The Opinions of International Students about an International Student Center's Orientation Training[i]

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The purpose of the research is to examine how the orientation training is performed in the international student center of a U.S. university (University of California, Los Angeles/Dashew Center). The study is in the form of a case study. The interview was used to get the international students' opinion about the international center and its orientation training. A total of 41 first year undergraduate and graduate international students who study at UCLA were interviewed to describing what the international students think about the orientation training at the center. The participants in this research were given information about UCLA's general structure, purpose, students' rights, the resources of the university, activities, student organization, possible risky situation, which they may encounter on the campus, and their responsibilities and duties, by the center during the orientation. The students' opinions about the orientation process were mostly positive and they thought that the staff at the center was welcoming during their orientation training. The students' attachments to the school were also positively affected by the orientation as they gathered a lot of information about their university through this process. Furthermore, students considered the online orientation offered by the center as a beneficial service that provided constant access to information that international students need to know. The study findings withdraw attention to the necessity of constructing international student centers and organizing international student orientation sessions at universities that provide education to international students.

Key Words: *Orientation training, Opinion, Undergraduate and graduate international students, International student center*

INTRODUCTION

The collapse of the Soviet Union, followed by the independence of some countries, resulted in stronger relations between Turkey and Turkic Republics which created an increase in the number of international students in Turkey. Furthermore, especially the cooperation agreements on many areas were signed between Turkey and Turkic Republics (Artam, 1993; Uludağ & Mehmedov, 1992). One of these agreements is the Great Student Exchange Project that started in 1992. In the beginning, this project started with five Turkic Republics, followed by the involvement of Asian and other countries

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and communities in the Balkans. The purpose of this project is to educate the citizens of the Turkic World, to rise the young generation who has sympathy for Turkey, and to build a bridge of friendship with the Turkic World. Another purpose of the Project is to teach Turkish, to introduce Turkish culture, and to construct unity among the countries that are in the Turkic World by improving their relationships (Çelik Balcı, 2008).

In addition to the Great Student Exchange Project, Turkey is a member of the Socrates and Erasmus program that was founded by European Union in 1987. The Socrates and Erasmus program supports student and professor exchanges for duration of three months in an academic year. Turkish universities became a part of this program during the 2004-2005 academic years. Starting from that date, while 30.000 students participated in this program throughout the Europe, the number of students who joined Turkish universities was more than 9000 (Turkish National Agency, 2010; as cited in. İlhan, Korkut-Owen, Furr, & Parikh, 2012).

These improvements show that Turkish universities have attained a high potential in international student enrollment. If Turkish universities prove that they provide high quality education and favorable conditions, they can generate significant conditions in international high education community. However, according to a report prepared by the Institution of High Education-Yükseköğretim Kurumu (2005), only 6.369 of 23.373 students who came from Russia, the Balkans, Asian Countries, Turkic Republics, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan between 1992 and 2004 have been able to graduate since 1992-1993. The reasons of this failure are students' having economic problems because of the scholarships in Turkey, low Turkish speaking proficiency, and the different educational system in Turkey.

The research shows that the international students especially experience loneliness, inconsistency, cultural shock, and psychological problems (Allaberdiyev, 2007; Bektaş, Kocabaş & Annaberdiyev, 2006; Biggs, 1999; Mamiyev, 2005). These findings in Turkey overlap with the categories created by Chen (1999) who stated that the international students experience stress on three basic issues. These issues are educational stress, social stress, and second language anxiety.

The studies on the problems of the international students in the United States (U.S.) show that the main problem of the international students is language proficiency (Church, 1982; Huntley, 1993; Mori, 2000; Yang, 2006). Furthermore, the students in the U.S. struggle with homesickness, adjustment to a new educational system and new social norms (Church, 1982), interpersonal problems, racial discrimination, loss of social support (Yeh & Inose 2003), dealing with developments in their country of origin, experiencing anxiety about returning home (Hsu 2003), health care (Guidry Lacina, 2002), visas, traveling, legal problems, and emotional and psychological problems (Zhai, 2002).

In times of the lack of social support, the role of international student center is critical for international students who struggle with these challenges. Therefore, international student centers need to have proactive services (Mori, 2000; Pedersen, 1991). The centers need to develop active strategies to advertise their services and provide newsletters for international students via campus events such as orientation for new students (Yoon & Jepsen, 2008). The center staff may wish to identify clinical interventions for these students that involve the use of existing and available social support networks on college and university campuses (Wilton and Constantine, 2003).

On the other hand, an important factor that needs to be addressed in relation to the failure of international students in Turkey is the inadequacy of international student centers at the Turkish universities (Bektaş, 2008). In Turkey, the international student centers are mostly located at the universities in Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir which are the highly populated cities. However, according to the research, a noteworthy problem that causes communication breakdowns is the low English level of the officers. Moreover, these centers do not include a private office or room for the international students. For those reasons, the international students do not use these international centers as desired (Bektaş, 2007; as cited in Bektaş, 2008). Two practical suggestions can be brought

forward for making the proactive center. These are; collaborating with the international student centers and creating a more active student orientation training (Bektaş, 2008).

