This model explains

disability based on social interactions between people with disabilities and their environment. This model describes disability depending on the impacts of bodily functions, social interaction, and environment while minimizing the effects of biological factors. The emphasis is on the social practices and organizations which hinder individuals with disabilities.

World Health Organization (2002) states that "disability is the umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors)" (WHO 2002, 4). Turkish Disability Act (TDA) states in article 3, "Disabled is the person who has difficulties in adapting to the social life and in meeting daily needs due to the loss of physical, mental, psychological, sensory and social capabilities at various levels by birth or by any reason after that and who therefore need protection, care, rehabilitation, consultancy, and support services" (Turkish Disability Act No 5378 2005).

According to the literature, there are controversial perspectives on accommodating employees with disabilities in the workplace. Most individuals with disabilities do not require special arrangements in workplaces, and there is no financial difference between hiring a person with a disability and one without a disability (Ellner & Bender, 1980). However, teachers with disabilities working at supportive workplaces are provided with extra breaks, support for course materials and evaluation, alternative methodologies, secretary services, and technological support (Anderson & Karp, 1998). Besides, supportive administration is needed to provide accessibility



and supportive accommodation for individuals with disabilities (Anderson & Karp, 1998).

Workers with disabilities are exposed to problems stemming from attitudinal barriers (including negative discrimination, segregation, and exclusion by their colleagues) and environmental barriers (including lack of accessible transportation and accommodation at work) (Carter et al., 2011; Jenkins & Rigg, 2004; Lindsay, 2011). Having accessible accommodation at work reinforces job satisfaction, productivity, and integration, along with psychological and physical wellbeing (Charmaz, 2010; Lindsay et al., 2018; Solovieva et al., 2011). Many individuals with disabilities do not want to disclose their disability to refrain from stereotyping, excluding, or discriminatory reactions like being treated as incapable or dependent (Blockmans, 2015; Lindsay & Cancelliere, 2018). On the other hand, some others claim disclosing disability may minimize or hinder stereotyping (Blockmans, 2015). Lindsay and Cancelliere (2018) state that both the administrators and colleagues working with an individual with a disability and a worker with a disability should be ready to make sense of their capabilities, needs, and alternatives.

Faculty Members with Disabilities

There is very limited research on faculty members with disabilities and their work-related experiences. However, within this scarce literature, some significant studies should be highlighted. Neca, Borges, and Pinto (2020) presented a literature review of research on teachers with disabilities, including fifty-three articles between 1990 and 2018. They emphasize the underrepresentation of teachers with disabilities in educational communities, the lack of studies on educators with disabilities in inclusive education studies, and the need for research on teachers with disabilities. They also

emphasize the need for the existence of teachers with disabilities at schools to change the negative assumptions of disability to manage a social change. Likewise, Ashcraft (2008) verifies that there are not many studies on the career boundaries of faculty members with disabilities. Williams and Mavin (2015) highlight the significance of career boundaries that can reinforce or restrict the career goals of the faculty members with disabilities.

It is also essential to see the impact of leadership practices on the experiences of these terms. Leadership practices shape the work behaviors in a workplace, and educational leadership is not an exception. Erdemir, Demir, Öcal, and Kondakçı (2020) presented a statistically significant relationship between mobbing in academia and leadership behaviors; as long as the faculty members face positive leadership, they are less likely to face mobbing. Effective leadership practices, including open communication, reasonable understanding, flexibility, and the appropriate role and authority distribution, are essential to ensure motivation and commitment (Pashiardis et al., 2011). Educational leadership for social justice offers fairness in educational rights and equal access to society's educational opportunities (Hill-Berry et al., 2019).

Most research on the social aspect of disability focuses on such critical issues as mobbing, humiliation, and discrimination. That is why elaborating on these terms will be helpful to make sense of the rest of the article. Davenport, Schwartz, and Elliott (1999) explained mobbing as "a malicious attempt to force a person out of the workplace through unjustified accusations, humiliation, general harassment, emotional abuse, and/or terror" (p. 40). Mobbing, regardless of the sector, mostly takes place in workplaces dominated by tight institutional and hierarchical structures (McCulloch, 2010).



However, mobbing is not limited to business organizations; the percentage of mobbing in academia can reach 65% (Raskauskas, 2006).

