

Qualitative Assessment of the Experiences and Psychosocial Problems of International Students Studying in Türkiye

Türkiye’de Öğrenim Gören Uluslararası Öğrencilerin Deneyimleri ve Yaşadıkları Psikososyal Sorunların Niteliksel Olarak Değerlendirilmesi

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ABSTRACT

International students may have more difficulties than domestic students from the regions of their home countries. This study aims to qualitatively assess the experiences and psychosocial problems of international students studying in Turkey. The convenience sample of the study in the descriptive phenomenological research design was 50 students. Data were collected using the focus group interview. Data were analyzed using MAXQDA package program according to Colaizzi's phenomenological analysis steps. Participants' experiences and psychosocial problems were divided into 3 themes: Developmental Opportunities, Needs, and Adaptation Problems. It was found that being an international student helps students acquire social capital and identity. It was found that students have needs related to peer mentoring, language learning, socioeconomic opportunities, and the acculturation process. Students were found to have adjustment problems due to culture shock, prejudice, and discrimination. To overcome the difficulties in bureaucratic procedures, it is recommended that commissions for international students be established at the university and departmental levels. In order to facilitate the adaptation of students and improve the quality of education, it is recommended that the language learning period be extended. It is also suggested that scholarship and housing opportunities for Turkish students be extended to international students. It is recommended that universities, faculties, and departments create academic adjustment programmes and printed guides to facilitate the acculturation process of international students. Contact-oriented activities that bring the community, academics, and domestic students together with international students should reduce prejudice and discrimination.

Keywords: International Students, Psychosocial Problems, Qualitative Study

ÖZ

Uluslararası öğrenciler, kendi ülkelerindeki bölgelerden gelen yerli öğrencilere kıyasla daha fazla zorlukla karşılaşabilirler. Bu çalışmada Türkiye’de öğrenim gören uluslararası öğrencilerin deneyimleri ve yaşadıkları psikososyal sorunların niteliksel olarak değerlendirilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Tanımlayıcı fenomenolojik araştırma desendeki araştırmanın amaçlı örneklemini 50 öğrenci oluşturdu. Veriler odak grup görüşmesi tekniği kullanılarak toplandı. Veriler Colaizzi'nin fenomenolojik analiz basamaklarına göre MAXQDA paket programı kullanılarak değerlendirildi. Katılımcıların deneyimleri ve yaşadıkları psikososyal sorunlar gelişim fırsatları, gereksinimler ve uyum sorunları olmak üzere 3 tema altında toplandı. Uluslararası öğrenci olmanın sosyal sermaye ve kimlik kazanma sürecinde öğrencilere yardımcı olduğu belirlendi. Öğrencilerin akran yönderliği, dil öğrenme, sosyoekonomik olanaklar ve kültürleşme sürecine ilişkin gereksinimlerinin olduğu belirlendi. Öğrencilerin kültür şoku, önyargı ve ayrımcılığa bağlı uyum sorunları yaşadığı belirlendi. Bürokratik işlemlerde yaşanan zorlukların üstesinden gelebilmek için üniversite ve bölüm düzeyinde uluslararası öğrenci komisyonlarının kurulması önerilmektedir. Öğrencilerin uyumunu kolaylaştırmak ve eğitimin niteliğini artırmak için dil öğrenme süresinin uzatılması önerilmektedir. Bunun yanı sıra, Türk öğrencilere yönelik burs ve barınma olanaklarının uluslararası öğrencileri de kapsayacak şekilde genişletilmesi önerilmektedir. Üniversite, fakülte ve bölümlere uluslararası öğrencilerin kültürleşme sürecini kolaylaştıracak akademik uyum programlarını ve basılı rehberleri oluşturması önerilmektedir. Toplum, akademisyenler ve yerli öğrencilerin uluslararası öğrencilerle bir araya getirildiği temasa dayalı müdahalelerin önyargı ve ayrımcılığı azaltacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Niteliksel Çalışma, Psikososyal Sorunlar, Uluslararası Öğrenciler

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Bandırma Onyedi Eylül University Ethics Committee for Noninterventional Research (Date: 13/09/2022/ Number: 2022-8). This study was supported by TÜBİTAK within the scope of TÜBİTAK 2209-A 2022/1 University Students Research Projects Support Programme (Project Number: 1919B012201979).