One reason that is related to the inadequacy of international orientation services in Turkey is the insufficient condition of the guidance and counseling services at the universities. The other reason is the low number of officers who also have limited knowledge and experience (Özgüven, 1989; Yeşilyaprak, 1989).

When the literature is examined, it can be noticed that studies were conducted on orientation training at the universities in Turkey (Kolunsağ & Vatansever-Özdemir, 2007; Kutlu, 2004; Ünal & Özdemir, 2013). Kolunsağ and Vatansever-Özdemir (2007) offered an orientation model for universities by examining a university in Turkey. Ünal and Özdemir (2013) examined European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus Program) and emphasized the importance of the orientation training. Kutlu (2004) studied university students' opinions and problems about the orientation training. Besides these studies, Koç, Avşaroğlu, and Sezer (2004) found that insufficient orientation training effects the academic achievement of the university students in general. Polat (2012) stressed that university professors also consider orientation training as necessary for dealing with the problems that the international students have to face. However, these studies only focused on the orientation training provided for the students who are Turkish citizens.

The orientation training in the counseling and guidance centers is carried out in order to provide service and assistance for the students who are new to university or college education in the U.S. It is thought that these services will help the new students to solve the problems they may run into and accelerate their integration process which will finally have a positive impact on their academic achievement (Henriksen, 1995).These services are provided for both students who are the U.S. citizens and the international students at the guidance centers within the university campuses (Mori, 2000; Pedersen, 1991).

While the orientation training for the international students in the international student center exists and works effectively at the U.S. universities (Guidry Lacina, 2002), Turkish universities fail to provide such services for the international students (Bektaş, 2008). Also the number of research that focuses the international student centers' orientation training for the international students in Turkey is very low. Hence, examining a model of orientation training served by an international student center in the U.S. is considered as necessary.

The purpose of the research is to examine how the orientation training is performed in the international student center of a U.S. university (University of California, Los Angeles/Dashew Center).

METHOD

The case study is used and the interview was used to get the international students' opinions about the international student center's orientation training. For the interview, 11 questions were created by using the purpose of the orientation training (Yeşilyaprak, 2005). These questions are "Were you welcomed at the beginning of your orientation training at the Dashew Center?", "Were you given information about UCLA's general structure, purpose and student rights by the Dashew Center?", "Did you feel comfortable during the orientation training at the Dashew Center?, "What things were done to make you feel comfortable?", "Did your attachment to the university increase because of the orientation training at the Dashew Center?", "Did your desire to be productive increase because of the orientation training at the Dashew Center?", "Were you aware of resources available at the university?", "Were you informed about activities and student organizations at UCLA during the orientation training?", "Did your motivation to succeed in school increase because of the orientation training? What things were done to increase your motivation?", "Were you given information about possible risky situations that you may encounter on campus?", "Were you given information about your responsibilities and duties as a student during the orientation training at the Dashew Center?

What sorts of information were you given?" and "What could be done to improve the existing services at the orientation training?"

Study Group

A total of 41 first year undergraduate and graduate international students who study at UCLA during the summer and fall quarters of 2015-2016 academic year were interviewed to describe what the international students think about the orientation training at the center. It was the first year for all the participants in the U.S.

Data Collection and Analysis

The student responses to the interview were analyzed by content and descriptive analysis. The reliability coefficient in content analysis can be calculated by using Cohen's Kappa through comparing two separate codings conducted by two raters (Cohen, 1960). In this research, the researcher has done two separate codings in different times. Cohen's Kappa was used for determining the reliability between two codings. Cohen's Kappa was found .95 which shows that the codings have high reliability.

RESULTS

The purpose of the study is to designate what the international students think about the orientation training at the center. For this purpose, the international students were interviewed by the researcher. The content and descriptive analyses were used to sort out the responses of the students.

The results of the students' responses regarding if they were welcomed at the beginning of their orientation training at the center are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The results for "Were you welcomed at the beginning of your orientation training at the Dashew Center?"

N=41	f	%
Yes	36	87.80
No	2	4.88
Gifts	8	19.51
Workshops	6	14.63
Volunteers	4	9.76
I do not know/remember	3	7.32
Tour	2	4.88
Foods	2	4.88
The movie	1	2.44

