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GÖÇ POLİTİKALARI SEMPOZYUMU**

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SUNUŞ

İnsanlık tarihi kadar eski bir olgu olan göç, kimi zaman savaşlar, doğal afetler ve sürgünler gibi zorunlu nedenlerle ortaya çıksa da daha çok daha iyi yaşam koşullarına ulaşmak amacıyla, görece gönüllü birey ve grupların hareketi olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Günümüzde uluslararası göç, çok önemli boyutlara ulaşmış olup farklı kültürlerin beraber yaşaması ve çalışmasını ve dolayısıyla da farklı kültürlerden gelen bireylerin kültürel uyum sorunlarını da beraberinde getirmiştir.

Türkiye, Cumhuriyetin kuruluş yıllarından bu yana başta nüfus mübadeleleri ile gelen göçler olmak üzere büyük göç hareketlerine sahne olmuştur. İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra Avrupa'nın artan işgücü talebiyle Türkiye göç veren bir ülke konumuna gelmiştir. Avrupa'ya göç, çeşitli aşamalardan geçerek seksenli yıllarda istikrar kazanmış ve göçmenler yerleşik vatandaşlar haline gelmişlerdir.

Son yıllarda başta Suriye krizi olmak üzere Türkiye'nin yer aldığı bölgede yaşanan çatışmalar ve siyasi krizler ülkemize yönelik büyük bir göç dalgasının başlamasına neden olmuş ve Türkiye artık sadece göç veren bir ülke olmanın ötesinde göç alan ve başka ülkelere ulaşmak isteyen göçmelerin transit olarak kullandığı bir geçiş ülkesi konumuna gelmiştir.

Tüm bu yaşanan gelişmelerin ışığında İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim Üniversitesi 2015 yılının Mayıs ayında göç olgusunun siyaset, sosyoloji, sosyal hizmet, ekonomi ve yönetim bilimi gibi disiplinlerin farklı bakış açıları ile değerlendirilmesini amaçlayan bir "Disiplinlerarası Göç ve Göç Politikaları Sempozyumu" düzenlenmiştir. Sempozyum ile Türkiye'nin mevcut göç politikalarının analiz edilmesi, yaşanan sorunlara yönelik çözümlerin tartışılması ve daha etkin politikaların ortaya çıkmasına katkıda bulunmak hedeflenmiştir.

İki gün süren sempozyumda toplam 27 bildiri sunulmuş olup bildiriler bu kitapta toplanmıştır. Ayrıca sempozyumun ikinci gününde 'Göç Çalıştay' yapılmış olup Türkiye ve yurtdışında yürütülen göç politikalarının nitelik ve etkinliği, bilhassa Türkiye'deki Suriyeli göçmenlerin yaşadıkları sosyal, ekonomik, kültürel sorunlar tartışılmış ve bu sorunların çözümüne ilişkin öneriler derlenmiştir. Göç politikalarından medya ve göç ilişkisine kadar birçok kategoride sunulan bildiri-lerin, ülkemizin göç politikalarına katkı sunmasını ümit etmekteyiz.

Prof. Dr. Mehmet BULUT

İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim Üniversitesi Rektörü

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Examining of Acculturative Stress Level of Foreign Students in Turkey

Sena ÖKSÜZ¹
Yulia KRYVENKO²

ABSTRACT

Living abroad is an exciting and satisfying experience but it has many challenges. Getting accustomed to a new environment and a new culture requires some psychological adjustments. This study explored acculturation processes of foreign students living and studying in Turkey through an examination of the association between acculturative stress and demographic informations. The participants of this study were 127 international students who were enrolled in Turkish language programs in İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim University and Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University. Students were asked to fill out a questionnaire and the acculturative stress scale for international students (ASSIS). Results revealed that students with less acculturative stress experienced a better adjustment outcome and showed lower sense of isolation. Based on the findings of the current study, practical suggestions are made for professionals to help international students experience better cultural adjustment and also to enhance the services and programs.

Key Words: Acculturation, International Students, Stress, Migration, Immigrants.

