An Evaluation of Tertiary Education Perceptions of Palestinian Students Studying in Konya

Fatih Yılmaz [1]   Mevlüt Uygur [2]

Abstract

Statistics indicate that the number of international students in Türkiye is increasing each year. These students both contribute to the country's economy and cultural richness. On the other hand, international students have some problems during their education. The researchers think that for a quality and practical education, it is important to identify the problems international students face and offer solutions to them. Accordingly, this paper aims to identify the problems faced by Palestinian students attending tertiary education in Türkiye and offer suggestions for solutions. Phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research methods, was adopted in the paper. The participants are 20 Palestinian students studying at different universities in Konya in the 2024-2025 academic year. The researchers employed the convenience sampling method. The data were obtained using a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers, who used content analysis to analyze the data. According to the findings, the most common problems faced by Palestinian students in tertiary education are language problems, economic problems, integration problems, and discrimination problems. Moreover, it emerged that the most common disappointments of Palestinian students in tertiary education were related to the education system and economic, social, and language issues. The participants also offered solutions to their problems related to education, social integration processes, economy, and language issues. Additionally, the expectations of Palestinian students at the end of tertiary education are employment, experience, returning home, quality education, and career opportunities. Considering the research findings, it is recommended that Palestinian students receive Turkish language education through universities and/or the Ministry of National Education before starting their majors.

Keywords: Economic Problems, International Students, Language Problems, Palestinian Students, Tertiary Education

[1] Dr., Ministry of National Education, Konya, Türkiye, yilmazoglu@gmail.com, ORCID:0000-0001-7852-6756

[2] Dr., Ministry of National Education, Konya, Türkiye, muygur1978@gmail.com, ORCID:0000-0002-3880-5731

Konya'da Eğitim Gören Filistinli Öğrencilerin Yükseköğrenim Algılarının Değerlendirilmesi

Fatih Yılmaz [1]   **Mevlüt Uygur [2]**

Öz

Ülkemizde her yıl uluslararası öğrenci sayısı giderek artmaktadır. Bu öğrenciler hem ülke ekonomisine hem de ülkenin kültürel zenginliğine katkı sağlamaktadır. Diğer yandan uluslararası öğrencilerin öğrenim süreçleri boyunca yaşadıkları sorunlar bulunmaktadır. Buradan hareketle uluslararası öğrencilerin öğrenim hayatları boyunca yaşadıkları sorunlarının ortaya çıkarılması ve bunlara yönelik çözüm önerilerinin getirilmesi kaliteli ve etkili bir eğitim için önemli olduğu değerlendirilebilir. Bu bağlamda bu araştırmanın amacı, ülkemizde yükseköğrenime devam eden Filistinli öğrencilerin yükseköğrenim sürecinde yaşadıkları sorunları belirlemek ve çözüm önerileri geliştirmektir. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden olgubilim (fenomenoloji) deseni kullanılmıştır. Bu araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 2024-2025 eğitim ve öğretim yılında Konya'daki farklı üniversitelerde öğrenim gören 20 Filistinli öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada uygun örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Veriler araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanan yarı yapılandırılmış bir görüşme formu ile elde edilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde içerik analiz tekniği kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda elde edilen bulgulara göre Filistinli öğrencilerin yükseköğrenim sürecinde en sık yaşadıkları sorunların ekonomik problemler, dil, uyum ve ayrımcılık problemleri olduğu belirlenmiştir. Diğer yandan Filistinli öğrencilerin yükseköğrenim sürecinde en sık yaşadıkları hayal kırıklıklarının ise eğitim sistemi, ekonomik, toplumsal ve dil sorunları olduğu bulunmuştur. Araştırmadan elde edilen diğer bir bulgu ise Filistinli öğrencilerin yükseköğrenim sürecinde yaşadıkları sorunlara ilişkin çözüm önerilerinin, eğitime, toplumsal entegrasyon süreçlerine, ekonomiye ve dil öğretimine yönelik olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca Filistinli öğrencilerin yükseköğrenim sürecinin sonundaki beklentilerinin ise istihdam, deneyim, ülkesine dönmek, kaliteli eğitim ve kariyer olduğu belirlenmiştir. Araştırma bulgularına göre Filistinli öğrenciler ülkemizde yükseköğrenime başlamadan önce üniversiteler ve Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı aracılığıyla Türkçe eğitimi almaları sağlanmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dil Sorunları, Ekonomik Sorunlar, Filistinli Öğrenciler, Uluslararası Öğrenciler, Yükseköğrenim

[1] Dr, Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, Konya, Türkiye, yilmazoglu@gmail.com, ORCID:0000-0001-7852-6756

[2] Dr, Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, Konya, Türkiye, muygur1978@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-3880-5731

Introduction

Due to globalization, several changes are taking place in education, especially in tertiary education, as in many sectors worldwide. One of them is the internationalization of universities, opening their doors to international students from various countries (Taylan, 2019, p. 1). International students leave their homeland and go to other countries for a better education. In turn, they offer opportunities for developed countries regarding economic and human resources. That is why, countries with developed tertiary education systems compete to benefit more from the abovementioned opportunities. Considering countries such as the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Canada, which have a significant number of international students, it is clear how outstanding the contribution of international students is to the economies of the countries (Özer, 2012, p. 10). To illustrate, in 2023, in the US, international students contributed 40.1 billion dollars and provided 368,333 jobs to the national economy (NAFSA, 2023; as cited in Okai & Mandayam, 2024, p. 306). Moreover, it can be concluded that international students are important for any country's tertiary education in terms of academic prestige and financial advantage (Baklashova & Kazakov, 2016, p. 1822).