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Geliş Tarihi / Received: 26.06.2023

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Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 19.09.2023

INTRODUCTION

As a result of globalisation and freedom of movement, many students today have the opportunity to study in a country other than their home country. Recently, the internationalisation of higher education has been high on the agenda in Turkey. Stakeholders are continuously developing policies to improve the international orientation of the Turkish higher education system.^{1,2} An important aspect of this policy is to attract more international students to Turkish universities. Given this nationwide challenge, the number of international students coming to Türkiye has increased rapidly over the past two decades. However, the ratio of international to domestic students is still lower than in most OECD countries. Moreover, the majority of international students come from neighbouring countries and Türkiye.^{1,3}

However, international students may face more difficulties than domestic students from the regions of their home countries. Students may face various problems such as discrimination, prejudice, and stigmatisation due to their personal and cultural characteristics.^{4,5} It has also been noted that international students often face financial problems due to tuition fees and the cost of living alone in a foreign country.⁶ Many international students are at a stage where they do not have sufficient funds to meet their living expenses. It is often difficult for students to save money and contribute to

their financial resources.⁷ In addition to financial problems, international students often struggle with assignments and school obligations, fear of academic failure, motivation to learn, and various psychological problems.^{2,8} In addition, students must adjust to the curriculum, learning styles, and other potential difficulties related to language, culture, and personal barriers.^{9,10} Although domestic students face similar issues on campus during their studies, international students may experience more loneliness and alienation than domestic students in the face of these issues.¹¹ However, psychosocial problems of international students can be an important obstacle to attracting international students to Turkish higher education institutions and to completing the educational process of incoming students. In order to effectively implement higher education policies, students' problems should be studied in depth and solutions to these problems should be proposed. An in-depth study of students' problems based on their experiences can be useful for developing intervention programmes and strategies for students' adjustment process. It can also ensure that higher education policies achieve their goals. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to qualitatively assess the experiences and psychosocial problems of international students in Türkiye.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The guidelines for reporting qualitative research (COREQ) were used to report the study.¹²

Design of the Study

The study was conducted in a descriptive phenomenological study design from qualitative research methods. Descriptive phenomenology is used to understand the individual's daily life experiences and the meaning of those experiences and thoughts about the event.¹³ The reason for choosing

this approach in the current study is to shed light on the experiences and psychosocial problems of international students studying in Türkiye from their own perspectives and to understand students' feelings, thoughts, and experiences about the events.

Place and Time of the Study

The study was conducted with international students continuing their education at a public university between December 15, 2022 and March 15, 2023.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of international students pursuing their education at a public university. In this study, the technique of convenience sampling was used to collect information from individuals who have experienced similar situations. The study included international students who were studying at the university in question, were at least 18 years old, were renewing their enrollment at the time of data collection and were actively pursuing their education. Access to data saturation in qualitative research was considered when determining the sample size. Focus group discussions with 10 participants continued until data saturation was reached. The study was completed with a total of 5 separate group sessions and the participation of 50 individuals.

The mean age of the participants was 21,02±1.46 years. Of the participants, 64% were male, 36% attended fourth grade, 86% had a moderate economic level, and 94% were not employed (Table 1).

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

Variables	N	%
Age ($\bar{x}\pm SD$: 21,02±1,46, Min-max:19-24)		
Gender		
Male	32	64
Female	18	36
Grade		
1	3	6
2	16	32
3	13	26
4	18	36
Economic Status		
Low	6	12
Moderate	43	86
High	1	2
Employment status		
No	47	94
Yes	3	6
Total	50	100

%; Percentage

Data Collection Tools

The data of the study were collected with "Questionnaire Form" and "Semi-structured Interview Form".