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INTRODUCTION

Internationalization of higher education has been one of the major global phenomena contributing to the development of multicultural societies. As millions of young people leave their native countries every year to study abroad to acquire professional skills or knowledge more cultures come in contact with each other. Turkey rapidly grows as destination for international students. Between the 2005-2006 and the 2011-2012 school year, the number of international students attending Turkish universities more than doubled, from 15,481 to 31,170. International students residing in Turkey come from 155 different countries, they provide diversity and opportunity for multicultural experience at host universities.

International students have to adjust to a new culture and educational system which can be very different from what they were used to in their home countries. They have to learn new ways of behavior according to the new cultural norms and many of them start learning from zero the language of the host country. These learning processes take time, and the longer these students stay in the host culture, the more acculturated they become (Flannery et al., 2001). However, some of them may face considerable difficulties in making new adjustments initially due to communication problems, lack of social connections, and homesickness. This may easily lead to acculturative stress (Pederson, 1991). Sooner or later most international students become acculturated into a new culture, although there are always few who may not be able to function well

(Sodowsky and Plake, 1992). This raises several questions in regard to what can account for successful acculturation and what are the main factors that cause stress among different immigrant groups, particularly foreign students. The purpose of our study is to examine whether demographic variables predict acculturative stress among foreign students who studying in Turkey. More specifically, we examined the relation gender, age, religion, level of education, number of year lived in Turkey and acculturative stress factors (perceived discrimination, homesickness, perceived hate/rejection, fear, culture shock, and guilt).

Acculturation has been studied as the process of cultural and psychological change that results from the interaction between cultures (Berry, 2005). It is seen as a process by which an individual must adjust to the new culture while at the same time deciding if to keep up the practices and convictions of his or her heritage culture (Berry, 1997).

Research on acculturation has primarily used one of two models, either a unidimensional or a bidimensional approach. In the unidimensional model, individuals from one culture assume the cultural norms, values, and beliefs of the culture in which they come into contact (Gordon, 1964). The bidimensional model, however, defines acculturation as a process in which both heritage and mainstream cultural identities are free to vary independently (e.g., Berry, 1980; Celano & Tyler, 1990; LaFramboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Laroche, Kim, Hui, & Joy, 1996; Sayegh & Lasry, 1993; Sanchez & Fernandez, 1993; Zak, 1973).

During the acculturation process, some individuals may experience a variety of stressors related with their personal features, attitude of the dominant culture to their group, or factors associated with their immigration. Acculturative stress refers to "a response by people to life events (which are rooted in intercultural contact) when they exceed the capacity of people to manage them" (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002, p. 362). Acculturative stress happens when people experience difficulties emerging from the acculturation process (Williams & Berry, 1991). It can come from contradictory social values and practices, language problems and discrimination (Gil, Vega, & Dimas, 1994). Immigrants are most likely to experience this form of stress, however it is also seen in later generations, including later-generation school students (Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987; Padilla et al., 1986).

All students face similar difficulties during their college years, but international students, in addition, must cope with challenges of adaptation to a completely new culture. College students "deal with stress from academic life and issues stemming from normal development, such as psychological autonomy, economic independence, and identity formation" (Toyokawa and Toyokawa, 2002, p. 363). Besides normal developmental concerns, international students face additional stress due to demands of cultural adjustment (Mori, 2000). Yeh and Inose (2003) found that international students feel a lack of adequate social connectedness and social support in the host country, which adds to acculturative distress. These results were confirmed by another study consisted of 170 volunteered international students from one private and four state universities in

Ankara, demonstrated that international students who have low acculturative stress, low perceived cultural distance and high use of positive coping skills were better adjusted to college life (Fatma Nihal Otlu, 2010).

On the other hand another study indicates that Chinese international students' language competency is significantly tied to acculturative stress, but other background characteristics such as age, gender, length of residence in the U.S., and marital status fail to show a strong association with acculturative stress (Yue Zhang, 2012).

METHOD

The purpose of our study was to examine whether demographic variables predict acculturative stress among foreign students who studying in Turkey. In this regard, it is possible to assert that this study is an example of correlational model.