Additionally, student circulation between countries is regarded to be an advantage for the economies of the countries as well as the recognition of the countries in the world, finding job opportunities in different countries thanks to international diplomas, and increasing the quality and quantity indicators of the universities (Yıldıran, Özkan, & Büyükyılmaz, 2016, p. 21). Moreover, internationally qualified graduate students make significant contributions to the scientific research capacities of higher education institutions and enhance their global competitiveness. The issue of international education is not only important in terms of its economic benefits and the training of professionals in certain fields. The presence of international students and faculty members on a campus directly influences the structure and quality of the education provided and also enables the development of intercultural dialogue (Özer, 2012, p. 10). In general, international students can also be considered an important source of revenue for countries worldwide.

In this context, students from several countries come to Türkiye every year for a better education and future. The arrival of international students in Türkiye first started in 1981 with the Exam for Foreign Students (YÖS) organized for those who wanted to receive higher education in Türkiye through their means. Later on, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1989, the Turkish and Related Communities Exam (TCS) was started to be held in 1992 in cooperation with the Turkish Republics, which declared their independence with the disintegration of the Soviet Union to receive education in Türkiye (Kıroğlu, Kesten, & Elma, 2011, p. 26).

Moreover, international students in Türkiye consist of students passing exams such as YÖS, TCS (students from Turkish Republics, Turkish and Related Communities), YÖK-scholarship students, Islamic Development Bank Supported students (bilateral agreements, YÖK), students coming within the framework of the Socrates/Erasmus Program (mutual agreement students) (Şahin & Demirtaş, 2014, p. 89). Although findings suggest that most students coming to Türkiye for higher education are from Turkic republics and related communities, student diversity has been increasing in recent years. The issue of international students can no longer be considered solely within the scope of Turkish and related communities. Recent global developments, migration movements,

and Turkey's growing influence on the international stage have contributed to this increasing diversity of international students. Notably, in recent years, alongside linguistically close countries such as Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, Syrian students have ranked first both in new enrollments and in the total number of students. Additionally, the number of students coming to Turkey from distant countries such as Nigeria, Somalia, Libya, Egypt, Pakistan, Yemen, and China has also increased (Demirhan, 2017, p. 551).

In this regard, 301454 international students studied in 200 universities in Türkiye in the 2022-2023 academic year (Council of Higher Education, 2024, p. 127). Consequently, considering both its geopolitical location and the opportunities and facilities provided for international students, it can be stated that our country is a center of attraction in education.

Although international students in our country contribute to the country's economy and cultural richness they have some problems during their education. It is for sure that leaving home to attend a university is a significant milestone for students. However, leaving home for university can be particularly challenging, especially for those studying abroad. International tertiary students are likely to experience adaptation difficulties when they begin their studies. Many factors contribute to the academic, social, cultural, and psychological adjustment of international students. While some international students find it easy to adapt to or cope with the stressors associated with living and studying in a foreign country, others may experience psychological distress (Mesidor & Sly, 2015, p. 262-263). While even students from the same country going to different cities for higher education experience problems, students from different countries inevitably face some problems. Because every society has its cultural structure, and someone who moves from one culture to another may easily encounter problems (Çelik, 2013, p. 2-3).

In particular, they may have problems due to a different food culture, unfamiliar living conditions, financial problems, finding a balance between study and work, etc. They must adapt to the curriculum, learning styles, language, culture, personal barriers, and other possible difficulties (Baklashova & Kazakov, 2016, p. 1823). Research indicates that international students face various challenges, including academic difficulties, language-related problems, financial issues, housing, transportation, and healthcare concerns, as well as social, psychological, and administrative difficulties. However, findings vary regarding which of these challenges have the most significant impact (Demirhan, 2017, p. 554). From this regard, it is possible to state that it is important for a quality and practical education to reveal the problems experienced by international students throughout their education and to propose solutions for them.

The literature has several research on international students (Akkaya, Çilingir & Levent, 2018; Alavi & Mansor, 2011; Altunbaş, 2020; Baklashova & Kazakov, 2016; Çelik, 2013; Çöllü & Öztürk, 2009; Derman, 2010; Huntley, 1993; Kalaycı & Göç, 2023; Kurtça, 2020; Taylan, 2019; Topal & Tauscher, 2020; Usta, Sayın, & Güzelipek, 2017; Wu, Garza, & Guzman, 2015; Yıldıran et al., 2016; Zhai, 2002). However, this paper emphasizes the perceptions of Palestinian students attending tertiary education and the problems they experience during their education and offers solutions for those problems.

This paper aims to study the perceptions of Palestinian students attending tertiary education in Konya. This research is significant due to the limited number of studies about Palestinian students in the literature. Therefore, it is thought to constitute a reference for future studies and contribute to the literature.

Method

This part has the research model, participants, data collection tools and analysis methods.

The Research Model

In this paper, phenomenology, one of the qualitative research methods, was adopted. In short, phenomenology can be defined as the study of phenomena that we are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding of (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p. 69). It is a type of qualitative research with its own focus and methodological strategies. Therefore, phenomenological research concerns a phenomenon's reality or underlying structure (Merriam, 2013, p. 36).

