

## *Full Length Research Paper*

# **The existence of favoritism in organizations**

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**The aim of this study is to determine if favoritism exists in Turkish universities and, if so, to clarify its type and to present the views of faculty members regarding the reasons for favoritism. This is a descriptive study and its population consists of the faculty members of Turkish universities. The study was carried out by obtaining the views of 385 faculty members who were randomly chosen. A scale was developed as a data collection tool. According to the data obtained through this study, it can be asserted that favoritism exists in the following academic areas in universities: the assignments of deans, directors, head of departments; the selection of teaching staff for academic activities; the supplying of teaching materials to faculties and colleges; deciding on the level of course loads of faculty members; in academic promotions; lack of effective communication with some teaching staff; the opening of new departments and establishing new units; and in the forming of faculty boards.**

**Key words:** Favoritism, university, academic promotion, organization, faculty member.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Favoritism means a person, being bestowed a privilege, not because of being the best in his/her profession, but because of some other irrelevant qualification (Employee Favoritism, 2006). Favoritism means to behave better towards one person or group of people than to others and shows the personal preferences of those who are decision-makers (Kwon, 2005).

Favoritism has three perspectives. These are nepotism, cronyism and patronage. Nepotism is to bestow privileges only on relatives at every level for every position. Cronyism is to bestow privileges only on friends. Patronage occurs when political parties assuming power assign their relatives and friends to high level management positions (Abdalla et al., 1998; Khatri et al., 2006; Pektaş, 1999). Apart from these three perspectives, favoritism is sometimes shown according to people's social and economic status (Jussim et al., 1998) and people who are of the same social and economic status bestow privileges on each other (Sprinthall and Sprinthall, 1990). Moreover, people with a low social status show much more favor (Batalha et al., 2007).

In addition, gender can sometimes be an important factor in showing favoritism; even physical appearance can be effective (Dusek and Joseph, 1983). Likewise,

people who are good-humored, that is, cheerful, are bestowed privileges much more than people who are not. This is thought to be because good-humored people are believed to be more honest, more social, more polite and more successful (Hess et al., 2002).

In some cases, having the same ideology/world view and involvement in the same group (organization, political party or religious opinion) can be a highly important factor in the subject of favoritism.

Sometimes, having good interaction with people can also be an influencing factor. For this reason, some institution managers try to keep communications with their personnel to a minimum in order not to show favor. However, good communication is very important in promoting personnel's success and motivation. Good communications between manager and personnel affect performance directly (Al-Houli, 1999; Bhushan, 1985; McGarity and Butts, 1984).

A situation which decreases performance or weakens organizational justice can result from lack of good communication and not building good relationships. As Hinkle and Brown (1990) state, there is no direct relation between having good relations with people in an organization and showing favor.

## Favoritism in organizations

Favoritism reveals unfair treatment in organizations. While favored individuals are awarded privileges, others (individuals who are not favored) are punished or neglected. There are many attitudes and behaviors in organizations that are apparently legal but are, in fact, examples of implicit favoritism (Redlawsk and McCann, 2005). For instance, managers behave better towards favored personnel by giving them the best classes and students, making positive assessments about them, supporting their advancement, appreciating them, and granting commissions that are income-generating. On the other hand, favoritism shown by managers reinforces the domination of personnel who are treated badly and triggers negative feelings directly or indirectly in organizations (Blase and Blase, 2003). This is because people evaluate themselves depending on how they are perceived in their group (Susskind and Hodges, 2007).

Studies on social identity theory and social psychology indicate that people are liable to bestow privileges on those who have similar attitudes, beliefs and behaviors as themselves (Turner et al., 1987; Sidanius and Pratto, 1999). Individuals view themselves considering the members of their social group and, evaluate and classify themselves accordingly (Turner, 1987; Kramer and Brewer, 1984; Schopler and Insko, 1992). Other groups in the social environment form a basis for the individual to assess the group's situation (Turner, 1975). People show a bias towards perception and underestimation to obtain a positive social identity and to raise self-respect during the carrying out of this social comparison, by showing favor to their own groups (Doosje and Ellemers, 1997). Moreover, while individuals incline towards people who have positive characteristics in their own group, they incline more towards people who have negative characteristics in other groups (Dasgupta, 2004). Sometimes, managers in an organization favor or actually reward those with a negative character to prevent them from making trouble. In this situation, management shows "unwilling" favor.