Participants

The participants were 127 international students enrolled in Turkish Language Education Program at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University and Fatih Sultan Mehmet University. Most of the respondents were young population between 18-25 years old (69%). The age of the respondents ranged from 18 years to 50 years. There were more male respondents (76%) than female Respondents (34%). 85% of participants didn't have a job in Turkey. 91% were Muslims, 9% - Christians. Majority were single - 76%. About 91% spent less than 2 years in Turkey. 57% have Bachelor's Degree. Nationality of the respondents ranged

widely: 35% were from Syria, 9% from Palestine, 6% from Yemen, 2% from Iran, 48% from other countries.

Instruments

Demographic scale that was used for the research included questions about gender, age, religion, marital status, level of education, native language, availability of job, number of years lived in Turkey, etc.

The acculturative stress scale for international students (ASSIS) was used to measure students' acculturative stress levels. Based on a study with international students, Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994) developed th's scale stating that there are seven main sub-factors that contribute to acculturative stress:

1. Perceived discrimination and alienation, which is defined as experiencing of discrimination based on race or color, receiving mistreatment, and feeling socially isolated.
2. Homesickness factor, which measures feelings of missing family and living in an unfamiliar environment.
3. Perceived hate means that some international students perceive negative attitudes about their culture based on the U.S. individuals' verbal and nonverbal behaviors.
4. Fear, which includes feelings of insecurity and keeping a low profile due to different cultural background.
5. Culture shock is comprised of difficulties related to adjustment to new cultural norms and expectations.

6. Guilt, which refers to feelings of betrayal to older cultural values and lifestyle and adopting the new ones.
7. The last factor is a miscellaneous category that includes some additional experiences that are important to study but do not fit into any other previous factors stated above.

Overall the acculturative stress scale for international students (ASSIS) consists of 36-item scale which measures acculturative stress among international students. Responses are scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with a score of 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree.” The scores range from 36 to 180, with high scores referring to higher acculturative stress. The subscales of ASSIS are: perceived discrimination (8 items), homesickness (4 items), perceived hate (5 items), fear (4 items), stress due to change (3 items), guilt (2 items), and miscellaneous (10 items).

The ASSIS has very high reliability and validity. The Cronbach’s coefficient alpha is 0.94 and Guttman split-half reliability is .96 for all 36 items of the scale. The validity of the scale, using factor analysis, was established; the seven factors of the scale accounted for 69.7% of the total variance. The alpha levels for the subscales are: perceived discrimination (0.90), homesickness (0.89), perceived hate (0.90), fear (0.88), stress due to change (0.79), guilt (.44), and miscellaneous (0.84) (Sandhu and Asrabadi, 1998). The internal consistency of the scale for our sample is 0.94.

Statistical Analysis

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is used to evaluate whether conducted Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS) points met normality hypothesis. Since the significance level is lower than .05, distribution did not meet the normality hypothesis. Therefore, Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze the significance between mean differences of two independent samples. When the independent samples are more than two, Krusal-Wallis test was used, and the group differences were confirmed with the Mann-Whitney test.

Procedure

The data of the study were gathered by the researchers of this study. Prior to conducting this survey and scale, ASSIS had been translated into Turkish and Arabic language by a certified translator and back translations are applied. Researchers handed in the scales and questionnaires by themselves and explained the goals and benefits of the study.

Anonymity was assured with no identifiable information included in the surveys. No compensation was provided to the respondents for their participation.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Mann-Whitney U Test Results of Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS) According to Gender, Job, Religion, Marital Status, Time Spent in Turkey

Variables		N	Mean Rank	Rank Sum Test	U	p
Gender	Female	43	67.94	2921.50	1636.50	.388
	Male	84	61.98	5206.50		
Job	Yes	19	58.61	1113.50	923.50	.488
	No	108	64.95	7014.50		
Religion	Islam	115	61.49	7071.50	401.50	.017*
	Christianity	12	88.04	1066.50		
Marital Status	Married	30	76.48	2275.50	1039.50	.026*
	Single	95	59.36	5599.50		
Time Spent in Turkey	0-2	115	64.61	7430.00	390.00	.045*
	3-5	10	44.50	445.00		

* $p < .05$

Foreign students' ASSIS points do not show significant relation to gender (U=1636.50, $p > .05$.)