Czarniawska (2008) defines humiliation as a kind of bullying that is a significant factor in forming and shaping a character. There are many ways to humiliate workers (Kozusznik, 2016). : treating them like a child or a servant; making them do something which is out of their job description; forcing them to do something immoral or illegal; discussing personal issues in public; forcing them to admit their mistakes or apologize in public, and directly insulting or swearing. Kozusznik (2016) also emphasizes that humiliated people tend to view themselves as a failure and constant humiliation at work causes a decrease in self-esteem.

Race, ethnicity, behavior, appearance, or sexual orientation can be presented as excuses for discrimination (Major & O'Brien, 2005). Discrimination in recruitment and hiring has always been an ongoing concern for economic justice, inequality, and workplace relations. Coffman, Exley, and Niederle (2018) present such obvious evidence of discrimination against women that female employees are significantly less likely to be hired than equally competent men. While disability can be used as an excuse for discrimination, gender can even worsen it. This double discrimination means that female workers with disabilities can face double discrimination and experience a much different work-life than men (Habib, 1995). While most university students are female, women remain underrepresented in higher education institutions in the US at senior leadership levels (Cook, 2012). Likewise, only 35% of full-time faculty members at HEIs are women in the US (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Besides, only 26% of university rectors are

female in the US (Colorado Women's College, 2013). There is a possibility that female faculty members with disabilities cannot decide if their experiences are due to their gender, disability, or an irrelevant reason. This case is explained by the term 'attributional ambiguity,' coined by Crocker et al. (1991) to explain a case when individuals of underrepresented or minority groups cannot be sure if their both positive and negative interactions stem from their underrepresented status or totally unrelated causes. According to Brower, Schwartz, and Jones (2019), gender-based attributional ambiguity exists among deans in US higher education and causes a burden to female academics getting administrative positions at universities.

The significance of including individuals with a disability is also emphasized in the Guideline of the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2012), which state that the teaching staff should be diverse, including teachers with disabilities, in schools in the Member States to show the social and cultural diversity of society. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) emphasizes that a standard school with inclusive orientation is the essential way of struggling against discriminatory practices, thriving welcoming communities, forming inclusive societies, and providing education for all. Moreover, the policymakers at all levels are expected to present their dedication to inclusion and encourage the students, teachers, and everyone to provide positive attitudes towards individuals with disabilities (UNESCO, 1994). Besides, inclusive orientation should cover all individuals at school. Inclusive orientation at universities requires inclusive practices for the students and the instructors and administrative and support staff.



This literature review emphasizes the requirement of inclusive practices everywhere, including HEIs. Besides, it reveals the need for disability studies in HEIs for the students and the faculty members. Under the YÖK regulations, there are services for people with disabilities, mostly serving students. Yet, faculty members with disabilities are not provided enough services, and a supportive work environment, as their needs are different. Thus, the current research is particularly significant in providing insights on faculty members with disabilities, revealing the challenges they go through, and feeding inclusive practices in HEIs.

Methodology

This research aims to explore the way faculty members with disabilities experience academic work-life in higher education in Turkey. In this phenomenological research, the shared phenomenon is having a disability, and the specific group is the faculty members in Turkey. The focus is on the lived experience of the target population. Due to the lack of available data sources to know and access faculty members with a disability in Turkey, "snowball sampling" was chosen to get in touch with the potential participants. Conducting the snowball sampling and reaching the participants took a long time. The researchers started with one participant, asked to be directed to another possible participant, and went on with their network.

A total of 15 participants who work at universities as faculty members and have a visible physical disability agreed to participate in the study. Out of 15 participants, only three participants are female. The participants' ages differ between 30 and 58. Their work experience lasts for between 3 months and 32 years. Four Professors, two Associate Professors, five Assistant Professors, three Research

Assistants, and one Instructor participated in this research. Six participants are either blind or visually disabled, four participants are wheelchair users, and five have upper or lower limb(s) disability. Four participants became disabled while working in their current position. Eleven participants have already had a disability before working. Seven were born with a disability, while eight had a disability later on.

For the ethical approach, individual demographic information is not given in detail. The number of faculty members with disabilities is thought to be few, and sharing any personal data may cause breaking the participants' anonymity. All the participants were assured that any information that can reveal their identity would not be shared, and their anonymity and confidentiality were secured. The participants' identities are covered to abstain from possible enforcement of administrative and political sanctions. This study aims to raise the voice of faculty members with disabilities. Thus, as many quotes as possible are quoted while reporting the results, instead of summing up them.