Favoritism in organizations is unjust because it gives various advantages to certain people despite their not deserving such privileges and because such behavior harms other people's good intentions. Favoritism damages transparency because it is generally shown secretly. The major dilemma of favoritism is that many people do not perceive it as a problem (Nadler and Schulman, 2006). Favoritism in many organizations is one of the most important reasons for inefficiency (Kim, 2004).

Favoritism damages transparency in management and makes the organization a closed or semi-closed system. For this reason, the principle of equality and openness that is particularly important for the management of personnel can be damaged. There is a homogenizing

aspect to favoritism, particularly in organizations. Homogenization leads to a closed organizational culture. Homogeneous collocations established on factors such as race, region, graduation from the same school ignore the open system approach in internal and external communications network. This is because homogenous groups want to protect their acquired rights (Pyo, 1999; Lee, 1999).

In these organizations, ensuring a high degree of social mobility and social change can alter the relationship between evaluating competence and social status (Smith et al., 2001).

## Problem

The opinions of academic members about the subject of favoritism that exists in higher education institutions were expressed both in written and visual form. It is possible to list favoritism shown as follows (Aktan, 2003; Ortaş, 2011):

- i. In the election and appointment of administrative personnel such as rectors, deans, directors of graduate schools, directors of institutes and heads of department.
- ii. In the appointment of professorships, associate professorships and assistant professorships.
- iii. In the recruitment of research assistants.
- iv. In the distribution of administrative and service personnel.
- v. In the allocation of budgets to units.
- vi. In the supplying of goods such as stationery, printed paper and office materials.
- vii. In assigning individuals to commissions and councils.
- viii. In the allocation of classrooms, workplaces and courses.
- ix. In contracts in fields like technical and operating systems.
- x. In the allocation of units and academic members from university resources.
- xi. In supporting academic members' studies and
- xii. In the process of showing discretion with regard to laws and legislation.

It was observed that only a few studies have been conducted on favoritism in the education system (Yilmaz and Altinkurt, 2011; Turkish Education Union, 2010; Aydogan, 2008, 2009). Almost all of these studies are related to primary schools, secondary schools and the Ministry of Education's central organization. No qualitative or quantitative research was found with regard to universities. The aim of this study is to determine whether favoritism exists in Turkish universities and, if so, in which areas and also to learn academic members' opinions about the reasons for favoritism.

The purpose of this study is to establish whether,

according to academic members' opinions, managers at department, faculty and university level show favoritism in their work and activities. The most important limitation of the study is that the data and findings which were obtained pertain to the opinions of academic members.

## METHODS

The study is a descriptive one. The target population of the study consists of 105,127 academic members working at 210 universities in Turkey. Sampling was used because the target population of the study was so large. Accordingly, 385 was determined as the sampling number based on Krijcie and Morgan's (1970) criterion designating the size of sampling for educational studies. The academic members (professors, associate professors and assistant professors) chosen through random sampling were contacted via electronic mail. The number of academic members who agreed to fill in the scale and were able to be contacted was 365.

### Data collection tool

In the study, a previously used scale was improved as a data collection tool. The process of improving the scale was as follows: the researcher first investigated the general working of a university, the laws and regulations related to universities, ethics in education, favoritism and books and articles related to nepotism, cronyism and patronage. Then, the opinions of academic members working in universities were collected on the subject of favoritism. A 48 point scheme was prepared from the results of obtained data from the literature and various studies. Afterwards, sentences on favoritism in universities were formed by consulting expert opinion about these points' adequacy levels, clarity and representability. The points of the statements in the scale were given as "1=strongly disagree" and "5= strongly agree" in a 5-point Likert scale.