Based on the students' responses, nine categories were formed for the first question. 87.80% of the students thought that the center's staff was welcoming at the beginning of the orientation. A total of 19.51% of the students said that the staff was welcoming because of the gifts that they gave to the international students. Moreover, 14.63% of the students found the staff welcoming because of the workshops. Also 9.76% of the students were welcomed by the volunteer students at the orientation. The 13th student said that "*…Yes. I think so, I felt welcomed because of the food and small gifts such as clothes and a sweater. They are great. I like the clothes. I do not wear too much because I bought clothes from the book store in UCLA. I like to wear clothes that I bought by myself. I felt happy when they gave these clothes to me. They were friendly….*" The 41th student mentioned that "*….Yes, I was welcomed. I received a welcome kit with a hoodie, a water bottle and a file with all the information (pamphlets) regarding resources available on campus….*" The 3rd student thought that "*…They were very welcoming and friendly. There were a lot of volunteers. We felt that we were at our homes….*" The 5th student said that "*…Yes. I felt welcomed. They offered the workshops. There were the graduate students who attended to the Dashew Center's activities frequently. They came and shared their experiences with us….*" The 38th student was satisfied because of the staffs' English "*…Yes, I felt welcome because staff was kind. They were speaking very clear…*" Only 4.88% of the students stressed that the staff was not welcoming at the orientation. As the 22nd student reported

"*…No, I did not feel welcomed because the orientation was not helpful. They gave gifts such as hoody and a calendar of UCLA. It was very general information. It was too general. I know it could have been detailed...*"

The results of the students' responses regarding if the center gave them information about UCLA's general structure, purpose, and student rights at the orientation training are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The results for "Were you given information about UCLA's general structure, purpose and student rights by the Dashew Center?"

N=41	f	%
Yes	23	56.10
No	5	12.20
I do not know/remember	9	21.95
General structure	9	21.95
UCLA's purpose	6	14.63
Online OP	6	14.63
Booklet	4	9.76
Academic Integrity	4	9.76
Students rights	3	7.32

According to Table 2, nine categories were obtained from the students' responses. While the majority of the students thought that the center gave information about UCLA's general structure, purpose and students rights at the orientation to them (56.10%), 12.20% of the students did not think the Dashew center provided them this information. Also 21.95% of the students stated that they have no idea about it as they could not remember. The 24th student mentioned that "*…They talked a lot. Yes, they mentioned a lot of information about UCLA…*", but the 28th student said that "*…No. UCLA's orientation did not give this information. I got those from my advisor…*" The booklet is another resource that 9.76% of the students pronounced. Moreover, 14.63% of the students said that they reached that information through the online orientation. The 9th student reported that "*…Yes, they gave this information. I got the booklets from the center. Also they offered an online orientation before we came here…*" The 16th student mentioned that "*…Yes, they mentioned this information. Before we came here, there is an online orientation, I started, and there were a video tutoring that we had to answer. The video was about the culture, life, and school purpose…*" The percentage of the students who said that the center gave them information was 21.95% about general structure and 14.63% about UCLA's purpose. On the other hand, 7.32% of the students stressed that they were only informed about students' rights. The 23rd student said that "*…They gave general information. I do not think they talked about the rights. They gave UCLA general structure and purpose…*" The 25th student stated that "*…There were more introductions about structure, purpose but not student rights…*"

The results of the students' responses regarding how they felt during the orientation training at the center are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The results for "Did you feel comfortable during the orientation training at the Dashew Center? What things were done to make you feel comfortable?"

N=41	f	%
Yes	39	95.12
No	2	4.88
Kind and helpful	17	41.46
Taking gifts	7	17.07
Volunteer students	5	12.20
Meeting other international students	3	7.32
Taking foods	2	4.88
Problem about VISA check in	1	2.44
The Movie	1	2.44

Content analysis resulted in nine categories in relation to how students felt during the orientation training at the center. The majority of the students were comfortable during the orientation training (95.12%). 41.46% of the students thought that the staff was kind and helpful, therefore they felt

comfortable. The 1st student said that "…*Yes, I was comfortable because they were very kind and gentle. They supported me…*" 17.07% of the students felt comfortable because of taking the gifts that the center gave them. The 10th student said that "…*I think so. I felt comfortable. I did not really care what they said. They gave me hoody, pencil, bag, and documents. I felt I belonged to school because of the gifts. They gave us identity with the words on hoody (Dashew center, international student)…*" The students said as they could meet volunteer students (12.20%) and other international students (7.32%), the process was comfortable for them. The 24th student said that "…*Yes, I was comfortable. They put you in a group. You had friends in this group. It makes you comfortable. You do not feel out off. They offer group activities and make these groups based on the students' majors. They mentioned the events and the trips, they also said when we have some questions, we are supposed to find them and they will be there to solve our problems. It made me comfortable. They are trying to make you comfortable ….*" The 21th student mentioned that "…*Yes. I did not feel uncomfortable. I did not have any special feeling. Also there were volunteer students they know our situation. That is why I was very relaxed. I felt welcomed. The volunteers were international students who have been in LA. They had known the U.S. culture and life. That was good…*" The 23rd student had similar opinion about the staff as the 21th student had. As he reported "…*Yes, I felt comfortable because they really welcomed us. They knew our language is not English, so it made me comfortable…*" Only 4.88% of the students did not feel comfortable. The 42nd student told that "…*No, actually I didn't feel comfortable because I could not finish my visa check-in process due to an error on my I-94 form. The center sent me to the Department of Homeland Security to correct the error by myself and I had to resubmit it. This was an uneasy situation for international students…*"

The results of the students' responses regarding whether their attachments increased because of the orientation training at the center are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The results for "Did your attachment to the university increase because of the orientation training at the Dashew Center?"