We developed the interview protocol based on Blackburn and Lawrence's (1995) faculty work model and the social model of disability to explore the nature of faculty work experience concerning disability. The faculty work model directed the study to focus on the participants' tasks and responsibilities at higher education institutions. The social model of disability guided the study to focus on the barriers stemming from the people and environments. The interview protocol consists of the following sub-sections: a) *demographic information*; b) *educational life experiences*; c) *recruitment process*; d) *professional relations with the administration, colleagues, students, and administrative staff*; e) *job satisfaction*, and f) *accessibility*.



Two experts on disability and counseling psychology have reviewed the interview protocol. Accordingly, necessary adaptations and changes related to counseling psychology and higher education have been made according to their feedback.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is used to analyze the collected data and interpret the interviews. In this study, the aim is to reveal the participants' interpretations of their lived experiences reflexively. To understand a shared phenomenon, considering the experiences from the perspectives of individuals who have experienced it is essential. IPA aims to discover the core of the shared phenomenon to understand the nature of the sample's lived experiences instead of merely generalizing the population's results (Willig, 2008). Thus, IPA necessitates analyzing each case through each participant's perspective, relying on each unique context rather than making a rough generalization (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The interview transcripts were analyzed with ATLAS.ti 7, a qualitative data analysis software, to conduct a systematic data analysis. This software supported the researchers to code, create code lists and themes, and track the codes. The researchers used this software to reveal the codes' connections and the codes' and themes' interactions and create thematic categories.

Results

In this section, the experiences of faculty members with disabilities will be reported under three themes - *Job Recruitment*, *Professional Relations*, and *Overall Job Satisfaction*.

Under the *Job Recruitment* theme, it is critical to emphasize the difference between the participants' experiences as having a disability before and after the application. Some were invited by the university

and did not face many problems. The participants who already had a disability before the recruitment had various experiences. Most of the ones with a disability went through the standard job application and recruitment processes and encountered negative discrimination:

"I faced many problems finding a job. At first, I specifically applied for the top positions at public institutions, but I got rejected because of my disability. Then I applied for positions at universities, and I got accepted. Then, they called me to visit them and directly told me: "We do not want you here; you are handicapped, and you are supposed to know who you are and what your capabilities are."

"I am an expert in my field; consequently, I easily got this position. But if I was in a different field, it could have been different. If there are some other candidates, they do not prefer the one with a disability to not handle assisting".

Alternatively, the participants, who have taken the central exams and programs, think if they had a standard job interview, they would not have been hired:

"I studied abroad with a program, and when I came back, my position was ready. Yet, the university could have made a problem. My department needed faculty members, and I got my job regardless of my disability. On the other hand, I am sure that if I went through the standard procedure, it would have been harder. Even after getting accepted, I faced the administration's reactions like, "How did we accept you? Why did we make such a mistake?"

Some of the faculty members with disabilities mentioned other job opportunities that they had the legal right, and they were not hired because the institutions regarded their disability as a burden:

"I was appointed as a teacher like everyone with the KPSS exam in the same year, but I was not assigned to work with them at the same time. They invited me to a commission in Ankara. They were going to decide whether I was capable of teaching or not. Moreover, when everyone was assigned in



September, I started in November. For sure, there were other candidates with disabilities who were assumed to be not capable of teaching and not appointed”.

Regarding the recruitment process, it was clear from the participants' statements that the job interviews were up to the interviewer's judgment. Interviewers can make decisions upon non-academic causes as long as they handle the process by the book. Some interviewers used the participants' disabilities as excuses against them. Some interviewers were prejudiced against disability. Some were reluctant to take responsibility due to a lack of knowledge about supporting disability. Some were basically unwilling to handle extra effort to accommodate the disabled or make the required adaptations since none of Turkey's universities is fully accessible. After academic life, individuals with a disability are precluded at the job application or job recruitment steps. Thus, the subjective recruitment process explains why the number of faculty members with disabilities is respectively low. This finding emphasizes the immediate need for an objective and transparent recruitment process.

Reflecting upon the *Professional Relations* theme, the social interactions of the participants at work are analyzed to interpret disability in a social context and universities' social structure. Most of the findings depict negativity that can be explained through discriminatory practices, social exclusion, social oppression, unfair treatment, abusing disability, prejudice against disability, and mobbing. Meanwhile, positive findings can be explained through the objective approach, social inclusion, and social and environmental support. Professional relations here will be reported under four sub-themes: *relationships with administrators, colleagues, students, and administrative staff.*

The most striking and unfortunate finding on the relationship with administrators is that almost everything is directly related to the higher education administrators' understanding and subjective judgments of disability. There is a range of negative experiences of faculty members concerning their former or current administrators:

"The current vice-rector is really careful about accessibility due to his understanding and concern. When he leaves, and someone else comes, the situation can get worse, and we can have more problems".