The Participants

In research, it is best to reach as many participants as possible. However, most of the time, this is neither a cheap way of data collection nor quick enough. In the case of this research, it is really tough to reach the participants. Since the participants of this research are Palestinians, it is tough for the researchers to collect data because we do not exactly know how many Palestinian students study in Konya and which universities they attend. In other words, we do not know the exact population size. Therefore, there is no option for the researchers but to adopt the convenience sampling method, which can be defined as collecting data from participants who are easily accessible (Golzar, Noor, & Tajik, 2022, p. 74).

Accordingly, the research participants consist of 20 Palestinian students studying at different universities in Konya in the 2024-2025 academic year. The participant students were coded as S.1, S.2.... and S.20.

At the very beginning of the data collection, the participants were informed that they could leave the research at any time. The participants were tertiary students, 19 males and 1 female. It is possible to infer that the participants stay in the same or nearby dormitories. It is also possible to conclude that males mostly prefer to study abroad. The participants mostly studied at Selcuk University (n=16; %80), Necmettin Erbakan University (n=3; %15) and Konya Technical University (n=1; %5) respectively. The fact that most of the students attended Selcuk University might be due to the fact that the participants stayed in the same dormitory near Selcuk University or Selcuk University had more quota for foreign students than the other universities in the city. They studied at the departments of agriculture (n=4; %20), radio television and cinema (n=3; %15), medicine (n=2; %10), mechanical engineering (n=2; %10), electrical and electronical engineering (n=2; %10), chemistry (n=1; %5), veterinary (n=1; %5), administration and organization (n=1; %5), dentistry (n=1; %5), faculty of divinity (n=2; %10) and one of the participants did not answer the question related to the department. In other words, we have one missing data (n=1; %5) regarding the participants' department. The average for their age was 24.45 (SD: 4.47; range 20-34); they are mostly in their twenties. The majority of the participants were undergraduate students (n=12; %60) followed by doctoral students (n=4; %20) and master's students (n=4; %20). Our universities are preferred by Palestinian students for both undergraduate and graduate education.

Data Collection Tools

This paper used a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers themselves to collect research data. While preparing the interview form, first, the researchers reviewed the literature thoroughly. Then, they wrote down the questions suitable for the research. In addition, two educational experts from the Department of Education reviewed the interview form. Apart from the demographic information, the data collection tool has the questions below:

1- What are the problems you face during tertiary education in Türkiye?

2- What are the disappointments you face during tertiary education in Türkiye?

3- What are your recommendations for solutions to the problems you have faced during tertiary education in Türkiye?

4- What are your expectations at the end of education in Türkiye?

Data Collection and Analysis

Covid-19 pandemic led the researchers to find alternative ways of data collection. In qualitative studies collecting data through Google Forms or other online data collection methods, an alternative to the traditional methods, became a common practice especially during the Covid-19 pandemic due to frequent quarantines, social distancing or travel restrictions (Saarijärvi & Bratt, 2021, p. 392). In fact, depending on the conditions, in qualitative researches, in addition to the traditional data collection methods, the researcher has options like face to face, phone or e-mail (Uslu & Demir, 2023, p. 292). The researchers think that as far as the research questions are meticulously formulated, collecting data using Google Forms or other forms of online surveys in qualitative research is no different from collecting data via e-mail, a sort of text based qualitative data.

In this research, the data were collected through Google Forms using semi-structured interview forms prepared by the researchers for the students participating in the study. The participants, voluntarily, were asked to fill in the data collection tools. At the beginning of the forms, the purpose and method of the research were explained to the participants. Moreover, the students' opinions were detailed in the paper, and direct quotations were included.

The researchers utilized content analysis to analyze the data. Content analysis is an analysis method that allows the data to be examined closely and to reach categories and themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p. 242-243). Content analysis, in other words, is a systematic way of categorizing texts, drawings, videotaped studies, or other material into categories or themes, which allows the researchers and readers to quickly grasp large volumes of data (Stemler, 2001, p. 1).

With this aim in mind, the data obtained were first coded using MAXQDA 2020 (VERBI Software, 2020). The research questions are the themes of the analysis, and the researchers have formed categories considering the related answers.

Reliability is a significant problem in qualitative research. The researchers did a reliability analysis and reported direct quotations from the opinions of the students participating in

the research. There are a couple of ways to ensure reliability in this type of research. One is Miles and Huberman's interrater agreement technique, which is consistency between different coders (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 64-66). In this method, to calculate reliability, the researchers divide the number of agreements by the number of agreements plus disagreements (McAlister et al., 2017, p. 3). Although the acceptable percentage may vary, it is expected to be around %90 (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 64). The percentage of agreement around the coders was around %95.

Findings

This section contains the participants' findings and interpretations of the data analysis. As a result of the content analysis, six categories were identified under the theme of challenges faced, six under the theme of disappointments, four under the theme of recommendations for solutions to the problems encountered, and five under the theme of expectations.