Foreign students' ASSIS points do not show significant relation to working condition. (U=923.50, p>.05)

Foreign students' ASSIS points show significant differences in accordance with religion. Hereunder, Christian participants showed higher acculturative stress compared Muslim participants. (U=401.50, p<.05.)

Foreign students' ASSIS points show significant differences according to marital status. (U=1039.50, p<.05.) Results show that married participants demonstrated higher acculturative stress than single participants.

Foreign students' ASSIS points show significant relation according to the time spent in Turkey. (U=390.50, p<.05) Those who lived in Turkey for 0 to 2 years have higher acculturative stress compared to ones who lived in Turkey 3 to 5 years.

Table 2. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results of Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS) According to the Age, Education, Nationality, Native Language and Accompanies

	Variables	N	Mean Rank	S D	X Square	p	Significant Difference
Age	A.18-25	88	59.57	3	8.083	.044*	B-C
	B. 26-32	32	79.41				B-D
	C. 33-40	4	45.13				
	D.40 +	3	57.83				

Education	A.Highschool	31	71.61	2	2.353	.308	C-A
	B. Bachelors	73	60.22				C-B
	C. Graduate	22	56.98				
Nationality	A.Syria	41	78.45	4	17.17	.002*	A-B
	B.Palestine	12	36.29				C-B
	C.Yemen	7	73.14				A-C
	D.Iran	3	53.33				
	E.Other	61	56.16				
Native Language	A.Arabic	79	64.17	3	19.63	.000*	B-A
	B.English	8	111.88				B-C
	C.Other	37	50.38				
Accompanied Ones	A.Family	37	71.38	3	10.11	.018*	C-D
	B.Friends	57	62.47				A-D
	C.Relatives	8	89.88				B-D
	D. Other	25	48.28				
Satisfaction of Living in Turkey	A.Always	51	45.67	2	21.24	.000*	C-A
	B.Sometimes	74	76.11				C-B
	C.Never	2	83.50				

***p<.01 **p<.05**

Foreign students' ASSIS points show significant differences in accordance with the age of the participants. χ^2 =(sd=3, n=124)=8.08, p<.05. In

order to define the difference among groups Mann Whitney U test is used and according to the results there are significant differences between the 26-32 and 33-40; 26-32 and 40 plus ages. Findings showed that participants who were between 26-32 years old have more acculturative stress levels.

Foreign students' ASSIS points do not show significant differences according to education levels of the participants. χ^2 =(sd=2, n=126)=2.35, p>.05.

Foreign students' ASSIS points show significant differences according to education levels of the participants χ^2 =(sd=4, n=124)=17.17, p<.01. In order to define the difference among groups Mann Whitney U test is used and it is found out that Syrians have more acculturative stress levels than Palestinians and Yemenis; Yemenis have more acculturative stress levels than Palestinians.

Foreign students' ASSIS points show significant differences according to the native languages of the participants χ^2 =(sd=3, n=124)=19.63, p<.01. In order to define the difference among groups Mann Whitney U test is used and the results show that participants whose native languages is English have more acculturative stress levels than Arabic or other speakers.

Foreign students' ASSIS points show significant differences according to the native languages of the participants χ^2 =(sd=3, n=124)=10.11, p<.05. In order to define the difference among groups Mann Whitney U test is used and it is found

out that those who are living with their relatives, families and friends have more acculturative stress levels than those who live by themselves.

Foreign students' ASSIS points show significant differences in accordance with the satisfaction of living in Turkey $\chi^2_{(sd=2, n=124)}=21.24$, $p<.01$. In order to define the difference among groups Mann Whitney U test is used and the results show those who stated that they are not happy living in Turkey at all have more acculturative stress levels than those who stated that they are always or sometimes happy living in Turkey

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how demographic variables predict acculturative stress among foreign students who are studying in Turkey. Overall, results of the study showed that these variables significantly predicted acculturative stress, however, not all of them. For example, ASSIS points didn't show significant relation to gender, education and working condition.

There is a limited amount of research related to gender and acculturative stress. This limited research produced inconsistent results. Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson and Pisecco (2002) found gender differences in experience of loneliness, a subcategory of acculturative stress. In the study, male graduate students reported experiencing higher feelings of loneliness than did female graduate students. However, Sodowsky and Plake (1992) did not find any gender differences in acculturative stress. As a result, it is important that the gender differences are continued to be explored.