Questionnaire Form

A questionnaire form developed by the researchers based on the literature was used. The questionnaire consists of 5 questions about individual and educational characteristics.^{2,9}

Semi-structured Interview Form

The semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers based on the literature consists of three open-ended questions.^{2,8} The form was finalised after expert opinions and pilot applications. The questions included in the form are listed below:

1. What experiences did you have during your studies in Turkey?
2. What problems did you experience while studying in Turkey?
3. Can you explain how you overcame the problems you experienced while studying in Turkey?

Implementation of the Study

To reach international students, researchers provided information to students through written, oral, and online media before the study began. The necessary conditions and contact information for participation in the study were provided in the announcements. The data collection method used in the study was the focus group interview technique. Focus group interviews are conducted within the framework of predetermined rules. The method focuses on the subjective responses of the interviewees and pays attention to the discourse of the participants and the social context of that discourse.¹⁴ The goal of the focus group interview is to obtain in-depth, detailed, and multidimensional qualitative information about participants' perspectives, lives, interests, experiences, tendencies, thoughts, perceptions, emotions, attitudes, and habits.¹⁴ Prior to beginning the interviews, a pilot interview was conducted with a different group than the main participants. Following these interviews, the interview process and questions were reorganised. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and one-on-one by

the researchers in areas designated by the organisation. After announcements were made, volunteer participants were contacted by telephone. Participants who met the inclusion criteria were explained the purpose and method of the study and the time for the interview was scheduled. Interviews were conducted in a quiet and group session-friendly environment. Written and verbal consent was obtained from the participants at the beginning of the interview. The questionnaire was then handed out and participants were asked to complete it. Finally, the focus group interviews were conducted with semi-structured questions. The individual needs of the participants were the determining factor in determining the duration. Interview duration varied from 45 to 90 minutes. Written notes and a voice recorder were used to record verbal and nonverbal utterances. Interview transcripts were sent to participants after the interviews with a request for comments and/or corrections.

Study Team and Reflexivity

One of the researchers is a lecturer in the Department of Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing, and the other researcher is a student in the Department of Nursing. One of the researchers is 31 years old and the other is 20 years old. One of the researchers is also a clinical psychologist and an internationally recognised positive psychotherapy consultant. He also has training in psychoanalytic psychotherapy. The consulting researcher is trained in qualitative research and one of the researchers is male, the other female. In order to prevent the researcher's own assumptions from being reflected in the study process, the researchers held meetings at specific intervals throughout the process.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Bandırma Onyedi University Ethics Committee for Noninterventional Research (Date: 13.09.2022, Number: 2022-8). Institutional approval was obtained from Bandırma

Onyedi Eylül University (Date: 22.12.2022, Number: E-40086482-300-73702). At the beginning of the survey, participants were informed of the provisions of the 1995 Declaration of Helsinki (as revised in Brazil in 2013) and their written and verbal consent was obtained. The principle of confidentiality was observed in the collection and storage of all information from participants. To this end, all information was anonymized by assigning a pseudonym. The data are password protected in the computerised environment. The data will be destroyed 3 years after the completion of the study and publication procedures. This study was supported by TÜBİTAK within the scope of TÜBİTAK 2209-A 2022/1 University Students Research Projects Support Programme (Project Number: 1919B012201979).

Evaluation of the Data

The voice recordings were transcribed and checked for consistency by the researchers. After the data were independently coded by the researchers, coding was agreed upon. Themes were obtained from the data. MAXQDA 20.0 software and Colaizzi's¹⁵ phenomenological analysis steps were used for data analysis. Transcripts were read several times by the researchers and brief notes were taken. Important statements were selected. Important expressions were reviewed and those with a common meaning were grouped. These meanings were divided into subthemes, themes, and codes. The results were combined with life experiences. The concept structure of the analysed phenomenon was revealed. Confirmation was then obtained from the participants. The obtained results were reviewed by an expert from the field.

Acknowledgement/Funding

We thank O.K. for reviewing the received themes, subthemes, and codes. This study was supported by TÜBİTAK within the scope of TÜBİTAK 2209-A 2022/1 University Students Research Projects Support Programme (Project Number: 1919B012201979).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participants' views were divided into 3 themes: Development opportunities, requirements, and adaptation problems. Themes, subthemes, and codes resulting from participants' views showed in Table 2.