N=41	f	%
Yes	22	53.66
No	12	29.27
May be	5	12.20
I learned lots of information	9	21.95
Normal Process	8	19.51
I had already attached	7	17.07
No relation between them	6	14.63
Meeting friends at the orientation	3	7.32
The orientation was too short	2	4.88
UCLA's slogan	2	4.88
Online orientation	2	4.88
It is not about the center	2	4.88
I had some problems	1	2.44

When Table 4 is examined, it can be noticed that there are thirteen categories about the students' responses regarding the increase of attachment because of the orientation training at the center. While 53.66% of the students thought their attachments increased because of the orientation training at the center, 29.27% of the students did not agree with that. The students reported that their attachments increased because of ample information (21.95%). A total of 19.51% of them thought the orientation training was just a normal process. Lastly, 14.63% of the students did not find any relation between attachment and the orientation training. The 5th student mentioned that "…*Yes, I felt more attached during the orientation. Because before I came to LA, I could take an online orientation in China. That is why it made me comfortable. They gave information about LA and UCLA life how to make friend in the U.S. It was so good because when you come to the U.S, you have a culture shock as an international student, that is why it gave more ideas to me …*" The 14th student stated that "…*I would not see attachment to the school because of orientation, but it just made me little bit comfortable because when you see the other international student, you are thinking that you are not alone and you get along with the process…*" The 16th student said that "…*Yes. I felt attached to the school because of the orientation. They gave a good handbook to us. When I came to the U.S.,*

my English was not good, but through the online orientation, I felt good and attached. I used to be confused due to the differences between British and American English because we learn British English in Sri Lanka. That is why I was confused…." The 20th student thought that *"…No, I did not feel attached to school because of the orientation. I had already attached to the school by myself. The Orientation was a normal process for me..."* The 23rd student said that *"…No, I was not attached due to the orientation. I do not also find any relation between attachment and orientation, but whenever I have questions, they answer me and I get the answer. The orientation helped me being motivated to the school for the first time..."*

The results of the students' responses regarding whether their desires to be productive increased because of the orientation training at the center or not are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. The results for "Did your desire to be productive increase because of the orientation training at the Dashew Center?"

N=41	f	%
Yes	15	36.59
No	18	43.90
May be	3	7.32
I learned a lot of information	9	21.95
Normal Process	5	12.20
I had already felt productive	4	9.76
I do not know/remember	3	7.32
There is no relation between them	2	4.88
Activities at orientation	2	4.88
Orientation is for international students to settle in	1	2.44
Other orientation training (main and department) were more effective	1	2.44

Table 5 shows eleven categories that were obtained from the students' responses. While 36.59% of the students thought their desires to be productive increased because of the orientation, 43.90% of the students did not agree with this idea. The reasons regarding why they do not think or think that their desires to be productive increased after the orientation training, are parallel with the 5th student's response. The 5th student thought that *"…Yes I felt very productive during the orientation. It helped for the culture shock. When I took the orientation, I felt I should have made lots of friends, I was going to join the trips, but I did not do that…"* According to the students, they learned lots of information (21.95%), it was a normal process for them (12.20%), and they had already felt productive (9.76%). The 10th student said that *"…I do not think that orientation helped me be productive because it is personal. It helped me how to settle in, get used to the school. That is it…"* The 4th student mentioned that *"…Useful. I am not sure. I do not remember. Before I came here, I had already been positive, but I felt happy after the orientation…"*

The results of the students' responses regarding whether they were given information about university's resources or not are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. The results for "Were you aware of resources available at the university?"

N=41	f	%
Yes	38	92.68
No	2	4.88
Library	22	53.66
Gym	16	39.02
Writing center	6	14.63
Medical Care	4	9.76
Bruin Bus	4	9.76
The center's activities	4	9.76
Career center	3	7.32
Counselor at Dashew Center	3	7.32
Café/Food Court	3	7.32
Housing	3	7.32
The link	3	7.32
Computer labs	2	4.88
Copy Center	1	2.44
I do not remember	1	2.44

When Table 6 is examined, it can be noticed that sixteen categories were obtained from the students' responses. While 92.68% of the students thought that they received information about university's resources at the orientation training, only 4.88% of the students did not agree with this idea. The category that was pronounced by most of the students was library (53.66%) followed by gym (39.02%), writing center (14.63%), medical care, Bruin Bus, the center's activities (9.76%), career center, counselor at the center, café/food court, housing, link (7.32%), computer labs (4.88%), and copy center (2.44). A total of 2.44% of the students stated that they did not remember. The 41th student mentioned that "…*Yes. I gathered information about the Library facilities, recreation centers, sports facilities*…" Similarly the 6th student said that "…*Yes, I got information about library and Wooden Center for the students (gym)*…" On the other hand the 27th student said that "…*No, the Orientation did not give me this information. I only got e-mails from the center about information*…"

The results of the students' responses regarding whether they were informed about activities and student organizations at UCLA during the orientation training is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. The results for "Were you informed about activities and student organizations at UCLA during the orientation training?"