The categories and frequency distributions of the theme "challenges faced" are shown in Figure 1 below.
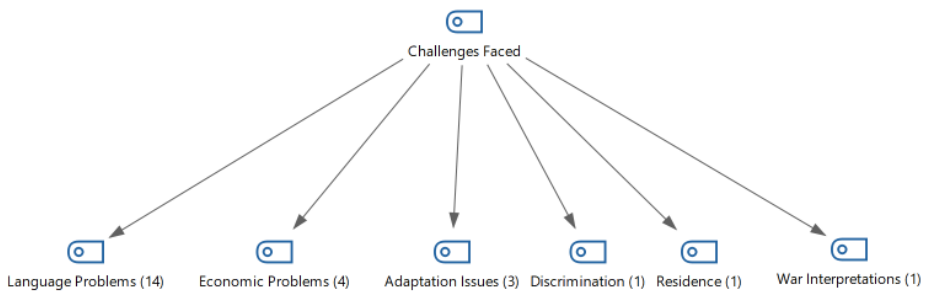
Figure 1. Challenges Faced by Palestinian Students

Figure 1 indicates that the most common challenge Palestinian students face is language problems. Some of the participant views in this category are as follows;

"All courses are in Turkish, and very few people speak English." (S. 3)

"*Language and Economic situation*" (S. 4)

"*Turkish language and social adaptation*" (S. 5)

"*At first, I could not understand the lecturers.*" (S. 7)

"*Language, not using too much English*" (S. 8).

 "When I first arrived, there were very few people who spoke English. It was a bit difficult to learn Turkish using only Turkish." (S. 8)

"I had a hard time using Turkish. The lecturers spoke fast." (S. 16)

Another category of the most frequently faced challenges is economic challenges. Some of the participant views in this category are as follows;

"*Financial problems*" (S. 19)

"*Lack of money*" (S. 20).

In the theme of challenges faced, the participants' views on the categories of "Discrimination" and "War interpretations," which are the least faced challenges by Palestinian students, are as follows;

"*Most of the dialogues are about Palestine and Jerusalem.*" (S. 17)

"*Discrimination*" (S. 2)

Categories and frequencies for the theme of disappointments experienced by Palestinian students are shown in Figure 2 below.
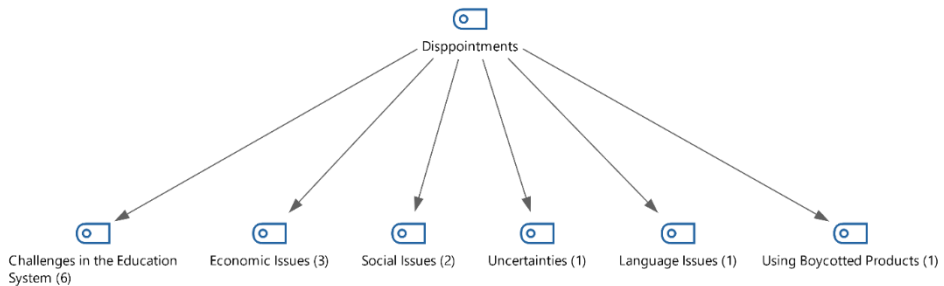

Figure 2. Disappointments Experienced by Palestinian Students

Figure 2 shows that the most common disappointment participants face is difficulties in the education system. Some of the participant views in this category are as follows;

"School and the laboratories are old." (S. 4)

"We have the same time as Turkish students in exams even though we are foreigners." (S. 3)

"It is a bit hard to go to school every day." (S. 8)

"I expected to be at a better level of education." (S. 10)

In the theme of disappointments experienced, some of the categories with the least number of codes were "Uncertainties" and "Using boycotted products." Participant views in these categories are as follows.

"I want to return to Gaza after graduating school, but the situation is not clear at the moment." (S.17)

"People consume the products on the boycotted list." (S. 12)

Categories and frequencies for the theme of recommendations for solutions to the problems faced are available in Figure 3 below.
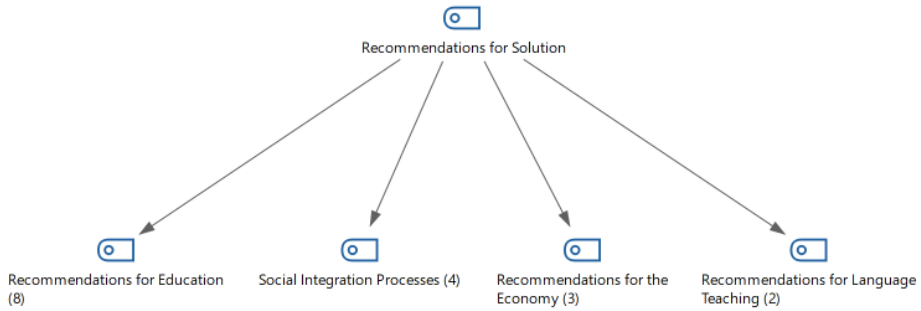
Figure 3. Recommendations for Solutions to the Problems

Figure 3 indicates that in the theme of recommendations for solutions to the problems faced, the most frequent recommendation is in the category of recommendations for education. Some of the participant views in this category are as follows;

> *"The Quality of Education should be improved."* (S. 12)

> *"The education system for foreign students should be improved."* (S. 11)

> *"Design an instruction method for foreign students"* (S. 13)

> *"Tertiary education system should be easier for foreign students."* (S. 5)

> *"School is better when it is three days a week."* (S. 8)

Another category of the recommendations for solutions is the social integration processes. Some of the participant views in this category are as follows;

> *"It is necessary to inform the Turkish students a little bit that the Palestinians did not sell their land; some students have no idea about it, and they think they sold it."* (S. 17)

> *"To organize a meeting event with foreign students and Turkish students"* (S. 7)

In the theme of recommendations for solutions to the problems experienced by Palestinian students, the least number of recommendations was in the category of suggestions for language teaching. Participant views in this category are as follows;

> *"Academic language should be given intensively when taking a Turkish course."* (S. 9)

> *"To learn Turkish well"* (S. 6).