To determine the structural validity of the scale, factor analysis was implemented. Analysis began with 48 points and when the first results of factor analysis were examined, it was seen that the factor load value of 10 points was under 0.35. These points were removed from the scale and factor analysis was conducted for the other 38 points. As a result of principal components and Varimax rotation procedure, four factors were found in the scale with an eigenvalue of 1.00 or higher.

The variance percentages accounted for by the factors were 21.15, 12.30, 11.71 and 11.04 respectively. All of the four factors clarified 56.21% of total variance. The variance level was over 41%; this is a reasonable level that can be accepted for the evaluation of a scale that has four factors. It was seen that the points that were included in the scale were gathered in four factors and that the factor load values of the points changed between 0.54 and 0.77. In addition, in the first stage of the scale's validity studies, an assessment and evaluation instrument was applied and the results of the data that were obtained were suitable for the sampling group at 0.000 level for KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) at a value of 0.81 and for the Barlett Test at a value of 1648.312. According to these findings, it can be said that "the scale on favoritism in universities" was highly reliable and valid. As for the scale's alpha reliability coefficient, it was determined that the alpha internal consistency coefficient was 0.83. Factor I comprising 21.15% of total variance and including 10 points was "favoritism at university level"; Factor II comprising 33.46% and including 13 points was "favoritism at faculty level"; Factor III comprising 45.17% of total variance and including 8 points was "favoritism at department level" and Factor

IV comprising 56.21% of total variance and including 7 points was "the reasons for favoritism".

## FINDINGS

Three hundred and sixty five academic members participated in the study. It was determined that 36% (131) of the academic members were females, and 64% (234) of them were males; 11% (39) of them were professors, 36% (132) were associate professors and 53% (194) were assistant professors. It was also determined that 28% (102) of the academic members did their PhDs abroad; 24% (88) of them did in the university in which they still work, and 48% (175) did them in a university other than that in which they work. The perceptions of academic members relating to favoritism at university, faculty and department levels were evaluated at point level, for that reason. The average of the points for each item, which has four sub-dimensions, in each dimension demonstrating the situation as regards favoritism are shown in the tables. The perceptions of academic members related to favoritism at university, faculty and department levels were examined by t-test and ungradable variance analysis to determine whether they changed in terms of gender, title, or location of PhD variables.

### Averages relating to responses of academic members participating in the survey to statements concerning favoritism at university level

Academic members stated that favoritism at university level is shown mostly in the appointment of deans/directors ( $X=4.14$ ), in contracts ( $X=3.84$ ), in selecting teaching personnel to participate in activities and events to be held ( $X=3.82$ ), in the appointment of heads of department ( $X=3.75$ ), and in supplying educational and instructional materials to faculties and graduate schools ( $X=3.42$ ) respectively. It is seen from Table 1 that for the other items, favoritism is shown at a medium level.

### Averages relating to responses of academic members participating in the survey to statements concerning favoritism at faculty level

Academic members stated that favoritism at faculty level is mostly shown in allocating course load ( $X=4.56$ ), in the appointment/determination of posts of professorship, associate professorship and assistant professorship ( $X=4.22$ ), in the appointment of heads of department ( $X=4.14$ ), in communicating with some teaching personnel ( $X=3.86$ ), in contracts and finishing various works ( $X=3.84$ ), in instituting new units like departments

**Table 1.** Item average points at lower dimension of university level (N=365).

S/No.	University level	X	S
1	Favoritism is shown in appointment of deans/ directors.	4.14	0.75
2	Favoritism is shown in appointment of heads of department.	3.75	0.88
3	Favoritism is shown in allocation of dwellings.	3.24	1.09
4	Favoritism is shown in contracts related to various works.	3.84	0.88
5	Favoritism is shown in selecting teaching personnel to participate in activities and events.	3.82	0.95
6	Favoritism is shown in instituting new units like faculties, institutes and departments.	2.90	1.04
7	Favoritism is shown in distributing supplies allocated from the university budget for faculties and other units.	3.24	1.00
8	Favoritism is shown in the allocation of buildings, facilities and materials of the university.	2.77	1.05
9	Favoritism is shown in assigning administrative personnel to faculties.	3.04	1.21
10	Favoritism is shown in supplying educational and instructional materials to faculties and graduate schools.	3.42	1.12