"I was not disabled when I first started as a research assistant. I waited for the assistant professor position for a long time and found out that my dean did not want me to get it. Then, I talked to the rector and got the position that I deserved. After that, my dean started mobbing".

Beyond the negative attitude from the administrators, some faculty members were exposed to mobbing, discrimination, social exclusion, and oppression due to personal judgments of administrators:

"At first, the department chair said, "now that you are blind, I talked to the rector, and he does not want you to work here. And I don't want to work with you. I let you think for a year. You can quit, retire or find another university". Then I went to the rectorship. The rector was kind and understanding to me. He did not know anything about this issue and helped me. It was all the plans of the department chair".

"Academia is cruel. I have been exposed to mobbing for sure. It does not matter how much I am successful and deserve my position. I have always been ignored because of my disability".

"I got aware of my disability when I started working here. The people at work behaved so badly that one day I came home, looked in the mirror, and I thought: "you are just a worthless disabled person; you cannot talk." I made myself shut up. I have faced each kind of mobbing. I was given much more responsibilities than the average workload. My health problems have gotten worse, and I was not able to walk. I even thought about quitting the job".



Few faculty members have had a supportive and inclusive attitude from their administrators:

"The rector asked me to work at the Disabled Students Unit. I am always in touch with the administration on disability and accessibility. That is why I have been a part of decision-making processes such as preparing the strategic plan".

The second sub-theme, *relations with colleagues*, has a more positive and inclusive perception than the relations with administrators, even though there are still some apparent issues that emerged from colleagues' interactions. Only a few faculty members explicitly stated that they have fair and democratic decision-making in their work environments, supportive and inclusive practices in the academic studies:

"There is no difference between young or old, novice, or experienced here. We have a fair workplace here".

"I got disabled when I was working here. My colleagues could have excluded me or forced me to retire. All my colleagues have supported me. There may be an influence of the organizational culture. If I were working at another institution, they would have excluded me".

However, due to the nature of academic life, such as competition or conflict of interests, some faculty members experienced negative incidents with their colleagues. Some of them even faced social exclusion:

"I have never abused my disability, but my colleagues tried to exploit my disability. Some claimed I could not carry out some duties due to my disability, and they could get those tasks or positions. Most people have abused my disability for their benefit".

"One of my colleagues claimed that I was included in these studies due to my disability rather than my success."

Some participants explicitly emphasized that disability studies are exploited for the sake of getting benefits from the situation:

"There are many people who exploit the disability field. As long as they can get a benefit out of a study, they will join."

"Relationships are mostly fake. As long as they have a possibility of profit over you, they act like helping you to show off in the community. But they do not care when you are alone".

The last two sub-themes – *professional relations with students and administrative staff* – will be presented together. Most of the participants mentioned they were effectively communicating with students. Besides, they stated that the administrative and auxiliary staff were generally supportive. However, some statements highlight that the auxiliary staff was acting disrespectfully or careless about their responsibilities for those participants:

"The previous dean told all staff not to contact me, I had limited communication with the others. Due to the dean's order, even the cleaners did not clean my office properly".

"I mostly thought that the auxiliary staff was acting like I was at a lower position than the other academics."

The third theme, *Overall Job Satisfaction*, is built upon the work experiences and their impact on self and social knowledge. In other words, as long as the participants have effective, inclusive, and supportive relations with their administrators and colleagues, their belongingness and motivation levels increase. When they are exposed to discrimination or mobbing by the administrators or colleagues, they perceive the social environment as excluding and hindering, causing a decrease in belongingness, motivation, and self-confidence. The participants are satisfied with their teaching duty and relations with their students. Some of them created ways to adapt the lectures according to their capabilities and classroom restrictions. In terms of



job satisfaction with the academic work, participants stated that they are satisfied with the nature of academic work, particularly with their community service roles where they can advocate for disability rights:

"I have worked in the Disabled Students Unit for years. We prepare e-books and audiobooks. We have a lot of voluntary readers and members with visual impairment. Meanwhile, we also help our students with disabilities on our campus. Our students can access documents in big points or Braille or tactile shape. We provide personal adaptation letters for each student to the faculty members. I can say we mostly work on community service".