N=41	f	%
Yes	30	73.17
No	5	12.20
Not very much	6	14.63
I do not know/ remember	4	9.76
Trip/activities/clubs	16	39.02
Volunteer group	1	2.44
Student organization	1	2.44
English course	1	2.44
Application	1	2.44

When Table 7 is examined, it can be noticed that there are nine categories in relation to the interview question. The majority of the students thought that they were informed about student organization and activities during the orientation training (73.17%). 39.02% of these students mentioned that they were informed about trips and activities of the center especially. For example the 17th student said that "…*Yes, I was informed about student unions, sport teams, and a trip to Las Vegas, the show such as "Cirque du Soleil"*…" Correspondingly the 9th student mentioned that "…*Yes, they gave this information to us. They had a list of student clubs that they mentioned in orientation*…" On the other hand 12.20% of the students claimed that they were not informed about student organization and activities. 14.63% of the students found that information was insufficient. The 39th student said that "…*The center did not mention that much. I was informed when I went to general orientation of UCLA, not the Dashew Center*…"

The results of the students' responses regarding whether their motivations to succeed in school increased because of the orientation training is displayed in Table 8.

Table 8. The results for "Did your motivation to succeed in school increase because of the orientation training? What things were done to increase your motivation?"

N=41	f	%
Yes	14	34.15
No	17	41.46
No relation	2	4.88
I do not know/remember	2	4.88
I felt more motivated after OP	10	24.39
Already motivated	8	19.51
Not so much	6	14.63
Orientation is for international students to settle in	5	12.20
The department motivated	1	2.44
Indirectly	1	2.44

The results in Table 8 demonstrate ten categories that were formed as a result of content analysis. While 34.15% of the students thought that their motivations to succeed in school increased because of the orientation training, 41.46% of the students did not share the same opinion. 24.39% of the students, who thought the orientation increased their motivations to succeed in school, mentioned they felt more motivated after the orientation. On the other hand, 19.51% the students, who did not think their motivations to succeed in school were affected by the orientation, said they had already been motivated before the orientation training. The 9th student stated that "…*Yes, I think orientation is an introduction for you. I felt very nervous for my first time. If I had not taken the orientation, I would not have noticed the school very well. I would have to explore the school by myself for a while, so I got started because of the orientation…*" The 3th student said that "…*My personality was not affected because I had already been motivated. The orientation is just giving information to the international students to live here…*" The 8th student mentioned that "…*Yes, I had a desire to attend the orientation. After the orientation, I was more comfortable, I challenged myself. My anxiety level is not high because of the orientation. I feel a lot better…*" The 12th student said that "…*I do not think it is related to the orientation, I think success is more about self-motivation…*"

The results of the students' responses regarding whether they were informed about possible risky situation on the campus are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. The results for "Were you given information about possible risky situations that you may encounter on campus?"

N=41	f	%
Yes	34	82.93
No	5	12.20
I do not know/remember	1	2.44
Emergency call	14	34.15
Sexual harassment	6	14.63
Plagiarism	6	14.63
Not to walk alone on the campus at night	6	14.63
Alcohol	4	9.76
Counselor number	4	9.76
Not to work out of the campus	3	7.32
Weapon	2	4.88
Not so much	2	4.88
Drug	1	2.44
Housing	1	2.44

Table 9 shows that there are fourteen categories related to the interview question. According to Table 11, 82.93% of the students thought that the center mentioned possible risky situations during the orientation training. 34.15% of these students told that the staff of the Dashew Center talked about emergency call, also 14.63% of these students said that they gave information about sexual harassment, plagiarism, and warned about not being alone at night on the campus. For instance the 2nd student mentioned that "…*Yes. They warned us about cheating and told us not to walk alone on the campus at night…*" The 23rd student stated that "…*Yes, they gave us the campus police number. They also gave information about sexual harassment, abuse of drugs, and alcohol.* They also said *that if we have mental problems, there will be a counselor to help us…*" Similarly, the 31st student reported that "…*Yes, they informed us about sexual harassment and gave us a phone number that we could call, if we have a problem…*" on the other hand 12.20% of the students said the Dashew Center did not mention possible risky situations on campus. For instance the 16th student said that "…*No. they did not tell anything about the risky situation on campus, but I still think that this neighborhood is very safe…*"

The results of the students' responses regarding whether they were informed about their responsibilities and duties as a student during the orientation training at the center are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. The results for "Were you given information about your responsibilities and duties as a student during the orientation training at the Dashew Center? What sorts of information were you given?"