**Table 2.** Item average points at lower dimension of faculty level.

S/No.	Faculty level	X	S
1	Favoritism is shown in appointment of heads of department.	4.14	0.75
2	Favoritism is shown in contracts and finishing various works.	3.84	0.88
3	Favoritism is shown in selecting teaching personnel to participate in activities and events to be held.	3.82	0.95
4	Favoritism is shown in instituting new units like departments.	3.84	0.88
5	Favoritism is shown in assigning administrative personnel to departments.	3.04	1.21
6	Favoritism is shown in supplying educational and instructional materials to teaching staff.	3.42	1.12
7	Favoritism is shown in appointment/determination of posts of professorship, associate professorship and assistant professorship.	4.22	0.83
8	Favoritism is shown in allocating classrooms.	2.92	1.06
9	Favoritism is shown in allocating course load	4.56	0.64
10	Favoritism is shown in allocating workrooms.	3.39	1.16
11	Favoritism is shown in establishing commissions.	3.78	1.04
12	Favoritism is shown in establishing administrative boards.	3.53	0.95
13	Favoritism is shown in communicating with teaching personnel.	3.86	1.04

(X=3.84), in selecting teaching personnel to participate in activities and events (X=3.82), in establishing commissions (X=3.78), in establishing administrative boards (X=3.53), and in supplying educational and instructional materials to teaching staff (X=3.42) (Table 2).

#### **Averages relating to responses of academic members participating in the survey to statements concerning favoritism at department level**

Academic members indicated that favoritism at department level is mostly shown in the appointment/determination of posts of professorship, associate professorship and assistant professorship (X=4.22), in selecting heads of departments (X=4.14), in

allocating course load (X=3.91), in selecting teaching personnel to participate in activities and events to be held (X=3.82), in communicating with teaching personnel (X=3.77) and in supplying educational and instructional materials to instructors (X=3.42) respectively (Table 3).

#### **Averages relating to responses of academic members participating in the survey to statements in the dimension of reasons for favoritism**

According to the views of academic members participating in the survey, the reasons for favoritism are arranged in order as having similar political views, having the same religion or ideology, studying at the same school, being fellow townsmen, being of the opposite sex, and being of the same race (Table 4).

**Table 3.** Item average points at lower dimension of department level (N=365).

S/no.	Department level	X	S
1	Favoritism is shown in selecting heads of departments.	4.14	0.75
2	Favoritism is shown in selecting teaching personnel to participate in activities and events.	3.82	0.95
3	Favoritism is shown in supplying educational and instructional materials to teaching staff.	3.42	1.12
4	Favoritism is shown in appointment/determination of posts of professorship, associate professorship and assistant professorship.	4.22	0.83
5	Favoritism is shown in allocating classrooms.	3.12	1.04
6	Favoritism is shown in allocating course load.	3.91	0.91
7	Favoritism is shown in allocating workrooms.	3.28	1.01
8	Favoritism is shown in communicating with teaching personnel.	3.77	1.12

**Table 4.** Item average points at lower dimension of reasons for favoritism.

S/no.	Reasons of favoritism	X	S
1	Having similar political views	4.59	0.60
2	Having same religion/ideology	4.46	0.70
3	Studying at the same school	4.08	0.97
4	Being related	3.98	0.96
5	Being fellow townsmen	3.73	1.17
6	Being of the opposite sex	3.43	1.06
7	Being of the same race	3.40	0.98

**Table 5.** Analysis of factors listed in the scale considering the gender.

Factors	Male (n=234)		Female (n=131)		t	p
	N	S	N	S		
University	3.38	0.33	3.48	0.27	-3.12	0.00
Faculty	3.69	0.32	3.77	0.31	-2.44	0.01
Department	3.63	0.34	3.84	0.31	-5.96	0.00