However, most participants are not satisfied with their research roles due to negative experiences at work. Besides the environmental barriers preventing their access to research, those problems may also arise from their exposure to social exclusion or oppression from the administrators:

"I quit academic studies. All my experiences have led this way. I am exhausted, and I do not have the energy to do anything. I offered joint research to my colleagues a few times, but they did not accept. They did not include me, and I work on my own. "

In summary, the lived experiences of faculty members are unpleasantly striking. They reveal that their experiences highly depend on the institution, the administrators, the physical environment, type, and the time of disability. How faculty members experience job recruitment, professional relations, and job satisfaction are affected and explained by the above dimensions. In other words, the process of job recruitment can be influenced by the fact of whether a faculty member already has a disability or not. Similarly, their work environments can be defined as supportive or disabling depending on administrators' perception, like the department chair, dean, or rector in the institution.

Discussion

Neca, Borges, & Pinto (2020) stated that there was an emphasis on specific topics such as life trajectories but a lack of attention to others' opinions about teachers with disabilities within the existing limited literature. This study emphasizes the participants' interpretations of the surrounding people's (students, colleagues, and administrators) opinions and conditions of the given context. What needs to be highlighted here is that faculty members' experiences significantly vary according to their university, type of institution, colleagues, primarily administrative attitude, and type of disability. The administrators have the most significant impact on both social interactions and environmental conditions at work. For instance, when the current rector is careless about an accessible campus, the next or previous rectors may be willing to provide whatever is needed for universal design on campus. The private universities mostly invite the faculty members, know the possible barriers beforehand, and are ready to give support and accessibility.

In line with the literature review, the severity and overtness of the disabilities seem to affect the experiences since the participants with mild disabilities experience more positivity than those with severe disabilities. As Bordieri and Drehmer (1987) stated, decision-makers' attitudes towards people with a disability vary according to the severity and type of disability. Besides, the overtness of disability can also change those attitudes (Gouvier et al., 1991). The combination of the prejudices against both disability and feminity results in double discrimination, and it is inferred that female faculty members with disabilities are exposed to double discrimination. The experiences of a male and a female participant with the same disability type with the same administrators at the same university



context were totally opposite. It seems that the only difference was gender discrimination combined with a disability to cause these contrasting experiences in line with Marks' (1999) statement. Besides, there are more males than females among the faculty members with a disability. Moreover, in line with Habib's (1995) study, female faculty members with a disability face more social barriers, exclusion, and isolation. A recent study also aligns with the literature emphasizing that female faculty members are exposed to mobbing more than their male colleagues, and the male-dominant cultural context of Turkey strengthens mobbing towards women (Erdemir et al., 2020). Yumuşak (2013), Akın and Karabacak (2014), Özçelik (2015), and Gezer (2015) emphasize in their studies that female teachers face mobbing more often than their male colleagues. This research has some evidence that mobbing depends on the victim's gender, and female faculty members with disabilities might face double discrimination.

In this study, we found that the administration mostly shapes the faculty members' social knowledge, and the administration directly shapes even social interactions among colleagues. A study conducted in Turkey on the job satisfaction and work conditions of teachers with disabilities reveals that teachers' job satisfaction depends solely on free mobility and accessibility (Kış et al., 2012). However, this study shows that professional relations at work, besides accessibility opportunities, significantly shape the faculty members' job satisfaction. Colleagues and administrators are expected to respect the needs and capabilities of the faculty members with disabilities to create a fair workplace for all in line with Lindsay and Cancelliere's (2018) study. Between 2013-2015, a total of 5890 people reported mobbing cases to a call line (ALO170), and most of these plaintiffs were teachers at public schools and faculty members

at state universities (Kılıç, 2013). The participants of this study confirm that mobbing widely takes place in Turkish academia and gets stronger in disability.

The faculty members' both self-knowledge and social-knowledge are shaped by the professional relations with administrators and colleagues. Meanwhile, the findings suggest that while the administration directly affects the self and social knowledge, it also indirectly affects the relations with colleagues and administrative and auxiliary staff. Moreover, the interviewer's personal judgment and prejudices were involved during some participants' job interviews, resulting in preclusion. As Cole and Lewis (1993) mentioned, the decision-makers can make a decision based on their personal judgment as long as the decision is made by the book. Besides, acquaintanceship significantly influences both the decision-making and accommodation as depicted in the results. On the other hand, confirming Keller's (1998) statement that the decisions can be established upon non-academic reasons, the administrators who are prejudiced against disability cause exclusion of the faculty member from academic studies. The fact that most participants mentioned "invisible" to define their existence and feel ignored or seen as a minority confirms the statement of Williams and Mavin (2012) that individuals with disabilities are generally "theoretically invisible" at work.