Christian participants showed higher acculturative stress compared to Muslim participants. These results suggest that Christians feel less comfortable when they are exposed to the values, traditions, and religion of mainstream Turkish culture and they are more likely to report experiencing stress associated with perceived discrimination. Amer and Hoovey's study (2012) shows that Christian Arabs living in the States display greater religiosity than Muslim Arabs living in the States.

Married participants and those who are living with their relatives demonstrated higher acculturative stress than single participants. As Verthelyi (1995) argued married international students may experience a higher level of acculturative stress than single international students for the possible reason was that they were likely to spend a substantial portions of social time in the company of their spouses or invest in relationship maintenance issues but lost opportunities for social interactions with both other international and domestic students, which may result in an increased social isolation among married international students.

Those who lived in Turkey for 0 to 2 years had higher acculturative stress compared to ones who lived in Turkey 3 to 5 years. Furthermore, results showed that length of time spent in Turkey negatively correlated to perceived discrimination stress. Specifically, the longer international students have lived in the country, the less they report experiencing stress related to discrimination. These results extend previous findings by Flannery and colleagues (2001) that

demonstrate the longer foreign students stay in the host culture, the more acculturated they become.

Syrians have more acculturative stress levels than Palestinians and Yemenis; Yemenis have more acculturative stress levels than Palestinians. It can be assumed that Syrians have higher acculturative stress level among other nationality groups because they were forced to move to Turkey by the difficult political situation while Palestinians and Yemenis migrated by their own choice. These results are confirmed by research findings of John Ogbu, a Nigerian-American anthropologist, who questioned the academic performance of minorities in American schools. He asked why some minorities succeed in American schools and some do not. He found a link between the students' identity of self and school performance. Minorities in the US, he concluded, are affected by their access to their racial heritage, culture, and language. **Involuntary Minorities** or so-called *Castelike Minorities* are those who have been incorporated into society against their will. Because of long periods of discrimination, this group harbors a distrust of the host country's institutions, such as school. **Voluntary Minorities** chose to immigrate to the host country and they view the society in a positive way. Voluntary minorities attempt to adapt to the dominate culture and see this change as positive. They are willing to learn and accept the cultural norms of the dominant group. While **Involuntary Minorities** maintain alternative self-affirming norms and set boundaries between themselves and the majority group.

Participants whose native languages was English had more acculturative stress levels than Arabic or other non-Turkish speakers. These results align with the study conducted by Suanet and Van de Vijver (2009) in Russia. They observed that students coming from Georgia, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine (the countries that have similar culture with Russia) reported the lowest perceived cultural distance, less stress and homesickness and more interactions with host-nationals. However, students coming from China and Iran (the countries that have different cultures when compared to Russian culture) reported high perceived cultural distance, more stress and homesickness and more social contacts with co-nationals compared to host nationals.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of this study have a few important implications. First, the results demonstrate the importance of Turkish language competency during the acculturative process. Other universities in Turkey may provide language training or implement programs like conversational Turkish for international students to communicate with local students, or open international student centers that might also assign bilingual personnel or mentors to work with students to improve their Turkish. This approach may promote more frequent and easier use of university services for international students. Another important implication may be in counselors' developing multicultural competence. Results of this study can help university counselors to understand the experiences and adjustment process of

international students. Orientation programs, workshops or support groups can be designed to facilitate adjustment process of these students.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this study, a total of 127 international students were reached to collect data which were relatively low in number and students only from 2 universities were represented. For further studies, it is important to reach bigger number of students from different universities to be able to make more sound generalizations.

Longitudinal studies on college adjustment of international students may give broader results since adjustment is an ongoing process that spans over time. A study that observes and evaluates international students from the beginning of their education to the end can give a whole picture of adjustment process and possible effective factors.

Qualitative studies can be conducted as they can give more specific information about adjustment experiences of international students and can provide deeper understanding of their adjustment process.

As cultural distance and acculturative stress were also significant in this study, it might be worth conducting a research on acculturation or life satisfaction. Examining how cultural adjustment can affect general adjustment or college adjustment of international students may be meaningful in understanding the role of culture in adjustment process.

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