#### Analysis of responses concerning the dimension of favoritism at university, faculty and department level, given by academic members participating in the survey in terms of gender, title and the location of Ph.D. variables

According to the averages shown in Table 5, it is seen that there is a difference in the opinions of both male and female academic members relating to favoritism at the level of university ( $t=-3.12$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), faculty ( $p=-2.44$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), and department ( $p=-5.96$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Accordingly, female academic members had higher response rates than male academic members.

In consequence of the analysis considering academic status (Table 6), it was found that among academic members, there was no statistically significant difference

in opinions regarding favoritism at the level of university ( $F=2.05$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and department ( $F=1.86$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). Professors, associate professors, and assistant professors were of the opinion that favoritism is high at university and department levels. As for favoritism at faculty level, it was found that there was a difference in the opinions of academic members. In the post hoc test to determine the source of the difference, it was found that associate professors had higher response rates than the other two groups.

In consequence of the analysis considering the location of the Ph.D. (Table 7), it was found that among academic members there was no statistically significant difference in their opinions regarding favoritism at the level of university ( $F=0.57$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), faculty ( $F=3.06$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and department ( $F=1.42$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). In other words, academic

**Table 6.** Analysis of factors listed in the scale considering academic status.

Factors	Professor (n=39)		Associate professor (n=132)		Assistant professor (n=194)		F	p	Post Hoc
	N	S	N	S	N	S			
University	3.51	0.28	3.42	0.30	3.39	0.32	2.05	0.13	-
Faculty	3.64	0.29	3.80	0.28	3.68	0.34	6.22	0.00	2-1;2-3
Department	3.72	0.31	3.75	0.34	3.68	0.35	1.86	0.15	-

\*Tukey HSD is used as Post Hoc test.

**Table 7.** Analysis of factors listed in the scale considering location of PhD.

Factors	1 (n=102)		2 (n=88)		3 (n=175)		F	p	Post Hoc*
	M	S	M	S	M	S			
University	3.40	0.31	3.45	0.30	3.41	0.32	0.57	0.56	-
Faculty	3.78	0.27	3.72	0.36	3.68	0.32	3.06	0.05	-
Department	3.75	0.33	3.71	0.37	3.68	0.34	1.42	0.24	-

\*Tukey HSD is used as Post Hoc test. 1= I did doctorate abroad; 2= I did doctorate in the university I work; 3= I did doctorate in a university other than that in which I work.

**Table 8.** Analysis of the reasons for favoritism listed in the scale considering gender.

Subjects	Female (n=131)		Male (n=234)		t-value	p
	M	S	M	S		
1	4.48	0.74	4.66	0.49	2.49	0.01
2	4.48	0.59	4.44	0.75	-0.61	0.54
3	3.45	1.38	3.88	1.01	3.09	0.00
4	4.32	0.94	3.95	0.97	-3.61	0.00
5	4.12	1.06	3.89	0.89	-2.11	0.03
6	3.41	1.14	3.39	0.87	-0.16	0.86
7	3.58	0.97	3.35	1.10	-2.09	0.03

members who work and do their Ph.Ds in the university other than that in which they work state that favoritism is high at faculty and department levels.

#### **Analysis of responses of academic members participating in the study on the reasons for favoritism in terms of gender, title, location of Ph.D variables**

Regarding the analysis of opinions of academic members concerning the reasons for favoritism in terms of gender (Table 8), it was observed that a difference did not exist in the opinions of either male or female academic members on "having the same religion/ideology" and

"being of the same race". Both groups indicated that they agreed at a "very high" level that favoritism is shown due to "having the same religion/ideology" and they agreed at a "high" level that favoritism is shown due to "being of the same race". When opinions on the reasons for favoritism between male and female academic members differed, it was shown that male academic members agreed more on the subjects "being of similar political opinion", "being fellow townsmen" than female academic members. Female academic members agreed more on the subjects "studying in the same school", "being a relative" and "being of the opposite sex" than males.