In line with Waterfield et al.'s (2018) research, most participants stated that they frequently have to prove themselves productive, successful, and capable. Besides, this study confirms Roulstone and Williams' (2014) and Bulk et al.' (2017) studies emphasizing that people with disabilities experience discrimination if they mention disability to get accessible accommodations. In line with Lindsay and



Cancelliere's (2018) and Blockmans` (2015) research, many individuals with disabilities are unwilling to share their disability because they do not want to be seen as incompetent or dependent face social exclusion or discrimination. It is inferred from the findings that many candidates were not hired for the faculty member positions since either the interviewers were prejudiced against disability or did not know or want to provide adaptations for accessibility.

It can be claimed that none of the universities in Turkey is entirely accessible. Universal design is needed everywhere, including the universities. The universal design can be explained as the design of items, places, and surroundings equally accessible to all people regardless of disabilities, ages, conditions, or capabilities (Story et al., 1998). Higher education administrators are expected to provide the necessary accommodation until the universal design is accomplished. The reflections as self and social knowledge have an impact on one's job satisfaction. The findings imply that none of the participants is completely satisfied with their job regarding the four faculty work domains. On the other hand, those who are content with accessibility and relations at work feel more satisfied with their jobs and have higher job satisfaction. As expected, mobbing, humiliation, discrimination, and exclusion have a negative impact on self-knowledge, self-esteem, and job satisfaction.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that the higher education institutions in Turkey lack a systematic and consistent approach and understanding of the needs of faculty members with disabilities. Page (2003) suggests higher education leaders should have five essential

features to create a diverse community: *commitment to understanding diversity and fundamental values, a culture of trust, developing ways of providing mobility to diverse groups, and being accountable for the success and failures of the organization.* The study results show us that promoting diversity through inclusive practices is needed, and academic leadership can be crucial for higher education institutions. The policymakers, higher education administrators, and managers are expected to prevent the social barriers caused by colleagues, administrators, and environmental barriers stemming from the disabling workplaces. They are expected to listen to the disabled individuals' expectations and act upon them.

Recommendations for Leadership and Management in Higher Education

Based on the results of the study and the above-mentioned vital features, the following suggestions were developed.

- The Turkish Higher Education Quality Council must secure the standard rules and regulations for recruitment and work environment, and keep track of the implementations of these rules and regulations on a bright and regular basis as part of the external evaluations.
- The existence of inclusive practices at universities should not depend on those in administrative positions and on their misguided judgments; thus, higher education administrators should be trained to embrace more inclusive practices for faculty work life.
- All stakeholders of higher education institutions should be trained and advocate the rights of individuals with disabilities and other types of diversity.



- The Council of Higher Education (YÖK) mandated Disability Units should serve students with a disability and all members of higher education institutions.
- Higher education institutions should be arranged according to universal design, and individuals with disabilities should not be forced to request an accommodation.

Suggestions for Future Research

Some suggestions can be considered for future research:

- Further research can be carried out to increase the generalizability of the results since the results of this qualitative research cannot be generalized.
- The researcher was supposed to collect the participants' interpretations and then interpret those interpretations accordingly due to the nature of phenomenological research. For a different method, observations or field-notes can provide further information.
- This study only covers the academic staff of higher education. Another research, including the administrative staff, can be conducted to include all individuals at universities.
- Comparative research on K-12 and Higher Education can be conducted since there are many differences between the experiences of faculty members with a disability based on this study and K-12 teachers with a disability according to some other researches.

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About the author

Havanur Aytaş graduated with a bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching and a minor degree in Sociology from METU in 2015. She received her master's degree in Educational Administration and Planning from METU in 2019. She has worked as a teacher at Ayseabla High School in Ankara, and English Instructor at the department of Applied English and Translation, Niğde University for four years. She is currently working as an instructor at the International Office, the Social Sciences University of Ankara.

Email address: aytas.havanur@gmail.com

Serap Emil is an Associate Professor in the department of Educational Sciences at Middle East Technical University teaching in the teacher education programs and graduate programs in Educational Administration and Planning program at METU. She is also serving as Student Advisor to the Director of Graduate School of Social Sciences. Her scholarship is in the field of higher education specifically faculty professional development, teaching and learning in higher education and development of higher education

Email address: semil@metu.edu.tr