Table 2. Themes, subthemes, and codes resulting from participants' views

Theme	Subtheme	Code	
Development opportunities	Social capital	Positive discrimination	
		Multiculturalism	
	Identity acquisition	New relationships	
		Separation-individuation	
Needs	Peer mentoring	Foreign language learner identity	
		Bureaucratic procedures	
	Language learning	Mentoring	
		Increasing language learning time	
		Increasing scholarship opportunities	
	Socioeconomic opportunities	Acculturation	Increasing shelter opportunities
			Health insurance
			Work permit
			Academic adjustment program
			Printed academic guide
	Adaptation problems	Culture shock	Self-help groups
			Creating socialization opportunities
Interaction groups			
Awareness			
Teaching immigration psychology			
Prejudice and discrimination		Loneliness	
		Cultural differences	
		Adaptation to the new environment	
		Learning a new language	
		Prejudice	
Housing discrimination	Discrimination from society		
	Discrimination from academics		
	Discrimination from students		
	Prejudice towards subculture		
	Housing discrimination		

Development opportunities

Participants indicated that being an international student helped them acquire social capital. The acquisition of social capital focused on positive discrimination, multiculturalism, and new relationships.

"Our class has never discriminated, I think I am very lucky in this respect. There are even some who communicate with

foreign friends rather than with themselves (P12)."

"After I met other foreign friends from different cultures, it started to be more fun. In the long run, having acquaintances everywhere will help me a lot (P22)."

"When you go to another country, it's a different culture, different people (P41)."

It was noted that being an international student helped participants complete the process of separation/individuation that could not be completed in previous periods. Students also indicated that learning a second language provided them with a new identity.

"You expect everyone to help you, you expect everyone to understand you. When you first come here, you are surprised when you do not see this kind of behaviour from everyone. But it's definitely a great contribution to self-improvement. I definitely believe that living alone in another country and studying alone at a young age develops a person (P31)"

"It's very nice to be a student and study here, you learn what life is all about (P18)."

"I mean it's a different country, of course there are many good things, for example you learn a different language. I feel like a different character is formed, you have two characters (P23)."

Requirements

Participants stated that they had difficulty with bureaucratic procedures when they had just arrived and that they needed mentoring. They stated that peer mentoring can be useful to overcome the difficulties in this process.

"When you first register, you do not get a residence permit, you do not get a house search, you do not get a phone number, you do not get a connection, you have a lot of

difficulties. I mean, we actually start very far back (P9)."

"Aside from that, we are also dealing with a lot of paperwork. Even before we came here, we had a lot of paperwork to do, and it's the same here. The adjustment period takes at least three to four months (P46)."

"I think there should be interpreters in the schools in the first years. In the beginning, you can not see your own problems. I think a graduate student like us should work there as an interpreter because they also have experience (P2)."

Participants indicated that an increase in language learning time would facilitate the adjustment process. In addition, students expressed their need for socioeconomic support, such as more scholarships, housing, and health insurance.

"Also, the teaching is not like what we learned at TÖMER, so it's a bit difficult. If you start school after you learn the language better, it can be easier. The time it takes to learn Turkish can be extended before enrolling in school (P37)."

"Scholarship opportunities and amounts should be increased for foreign students (P16)."

"There should be a dormitory specifically for foreign students. This is very, very important because the prices of houses are very high and some do not rent houses to foreigners (P45)."

"One of the problems I have here is the dormitories. There are only a few dorms and I have problems with housing (P38)."

"I think there should be private insurance for foreigners, at least for students (P8)."

"And there are problems with work, because we do not have a work permit, we work for half the normal wage (P21)."

Participants expressed their need for academic adjustment programmes and

printed guides to facilitate the acculturation process, conducting support groups, improving socialisation opportunities, conducting interaction groups between academics and students, raising community, peer, and academic awareness of the adjustment process of international students, and teaching migration psychology.

"In the first year, the average of foreigners will always be low because they have no knowledge of the exam. For example, I did the makeup, we had no knowledge. I did not know the conditions for passing and failing. We came and they did not tell us anything about the system. We talked to our friends and learned from them, so there is something missing (P11)."