Categories and frequency distributions for the theme of expectations are shown in Figure 4 below.
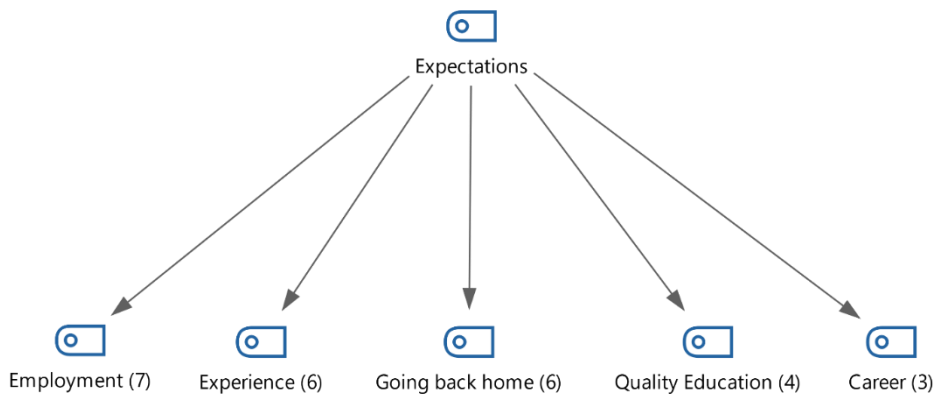
Figure 4. Expectations of Participants

Figure 4 indicates that the most frequent expectation in the theme of Palestinian students' expectations is in the "Employment" category. Some of the participant views in this category are as follows;

> "*Employment opportunities*" (S. 19)
>
> "*To find a suitable job*" (S. 18)
>
> "*To work in the field, I studied*" (S. 10)
>
> "*I mean, I cannot work here anyway.*" (S. 3)

Another category of expectations is "Going back home." Some of the participant views in this category are as follows;

> "*So, I cannot work here anyway... I will go back to my country, take the equivalency exam, and practice my profession there.*" (S. 3)
>
> "*To have the right to work in any country. To be able to develop the health sector in my country upon graduation.*" (S. 7)
>
> "*Receiving a diploma and returning home*" (S. 6)

Regarding expectations, the least common expectation is in the career category. Student views in these categories are as follows;

> "*Becoming an assistant in the university*" (S. 20)
>
> "*Having a master's degree*" (S. 1)

The word cloud created using the themes and categories is available in Figure 5 below.
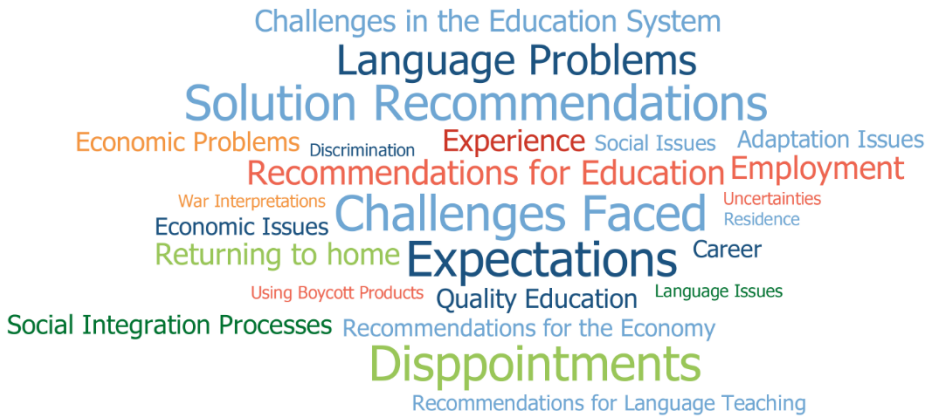
Figure 5. Word Cloud of Themes and Categories

Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

In this paper, the researchers studied the perceptions of higher education of Palestinian students attending tertiary education in Konya. In this regard, they found that the most common problems encountered by Palestinian students participating in the research were language problems, followed by economic problems, adaptation problems, discrimination problems, residence problems, and war comments, respectively. However, the most common problem faced by Palestinian students is the language problem since they come to Türkiye from a foreign country and cannot speak Turkish fluently. The literature also has some research supporting the findings of this paper. To illustrate, Taylan (2019) states that the most important problems experienced by international students from Asia, Africa, Turkic Republics, and Balkan countries in Sakarya, Türkiye, are language problems, educational and academic problems, cultural problems, discrimination, and economic problems. Çelik (2013) also states that international students studying higher education in Türkiye face adaptation, economic, accommodation, and transportation problems. Şahin and Demirtaş (2014) found that the leading problems of international students are primarily economic, and they concentrated on issues such as school fees, nutrition, transportation, language, and accommodation. According to the findings of Kalaycı and Göç (2023), the problems faced by international students are language problems, educational problems, cultural problems, and adaptation problems. However, the most important problem is the language. In addition, findings of some research (Akkaya et al., 2018; Alavi & Mansor, 2011; Altunbaş, 2020; Baklashova & Kazakov, 2016; Çöllü & Öztürk, 2009; Kurtça, 2020; Topal & Tauscher, 2020; Usta et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2015; Zhai, 2002) overlap with the findings of this paper. In this context, it can be concluded that the problems faced by international students coming to Türkiye are similar. In particular, several papers indicate that the most common problems international students encounter in tertiary education are language, economic, adaptation, and discrimination problems.