N=41	f	%
Yes	35	85.37
No	4	9.76
I do not remember the details	3	7.32
Plagiarism	13	31.71
Minimum GPA	12	29.27
Respect others	6	14.63
Minimum unit requirement	5	12.20
I20 expiration	5	12.20
Finish your work on time	3	7.32
Handbook	1	2.44
Law of California	1	2.44

The content analysis resulted in eleven categories regarding if the students were informed about their responsibilities and duties as a student during the orientation training at the center. The majority of the students (85.37%) reported that the center gave them information about their responsibilities and duties as a student during the orientation. 31.71% of these students told that the center warned them about the consequences of plagiarism, 29.27% of the students said they talked about minimum GPA, and 14.63% of the them reported that the center told them to respect others. Also 12.20% of the students claimed that the center talked about minimum unit requirements and I20 expiration. For instance the 1st student said that "*…Yes. They told us to create original works and not to do plagiarism, they also told us to respect to others…*" Correspondingly, the 5th student stressed that "*…They gave us information about our academic responsibilities, such as plagiarism…*" similarly the 8th student stated that "*…Yes. Plagiarism was discussed in the orientation. They told us not to cheat in the exams. They told that understanding the topic subject is more important than passing the classes…*" The 9th student talked about her responsibilities especially as an international student "*…Yes, they mentioned minimum unit that we have to take, we need to keep our GPAs high. We should keep studying hard…*" The 17th student said that "*…Yes, the Dashew Center mentioned our responsibilities and duties. I need to take some enough credit. I need to GPA over 3.00. Anytime I go abroad, I should go to the center and have my I20 signed. I am allowed just to work on the campus…*" On the other hand 9.76% of the student claimed that they were not informed about their responsibilities or duties as a student by the center. For instance, the 35th student said that "*…No. but I had already known my responsibilities…*"

The results of the students' responses regarding what the center could do to improve the existing services are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. The results for "What could be done to improve the existing services at the orientation training?"

N=41	f	%
Enough they are great	10	24.39
I do not know	8	19.51
Speed up process	4	9.76
Housing option	4	9.76
More information about American culture	3	7.32
Provide detail information	2	4.88
More organized orientation	2	4.88
More English class	2	4.88
Improve website	1	2.44
Different language class	1	2.44
Student pick up service from the airport	1	2.44
More electronic	1	2.44
Korean counselor	1	2.44

When Table 11 is examined, it can be noticed that the students' reports resulted in twelve categories. While 24.39% of the students thought the services are enough, 19.51% of the students did not know and thought that the activities should be improved. For example, the 12th student was satisfied with the existing services as he put it "*…They are already very good. I cannot say anything. Those were so good, as well…*" The 1st student mentioned the center's activities and reported that "*…They should have more activity on writing. UCLA has a writing center, but this center is for native students, too…*" 9.76% of the students thought the center should speed up process for the document services. The 6th student mentioned speeding up the process and uttered that "*…I had to fill out my internship form for my VISA. I went to the center to help me about that, but it took them so long to complete the document work. It took five days. I knew they have a lot of stuff to do. If they had speeded up my procedure, I would have been happy…*" A total of 9.76% of the students made suggestion about housing option and 7.32% of the students wanted more information about American Culture. The 17th student said that "*…They should give more information about American culture. We have just brief information but not that much. It is not enough. You usually want to know more…*" The 27th student gave suggestions that "*…They can give us some information about housing service, as well. If they put information about housing on website, we can reach that when we are in our country. Before we come here, we can solve this housing problem, here is expensive for us. The center should help us in terms of housing…*" Only 2.44% of the students (n=1) mentioned that the Dashew Center should offer a Korean counselor. The 32nd student from South Korea said that "*…They can have a Korean counselor because if we want to share our problem in our mother tongue, it would be very helpful for us, we could give more detail. Otherwise in English is so hard. A person familiar with our culture can understand our problem better than an American counselor …*"

CONCLUSION AND COMMENTS

The primary purpose of this study was to examine how the orientation training was performed in the international student center of a U.S. university (University of California, Los Angeles/Dashew Center). Secondarily, study aimed to determine what the international students thought about the orientation training at the center. For this purpose, the international students were interviewed by the researcher. In this study, the students' opinions about the orientation process were positive in general. They thought that as the center was welcoming during their orientation training, they felt comfortable. They have this opinion because they were given gifts such as hoody, pencil, calendar of UCLA and bag and the center's staff and volunteer students were very helpful and kind to them during the orientation training. On the contrary, research contacted by Zhai (2002) in another university showed that although the center's staff was seen as helpful, caring, and knowledgeable by the international students, the staff seemed all very busy with immigration matters and had no time to discuss the personal concerns when the students had personal problems. According to Ramachandran (2011), most international students complained about the lack of interest in their personal concerns. These findings emphasize that International student centers should provide personal attention to students' concerns and provide relevant and timely information instead of using only booklets, brochures and other advertising material.