"There should be a written guide before the academic year (P24)."

"I mean, to be honest, when I arrived, I felt like a ball on a football field and everyone was running around. Nobody was guiding me, nobody was helping me, so I had a lot of trouble my first year (P1)."

"And I think there should be a presentation or a student friend to introduce the university, campus, and classrooms when you come to the university (P39)."

"There should be groups for foreign students and everyone should meet there and talk about their problems...(P47)"

"Meetings can be held to increase our interaction with the lecturers. The lecturers feel the difficult things we are going through (P20)."

"We have difficulties because of the economic situation and outside the school, I do not want to have difficulties at the university (P13)."

"The psychology of foreign students should be explained in the lessons for our Turkish friends. It is only necessary to raise awareness here (P3)."

"Our university can talk to shop owners about supporting foreign students through joint events (P5)."

"Since we are far away from our families here, there are problems with family, classes, and the place where we live, and it is very difficult psychologically. Everyone who can should be informed about this issue... (P49)"

Adaptation Problems

Participants cited indicators of culture shock, such as loneliness, difficulty adapting to a new environment, and learning a new language.

"These situations touch me very much, I have been crying a lot lately, I can not understand them. I wish I had not come (P50)."

"Sometimes we get sick but no one knows, no one asks us, Ramadan comes and we are left alone, Eid comes and we are left alone, no one does anything for us (P42)."

"Regardless of what country we come from, there are inevitable cultural changes, the way people grow up ... there are a lot of differences in that respect (P17)"

"You do not know the city; you do not know where to eat and who to trust (P4)."

"So you have difficulty learning the language (P19)."

"Also, we, the foreign students, generally lose a lot in the first year and the average of the first year was low for everyone (P48)."

Participants indicated that they were subjected to prejudice and discrimination by society, academics, and other students. International students themselves were also found to be prejudiced against subcultures.

"My former friends were very good, and I got along very well with them. When I repeated the courses I failed, I had to take courses with other classes. But I was not able to be a part of the group. I think I could not

be part of the group because I am a foreigner (P40)."

"You might meet foreigners with some prejudice because Syria has gotten a lot of attention in recent years (P10)."

"Especially I see people who have prejudice against African students, for example it happened to me once, I went to a job interview, my friend was looking for a job, my friend is African, I asked if you would hire him, the man said I do not hire illegal workers (P6)."

"People deal in herd psychology and think all foreigners are illegal (P6)."

"Also, friends outside ask us if our state gives you something or if our state gives you a scholarship, but there is no such thing (P36)."

"On the bus ride, some people said that when the bus is full, we can not sit in our own bus because of the foreigners and we have to stand (P30)."

"We talk to the landlord, the landlord was not here, he was abroad and he wants extra money from you to come. There are Turkish friends, they also got an increase, 250 TL or so, but we got an increase of 1000 TL. We said we do not accept it, he (the landlord) said if you do not accept it, you rent another house. Now we have to pay and that is a problem (P25)"

"I am afraid to tell someone that I am a foreigner, because if I say that I am a foreigner, people think that this foreigner does not understand us. We are foreigners, we come from a city, we come from a community, excuse me, we did not come from the cave and come here to study. I really complain about these problems (P44)."

"They discriminate against foreigners (P27)"

"I can not ask the questions I want in class, I feel shy and most lecturers walk past you and do not answer (P33)."

"Because I am Asian, one lecturer asked me if I can cover my small nose with my mask. He made fun of me because I am Asian (P7)."

"A teacher said that foreigners are richer than us and I am surprised how he talks like that. The teacher asked the foreigners how many dollars they make a month (P32)."

"The professors tell us why do you come here, is there no university in your country (P43)."

"I have seen reactions from Turkish students that if you had not come, another Turkish student would have come, that you are cheating our friends out of their rights (P26)"

"You can not trust yourself to be friends with a stranger. My previous friends were very good, I was very sad to change class, I do not get along with my current friends. It seems like they do not like foreigners (P15)"

"They say you do not speak Turkish so well, why do you come to school? I left my family and my hometown and came alone. I spent so much money to study, to learn Turkish culture. I mean, we are not Syrians (P29)."