When analysis of the reasons for favoritism considering academic status (Table 9) was examined, a difference did not occur in the opinions of professors, associate

**Table 9.** Analysis of the reasons for favoritism listed in the scale considering academic status.

Subjects	Professor (n=39)		Associate professor (n=131)		Assistant professor (n=194)		F	p	Post Hoc
	M	S	M	S	M	S			
1	4.61	0.49	4.41	0.74	4.71	0.47	10.26	0.00	3-1;3-2
2	4.43	0.71	4.49	0.64	4.44	0.73	0.21	0.80	-
3	4.30	1.00	3.72	1.16	3.61	1.19	5.69	0.00	1-2;1-3
4	4.69	0.61	4.10	0.99	3.95	0.97	9.77	0.00	1-2;1-3
5	3.66	1.13	4.13	0.85	3.93	0.97	4.06	0.01	2-1;2-3
6	3.82	1.04	3.47	0.92	3.26	0.97	6.06	0.00	1-2;1-3
7	3.20	1.10	3.34	1.09	3.54	1.02	2.42	0.09	-

\*Tukey HSD is used as Post Hoc test.

**Table 10.** Analysis of the reasons for favoritism listed in the scale considering the location where PhD is done.

Subject	Abroad (n=102)		In his/her own university (n=88)		In other universities (n=175)		F	p	Post Hoc
	M	S	M	S	M	S			
1	4.58	0.51	4.71	0.56	4.54	0.65	2.45	0.08	-
2	4.50	0.64	4.48	0.62	4.42	0.76	0.48	0.61	-
3	3.91	1.13	3.80	1.12	3.58	1.21	2.68	0.07	-
4	4.11	0.93	3.92	1.04	4.15	0.96	1.75	0.17	-
5	4.08	0.92	3.87	1.02	3.97	0.94	1.17	0.30	-
6	3.36	0.92	3.51	0.94	3.36	1.02	0.74	0.47	-
7	3.31	1.01	3.45	0.99	3.50	1.12	1.03	0.35	-

\*Tukey HSD is used as Post Hoc test.

professors and assistant professors regarding the items "having same religion/ideology" and "being of the opposite sex". A difference did occur in opinions on the reasons of favoritism in terms of academic status; professors agreed more on the reasons "being fellow townsmen", "being a related", and "being of the same race"; associate professors agreed more on the reason "studying in the same school", and assistant professors agreed more on the reason "having the same political opinion". When analysis of the reasons for favoritism concerning location of PhD was examined (Table 10), it was observed that there was no difference in opinions. Accordingly, the opinions of academic members doing their PhD inland (members doing their doctorates in the university in which they work and members doing their doctorates in universities other than those in which they work) and those doing their PhDs abroad showed parallelism.

## RESULTS, PROPOSALS AND DISCUSSION

### Favoritism at university level

The aim of Turkish universities is to conduct high-level

scientific research and to produce technology, to expand scientific data, to contribute to global and modern development and to support national progress and development. With the aim of fulfilling these objectives, there are 210 universities (including foundation and private universities) in Turkey (by 2011). The number of teaching personnel working in these universities is 105,127. In 2011, approximately five percent of the populations of Turkey were in attendance at higher education institutions. In other words, the number of students in higher education in Turkey is 3,569,334 including Open University. By 2010, the schooling rate in higher education was 32% (www.tuik.gov.tr 2011; Milliyet newspaper, 28 March 2011).

The rector in Turkish State universities is selected from the six professorial candidates given the most votes by academic members of the university (election is by secret ballot). The General Board of Higher Education selects three candidates and these are presented to the presidency. The president chooses one of them, and assigns him/her as rector. The term of duty of the rector is four years. The rector represents the legal personality of the university. In foundation universities, the selection of rectorial candidates and appointment of rector is

performed by a board of trustees.