Another finding in the research is that the most common disappointments of Palestinian students are the difficulties in the education system, followed by economic difficulties, social problems, uncertainties, language issues, and consumption of boycotted products.

However, the most common disappointment of Palestinian students is the difficulties in the education system since they cannot speak Turkish sufficiently. As a result, they cannot adapt to the education system. Additionally, it can be stated that the most common challenges faced by Palestinian students in their tertiary education journey—financial difficulties and language barriers—yield similar results to some of the disappointments they experience, which are also economic hardships and language-related issues. Some research in the literature supports the findings of this paper as well. Enterieva and Sezgin (2016) state that students from Turkic Republics faced some problems related to academic, social, and educational support services. As a result of the research done by İnce and Koçak (2018), international students stated that they had difficulties in terms of differences in education and educational methods. Kurtça (2020) found that the problems faced by international students had two dimensions: social and economic. The inability to understand some courses in the social dimension was especially an important problem. It is considered that the inability of students to understand some courses is due to the inadequacy of their Turkish. When economic problems are considered, it was found that students had more problems with scholarships and accommodation. It was found that more than half of the students stayed in private dormitories and houses and spent much of their income on accommodation. Şahin and Demirtaş (2014) determined that international students had problems arising from both the system and the lecturing styles of the teaching staff. In addition, international students mostly experience economic problems. Yardımcıoğlu, Beşel, and Savaşan (2017) state that international students have socio-economic problems such as friendship, health, cultural, economic, psychological, academic, and social problems. They also offered solutions to these problems. In this context, it can be concluded that the disappointments and problems experienced by international students coming to Türkiye are similar. Especially considering the most common disappointments and problems of international students attending tertiary education, it is possible to infer that they face educational, economic, social, and language difficulties.

Other findings in the research are the recommendations for solutions to the problems faced by Palestinian students during tertiary education, followed by recommendations for education, social integration, the economy, and language teaching, respectively. The fact that Palestinian students have some recommendations related to education may be because they come to Türkiye from a foreign country, cannot speak Turkish sufficiently, and cannot adapt to the education system. However, they desire to get a good education. Findings from research in the literature support this inference. For instance, Enterieva and Sezgin (2016) list the suggestions of the students from Turkic Republics on education as up-to-date education and educational content, as well as student-centered education. Moreover, some students also suggest academically and personally qualified lecturers, working on projects with the lecturers, practical education, using English in education, and reducing bureaucracy in education. According to the results of research done by Cevher (2016), to determine the satisfaction levels of foreign university students, the participants recommend that the signs and announcements should be in English on the campus, online support or communication via e-mail at the end of the course should be available, academician-foreign student communication should be developed, professors or lecturers should frequently meet with international students. Before registration, more detailed information about the city and the university should be provided. Similarly, the results of the research done by Gönültaş, Kul, and Al-Khatib (2023) to study the adaptation problems faced by international students during the Covid-19 pandemic and

their coping strategies with those problems indicate that they preferred going to a Turkish course or improving their language on their own. Coping strategies for socio-cultural problems included meeting new people, participating in various activities, accepting differences, and trying to get to know Turkish culture. Some coping strategies for academic problems included studying and attending training. Some coping strategies for emotional problems were making phone calls, participating in sports, art, etc., and spending time with friends. According to the results of the research done by Kocabıyık, Bacıoğlu, and Güvendir (2019) to determine the problems of international students studying at Trakya University and the reasons for those problems, the suggestions regarding the language problems of international students were determined as going to a course, reading books, participating in social environments, making the language exam more difficult, speaking Turkish and enough preparation. Suggestions for some university services were determined as activities, orientation, conferences, language courses, and establishing a community. Suggestions for academic failure were determined as additional courses, reading books, and peer education. In this regard, it can be concluded that the solutions and recommendations regarding the common problems faced by international students in tertiary education are similar. Notably, it has been determined that the solution recommendations of international students studying tertiary education contain recommendations for education, social integration processes, economy, and language teaching.

Finally, it came out in the research that the expectations of Palestinian students at the end of tertiary education are mostly employment, followed by experience, going back to their country, quality education, and career. The fact that Palestinian students want to find a job at the end of their education and pursue their academic expectations may be the reason. Some findings in the literature support the findings of this paper as well. According to the research results by Yılmaz (2022), international students dreamed of a better life in the future, which is why they studied in Türkiye. International students were found to plan to migrate to European countries after getting a good education. According to the results of the research by Musaoğlu (2016), most international students' expectations and dreams before coming to Türkiye were grouped into three. The most frequently used one of those groups are the participants' careers, future, and dreams. Moreover, the data showed that they also expected a quick adaptation. Another expectation is to trade between Türkiye and their own country. In this regard, it can be concluded that the expectations of international students at the end of tertiary education studying in Türkiye are similar. In conclusion, it is possible to state that the expectations of tertiary students are employment, experience, going back to their country, quality education, and career.

Considering the findings of this research, the researchers made the following recommendations.

- For some time, international students can study Turkish in courses offered by universities or the Ministry of National Education to learn the Turkish language before starting their majors. At the end of those courses, an exam can also be held.
- The rise of inflation is a significant problem in many countries. Palestinian students, like everyone else, were also affected by the situation. They need economic support. The amount of scholarships given to students can be revised.