Andrade (2006) suggested that the university staff could take steps to make their institutions a welcoming place for international students. She emphasized that the staff must become aware of the degree of success of their international students, not only as indicated by quantitative data such as GPAs and retention rates, but also by qualitative data derived from surveys, interviews, and focus groups as numbers may mask the difficulties and sacrifices students face to be successful.

As the orientation training involved volunteer international and domestic students, the new international students thought that these volunteers could understand their situations which made the process relaxing for them. It is crucial to hire international students as the center staff so that international students feel they could be understood by the staff, especially in terms of language and culture (Yang, Wong, Hwang, & Heppner, 2002). According to Abe, Talbot, and Geelhoed (1998), the considerations of racial diversity, gender, age, language, or specialty area should be focused on by the administration while hiring staff to international student centers. Eseonu, Wedderburn, and Maurice

(2011) also suggested the idea of a non-international buddy system to assist the international students to settle in. Coles and Swami (2012) attributed an important role to university societies in the first few weeks.

Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner, and Nelson (1999) emphasized providing a welcoming environment for international students. According to them, the center's staff must cooperate other student affairs professionals, faculty, domestic students, and community volunteers to create a welcoming environment for international students. Likewise, Zhai (2002) suggested that the number of activities between international and the domestic students should increase.

In this case, the universities in Turkey may hire volunteer students who are third or fourth year international and domestic students. The international students may share their opinions with these new students easily since they experienced the same situations during their initial times in the host community. Furthermore, the staff of the center is supposed to be welcoming for the international students especially on the orientation training. The universities may give them gifts such as items representing the city or school, bag, calendar of the school, notebook, or pencil. These gifts may as well be helpful as they make them feel welcomed.

The students' attachments to the school were positively affected by the orientation as they gathered a lot of information through this process. Furthermore, online orientation which the students could take is a beneficial facility of the center. Thus, when the international students arrive in the U.S., they can already have information about UCLA and the city. Online orientation also minimizes terminological confusion that the students may have in the future as it familiarizes them with the frequently used terms and information that the center provides. According to Murphy, Hawkes, and Law (2002) the using of online orientation is widely acknowledged in providing information to prospective international students and parents. Correspondingly, the universities may offer online orientation training to the international students. When the students are in their countries, they could be informed about the school, city, and so on. In this way, they could get familiar with the city and the university life and education before they start living in Turkey.

In the current research, although the students thought that they learned a lot of information about the university, the city, and so on, they did not feel productive and motivated during the orientation. According to these students, the orientation was a normal process and they had already been productive at the beginning of the orientation. They also put emphasis on the benefit of the center in terms of helping the international students settle in.

The participants in this research were given information about UCLA's general structure, purpose, students' rights, the resources of the university, activities, student organization, possible risky situation, which they may encounter on the campus, and their responsibilities and duties, by the center during the orientation. They thought that they were informed about UCLA's general structure more than their rights as a student. Also, the center informed them about library, fitness center, writing center, medical care, trips, clubs, and activities of the center as resources of the school. According to them, the center provided crucial warnings and suggestions about the possible risky situations such as emergency call, sexual harassment, plagiarism, and other risks on campus. These suggestions and information about student responsibilities and the university's facilities prepared the students for potential situations and problems they may have to face in their educational life at UCLA.

On the other hand, informing the students about possible risky situations on campus is essential for both the students and the administration. If the students do not pay attention to the dangers on campus, they might have to struggle with possible threats that could lead to serious problems. Consequently, the administration would have to account for their mistakes because the students could incorrectly assume that international students with problems are mainly the responsibility of the international student center (Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner, & Nelson, 1999). Therefore the students are supposed to be informed about every detail of the school such as the students' rights and

possible risky situations during the orientation. In order to have a stress-free academic and social life, international students need to receive professional support from the student services located on campus. Information on local transportation, health care, house-keeping and other services required for the easy conduct of daily activities are important for international students (Ramachandran, 2011).

The center explained the students' responsibilities and duties which were about the minimum units they should take and lowest GPA they should have, and maintenance of their VISAs. According to Althen (1990), the orientation should include immigration regulations such as travel documents; maintenance of status besides information about the U.S. academic system.

The centers of the universities may inform the students about possible risky situations, the university's purpose, structure, students' rights, responsibilities, and duties. If the center focuses on students' responsibilities such as minimum unit or GPA, the students will be more careful at the beginning of their education. Otherwise, they might have to extend their higher education because of unawareness about their responsibilities. Although the students were satisfied from the existing services of the orientation training, they desired the center to speed up document process, to have housing options, and more information about American culture. Especially, they complained about housing problem because they struggled with finding a place which is around the campus. Housing problem is a crucial issue especially for international students. As they come from other countries, they have limited knowledge about the city, culture, as well as the university. They do not know how to rent a place, how much the prices are, or whether the university has a dormitory for them.