In this study, according to the opinions of teaching personnel, favoritism is shown in the appointment of deans and managers. The dean of a faculty is appointed by the Board of Higher Education for three years from three professors whom the rector recommends, either working in the university or in another university. The director of graduate schools is appointed directly by the rector (Higher Education Law no. 2547). The rector generally selects deans from those who have close political or ideological beliefs, from his relatives, or from those who voted for him at the rectorial election.

Faculty members indicate that favoritism is shown in the appointment of heads of department. The head of a department in Turkish universities is appointed for three years by the rector from among salaried professors, associate professors, or assistant professors who are recommended by the deans of faculties (Higher Education Law no. 2547). However, deans consider possible candidates to appoint as heads of department by taking the rector's opinion into consideration or informing him before hand (because the post is appointed by the rector). The rectors in certain universities can intervene in the appointments of head of department. In addition, faculty members indicate that favoritism is made in supplying the educational material needs of faculties/graduate schools, and in choosing teaching personnel to participate in activities and events. The rector's office has a decisive role in the selection of teaching personnel who will attend national or international activities and events in the university. The rector can choose the faculty member he wants. This choice is generally made from his friends or assistants, or people who voted for him in the rectorial selection.

These results correspond to those in the study made by Lee (1999). Lee (1999) indicated that favoritism is an important factor after Confucianism in Korean Universities. Favoritism generating from reasons like tribalism, family bonds, regional relationships, and school bonds also impedes the exchange of scientific knowledge as much as intercollegiate, interfaculty and interdepartmental academic knowledge (Pyo, 1999).

### **Favoritism at faculty level**

According to the opinions of faculty members, favoritism is shown in allocating course load in communicating with some teaching personnel, in the appointment/determination of posts of professorship, associate professorship and assistant professorship, in contracting out and finishing various works, in instituting new units like departments, in the selection of teaching personnel to participate in activities and events, in establishing the administrative boards of faculties, and in the distribution of educational and instructional materials to academic

members of staff.

One of the most important duties of faculty members is lecturing. Every department divides courses appropriate to its mission to faculty members of department. Sometimes, many departments may have common courses and the dean may interfere with the distribution of courses.

In the Higher Education Law no. 2547, the following method is applied in the appointment of professorship, associate professorship and assistant professorship posts in Turkey:

a) Professorial posts are announced by the rectorship. Five professors related to the department where a post is available, of whom at least three are from different universities, are chosen by the university administrative board to determine the scientific qualifications and conditions of the candidates applying for the professorship post. These professors write an individual report for each candidate and, if there is more than one candidate for the post, they state their choice. The rector makes an appointment based on the reports of the university administrative board.

b) Vacant associate professor posts in a unit of a university are advertised by the rectors' office. Three professors, at least one of whom is from a different university and, if possible, one of whom is a related unit administrator, are chosen by the rector to analyze the suitability of the candidates. These professors make their own comments regarding the candidates to the rector. The rector assigns the post on the basis of these comments after taking the university administrative board's opinion.

c) Vacant assistant professor posts in a unit of a university are advertised by the rector's office. Deans of faculties as well as managers in graduate schools and institutes connected to the rector's office require written comments on each candidate by determining three professors or associate professors, one of whom is a director of that unit and one of whom works at another university. The dean or related manager makes recommendations to the rector after taking his own administrative boards' opinion into consideration. Appointment is made by the rector.

Even if the legal requirements afore outlined are followed, various opinions were expressed both in written and visual form among faculty members that there is favoritism in recruitment and academic promotions. These are (Aktan, 2003; Ortaş, 2011):

1- In spite of the Academic Personnel and Post Graduate Education Entrance Exam (ALES) and Interuniversity Foreign Language Examination (UDS), undeserving people are still accepted to master's and doctorate programs through master's and doctorate entrance



exams and research assistant exams and also with referenced scholarship exams which are held for science and interview examinations. Moreover, academic titles are conferred by creating an arbitrary false jury at master's and doctorate thesis oral examinations.