- Through social integration activities or orientation days organized by communities, universities can take measures to solve the adaptation problems of students.
- This is qualitative research; quantitative research on the same subject can be done with a larger sample.

Değerlendirme	İki Dış Hakem / Çift Taraflı Körleme
Etik Beyan	Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur. * (Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi, Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırmalar Yayın Etiği Kurulu Başkanlığının 29.11.2024 Tarih, 2024/885 Nolu kararı ile Etik Kurul Kararı alınmıştır.)
Benzerlik Taraması	Yapıldı – Ithenticate
Etik Bildirim	itobiad@itobiad.com
Çıkar Çatışması	Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.
Finansman	Bu araştırmayı desteklemek için dış fon kullanılmamıştır.
Yazar Katkıları	Çalışmanın Tasarlanması: 1. Yazar (%50), 2. Yazar (%50) Veri Toplanması: 1. Yazar (%50), 2. Yazar (%50) Veri Analizi: 1. Yazar (%50), 2. Yazar (%50) Makalenin Yazımı: 1. Yazar (%50), 2. Yazar (%50) Makale Gönderimi ve Revizyonu: 1. Yazar (%50), 2. Yazar (%50)
Peer-Review	Double anonymized - Two External
Ethical Statement	It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited. * (Necmettin Erbakan University, Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research Ethics Committee Decision was taken with the decision dated 29.11.2024, numbered 2024/885 of the Presidency of the Publication Ethics Committee.)
Plagiarism Checks	Yes - Ithenticate
Conflicts of Interest	The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.
Complaints	itobiad@itobiad.com
Grant Support	The author(s) acknowledge that they received no external funding in support of this research.
Author Contributions	Design of Study: 1. Author (%50), 2. Author (%50) Data Acquisition: 1. Author (%50), 2. Author (%50) Data Analysis: 1. Author (%50), 2. Author (%50) Writing up: 1. Author (%50), 2. Author (%50) Submission and Revision: 1. Author (%50), 2. Author (%50)

References / Kaynakça

Akkaya, A. Y., Çilingir, G. A. ve Levent, G. T. (2018). Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesindeki Suriyeli öğrencilerin akademik sorunları üzerine bir çalışma. *Sosyal Politika Çalışmaları Dergisi, 40*(2), 413-448. https://doi.org/10.21560/spcd.vi.447969

Alavi, M., & Mansor, S. M. S. (2011). Categories of problems among international students in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 30*, 1581-1587. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.10.307

Altunbaş, A. (2020). Türkiye'de yaşayan göçmenlerin üniversite eğitiminden memnuniyetlerinin Konya'daki Suriyeli öğrenciler örneği üzerinden değerlendirilmesi. *Üniversite Araştırmaları Dergisi, 3*(2), 64–74. https://doi.org/10.32329/uad.772646

Baklashova, T. A., & Kazakov, A. V. (2016). Challenges of international students' adjustment to a higher education institution. *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education, 11*(8), 1821–1832.

Cevher, E. (2016). Yükseköğretimde uluslararası öğrenci hareketliliği ve memnuniyeti. *Uluslararası Avrasya Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 7*(22), 337-349.

Council of Higher Education. (2024). *Üniversite izleme ve değerlendirme genel raporu 2024 [University monitoring and evaluation general report 2024].* Retrieved from https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/2024/universite-izleme-ve-degerlendirme-genel-raporu-2024.pdf on 15.11.2024.

Çelik, İ. (2013). *Türkiye'de yükseköğrenim gören yabancı uyruklu öğrencilerin sorunları [The problems of international student having higher education in Turkey]* (Master's Thesis). Trakya University, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Edirne.

Çöllü, E. F., & Öztürk, Y. E. (2009). Türk Cumhuriyetleri, türk ve akraba topluluklarından Türkiye'ye yükseköğrenim görmek amacıyla gelen öğrencilerin uyum ve iletişim sorunları (Konya Selçuk Üniversitesi örneği). *Journal of Azerbaijani Studies, 12*(1–2), 223–239.

Demirhan, K. (2017). Ulusal alanyazında uluslararası öğrenciler ve uluslararası öğrencileri siyasal açıdan düşünmek. *Uluslararası Yönetim İktisat ve İşletme Dergisi, 13*(13), 547-562.

Derman, S. (2010). Yabancı uyruklu öğrencilerin Türkiye Türkçesi öğreniminde karşılaştıkları sorunlar. *Selçuk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, 29*, 227–247.

Enterieva, M., & Sezgin, F. (2016). Türki Cumhuriyetlerden Türkiye'ye gelen yükseköğretim öğrencilerinin akademik ve sosyal beklentilerinin karşılanma düzeyi. *Yükseköğretim ve Bilim Dergisi, 6*(1), 102–115.

Golzar, J., Noor, S., & Tajik, O. (2022). Convenience sampling. *International Journal of Education & Language Studies, 1*(2), 72–77. https://doi.org/10.22034/ijels.2022.162981

Gönültaş, M., Kul, A., & Al-Khatib, A. (2023). Uluslararası öğrencilerin uyum problemleri ve bu problemlerle baş etme stratejileri: Bir durum çalışması. *Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 10*(1), 60–69. https://doi.org/10.21666/muefd.1096957

Huntley, H. S. (1993). *Adult international students: problems of adjustment.* Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED355886.pdf on 08.12.2024.