Participants were found to have experienced significant economic discrimination, such as inadequate housing facilities, higher prices for foreigners, higher price increases for foreigners, or not renting houses to foreigners.

"Rents are very expensive and sometimes a house is not rented because I am a foreigner (P35)."

"If you tell someone you are a foreigner, it makes the job harder, when it should be easier. You can set the price higher than it

should be. We rented a house and got cheated (P14)."

In the current study, it was found that international students can gain social capital through affirmative action, multiculturalism, and new relationships. It is known that one of the most important gains of internationalisation in higher education is the acquisition of social capital.¹⁶ Interpersonal relationships are at the heart of the concept of social capital. The healthy and efficient functioning of communication networks in communities is considered a prerequisite for the healthy continuation of communities.¹⁷ Therefore, new and multicultural relationships formed during university can support individual, career, economic, sociocultural, political, and social development in the long term.

It was found that being an international student helped participants complete the process of separation/individuation that could not be completed in earlier periods. In studies similar to the findings of this study, it was found that university students gain self-determination and autonomy by leaving the parental home in the process of individuation.¹⁸ Adolescence is a period in which developmental tasks that could not be completed in earlier developmental periods are revised and compensated for.¹⁹ Leaving the parental home during the study period and entering a new environment in a different country, as well as entering professional training, may have allowed international students to activate themselves and benefit from the process of separation/individuation. Students also indicated that learning a second language created a new identity for them. The social constructivist approach to foreign language teaching explains that learning a foreign language in a new sociocultural environment can change students' personal identities and enable them to create new identities.^{20,21}

Participants indicated that they had difficulties with bureaucratic procedures when they were new to the country and that they needed mentoring. To overcome the

difficulties in this process, peer mentoring could be useful. Parallel to the findings of this study, there are some studies that show that international students have difficulty meeting the bureaucratic expectations of being at university and settled when they arrive in the country.⁹ Bureaucratic difficulties are expected situations in the process of adjusting to the university environment and the conditions of the settled environment. However, it is assumed that such problems can be easily overcome with simple precautions.

Participants indicated that increasing the language learning time would facilitate the adaptation process. There are some studies that show that difficulties related to language acquisition in the early years make it difficult for international students to adjust to the university environment.⁹ Although the duration of language instruction varies from country to country, students begin their university studies when they reach a level of language proficiency above a certain level on the exams. When adapting to the university environment, the scores obtained in the exams and the foreign language level required in the courses may differ. When students begin professional training, they will be exposed to professional terms. Therefore, extending the language learning process can facilitate students' adjustment to school by improving their speaking, comprehension, writing, and reading skills.

The results of the study are consistent with the findings of previous studies showing that international students need socioeconomic support such as more scholarships and housing opportunities, as well as health insurance.^{6,7} In addition to the education and health policies of the country of study, the economic conditions of the country may also contribute to students experiencing such problems. On the other hand, it is found that another important factor that causes students to have problems with housing is ethnic discrimination in the housing market.⁶ Indeed, this study found that students experienced significant economic discrimination, such as offering

higher prices to foreigners, raising prices more for foreigners, or not renting houses to foreigners. The economic discrimination experienced may be due to the negative stereotypes and prejudices against foreigners in society. In addition, the experienced economic discrimination may also be related to opportunistic approaches that arise due to inadequately functioning control mechanisms.

Participants expressed the need for academic adjustment programmes and printed guides to facilitate the acculturation process, conducting support groups, enhancing socialisation opportunities, conducting interaction groups between academics and students, raising community, peer, and academic awareness of the adjustment process of international students, and teaching migration psychology. In fact, it has been reported that adjustment programmes, interactions between students, academics, and the community, awareness of the adjustment process, and migration psychology can have positive effects on students' acculturation stress.^{10,22-24} Such practises can facilitate the adaptation process by addressing students' needs in the area in which they are struggling.