Ministry of National Education-Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB) (2001) listed housing as a major problem. The report also showed that international students had experienced problems such as homesickness, adaptation, loneliness, anxiety, depression, sadness, and housing (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998; Sam & Eide, 2008). Additionally, other studies found that international students, who came to Turkey to have university education, had problems in the fields of orientation, housing, and economic status (Açıkalın, Demirel & Önsoy, 1996; Ercan, 2001; Garabayev, 2000; MEB, 2001; Soyutürk, 2000; Özkan & Acar Güvendir, 2015).

According to Özkan and Acar Güvendir (2015), when the international students arrive in the new country for their higher education, they did not receive help from the university. Thus, they had to solve their housing problem by themselves, as well. Chen (1999) identified three main stressors for international students based on the relevant literature. One of the main stressors is social stressors which includes housing, social adjustment, and social isolation. Therefore Guidry Lacina (2002) thought that the U.S. universities can provide housing assistance.

If the centers at the universities in Turkey inform the international students about housing facilities that they have, the students may get along with the process easily. In Turkey, the international students can stay at the dormitories which belong to the government. If they get the scholarships from the government, even they can stay at the dormitory for free (http://www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr). However, if they do not have scholarships, they have to choose private dormitories or houses. In this case the universities may hire someone who demonstrates the housing options of the city and the university to the students during the orientation.

Although only one student mentioned a desire to have counselor who speaks her mother tongue (Korean), this issue is crucial in terms of drawing the attention to the language problems that the students have to cope with. The Korean student in this research wanted to have a Korean counselor because when he went to counselor center, he could not explain his feelings clearly due to his English proficiency. While the students are trying to explain their troubles in English, this process might be more difficult for them than explaining the same problems in their mother tongue.

According to Guidry Lacina (2002) a university may help the international students by providing an international student center with advisers and counselors who can help students with common problems such as culture, social life, health care, money matters, and so on. However, it should be

kept in mind that language and cultural concerns could be serious barriers to seeking counseling (Leong & Chou 2002; Yoon & Jepsen, 2008). Mau and Jepsen (1988) found that Chinese students preferred older counselors with the same racial background, as well (as cited in: Yoon & Jepsen, 2008). Likewise, Wilton and Constantine (2003) claimed that college and university counseling centers may hire Asian and Latin American counselors with strong cultural ties and affiliations who could serve as role models for Asian and Latin American students and who might be better able to understand many of these students' cultural adjustment and mental health issues. Other research also argues that having counselors with similar cultural backgrounds could aid some of these students in feeling more comfortable about the counseling process (Constantine, 2001; Pedersen, 1991; Sandhu, 1995). In this case especially the international student centers are supposed to hire counselors considering the mother tongue of the international students.

The students in this research stressed a wish for more English courses. Language is the prominent problem for the international students from past to present (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998; Açıkalın, Demirel, & Önsoy, 1996; Adıgüzel, 1994; Allaberdiyev, 2007; Chen, 1999; Church, 1982; Ercan, 2001; Garabayev, 2000; Huntley, 1993; Jacob & Greggo, 2001; Lee, 1997; Luzzo, Henao, & Wilson, 1996; Mori, 2000; Otrar et al., 2002; Sandhu, 1995; Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010; Soyutürk, 2000, Tamaoka, Ninomiya, & Nakaya, 2003; Wan, Chapman, & Biggs, 1992; Yang, 2006; Yang, Wong, Hwang, & Heppner, 2002; Yi, Lin, & Kishimoto, 2003; Zhai, 2002). English language skills are crucial in terms of both the academic and social adjustment of international students (Andrade 2006). According to Yeh and Inose (2003), not only the language barrier has effects on the students' abilities to academically succeed but also it impacts their ability to socialize with other students. Sherry, Thomas, and Chui (2010) made suggestions about solving language problem which may be done through language tuition services that centers could provide for students. Also, students may be encouraged to get involved in informal conversational groups as a way of enhancing their skills and confidence in second language through a language circle. Furthermore, centers may establish social clubs which strongly focus on informal social interactions and may improve the verbal communication skills of international students to enhance the interactions between international students and other students on campus.

Griffiths (2007) thought that teachers and international students should be aware of learning strategies such as structured workshops, group works, and participation in internal and external events to overcome language problems. Also Althen (1990) made suggestions for incorporating the students into a cohesive program such as lectures, informal discussions, panel presentation simulations, role plays, assigned activities, social activities, films, tours, homestays and/or home hospitality, off-campus "retreats", self-instructional materials "Buddy system" (involving either international students or U.S. students), lists of do's and don't's, and individual attention from a staff member. Similarly, the centers of universities in Turkey could organize events which can help the international students share their experiences. The study findings show that constructing international student centers and organizing international student orientation sessions at universities that provide education to international students in Turkey are important as they ease the adaptation process of the international students to a new system and educational life.

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