İnce, M., & Koçak, M. C. (2018). Türkiye'de yüksek öğrenim gören yabancı uyruklu öğrencilerin sosyal ve kültürel problemleri. *Journal of Turkish Studies, 13*(10), 371–385. https://doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.13598

Kalaycı, H., & Göç, E. (2023). Yükseköğretim kurumlarında öğrenim gören yabancı uyruklu öğrencilerin sorunlarına sosyolojik bir bakış: Çankırı örneği. *Iğdır Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi,* (34), 69–94. https://doi.org/10.54600/igdirsosbilder.1245705

Kıroğlu, K., Kesten, A., & Elma, C. (2011). Türkiye'de öğrenim gören yabancı uyruklu lisans öğrencilerinin sosyo- kültürel ve ekonomik sorunları. *Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 6*(2), 26–39.

Kocabıyık, O. O., Bacıoğlu, S. D., & Güvendir, M. A. (2019). Yükseköğretimde öğrenim gören uluslararası öğrencilerin sorunları. *Journal of Human Sciences, 16*(2), 561-581.

Kurtça, B. (2020). Bartın üniversitesi'nde eğitim gören yabancı uyruklu öğrencilerin sosyo-ekonomik sorunları ve çözüm önerileri. *Bartın Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, 5*(1), 113–126.

McAlister, A. M., & Lee, D. M., & Ehlert, K. M., & Kajfez, R. L., & Faber, C. J., & Kennedy, M. S. (2017, June). Qualitative Coding: An Approach to Assess Inter-Rater Reliability Paper presented at 2017 *ASEE Annual Conference & Exposition,* Columbus, Ohio. https://doi.org/10.18260/1-2--28777

Mesidor, J. K., & Sly, K. F. (2015). Factors that contribute to the adjustment of international students. *Journal of international students*, *6*(1), 262-282. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v6i1.569

Merriam, S.B. (2013). *Nitel araştırma* (3. Basımdan Çeviri). (S. Turan, Çev. Ed.). Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). California: SAGE Publications.

Musaoğlu, B. N. (2016). Türkiye'de öğrenim gören uluslararası öğrencilerin entegrasyon süreci. *Türk Dünyası Eğitim Araştırmaları Dergisi, 1*(1), 12-24.

Okai, L. B., & Mandayam, G. (2024). The importance of international students in the United States. *International Journal of Studies in Education and Science, 5*(3), 304–326. https://doi.org/10.46328/ijses.108

Özer, M. (2012). Türkiye'de uluslararası öğrenciler. *Yükseköğretim ve Bilim Dergisi,* (1), 10-13.

Saarijärvi, M., & Bratt, E. L. (2021). When face-to-face interviews are not possible: tips and tricks for video, telephone, online chat, and email interviews in qualitative research. *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*, *20*(4), 392–396. https://doi.org/10.1093/eurjcn/zvab038

Stemler, S. (2001). An overview of content analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation, 7*(17), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.7275/z6fm-2e34

Şahin, M., & Demirtaş, H. (2014). Üniversitelerde yabancı uyruklu öğrencilerin akademik başarı düzeyleri, yaşadikları sorunlar ve çözüm önerileri. *Milli Eğitim Dergisi, 44*(204), 88–113.

Taylan, Ş. (2019). *Sakarya Üniversitesindeki uluslararası öğrencilerin sorunları [Problems of international students in Sakarya University]* (Master's Thesis). Sakarya University, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Sakarya.

Topal, F., & Tauscher, S. (2020). Uluslararası öğrencilerin akademik ve sosyal yaşamlarında karşılaştıkları sorunlar üzerine inceleme. *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi, 15*(1), 309–344. https://doi.org/10.17550/akademikincelemeler.624380

Uslu, F., & Demir, E. (2023). Nitel bir veri toplama tekniği: Derinlemesine görüşme. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, 40*(1), 289-299. https://doi.org/10.32600/huefd.1184085

Usta, S., Sayın, Y., & Güzelipek, Y. A. (2017). Yabancı uyruklu öğrencilerin kente ve üniversiteye uyumu: Karaman ili örneği. *Yükseköğretim ve Bilim Dergisi, 3*, 565–577.

VERBI Software. (2020). *MAXQDA 2020 [computer software].* Berlin, Germany: VERBI Software.

Wu, H.P., Garza, E. & Guzman, N. (2015). International student's challenge and adjustment to college. *Education Research International*, 1-9. http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2015/202753

Yardımcıoğlu, F., Beşel, F., & Savaşan, F. (2017). Uluslararası öğrencilerin sosyo-ekonomik problemleri ve çözüm önerileri (Sakarya üniversitesi örneği). *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi, 12*(1), 203–254. https://doi.org/10.17550/akademikincelemeler.308940

Yıldıran, C., Özkan, D., & Büyükyılmaz, O. (2016). Yabancı uyruklu lisans öğrencilerinin durum analizi: *Karabük Üniversitesi. Journal of International Scientific Researches, 1*(1), 20–20.

Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2018). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri* (11th ed.). Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.

Yılmaz, E. (2022). İstanbul'daki uluslararası öğrencilerin göç deneyimleri ve kente entegrasyonu araştırması. *Sosyoloji Dergisi,* (43), 51-93.

Zhai, L. (2002). *Studying international students: Adjustment issues and social support.* Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED474481.pdf on 08.12.2024.