2- Assistant professor posts are announced by the rector's office at the request of departments and deans. Announcements for posts are generally made for a particular person who will be appointed; this person has actually been chosen beforehand. Deans appoint a jury that approves the appointment perfunctorily. This situation is covered up by the fact that one of the members of the jury must be from the other university. He/ she is invited as a familiar jury member.

3- Posts announced for teaching personnel are not competitive. Vacant posts are advertised for people who are actually working at the university and are, in fact, under consideration for the post. The whole process is a mere formality.

4- The objective criteria that should be required for academic appointments and promotions are not in place many universities. A standardized procedure regarding appointment criteria in universities does not exist.

### **Favoritism at department level**

According to the opinions of academic members, favoritism is shown in the appointment/determination of posts of professorship, associate professorship and assistant professorship, in selecting heads of department, in allocating course load, in selecting teaching personnel to participate in activities and events, in communicating with teaching personnel, and in supplying educational and instructional materials to lecturers at department level.

In the study, female academic members agree with male members that favoritism is shown at university, faculty and department level. On the other hand, while professors, associate professors and assistant professors agree that favoritism is shown at university and department levels, at faculty level, only associate professors share this opinion. This situation is in agreement with the opinion of Jussim et al. (1998) and Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1990) who state that favoritism can be shown according social status; it has also been shown that favoritism towards people with a lower social status (assistant professors) is very common (Batalha et al., 2007) is very common. The reason associate professors state there is favoritism at faculty level is because they believe they are seen as rivals because the title of associate professorship is one between professorship and assistant professorship.

It could be said that professors show favor to assistant professors who have a lower title and not to associate professors who will soon be professors. In this study, it

was found that there was no difference between academic staff who did their PhDs abroad and those who did their PhDs in Turkey, in opinions related to favoritism at university, faculty and department levels. These results are in agreement with Armin and Zehnder (2007) about favoritism not being significantly related to an individual's sex or other characteristics.

### **The reasons for favoritism**

In the scale used in this study, seven points related to the reasons for favoritism were added. In addition, if there were any further points they wished to express, they were asked to do so on a blank page. However, it was observed that none of the participants added any other reasons for favoritism apart from those aforementioned. According to the opinions of academic members participating in the study, the main reasons for favoritism in universities are, in order, 1) having similar political views, 2) having same religion and ideology, 3) studying at the same school, 4) being related, 5) being fellow townsmen, 6) being of the opposite sex, and 7) being of the same race. These results show a similarity with studies indicating that having similar beliefs, attitudes, and behavior, gaining a social identity, physical appearance, having ideology/ world view involvement in the same group (organization, political party or religious opinion) play an important role in favoritism (Turner et al., 1987; Sidanius and Pratto, 1999; Doosje and Ellemers, 1997; Dusek and Joseph, 1983; Turkish Education Union, 2010; Aydogan 2009; Aydogan, 2008).

As regards the reasons for favoritism, while female academic members state that studying in the same school and being of the opposite sex are important factors, male academic member state that having similar political views and being fellow townsmen are important ones. In terms of academic status, professors specify that being fellow townsmen, being related and being of the same race are significant factors; associate professors specify that studying at the same school is a significant factor; assistant professors specify that having similar political views is a significant factor in favoritism. In terms of location of Ph.D (or university), it emerged that there was no difference in the opinions of academic members. Almost all of them stated that the aforementioned reasons for favoritism were effective.

Universities and academic members have three important functions: discovering the truth and stating it; making fair evaluations about their students' and colleagues' studies; and training students for the difficulties of life (Sugarman, 2005). These three functions require a meritocratic approach. Favoritism emerges if meritocracy does not exist. Lee (2001) states the following conditions as necessary to rid universities of favoritism:

- i) Organizational culture should be transformed from a closed to an open one,
- ii) An organizational structure should be established which is not based on favoritism,
- iii) The system should be changed from a closed organizational and administrative structure established on universities' personal relations into an open system and
- iv) A culture of criticism should be encouraged.

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