Participants cited indicators of culture shock, such as loneliness, difficulty adjusting to a new environment, and learning a new language. There are many studies that show that international students experience culture shock when studying in another country.^{25,26} Culture shock is one of the most common experiences of students who come from abroad to work, study, and live in a completely new way of life and cultural atmosphere. It describes students' experience of confusion, frustration, and helplessness when they move from their home country to a new country to study.²⁷ Culture shock is an expected process when adjusting to a new culture.

The results of the current study are consistent with the findings of previous studies reporting that international students experience prejudice and discrimination from

society, academics, and other students.^{4,28,29} It is reported that stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against Asian students increased, especially during the pandemic period.⁴ When analysing the participants' statements, it can be seen that one of the reasons for prejudice and discrimination is that society, academics, and students believe that their own resources are used for international students. In addition, the economic disadvantages associated with pandemics, wars, and migrations may have increased prejudice and discrimination against international students. As indicated by the students' statements, other pre-existing negative stereotypes in society may also cause international students to face prejudice and discrimination. At the same time, international students themselves were found to be prejudiced against subcultures. The

concepts of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination towards subcultures, defined as a culture that does not break its ties with the dominant culture but develops by separating itself at various important points, have been frequently studied in different samples such as students, LGBTQ+ individuals, and Syrians.³⁰⁻³² In the present study, international students' prejudice toward subcultures may be a coping mechanism they use to deal with the prejudice and discrimination they face in the dominant culture. In addition, each culture may have negative attitudes, beliefs, and discriminatory behaviours toward other cultures. Students' prejudices toward subcultures may have developed because of stereotypes and prejudices they acquired in the society in which they grew up or in the culture of the country in which they study.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was found that international students studying in Turkey acquire social capital through positive discrimination, multiculturalism, and new relationships. It was found that education in another country has positive effects on students' identity development. It was found that students have difficulties with bureaucratic procedures when they first come to the country. It was found that an extension of language learning time, scholarship and housing opportunities, and health insurance would facilitate students' adjustment process. In addition, it was found that international students have needs such as creating academic adjustment programmes and printed guides to facilitate the acculturation process, conducting support groups, enhancing socialisation opportunities, conducting interaction groups between academics and students, raising awareness among society, peers, and academics about the adjustment process of international students, and teaching migration psychology. It was found that students owed different reactions to culture shock. International students were found to be subject to prejudice and discrimination by society, university faculty, and other

students, and students themselves were found to be prejudiced against subcultures.

To overcome the difficulties in bureaucratic procedures, it is recommended that commissions for international students be established at the university and departmental levels. Peer mentoring offered by this commission can help students overcome bureaucratic difficulties. In order to facilitate students' adjustment and improve the quality of education, it is recommended that the language learning period be extended. In addition, it is suggested that scholarship and housing opportunities for Turkish students be extended to international students. In some countries, housing problems have been solved by lifting quotas for international students in dormitories. In addition, it is recommended that universities, faculties, and departments create academic adjustment programmes and printed guides to facilitate the acculturation process of international students. It is recommended that university guidance and psychological counselling offices assist students in forming and conducting support groups. It is also recommended that psychological counselling centres should recognise the culture shock

that students experience, monitor the psychological effects of culture shock, and provide students with skills to cope with acculturation stress. It is also recommended that socialisation opportunities for students at the department and university level be improved and interaction groups between academics and students be conducted. Similarly, it is recommended that universities should sensitise society, student peers, and academics to the adjustment process of international students and teach the psychology of migration. In addition, these topics can be included in the curriculum. It is recommended that universities implement and evaluate the results of training and contact-based interventions to combat prejudice and discrimination by academics, students, and society. It is believed that contact-based interventions that bring the community, academics, and domestic students together with international students will reduce prejudice and discrimination.

These interventions should address the prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes of international students themselves toward subcultures. Researchers are advised to conduct further studies that examine the views and experiences of academics, peers, and the community together.

The results of this study may only be generalized to the sampled students. In addition, students study at a district university. Therefore, the problems experienced may be different from the problems experienced in the metropolitan city or in different regions. Therefore, it is an important limitation of the research that the sample consists of students studying at a single district university.

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